

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the fourth Metro Detroit Model United Nations Conference. Over the past four years we have worked tirelessly to develop an exciting and innovative Model United Nations format that challenges our delegates in a competitive and inclusive environment. We work year-round to ensure that our staff members are as prepared as possible to ensure that all of our delegates can participate in our debates. Moreover, the topics that you will discuss have been carefully selected for their global importance and the larger questions that they ask. When reading through the following background guide, be sure to analyze and evaluate what larger questions are being provoked by the topic and what commentary these larger questions make about the current international system. Finally, if you have any questions, be sure to reach out to your chairs on the email address provided on their committee page.

We look forward to welcoming you in January,

Mitchell Dennis

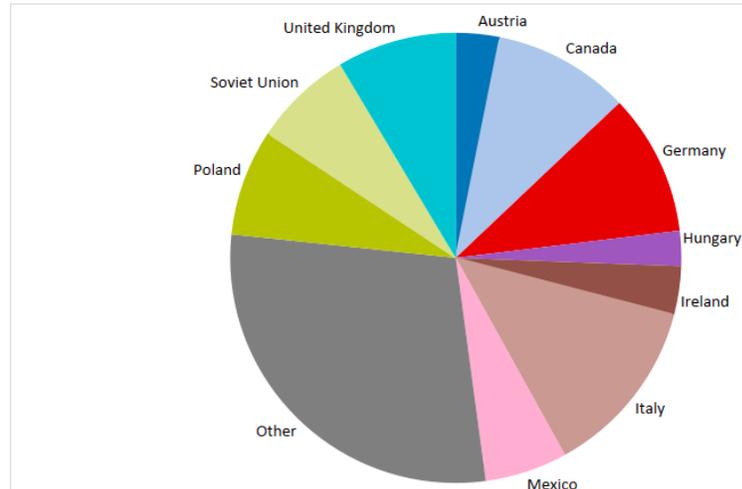
Secretary General of the Metro Detroit Model United Nations IV

Establishing more effective pathways for immigration

History of Immigration in America

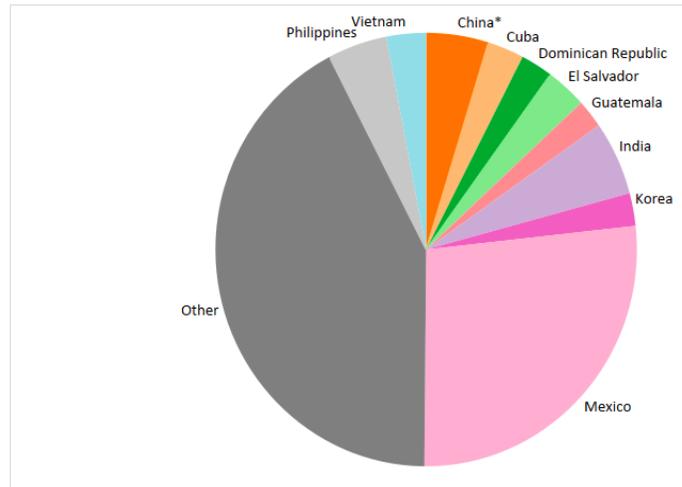
Historically, America is known to be the country of immigrants. Immigrants have sought to come to the United States to escape religious persecution and to come to the land of opportunity in order to pursue the American Dream. Over the years, the United States has taken millions of immigrants under its wing. Many factors have influenced waves of immigration such as war and economic and

Top Ten Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups, 1960



democratic opportunities. In the 1960's, most immigrants coming into the United States were from Eastern European countries such as Austria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and the Soviet Union. This

Top Ten Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups, 2015



demographic was influenced by the end of World War II and opportunities offered in the U.S. that were not available in Europe. As seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2,¹ immigration in the U.S. has shifted from dominantly Eastern European countries to Latin American countries such as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. In order for the U.S. to accommodate such diverse immigration patterns, several immigration acts were implemented to define and

regulate immigration into the U.S. Three of the main acts that shaped U.S. immigration policies are: the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, and the

¹ "Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups over Time, 1960-Present." *Migration Policy Institute*. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/largest-immigrant-groups-over-time>.

1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act.

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (INA)

The INA defined who was a citizen, who could immigrate to the United States, and tightened security screenings, standards, and procedures for those coming into the United States. The INA was the first act that created three distinct categories of immigrants: those seeking citizenship that are relatives of current U.S. citizens, those with specialized working skills, and those who are refugees.² This act also defined those who were born in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam as citizens of the United States by birthright. The INA was very important to U.S. immigration policy because it was the first act to concretely define what an immigrant was, who qualified as an immigrant, and the types of immigration statuses that could be obtained.

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

The IRCA had four main provisions. First, the IRCA legalized non-citizens that had documented evidence proving that they had been in the U.S. since January 1, 1982. Second, the act placed sanctions on employers, prohibiting the employment or recruitment of aliens for jobs in the U.S. The IRCA also created a category designated for temporary agricultural work and created a pathway for legalization for these workers. Lastly, the act also established a visa waiver for certain nonimmigrants without visas. The IRCA was necessary to help improve the modern immigration system because it created mandates for documentation, increased border enforcement, and created a pathway to legalization for undocumented immigrants who were eligible for citizenship.

1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)

The IIRIRA strengthened security policies, penalties, streamlined deportation, and put more accountability responsibilities on states. The act placed 5,000 more Border Patrol agents, legalized deportation of immigrants who falsely claimed citizenship, increased penalties for fraudulent documents, and mandated that states make it more difficult to fraudulently replicate identification documents. This act was significant because it strengthened border security and further enforced the provisions enacted in previous legislation.

The Impact of Immigrants on the Nation

Social Impacts

The diversity of immigrants coming to the United States has continually shifted and shaped the culture of the nation. These cultural differences are the roots of jazz, creole, and many other staples of immigration. Immigration blends cultures and ideologies, resulting in new systems of thought and advancements. But cultural differences can also lead to social tensions in communities. Some citizens call for assimilation of immigrants, asking them to give up their culture to adapt to their new surroundings. While others call for the integration of immigrants into communities, where immigrants can hold onto their culture while also adapting and partaking in the culture of their new

² "History of U.S. Immigration Laws." *Federation for American Immigration Reform*. http://www.fairus.org/facts/us_laws.

home. Some migrants choose to integrate, which can cause some tensions between migrants and citizens because the citizens want the migrants to assimilate and fully adapt to their new home and culture. While not everyone has this viewpoint, tensions will arise and this impacts the migrants either directly or indirectly. Racism and ethnocentrism can arise from social tensions and can become a problem for many migrants.

Economic Impacts

Migration in the US is disputed, and one of the main causes of dispute is the economic impact of immigration. Many critics of immigration argue that it is harmful to the economy and is dangerous to citizens because the migrants are taking jobs from Americans.³ Critics also claim that migrants and refugees have the potential of having a negative impact on the economy by being unproductive. On the other side of the argument, proponents believe that immigrants can be extremely lucrative because migrants are taking jobs dealing with technology and agriculture—two fields in which the U.S. needs employees. Studies have found a positive correlation between wages and employment of skilled migrants, which can effectively boost the economy.⁴ Policies that have been recommended to appease to both sides of the economic argument are directed towards increasing the amount of workers visas allowed in the U.S. The main economic discussion taking place targets maximizing profits and benefits from immigrant labor while ensuring that the labor being used is legal and fair to both parties.

Political Impacts

The political impacts of immigration have been extremely strong. The 2016 election cycle stands as an important example of how immigration to the U.S. has polarized the two major political parties and has divided the nation. While some Democrats argue for immigration on an economic and humanitarian front, many Republicans argue against immigration due to citizens' safety and national security. Both sides have valid arguments, however, the fact remains that immigration has divided the nation. These divisions have also caused some local governments to try to take immigration legislation into their own hands, which has also further divided the nation politically. The main political discussion is about the role of the local government in spearheading immigration legislation and whether or not the local government should have a role in immigration legislation.

The Current Immigration Situation

Comprising 244 million people worldwide, migrants are 3.3% of the world's population. One in five, or roughly 46.6 million, of these migrants lives in the United States.⁵ The U.S. is home to several categories of immigrants: naturalized immigrants, lawful permanent residents, and refugees. In 2016,

³ "The U.S. Immigration Debate." *Council on Foreign Relations* <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/us-immigration-debate-0>

⁴ "Immigrants Are Making the U.S. Economy Stronger." *Bloomberg L.P.* <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-03-24/immigrants-are-making-the-u-s-economy-stronger>.

⁵ "International migration: Key findings from the U.S., Europe and the world." *Pew Research*. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/15/international-migration-key-findings-from-the-u-s-europe-and-the-world/>.

the U.S. resettled 85,000 Refugees, the most refugees the U.S. has had migrate in one year since 1999.⁶ The U.S. is currently faced with the issues of resettlement, uneven migrant distribution, the refugee crisis, and the role of the local government. Currently, there are three main legal pathways of immigration into the U.S.: obtaining a green card, and naturalization, asylum/visa seekers.

Current Pathways of Immigration

Legal Pathways

Lawful Permanent Residents

In fiscal year 2015, the U.S. had 1,051,031 new lawful permanent residents with origins from seventy countries.⁷ A lawful permanent resident, or green card holder, is a non-citizen who has been authorized “to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis.”⁸

Naturalization

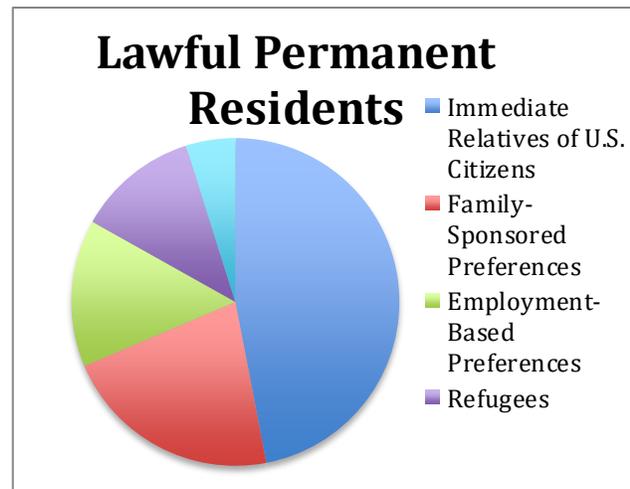
Every year in the U.S. roughly 680,000 immigrants are granted citizenship through naturalization.⁹ In order to be eligible for naturalization, immigrants must meet all of the following qualifications: be at least 18 years old, be in the U.S. for at least 30 months, have general knowledge about the U.S., be able to speak, read, write, and understand English, be able to take the Oath of Allegiance, and be a lawful permanent resident and reside in the U.S. for at least 5 years.

Refugees

Refugee status in the U.S. applies to people located outside of the U.S. that have demonstrated that they were faced with “persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.”¹⁰ Many refugees coming to the United States are taken in by voluntary agencies,¹¹ which are agencies that take in refugees and help integrate them into American cities, find jobs, and find housing.

Illegal Pathways

While there are legal forms of immigration, undocumented immigration is also a pathway for some



⁶ “International Migration: Key Findings From the U.S., Europe and the World.” *Pew Research*.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/15/international-migration-key-findings-from-the-u-s-europe-and-the-world/>.

⁷ “Infographics 2015” *Department of Homeland Security*. <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/visualization/2015>.

⁸ “Lawful Permanent Resident.” *Cornell Law School*. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/lawful_permanent_resident_lpr.

⁹ “Naturalization Fact Sheet.” *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*. <https://www.uscis.gov/archive/archive-news/naturalization-fact-sheet>.

¹⁰ “Refugees.” *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/refugees>.

¹¹ “Voluntary Agencies.” *Office of Refugee Resettlement*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/voluntary-agencies>.

immigrants into the United States. Migrants cross the border illegally in search of economic opportunities or to escape violent conflict in their home country. Many migrants crossing the border are from Mexico, Central America, and South America. In 2016, it was estimated that there were 11.3 million unauthorized immigrants in the U.S.¹² Proposed solutions to illegal border crossings have been tighter border security, increased homeland security presence, and a wall along the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Although some of these solutions have proven to be effective in slowing border crossings, they are not going to fully stop illegal border crossings. The most successful method to prevent and stop illegal border crossings has been increases in homeland security presence and border patrol, which led to a forty percent decrease between the months of January and February 2017 when the new administration took office.¹³

Issues That Need to Be Addressed

Undocumented Immigration

Many migrants who cross the border illegally are coming to the U.S. in search of work, in order to escape countries with internal warfare, and are coming to the U.S. as a last resort. This makes undocumented immigration a difficult problem to solve because, on one hand, the U.S. is the land of opportunity and a refuge for those escaping persecutions, but, on the other hand, the U.S. also has an obligation to its citizens to protect its borders. Although the U.S. has measures in place, such as border patrol, homeland security, and a fence that lines portions of the border, undocumented immigration is still an issue in the southern U.S. along the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Due to current political polarization of the U.S. government, it is difficult to create a comprehensive solution to undocumented immigration that will both satisfy the left and right while simultaneously protecting citizen's rights and migrants.

Population distribution

In fiscal year 2016, 54 percent of refugees were resettled in 10 states, as seen in Figure 3.¹⁴ This uneven distribution is due to the help of voluntary agencies that help refugees and immigrants adjust to the U.S. These agencies are not present in every state, and subsequently many refugees and immigrants flock into a handful of states that have these programs. In order to help combat the unequal refugee and immigrant distribution, some legislators have suggested having immigration quotas for each state, where each state is required to take in a certain amount of refugees in order to

¹² "5 Facts About Illegal Immigration in The U.S." *Pew Research*. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/>.

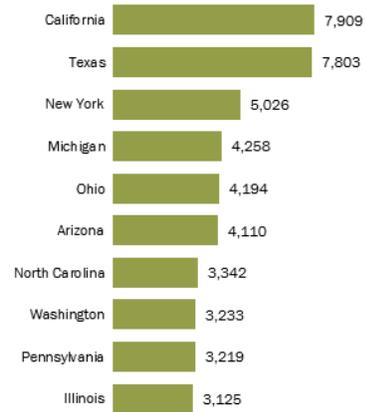
¹³ "Illegal border crossings drop 40 PER CENT in Trump's first full month as president: Homeland Security says it's the lowest total in nearly five years." *Associated Newspapers*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4295874/U-S-says-illegal-immigration-Mexico-declined-month.html>.

¹⁴ "Just 10 States Resettled More Than Half of Recent Refugees to U.S." *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/12/06/just-10-states-resettled-more-than-half-of-recent-refugees-to-u-s/>.

prevent further resettlement issues. California, Texas, and New York took the largest amounts of refugees in during the 2016 fiscal year. This issue should be addressed to help accommodate refugees and U.S. citizens alike, as some communities take in several hundred refugees, while others do not home any. Highly populated cities like New York City, Los Angeles, Miami, and Santa-Clara are hubs for immigrants because they have programs to protect and help immigrants and refugees get on their feet in the U.S.¹⁵ The role of the local government in population distribution should be considered because local governments have the power to create and encourage volunteer agencies that help refugees and migrants integrate into society. Cities like New York, L.A., and Miami have programs for immigrants because they have such high immigrant populations. Smaller cities cannot maintain effective programs because of their lack of resources. The role of the local government should be considered because cities are given the responsibility of taking care of immigrants and if they cannot, then the immigrants and the city will suffer economically.

California, Texas and New York were the top states by number of refugees resettled in fiscal 2016

Number of refugees resettled in in fiscal year 2016



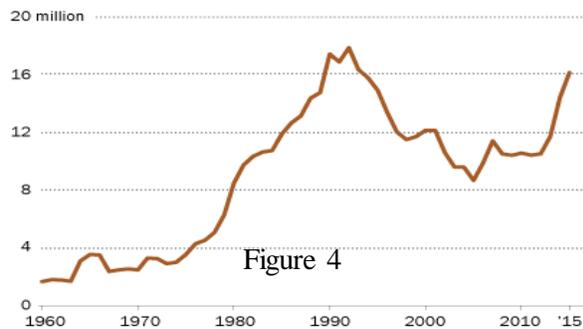
Note: Fiscal year began Oct. 1, 2015, and ended Sept. 30, 2016. Top 10 states by resettlement shown. Source: U.S. State Department's Refugee Processing Center accessed Nov 22, 2016.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER **Figure 3**

While the federal government should try to help control the flood of immigrants to three or four areas of the country, the local government should also have a role in determining if the city can maintain a successful program for immigrants and if the city can help the immigrants adjust to the U.S. via social programs such as language courses, American

Number of refugees today approach number following fall of Berlin Wall in 1989

Total number of refugees worldwide living outside of their birth countries waiting to return or be resettled



Source: UNHCR. PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 4

government courses, and courses that teach immigrants how to enter the U.S. workforce.

Refugee Crisis

The international refugee crisis was sparked by internal conflicts, civil unrest, religious persecution, and genocides in various nations around the world. As seen in Figure 4, the number of refugees worldwide has increased since 1960. Many of these conflicts are deep rooted and will prevent citizens from being able to return in the next decade or even their lifetime.¹⁶ Nearly half of all refugees migrating to the U.S. come

¹⁵ "20 U.S. Cities with the Most Immigrants." *The Daily Beast Company*. <http://www.thedailybeast.com/20-us-cities-with-the-most-immigrants>.

¹⁶ "Congolese Refugees." *Cultural Orientation Resource Center*. <http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/populations/congolese-refugees>.

from three countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, and Burma.¹⁷

Resettlement

The role of the state should also be addressed when considering resettlement of immigrants.

Currently, immigrant populations are very disproportionate across the U.S. Some states take on thousands of refugees, while others take on a few hundred. This imbalance should be addressed because some states are overwhelmed and do not have the facilities, resources, and manpower to successfully integrate migrants into the community. In Germany, Germany's Federal Employment Agency suggests that only 10% of the recent immigrant arrivals will be ready to work after one year; 50% will be prepared after five years, and 70% will be prepared after 15.¹⁸ This is because Germany lacked effective tools and resources to help migrants adjust to the German language, culture, and workforce. Germany overwhelmed itself with immigrants and did not have enough resources to adequately integrate immigrants. Some U.S. cities and even states may face this problem if immigrant and refugee resettlement is not addressed. Cities and states faced with too many migrants may be subject to high unemployment rates among migrants and civil unrest from citizens if the issue is not solved. In U.S. cities like New York City, which is an immigration and refugee hub, programs associated with religious organizations such as catholic charities¹⁹ and other non-religious service groups help immigrants integrate into the U.S. via English language courses, food kitchens, community closets, and affordable housing. Programs like these have been successful with helping immigrants settle into U.S. cities and to become employees and business owners in the workforce.

Role of the Government

Role of the State

An important question to ask when discussing immigration is about the role of government and whether or not the national or local government should be responsible for creating immigration policies. Currently, there are national laws that create guidelines for who, where, and how migrants should be entering the US. But lately, local governments have taken it upon themselves to create their own set of rules. The most popular, and arguably the most controversial, local immigration policy is the creation of sanctuary cities. Sanctuary cities are cities where citizens and migrants, undocumented and documented, are protected from prejudice from political differences and have policies that do not cooperate with federal law enforcement or immigration policies.²⁰

Sanctuary cities bring about the question of whether or not the local governments should have a say

¹⁷ "U.S. Admits Record Number of Muslim Refugees in 2016." *Pew Research Center*. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/05/u-s-admits-record-number-of-muslim-refugees-in-2016/>.

¹⁸ "A Working Solution." *The Economist*. <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21699306-best-way-settle-newcomers-find-them-jobs-working-solution>.

¹⁹ "Refugee Resettlement Program." *Catholic Charities Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens*. <https://www.ccbq.org/what-we-do/family-services/refugee-resettlement-program>.

²⁰ "What Are Sanctuary Cities, and Can They Be Defunded?" *Cable News Network*. <http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/25/politics/sanctuary-cities-explained/index.html>.

in the immigration policies that are in effect in their area. Sanctuary cities also bring up questions about dynamics between federal and local governments. Some argue for more local action, while others call for more federal action. While local actions are more specific to the region, federal actions can be more encompassing. Discussions about whether or not the local governments should get involved and whether or not the citizens in the effected areas deserve a say in what takes place have been overlooked and are something that should be addressed. The role of the state is important with the topic of immigration because it impacts so many individuals and can help settle tensions on the topic.

Role of the Local Government

Local governments have become more involved in immigration in the twenty first century. Cities have instituted policies that go directly against federal government policies. This has created tensions between the federal administration and local administrations. While local intervention can be beneficial and represent the opinions of local citizens, the decision to go against federal policies shows a rift in the U.S. government system. In the U.S., there are currently eighteen cities with sanctuary city laws, including New York City, Miami, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and Dallas.²¹ These cities have been notified that if they keep sanctuary city laws, then the federal government will attempt to pull federal funding from them.²² While the federal government is encouraging local governments to welcome immigrants, it is also encouraging immigrants to pursue legal pathways. Local governments have the right intentions with implementing sanctuary city laws, but the federal government sees this action as direct opposition to federal laws. Local governments must weigh the repercussions from the federal government alongside their own wishes and determine if the end justifies the means.

Questions to Consider

- What are the most effective ways to help immigrants integrate into society?
- Should it be easier or more difficult for immigrants to obtain citizenship?
- Can the American Cities Summit create a comprehensive solution to streamline integration of refugees into American cities? If so, what actions must be taken to ensure this?
- What will the role of the state be in facilitating integration of refugees into the community?
- What will the role of the community be in facilitating integration of refugees into the community?
- What may be the consequences of improving the effectiveness of immigration pathways within the United States?

²¹ "List of Sanctuary Cities." *Apsan Law Offices*. <http://www.apsanlaw.com/law-246.List-of-Sanctuary-cities.html>.

²² "Actions Show Immigration Priorities Differ Widely Between Federal, Local Governments." *Penton*. <http://americancityandcounty.com/immigration-reform/actions-show-immigration-priorities-differ-widely-between-federal-local-governmen>.