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Presidential Partisanship Compared to Migration Push Factors: A Study of Undocumented Migration in the U.S.

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Abstract

With the recent re-election of Donald Trump to the presidential office, many Americans are worried about what is to come concerning immigration policy, particularly for those who are undocumented. While immigration is a highly divisive issue in political debates, the reality of implementation indicates that both the democratic and republican parties are harsh on undocumented migration. I hypothesize that the immigration policies of the United States are reactionary in relation to undocumented migration and therefore rely more heavily on the push factors of migration from foreign countries rather than the political ideology of the president. The findings of this paper ultimately support my hypothesis that presidential ideology is not statistically significant in handling undocumented migration. However, they also conclude that push factors do not fully explain the trends in undocumented migration either.

Keywords

International Relations, Undocumented Migration, Political Ideology, Push Factors, Donald Trump, Barack Obama, George Bush, Joe Biden

Introduction

Every election cycle, one of the most fiercely debated and decisive issues is that of immigration. More specifically, an emphasis is placed on undocumented immigration. In the recent 2024 election campaigns, this had been blatantly evident in the way the president-elect, Donald Trump, and his running mate JD Vance discussed immigration. Notably, with Vance refusing to call legal immigrants, granted status through programs such as Temporary Protected

Status (TPS) or Humanitarian Parole, as anything other than "illegal". While the Republican Party and politicians such as Trump and Vance are extremely overt with their cynical views on immigration, some Democrats also hold negative beliefs on immigration policy.

This paper analyzes the differences in immigration policies toward undocumented immigrants between the two major U.S. political parties since the year 2000 and the start of the Bush administration. It also aims to answer the questions of 'how do different executive administrations define the appropriate treatment of undocumented/unwanted immigrants?' and 'why does the policy framework sometimes shift during administrations?' I hypothesize that while Democrats are more lenient and accepting of immigrants in general, the treatment of, and policy surrounding undocumented immigrants has gotten increasingly stricter since the late 20th century, even under Democratic administrations. This trend is because U.S. immigration policy is influenced by a change in the "push" factors—such as national disasters, political violence, lack of democracy, and economic crises — rather than presidential ideology.

The first part of this paper analyzes the actions taken and some of the opinions held by each president throughout their time in office. Through this analysis, one can better understand the nuances of each executive administration with regard to undocumented migration. The second part of this paper consists of 38 case studies of various countries in order to test this hypothesis. I selected these countries in particular to be geographically diverse, and therefore representative of different cultures and geopolitical situations. I looked for nations of varying sizes and ones that seemed to have data that either dramatically increased or decreased over time. From this data, I ran a series of chi-squared tests in order to investigate the relationship between the variables. The last section of this paper focuses on analyzing the results of these tests, in addition to outlining some of the limitations of this research and recommending future research projects and case studies within the topic.

The Bush Administration and the War on Terror

When George W. Bush was inaugurated as President of the United States in 2001, he entered the Oval Office with optimistic beliefs regarding immigration and the intentions of implementing reform (Sohn et al., 2023). Bush's comprehensive immigration reform plan was supported by a bipartisan group of US senators (Wickham, 2019). However, shortly into his first term, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 occurred, and his once optimistic immigration beliefs quickly faded (Angulo-Pasel, 2023; Sohn et al., 2023). The events of 9/11 and the subsequent War on Terror that followed renewed and deepened blind patriotism, border violence, and anti-immigration sentiment (Angulo-Pasel, 2023; Pope and Garrett, 2013). The anti-immigrant rhetoric that was ubiquitous in this time was not a new phenomenon, simply the same rhetoric that was used during the War on Drugs, but with the notable addition of the word "terrorism" (Angulo-Pasel, 2023). In late 2001 and 2002, the government made numerous reforms, including the passing of the PATRIOT Act, the Homeland Security Act, the Enhanced Border Security, the Visa Entry Reform Act and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), all which aimed to increase monitoring and reporting processes as well as tighter border control (Angulo-Pasel, 2023). The anti-immigrant rhetoric stemming from the War on Drugs, not only incited hatred, but conflated immigrants with criminals. As grounds for deportation devolved from only serious criminal offenses to any kind of criminal infraction, the rate of deportation increased. In 2001 alone, approximately 1.5 million people were deported (Sohn et al., 2023). Also in 2002, President Bush signed an Executive Order (EO) which delegated responsibilities for migrant processing in Guantánamo. This EO allowed for the Attorney General to intercept anyone in the Caribbean whom he suspected of planning on entering the United States and hold

them at Guantánamo Bay Naval Base for an unspecified amount of time. This Order helped to turn the isolated naval base into a detention camp, infamous for its injustice, abuse, and holding those without formal charges (American Civil Liberties Union, 2024). In 2005, he reiterated a strict policy of blocking these migrants, particularly Haitians seeking refuge following an influx of violence back in Haiti. His instructions were clear: "we will turn back any refugee that attempts to reach our shore" (Waslin, 2020). This degree of strict policy harms those with strong applications for immigration and essentially leaves illegal immigration as the only way into the U.S. for these groups. The Real ID Act of 2005 was another policy response to 9/11 and required new security standards for state-issued identification and proof of immigration status, to further increase monitoring of immigrants (Pope and Garrett, 2013; Puiu, 2023). Under Bush, the construction of the border wall with Mexico to keep out undocumented migrants began in 2006 (Puiu, 2023; Hernández, 2021). His efforts did not have much of an effect, given that 2007 witnessed a peak of undocumented individuals at 12.2 million (Puiu, 2023). While his wall was ineffective, Bush also placed an emphasis on increasing prosecutions for illegal entry (Chacón, 2022).

Despite his intentions for immigration reform at the start of his presidential tenure, 9/11, which defined the broader political context, quickly caused him to reverse his beliefs and instead enact harsh anti-immigration policies that would be continued throughout the following administrations.

Obama: Immigration Advocate or "Deporter-in-Chief"?

President Barack Obama is typically hailed as a proponent of immigrant rights and expanding and creating programs to aid immigrants. Obama's supportive approach including

policies that focused on improving border security, increasing legal migration opportunities, and creating a smoother path for immigrants from all around the world. Not only did he promote social economic development and democratic governance in Latin American countries in order to diminish some major "push" factors of migration, but he also applied a special focus on generating more opportunities for individuals from Latin American countries to immigrate legally (Puiu, 2023). One such program was the Central American Minors (CAM) program, created in 2013. Through this program, 51,705 children from countries including Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador were able to claim refugee status (Puiu, 2023). Another program dedicated to helping children is the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, created by Obama in 2012 and later expanded in 2014. Since its inception, DACA has temporarily deprioritized for deportation and granted work authorization for over 825,000 immigrants (Chacón, 2022). The Obama administration believed that generating immigration reform was so important, that in 2013, to pass the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, Obama worked with the Gang of Eight. The Gang of Eight was a bi-partisan group of senators consisting of Michael Bennet, Dick Durbin, Lindsey Graham, and Marco Rubio among others (Puiu, 2023). This act aimed to establish a clearer and shorter path to a green card, more border security, and workplace verification to reduce illegal work, however it did not pass in Congress (Puiu, 2023). Despite having never been enacted, the cooperation of both parties in its development, shows that immigration reform is not solely a concern for Democrats. On November 20, 2014, the president announced that he would be taking executive action in order to protect millions of undocumented immigrants (Zug, 2015). However, the key element of his executive action, and most of his immigration reforms, is that they were exclusive in terms of eligibility. Deferred action through his executive action exclusively applied to either 1) undocumented parents of United States citizens or legal permanent residents who have been in

the U.S. since January 1,2010, and 2) undocumented children who were under 16 years old upon arrival in the United States and before January 1, 2010 (Zug, 2015). Therefore, while enlarging the protections and benefits available to older undocumented arrivals, it did not help more recent arrivals, and arguably sanctioned their increasingly harsh treatment (Zug, 2015).

Not every policy that Obama supported benefitted immigrants. Throughout his first term and the beginning of his second, Obama continued the policies and practices that the Bush administration enacted post-9/11. These policies included mass persecutions on the border, removals of lawful permanent residents for relatively minor offenses, and a continued reliance on detention (Chacón, 2022). At the very end of the Bush administration in October 2008, the Secure Communities (S-Comm) program was created and enacted in 14 counties but quickly spread throughout the country during the Obama years (Schreckhise and Chand, 2023). S-Comm was a monitoring program which automatically screened both state and arrest data by the DHS in order for them to determine whether the individual arrested is undocumented or eligible for removal based on a criminal conviction (Hernández, 2021; Chacón, 2022; Schreckhise and Chand 2023; Sohn et al., 2023). While in theory this is not bad, S-Comm flagged those with low-level violations, such as traffic violations or parents caught shoplifting when trying to provide their children with food and diapers (Zug, 2015). Placing struggling parents and those with speeding tickets in the same category as gang members, murderers, and rapists, that is "security threats requiring detention and removal" is not representative of the "beneficial immigration reforms" that Obama has been credited for. While the S-Comm program was replaced by the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP) in late 2014, the policy was still in place for most of Obama's presidential career. Additionally, despite PEP narrowing its focus to only those with serious criminal convictions and eliminating ICE detainers in favor of jails, it still used the same monitoring database (Chacón, 2022; Schreckhise and Chand, 2023). On a positive note, while

PEP was in effect, removals did drop by roughly 27% and noncriminal removals declined approximately 51% (Schreckhise and Chand, 2023). In spite of this decrease, Obama was still referred to as "Deporter-in-chief" by many immigrant rights groups (Blasingame et al., Schreckhise and Chand, 2023; Zug; 2015). He earned this nickname through the fact that he has deported more immigrants than any other president. When it comes to deportation, Obama's priorities focus on criminals rather than children and families (Zug, 2015). However, given that individuals were deported for minor violations, including parents, this is not entirely true. Obama's claim that his administration was concerned with keeping out "felons not families," implies that these two categories are independent of one another and that criminals are not also part of families (Hernández, 2021; Zug, 2015).

Coupled with the expansion of DACA and the end of the Secure Communities program that benefitted long-term residents, the administration cracked down on the undocumented immigrants who entered the United States more recently and implemented a policy of deterrence, out of fear that the new benefits would incentivize an increase in undocumented immigration (Sohn et al., 2023; Zug, 2015). While President Obama did not continue Bush's efforts of building a border wall, he did rely on prisons and detention centers. Under Obama, ICE's population of prisoners grew to as many as 478,000 in a single year (Hernández, 2021). While Obama aimed to avoid family detention, the summer of 2014 saw tens of thousands of Central American women and children cross the border and was thus quickly characterized as a crisis (Zug, 2015). The administration saw the revival of family detention as the only solution for handling the crisis and began rebuilding and expanding family detention centers. In December 2014, the largest detention center in the United States was built with a capacity of 2,400 and was specifically designed for women and children (Zug, 2015). All the arriving adults during this period were detained, denied bond, and quickly scheduled for deportation. Increased detention

rates during this period prevented many detainees from having access to a lawyer, and were often left unrepresented in court, even children. The lack of fair trials in many cases prevented those with strong cases for asylum from being granted said status, and instead resulted in deportation (Zug, 2015). No matter how good Obama's intentions were for immigration reform and only deporting criminals and those without valid claims, they are not what came to fruition.

Trump's Influence on Immigration

It is no secret that Donald Trump maintains an extremely hard and critical stance on immigration. Since 2016, he has consistently campaigned for the construction of a wall along the southern border of the United States with Mexico, and strict immigration policies, while often employing hateful rhetoric and erroneous information (Sohn et al., 2023; Chacón, 2022). His immigration policies have been harmful for nearly every category of immigrants and nonimmigrants as well as those who advocate on their behalf (Waslin, 2020). When Trump entered office, he made significant changes to immigration policy in numerous areas, including high-skilled immigration, refugee policy, visa screening, and enforcement. (Waslin, 2020; Sohn et al. 2023). One of his first presidential actions was to issue an Executive Order calling for a travel ban, whose final iteration was issued as a proclamation in September 2017. This travel ban targeted individuals originating from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Lebanon—all predominately Muslim countries. (Waslin, 2020; American Journal of International Law, 2021; Puiu, 2023; Wickham, 2019). The travel ban was one of the first measures taken as a part of his "zero tolerance" policy, meant to keep people out of the United States (Puiu, 2023). Other measures included family separation for asylum seekers, an increase in the number of ICE raids, and an expedited hiring process of 10,000 new ICE agents (Schreckhise and Chand, 2023). His

administration also negotiated a policy requiring asylum seekers to first seek asylum in a different country prior to seeking asylum in the United States (American Journal of international Law, 2021). By enacting these types of bureaucratic roadblocks, Trump effectively slows the legal immigration process and discourages and blocks perspective immigrants from applying for status (Wickham, 2019). In addition, Trump ended several programs that aided recent immigrants in adjusting to a new life and reinstated the S-Comm program rather than PEP (Puiu, 2023; Chacón, 2022; Schreckhise and Chand, 2023). The restoration of S-Comm caused removals to increase from 14,725 per quarter (as under PEP) to 18,639 per quarter. However, this is still lower than the number of removals under PEP that occurred between Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 to the end of FY 2014 at 19,191 removals per quarter under Obama (Schreckhise and Chand, 2023). Contrary to Obama, however, rather than attempting to reduce immigration by supporting troubled countries, Trump made an effort to limit the amount of aid offered to Latin American countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (Puiu, 2023). He also threatened these countries governments, stating that if they do not prevent their citizens from illegally migrating to the U.S., the aid would stop altogether (Puiu, 2023). In January 2017, just after taking office, Trump created Executive Order 13769 which effectively halted refugee resettlement. The change was sudden given the speed at which Trump enacted it and resulted in the lowest number of resettled refugees on US soil since 1977, or a 66% drop from resettlement rates in 2016 (Masterson and Yasenov, 2021; Wickham, 2019). As a result, refugee admissions decreased from 84,994 in FY 2016 down to 53,716 in FY 2017 and 22,491 in FY 2018 (Wickham, 2019).

One of the most well-known immigration policies that defined Trump's presidency was the declaration of a national emergency along the southern border and his push for the creation of a wall (Waslin, 2020; Angulo-Pasel, 2023; Wickham 2019). This apparent need was echoed

again by him during the Migrant "Caravan" of 2018. This "Caravan" started in October 2018 and comprised approximately 4,000 migrants traveling up from Central America with the goal of entering the United States (Angulo-Pasel, 2023). Trump classified this group as a threat to the safety and intrinsic cultural values of the country and claimed that they posed an "imminent danger". He also stated that these immigrants were illegally entering the country, however they presented themselves at a port-of-entry (POE) and followed all necessary legal channels (Angulo-Pasel, 2023).

By no means were Trump's immigration policies progressive or forgiving. Yet, they also never claimed to be. Rather than targeting specific groups as the Obama and other administrations had done, Trump prioritized all undocumented people as viable for apprehension and removal (Sohn et al., 2023). According to a study, while Trump openly targeted all undocumented immigrants, the results provide little evidence to support the theory that the Trump administration succeeded in deporting a more diverse group of undocumented immigrants than the previous administration (Sohn et al., 2023). If this finding is correct, then Trump and Obama's policies on deportation are not that different in regard to their application. Additionally, during Obama's administration, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM) was proposed. At first, Trump expressed "great sympathy" for the Dreamers and pledged to work with Congress in order to help pass legislation. However, once Democrats declined Trump's proposals for the building the border wall, cutting legal immigration, restricting family migration, and reducing the rights of children to seek asylum, he went back on his promise (Wickham, 2019). Trump's willingness to work out a solution for the Dreamers is more than what most expect out of him when it comes to immigration policy.

Analyzing Biden's Early Days

When Biden took office, he quickly reversed many of Trump's immigration related policies. On inauguration day, Biden announced the end of the national emergency at the border, the halting of the border wall construction, and the repeal of the travel ban (American Journal of International Law, 2021). Biden's plan for immigration reform included addressing the underlying causes of migration and a strategy to confront instability, violence, and economic security that plagues individuals and drives them from their homes, comparable to Obama's policy. His plan would also ensure that the United States government would collaborate with regional partners to provide alternative solutions and opportunities in other places (American Journal of International Law, 2021). By February 2, 2021, Biden had already announced a task force with the sole purpose of reuniting children with their parents after they were separated at the border and placed a 100-day pause on removals (American Journal of International Law, 2021). Overall, Biden immediately indicated that the federal government was to put some degree of leniency back into the immigration system (Chacón, 2022).

Despite this initial promise of a more humane immigration policy, the Biden administration continued to uphold some of Trump's more exclusionary measures, including restrictive interpretations of immigration law in courts and maintaining certain border enforcement practices (Chacón, 2022). One such policy is the public health bar on entry, enacted by the U.S. Center for Disease Control, supposedly in response to COVID-19 concerns. Despite the shift of executive power from Trump to Biden, U.S. immigration policy continued to be defined in a harsh manner (Chacón, 2022).

Methodology

I hypothesize that U.S. immigration policy is greater influenced by a change in migration push factors rather than the political ideology of the presidential administration. This would categorize U.S. immigration policy as reactionary, as it changes in response to shifts of the push factors in foreign countries. My main independent variables therefore are the existence of political violence and terrorism, a lack of democracy, and exacerbated economic conditions, with the main variable being the number of expulsions.

Dependent Variables

To measure my dependent variables, I have compiled data from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as published in their annual *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. This data ranges from the year 2000, at the start of the Bush Administration and just before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 up until 2022, the most recent year of published immigration data. More specifically, I analyzed data concerning the number of "Aliens Removed by Criminal Status and Region and Country of Nationality" (Department of Homeland Security). Within this data, I was able to control for removals based on criminal status. By controlling for criminal status, I was able to better induce if the number of expulsions is due to an influx of criminal activity by foreign nationals either before or after entering the country, or if it is civilians searching for a better life who are being expelled. Calculating the number of undocumented immigrants within a country at any given time proves difficult. Analysts and politicians make their best estimates, but there is a very real possibility that these figures estimate the total number of undocumented individuals. This is because these people often fear retaliatory actions and deportation and do not

come forward with their status. By analyzing the number of removals, particularly, noncriminal, one can approximate the number of undocumented individuals within the country each year. Additionally, I looked at the number of "Individuals Granted Asylum Affirmatively by Region and Country of Nationality," over the same time period. An asylum seeker, or asylee, as defined by the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services, is an individual who meets the definition of a refugee– someone unable or unwilling to return home due to fear of serious harm, however they are already in the United States and seeking status at an authorized port of entry. Thus, this data is included as those seeking asylum initially arrive in the United Sates without legal status. Asylum is one of the few international laws that the United States must adhere to with regard to immigration. Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which the U.S. is a signatory of, established that everyone has a right to seek asylum in another country while fearing persecution in their own (UN General Assembly, 1948). The subsequent 1951 Refugee Convention contained the core policy of non-refoulement, stating that a refugee cannot be ordered to return to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom (United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees). With asylum being protected by law, it should, in theory, be implemented uniformly across executive administrations.

Independent Variables

To ascertain if the aforementioned data correlates with foreign crises, I have compared it to a number of indices in the World Development Indicators Database published by the World Bank. Years where a country saw a decrease in conditions were identified by –1, years in which no change in conditions occurred were classified as 0, and the years when an improvement took place were defined by a value of 1. The first index, the Political Stability and Absence of

Violence/Terrorism index, is self-explanatory and gauges perceptions of the likelihood of political instability and/or politically motivated violence. The Rule of Law index sets out to gain insight into the extent that agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, particularly in terms of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence (World Bank Group, 2024). With these two variables, I intend to establish context as to the political atmosphere and crime rate within the countries. If people do not feel safe within their environment, they are inclined to leave it.

Furthermore, I investigated the Control of Corruption and Voice and Accountability indices. The control of corruption variable captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is used for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption. Meanwhile, the voice and accountability variable measures the perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government as well as possessing a free media, freedom of expression, and the freedom of association. The Government Effectiveness index aims to capture opinions about the quality of public service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, as well as the quality of policy formulation and implementation and the government's commitment to said policies. Together, these three indices will provide insight into the level of democracy within the country (World Bank Group, 2024). If individuals do not feel represented or cared for by their government, they are more likely to move to a different country.

The last two indices included in this study were the rates of undernourishment and unemployment. An increase in the rate of unemployment can signal an economic crisis in which many people are unfortunately laid off. Individuals unable to find a job within their current economy are motivated to migrate elsewhere. Additionally, employment and economic opportunities have always been significant pull factors for migration to the United States, as it is ubiquitously known as the "land of opportunities". Therefore, it is rational to assume that these

individuals would pick the United States as their destination. The rate of undernourishment can also indicate an economic crisis as more citizens cannot afford to buy food, as a result of decreased wages and/or an increase in the cost of living that is disproportional to income. It could also signify the occurrence of a famine, which would negatively affect agricultural economies.

Other variables tested included the distance of each country from the border of the United States and which political party the president belonged to. Countries within 2,000 miles (approximately 3,200 kilometers) from the United States were considered close and assigned a value of 0 while all other countries were assigned a value of 1. Presidential party was measured similarly, with years under a democratic president labeled as 0, and years marked by a republican president as 1. With all these variables, I conducted a multitude of chi-squared tests to establish which independent variables had an effect on the dependent variables. Appendix 1 shows each variable as it was entered.

Results

In order to establish a base connection, I input the number of asylum rates overall against the number of removals per year. For each subsection — total removals, criminal removals, and noncriminal removals — the calculated p-value was equal to less than 0.001, meaning that the relationship between asylum and removal rates is statistically significant. However, when each of the conditional indices was compared to the rate of asylum cases for the aggregated countries, none of the variables showed to be significant. Interestingly, when the values of the domestic conditions of the countries were aggregated, some countries showed a statistically significant relationship. Bangladesh had a p-value of 0.015, El Salvador with a value of 0.035, Guatemala

with 0.013, Haiti had a p-value of <0.001, Honduras with 0.019, and Nepal with a p-value equal to 0.016. When the conditions and the countries were aggregated, some years proved statistically significant as well. These years included 2004 with a p-value equal to 0.002, as well as 2006 and 2014, with both displaying a p-value less than 0.001. The two variables that proved significance with relation to asylum on their own, were the distance of the country to the United States as well as whether the incumbent president was a democrat or a republican. These chi analyses resulted in p- values of 0.010 and 0.013, respectively. With analysis per year exploring distance to the border and asylum, 2015, 2016, and 2017 all proved to be significant years with p-values all less than 0.001.

When analyzing criminal removals per year, none of the seven indices showed statistical significance. Yet, when analyzing the indices by their country, some cases were discovered to have significant relationships. In terms of unemployment, Bolivia, Guatemala, Nepal, Panama, and Venezuela were statistically significant cases. These countries boosted p-values of 0.015, 0.043. <0.001, 0.045, and 0,023, respectively. For the rule of law measure, only Haiti proved to be significant, with a p-value of 0.021. Undernourishment garnered more statistical significance, with a total of six cases. Colombia brandished a score of 0.001, Guatemala had a value of 0.019, India and Nepal both with values less than 0.001, Nicaragua showing a significance of 0.014, and lastly, Ukraine with a p-value of 0.003. Government Efficiency was another variable which was shown to only be significant with one country for criminal removals; Algeria with a value of 0.004. The voice and accountability measure was significant in India with a score equal to 0.046, and control of corruption proved itself influential in Nepal with a value of 0.032. The last index, political stability and the absence of violence/terrorism was significant in both Bangladesh and Iran, with values of 0.017 and 0.053, correspondingly. When totaled together however, there were two counties in which criminal removals and country conditions showed a significant

relationship: Colombia with a p-value of <0.001 and Nepal with a value of 0.006. Meanwhile, when the conditions were totaled and the correlation between criminal removals and these aggregated conditions was analyzed across all countries, some years were significant. These years were 2005, with p equal to 0.025, 2006 with a p-value of 0.038 and 2014 with a p-value of <0.001. The relationship between criminal removals and distance to the border also showed itself to be significant, with its probability level of <0.001. Additionally, every year between 2005 and 2020 with the addition of 2022 demonstrated a significant relationship between distance and criminal removals. Unlike asylum cases, the relationship between political party and criminal removal cases is not significant overall (Appendix 2). In fact, Democrats tended to deport more individuals per year, with an average of 3555 people compared to Republicans with an average of 2627 people. Although, when analyzed per country, five cases proved to demonstrate significant relationships in relation to political partisanship. These cases are Afghanistan with a significance of 0.026, Algerian with a value of 0.012, France with a p-value equal to 0.038, Senegal with 0.003 significance, and Spain with a value of 0.015.

Noncriminal removals display somewhat of a similar pattern to criminal removals and asylum cases. When chi-squared tests were conducted on the individual push factor indices across the 38 countries overall, none of them were shown to be statistically significant. Nevertheless, when separated out by country, some proved to contain exceptions. An increasing rate of unemployment was statistically significant in Bolivia with a p-value of 0.005, Cameroon with a value equal to 0.025, Guatemala with 0.05 exactly, and Romania displaying a value of 0.044. Rule of law was shown to be statistically significant in the cases of Cameroon, and Uzbekistan, with p-values of 0.010 and <0.001, accordingly. An increase in undernourishment established itself as the most statistically significant variable regarding country conditions with relation to noncriminal removals, with a total of seven exceptional cases. Brazil carried a p-value

of 0.037, Ecuador with a value of 0.016, Ghana with a value equal to 0.017, Guatemala measuring 0.019, Nepal at 0.006, Peru with a value of 0.10, and Uzbekistan with a p-value of 0.002. Government effectiveness was significant for the removal of noncriminal Afghan nationals with a value of 0.019, Ghanaians at a value of 0.044, and Romanians with a p-value of 0.017. Likewise, voice and accountability was relevant in three cases — El Salvador at 0.012, Senegal with a significance of 0.002, and Uzbekistan with a value of 0.015. Control of corruption proved statistically significant in Panama with a p-value of 0.008, Senegal with a value of 0.017, Tunisia at 0.045, and Uzbekistan yet again with a significance equal to 0.029. The final index on country conditions is the political stability and absence of violence/terrorism index, which was only statistically relevant in Georgia, with a p-value of 0.038. Like criminal removals, when the conditions of the countries are totaled, there is a correlation between those push factors and noncriminal removals in 2005, 2006, and 2014. The p-values of these years are equivalent to 0.021, 0.044, and <0.001, accordingly. When analyzed by country, the aggregate conditions variable is significant in Iran at a value of 0.017 and Nepal with a p-value od <0.001. Also similar to criminal removals is that overall, a country's distance from the United States border is statistically significant with a p-value equaling less than 0.001, or about 15,484 individuals (98%) per year. When divided into individual years, the relationship remains significant for each year after 2005. Lastly, the political partisanship of the president proved to be insignificant once again when analyzing the overall rate of noncriminal removals. Once again, Democrats report a higher rate of removal with 4727 individuals per year compared to the Republicans at 4078 individuals. However, when broken down by country of origin, a myriad of statistically significant cases was revealed. Argentina carried a p-value of 0.012, Bangladesh with a value of 0.003, Bolivia with a significance of 0.012, Chile equaling <0.001, Cuba at 0.032, Ghana with a p-value of 0.008, India measuring at 0.042, Morocco with a value of 0.019,

Nepal showing a value of 0.037, Romania coming in with a value of 0.046, Senegal also with a value of <0.001, Tunisia, with a p-value of 0.031, and finally, Ukraine with a significance value measuring 0.038.

Discussion, Limitations, and Further Consideration

The results of this analysis provide some interesting findings. Arguably one of the most intriguing findings being that in general, the political party to which the president belongs, and the associated ideology does not have a significant influence on the number of removals, both criminal and noncriminal. This conclusion directly supports my hypothesis. It does not matter if a democrat or republican holds the title of president, as when it comes to implementation, both parties respond to undocumented migration in the same manner. The relationship between granted asylum cases and political party being statistically significant makes sense given that even while asylum is considered a human right, Trump still attempted to set up roadblocks to gaining asylee status, including procedural barriers, evidentiary burdens, and qualification standards (Frelick, 2020). With cases of asylum, the lack of significance in relation to the main seven indices could be connected to the existence of special immigration status for varying situations. Temporary Protection Status (TPS) is one such status, in which the government designates specific countries to receive. A country is chosen for TPS if they are experiencing adverse conditions which make it unsafe for citizens to return. These conditions include ongoing armed conflict, natural disasters, epidemics, as well as others. Currently, seventeen countries have been designated as eligible for TPS (USCIS, 2024). Of those seventeen, ten are included in this study. The countries included are Afghanistan, Cameroon, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, Ukraine, and Venezuela. Their TPS designation signifies that these

countries do have adverse conditions that motivate citizens to immigrate, however given the opportunity for a status with an easier application, a large number select it over the asylum application. This population is not reflected in the data available in the *Immigration Yearbooks* as published by the DHS. What is more intriguing is that within the relationship between political partisanship and removals, there was a multitude of exceptional cases. There seems to be no obvious explanation as to why these countries are statistically significant cases. In the same vein, for each index, there appeared to be statistically significant countries despite the variable not being significant across the 38 countries for all types of removal as well as asylum. This trend could potentially be attributed to the fact that not each of the case studies experienced each of these variables. Alternatively, another explanation could be that since the variables were categorized on an ordinal scale ranging only from –1 to 1, the severity of some dramatic changes in conditions was underestimated, and instead, treated uniformly. For instance, a decrease of 0.1 on the political stability and absence of violence/terrorism scale could be viewed the same as a decrease of 1. Thus, perhaps a new analysis which accounts for more variety within the range of the variables would reveal more nuances, and perhaps even a different pattern.

What is not surprising is that a country's relative distance to the border of the United States is statistically significant. If the individuals who are coming to the United States are undocumented and wanting to establish a better life — whether they are fleeing political persecution or searching for economic opportunities — they are unlikely to have loads of money to afford travel. It is inherently cheaper to travel to nearby countries, that one could get to by land or boat, than to fly to a faraway place. Yet, even with this seemingly straightforward variable, the data reveals that distance is not statistically significant prior to 2005. This then poses the question of why this was the case, and perhaps a future case study is to be done.

It is critical to note that this research is limited in its scope, focusing solely on undocumented immigration and asylum seekers. Even still, some gaps remain. For instance, I did not include asylum granted defensively, as the *Yearbooks* did not include that data for every year. Without this knowledge, there could be a meaningful underestimation of the number of individuals seeking asylum each year, which could affect the data. Furthermore, it is important to note that noncriminal removal figures are also likely to be underreporting the actual number of people attempting to enter the country as voluntary departures are not included in this study for the same reason as defensive asylum — a lack of data for the majority of the years observed. Voluntary departures are used to describe individuals who attempt to enter the country without documentation, however they are caught and confronted with evidence of their lack of necessary papers. Once confronted, and if the individual has a clean criminal record, they are given the option to voluntarily return to their country of origin without formal charges drawn up against them and encouraged to find a legal way to immigrate (USCIS, 2004). If this data can be found for each year, a more in-depth analysis can be conducted to investigate their significance.

With regard to criminal removals, it is important to note that not all those who are classified as criminals are guilty of violent crimes. As previously mentioned, since the onset of the War on Terror, a regression on what qualifies as a deportable offense has occurred, with an increase in monitoring software, such as S-Comm and PEP, for low-level violations. This may skew the data slightly, with an overreporting of deported criminals. In order to gain a holistic understanding of the undocumented policy implementation, one must observe all forms of removals. If data can be collected on criminal removals that break down criminal charges by country and year, an interesting study can be conducted which would control for the type of offense committed. Who is being deported at a higher rate? Felons or low-level violators? Such a study has the potential to further explore the removal policies of the United States.

Furthermore, the analysis focuses on international crises as external factors influencing immigration policy, and not internal, domestic factors. Meaning that domestic economic factors, the composition of Congress and whether the political party of the majority aligns with that of the President, and public opinion are not considered in the investigation. This is not to say that these factors are not also determinants of U.S. immigration policy. With the potential studies mentioned above and these domestic factors, there is a vast assortment of research to be conducted in immigration policy implementation.

Conclusion

The recent election of Donald Trump to his second presidential term has left many people, immigrants and citizens alike, very worried about what to expect these next four years. Throughout his re-election campaign and as he currently prepares to take office again, Trump has spewed many anti-immigrant policies that he intends to implement, including mass deportations and denaturalization. While it is impossible to tell the future, there is a likely probability that these “promises” are simply just false promises that will not be implemented. The key take away of this paper is that statistically, presidential ideology does not have a significant relationship with rates of removal. Politicians often fail to follow through on their intentions, whether due to congressional disagreement, a more important crisis taking their attention away, or other factors. It is perfectly reasonable to fear for the upcoming four years, however one can also have hope.

Appendix 1

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	Country	String	12	0	Country	None	None	12	Left	Nominal	Input
2	Year	Numeric	4	0	Year	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
3	TotalRemov...	Numeric	6	0	Total Removal	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
4	CriminalRe...	Numeric	6	0	Criminal Remo...	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
5	Noncrimina...	Numeric	6	0	Noncriminal R...	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
6	Asylum	Numeric	4	0	Asylum	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input
7	PoliticalSta...	Numeric	2	0	Political Stabilit...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
8	ControlofCo...	Numeric	2	0	Control of Corr...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
9	VoiceandAc...	Numeric	2	0	Voice and Acco...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
10	Governmen...	Numeric	2	0	Government Eff...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
11	Undernouri...	Numeric	2	0	Undernourish...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
12	RuleofLaw	Numeric	2	0	Rule of Law	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
13	Unemploy...	Numeric	2	0	Unemployment...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
14	Democrator...	Numeric	1	0	Democrat or R...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
15	Distancetot...	Numeric	1	0	Distance to the...	None	None	12	Right	Ordinal	Input
16	TotalConditi...	Numeric	2	0	Total Conditions	None	None	12	Right	Scale	Input

Appendix 2

Democrat or Republican

[DataSet1]

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Total Removal	Between Groups	417123743.79	1	417123743.79	.357	.550
	Within Groups	1.019E+12	872	1168878609.5		
	Total	1.020E+12	873			
Criminal Removal	Between Groups	182929748.95	1	182929748.95	.804	.370
	Within Groups	1.934E+11	850	227581460.36		
	Total	1.936E+11	851			
Noncriminal Removal	Between Groups	89433530.436	1	89433530.436	.227	.634
	Within Groups	3.351E+11	850	394191175.50		
	Total	3.352E+11	851			
Asylum	Between Groups	2103657.422	1	2103657.422	6.270	.013
	Within Groups	231855500.97	691	335536.181		
	Total	233959158.39	692			

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