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## Center for Immigration Studies: A Progressive Case for Immigration Restriction?

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**Center for Immigration Studies: A Progressive Case for  
Immigration Restriction?**

**Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of Historic Studies of Bard College**

**By Jeremy Coppola**

**Annandale-on-Hudson, New York**

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DI4D.

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## Introduction

*The United States must adopt an immigration system that serves the national interest. To restore the rule of law and secure our border, President Trump is committed to constructing a border wall and ensuring the swift removal of unlawful entrants. To protect American workers, the President supports ending chain migration, eliminating the Visa Lottery, and moving the country to a merit-based entry system. These reforms will advance the safety and prosperity of all Americans while helping new citizens assimilate and flourish.”<sup>1</sup>*

-White House website section on Immigration

*“What we need is comprehensive immigration reform...If you open the borders, my God, there's a lot of poverty in this world, and you're going to have people from all over the world. And I don't think that's something that we can do at this point. Can't do it. So that is not my position.”<sup>2</sup>*

-Bernie Sanders, Senator and Presidential Candidate

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<sup>1</sup> United States Government. “Immigration.” *The White House*, The United States Government, 2018, [www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/immigration/).

<sup>2</sup> Rodrigo, Chris Mills. “Bernie Sanders Says He Is against Open Borders, for 'Comprehensive Immigration Reform'.” *The Hill*, The Hill, 8 Apr. 2019 [thehill.com/homenews/campaign/437790-bernie-sanders-blasts-open-borders-theres-a-lot-of-poverty-in-this-world](http://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/437790-bernie-sanders-blasts-open-borders-theres-a-lot-of-poverty-in-this-world).

I found the Center for Immigration by chance. I was trying gain insight into the immigration policies of the Trump Administration. But with so much discord and staff turnover in the White House, it was difficult to find a specific policy-maker or agency to focus on. But one day while researching, I stumbled upon the Center for Immigration Studies website. What struck me immediately was their seeming difference from the Administration: they argued that illegal immigration was hurting vulnerable minority groups, damaging the environment, and prevented better public education and healthcare.

Normally, these concerns would feature on a decidedly liberal policy agenda, not that of the Trump Administration. So, the fact that these concerns were front and center on the CIS, an organization dedicated to immigration restriction and enforcement-seemed worth exploring further. This wasn't the usual conservative or xenophobic reasoning that relied heavily on disparaging the character and cultures of the immigrants coming in, but something(seemingly) quite different.

## Chapter One: An Overview of The Center for Immigration Studies

What are the talking points that come to mind when one thinks about reasons for immigration restriction in the United States? Often, the focus is on crime, drugs, border security, national origin and culture, and the unknown nature of those entering the United States. Whether it be from the news, our President, or friends and relatives, these have emerged as the primary terms in the argument for reducing the flow of immigrants into the United State. These are notions that revolve around xenophobia and seek to stroke fears of non-white peoples entering the country. White undocumented immigrants are rarely discussed in this framework, along with undocumented immigrants coming from the Canadian border.

But there is a different way to approach this discussion--while reaching many of the same policy conclusions. It's a progressive sounding agenda that can resonate with Americans across the entire political spectrum.

The Center for Immigration Studies is a think tank in Washington D.C dedicated entirely to immigration reduction. The CIS has numerous connections to the Trump Administration, along with lesser known political connections. So, it raises the question, is this organization a legitimate voice that breaks away party lines in order to follow their own morality, or is it a Trojan Horse: more of the same anti-immigrant rhetoric, dressed up and customized for an audience that usually rejects this narrative?

The Center for Immigration Studies is a self-described “nonprofit, non-partisan” organization formed in 1986, headquartered in Washington D.C. It describes itself as “...an independent, non-partisan, non-profit, research organization. Since our founding in 1985 by Otis Graham Jr., we have pursued a single

mission – providing immigration policymakers, the academic community, news media, and concerned citizens with reliable information about the social, economic, environmental, security, and fiscal consequences of legal and illegal immigration into the United States.”. What is not mentioned is John Tanton, a former Michigan eye surgeon who has funded or founded no less than 13 immigration focused political groups dedicated to research, studies, and opinion pieces all centering around an argument for less immigration into the United States, including The Center for Immigration. But it’s not entirely obvious that this should be the case. While not exempt from stereotypical rhetoric centering around crime and race, CIS primarily bases its arguments on progressive, possibly populist causes. This allows CIS to reach individuals who either don’t often consider immigration in their political beliefs or reach those willing to listen due to it being designed to appeal to those on the left through a focus of workers’ rights, environmental protection, and protection of the lower economic classes.

The Center for Immigration seeks to encourage what often are considered progressive goals such as a focus on public education, the environment, and the protection of the working class. While there has been an increase recently articles about border security and terrorism, most likely due to the political and media focus on the “migrant caravan” (as of 11/27/18 this topic is on the front page of the CIS homepage) this is not the norm for CIS. Articles on the website detail the negative effects of immigration on the environment, the tax burden of undocumented immigrants on social services shifted, they argue, onto American natives, and most prominently undocumented worker’s negative effect on blue collar workers in the United States. On the “about” page on the Center for Immigration Studies website,

states “The data collected by the Center during the past quarter-century has led many of our researchers to conclude that current, high levels of immigration are making it harder to achieve such important national objectives as better public schools, a cleaner environment, homeland security, and a living wage



for every native-born and immigrant worker. These data may support criticism of US immigration policies, but they do not justify ill feelings toward our immigrant community. In fact, many of us at the Center are animated by a 'low-immigration, pro-immigrant' vision of an America that admits fewer immigrants but affords a warmer welcome for those who are admitted."<sup>3</sup>. How can we make sense-- and evaluate politically -- the position, at this moment in this context?

Interestingly, the institution decides to present itself in a non-partisan light to those who will listen. While its goals mostly align with that of the GOP due to their primary goal of restricting immigration and , the focus on appearing not aligned with any political party but rather with the idea of a reduction in immigration increasing the quality of life for those living in the United States is affirmed on their webpage detailing who works for the center. "Our board, our staff, our researchers, and our contributor base are not predominantly 'liberal' or predominantly 'conservative.' Instead, we believe in common that debates about immigration policy that are well-informed and grounded in objective data will lead to better immigration policies."<sup>4</sup> This is intriguing as the institute has been featured primarily on Fox News and cited by the far right, particularly members of the Trump Administration.

This organization is not the first think tank, or policy institute, to make a significant impact in American politics. rather it is one in a lineage of them. Organizations seeking to influence the politics of the United states have existed since the early 19th century with the first being Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think tank dedicated to promoting cooperation with foreign nations. One of the largest and most influential was the Olin Institute, founded in 1954, was one of the first political

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<sup>3</sup> Center of Immigration Studies. "About the Center for Immigration Studies." *CIS.org*, cis.org/About-Center-Immigration-Studies.

<sup>4</sup>ibid

foundations to open its doors in post-World-War II America.<sup>5</sup> Its goals were to promote conservative thought and leaders in the academic world, something that those working for the institute felt was dangerously lacking in a new age of academics. The Olin institute and its successors were more effective in promoting their ideas than their liberal thinking counterparts due to the Olin Institute's differing tactics that were more effective than their opponents across the political divide. The Olin Institute and other conservative organizations funded research among academics that leaned towards the political right rather than fund neutral studies. Research Director Leslie Lenkowsky of conservative think tank The Smith Richardson Foundation, stated "we don't create ideas, we nurture them..."<sup>6</sup> These think tanks helped to give platforms and create iconic conservative figureheads who represent conservatism in modern politics such as Allan Bloom and Dinesh D'Souza, who are relevant political figures currently.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, there are visible effects of these organization on American politics and there, along with the Center for Immigration Studies, reach should not be ignored.

CIS commitment to political partisanship is somewhat doubtful if one looks in their "Kudos" section. Here, CIS quotes the praises of the organization by politicians, heads of government organizations, and authors in order to show they have a reputable place in the immigration debate. It is worthy to note that there is only one non republican individual cited, Richard Lamm. He is a Reform party member, listed as "former Democratic Governor of Colorado". Another interesting quote on the kudos page is from F.J Augustyn Jr. of The Library of Congress, Choice Review states "The Center's website... is best used by more sophisticated researchers than undergraduates".<sup>8</sup> This refers to the fact that it is better for

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<sup>5</sup> Weller, Mark. "Contemporary Sociology." *Contemporary Sociology*, vol. 26, no. 6, 1997, pp. 712–713. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/2654632](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2654632).

<sup>6</sup> "The Rise of Conservatism on Campus: The Role of the John M. Olin Foundation." *Change*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2006, pp. 32–37. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/40178183](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40178183).

<sup>7</sup> Ratner, Lizzy. "Olin Foundation, Right-Wing Tank, Snuffing Itself." *The Observer*, 9 May 2005, [observer.com/2005/05/olin-foundation-rightwing-tank-snuffing-itself/](http://observer.com/2005/05/olin-foundation-rightwing-tank-snuffing-itself/).

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

“sophisticated” researchers to use the site than simple undergraduates is an odd quote to put under the label of kudos. It suggests an intellectual bias and distrust in the skill and complexity of the undergraduate researcher, who would never take offense to it. Regardless, are there any on the left who agree with this progressive way of implementing immigration restriction?

CIS turns to George Borjas, Harvard labor economist and published author in order to prove the CIS theory that immigration is harmful for the average American from an economic standpoint. Borjas subscribes to a neoclassical theory of economics that focus on supply and demand of the economy. In a transcript of a talk centered around the effects of immigration on the American worker to state their states that research indicates while immigration as a whole increases GDP of a country, Borjas says “there’s no doubt about the fact that immigration increases total GDP by a lot, in the order of \$1.5, \$1.6 trillion. It is also no doubt about the fact that most of that money goes to the immigrants themselves.”, it decreases the wages of high school and non-high school educated workers due to undocumented immigrants often being high school dropouts. Borjas says “If you look at the evolution of wages for specific groups over time, you will tend to find this sort of negative correlation between the wage growth of a group and how many immigrants into the group. And this sort of – that scattered diagram that’s in the report – and you can basically see it visually – that those groups that receive most immigrants are the groups where the wage grew the least over the last few years”.<sup>9</sup> The addition of immigrants causes a saturation of labor in the job market, resulting in a wage decrease as there is larger supply of workers. Therefore, the employer will have an easier time finding workers willing to take their jobs due to the knowledge that others are vying for the same job. This is due to the idea that unskilled, undocumented immigrants are willing to take less pay and therefore employers will choose to hire them

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<sup>9</sup> Borjas, George, and Steven Camarota. “Teleconference Transcript: Immigration and the American Worker.” *CIS.org*, 12 Apr. 2013, [cis.org/Transcript/Teleconference-Transcript-Immigration-and-American-Worker](http://cis.org/Transcript/Teleconference-Transcript-Immigration-and-American-Worker).

in order to pay their workers less. CIS cites this as they focus on how working-class Americans would be better off economically if there were an increase in immigration restriction. Another article on the CIS website focuses on the decrease of union membership and its correlation with years of influxes of immigration into the United States<sup>10</sup>. Another article by CIS fellow Jerry Kammer details how an ICE raid benefited the workers of a meat processing plant as the raid decreased the amount of immigrants working there (there is no proof if those that left were undocumented or not) and the job positions were taken by native workers who were more likely to be union members than immigrant workers.

This recurring theme of protecting the working class and helping native workers is traditionally an older liberal goal, not an idea that's often associated with the same forces the but has recently been used in populist rhetoric that has popped up in recent election cycles and government.

There is a tension between immigrant workers and black workers, and to advocate for one of these demographics is to go against the other. At least, that is what CIS believes. The foreword to the topic of "African Americans" on the CIS's topic section CIS cites Frank Morris, Dean of graduate studies at Morgan University. "On the issue of immigration, contemporary Americans, and especially African Americans, need to be guided by two lessons from history. The first, from the New Testament, says that "without vision, the people perish." The second warns that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Unfortunately, many African American political leaders and intellectuals do not heed these lessons with regard to immigration. They either are ignorant of the insights of their forerunners or they fail to understand how similar today's conditions are to those during the previous wave of mass immigration".<sup>11</sup> After the Immigration Act of 1990 was passed by Congress legalizing the

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<sup>10</sup> Briggs, Vernon. "American Unionism and U.S. Immigration Policy." *CIS.org*, 2001, [cis.org/Report/American-Unionism-and-US-Immigration-Policy](http://cis.org/Report/American-Unionism-and-US-Immigration-Policy).

<sup>11</sup> Malloy, Robert. "'Cast Down Your Bucket Where You Are' Black Americans on Immigration." *CIS.org*, 1 June 1996, [cis.org/Report/Cast-Down-Your-Bucket-Where-You-Are-Black-Americans-Immigration](http://cis.org/Report/Cast-Down-Your-Bucket-Where-You-Are-Black-Americans-Immigration)

status of millions of immigrants (and workers) Major Owens, a U.S House of Representatives member of New York and former member of the Democratic Socialists of America, stated on the subject “we are taking one more step toward the creation of a permanent black underclass”.

Donald Trump’s presidential campaign used information from the Federation for American Immigration Reform, or FAIR, a sister group to CIS, for a campaign ad about immigration as a source to support his anti-immigration views. The statement “illegal aliens are incarcerated at three times the rate of legal residents”<sup>12</sup>, was cited for this election advertisement. Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions wrote about the organization, and his blurb is featured on the Kudos section of the CIS website, “Most of us don’t have time to go out and crunch the numbers and census data and go through all of this. I just want to thank CIS for providing invaluable research. You can be sure the other side has plenty of money and plenty of numbers, a lot of it not very accurate.”<sup>13</sup>.

In the first year of the Trump Administration, CIS Director Mark Krikorian received an invitation for the first time in CIS’s history to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement meeting discussing operations and policy, Krikorian also stated he's been "in touch" with the incoming appointees at the Department of Homeland Security<sup>14</sup>. More importantly, on April 11, 2016 the CIS published a list of changes the organization would like to see implemented by the United States Government regarding immigration. Some things on the list include detention of individuals seeking political asylum in the United States, prosecution of those who "smuggle" children into the United States and giving local police new power to enforce federal immigration laws. One item on this Wishlist by CIS was a call to

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<sup>12</sup> Maddow, Rachel. “Trump Cites Racist's Group in New Campaign Ad.” *MSNBC*, NBCUniversal News Group, 16 Aug. 2016, [www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow/watch/trump-cites-racist-s-group-in-new-campaign-ad-747637315565](http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow/watch/trump-cites-racist-s-group-in-new-campaign-ad-747637315565).

<sup>13</sup> “About the Center for Immigration Studies.” *CIS.org*, [cis.org/About-Center-Immigration-Studies](http://cis.org/About-Center-Immigration-Studies).

<sup>14</sup> Woodruff, Betsy. “Trump Making 'Nativist' Group's Wish List a Reality.” *The Daily Beast*, The Daily Beast Company, 13 Mar. 2017, [www.thedailybeast.com/trump-making-nativist-groups-wish-list-a-reality](http://www.thedailybeast.com/trump-making-nativist-groups-wish-list-a-reality).

"rescind all outstanding 'prosecutorial discretion' policies; eliminate the "Priority Enforcement Program and reinstitute Secure Communities". Within less than a year, on Jan 25, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order directing that "The Secretary [of Homeland Security] shall immediately take all appropriate action to terminate the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP) described in the memorandum issued by the Secretary on November 20, 2014, and to reinstitute the immigration program known as 'Secure Communities' referenced in that memorandum".<sup>15</sup> These connections suggest that CIS is a real source of influence in the Administration's policies and action on immigration, and therefore worth investigating this unique organization.

Another element of CIS's "progressive" approach to immigration restriction is to justify it through environmental concerns. The CIS the environmental arguments made for Immigration seem to be one of the less featured reasons for immigration restriction championed on the sight, possibly due to the difficult nature of linking environmental damage to illegal immigration. The first article found when one searches for articles with the word "Environment" is, "How Many Is Too Many? The Progressive Argument for Reducing Immigration into the United States. In the CIS's own words, Authors Winthrop Staples III is a wildlife biologist, "bear technician" who has researched wild cats with a master's in environmental philosophy. Philip Cafaro is a professor of philosophy at Colorado State University and a former park ranger and interestingly included, the bearer of "two children and one vasectomy", in what seems like an effort to show the commitment to limiting population growth that Cafaro has. The authors state the 5 primary statements regarding the relationship between immigration into the United States and the environment which lines up with the beliefs of the Center for Immigration Studies and their view on immigration and the environment. The authors write that Americans are morally obligated to address the issues of our deteriorating environment and "become good global environmental

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<sup>15</sup> ibid

citizens". The article also references the high carbon footprint of Americans compared to European or Japanese peers, as well as the cost of growing housing areas needed in order to accommodate a growing population, which are usually talking points of those on the left talking about the environment. It is brought up in the article that immigration is a "sensitive topic" but never goes into why. Instead, the article focuses on how environmental groups such as the Sierra Club have dropped their stance on immigration from the public spotlight due to controversy for unstated reasons.

This and other articles on the website regarding environment are interesting in that while they seem to be sincere, they ignore other arguments that disagree with conservative ideology regarding the environment. For example, in the article previously mentioned, while the authors do account for how immigrants can and do cause America to pollute more than if they were not present, it is never mentioned that, for example, that oil companies make up a significant majority of the world's pollution are in fact large oil companies.<sup>16</sup> While there is a numerous amount of rhetoric that focuses on protection of the environment of the United States, it isn't discussed what the environmental issues are with the areas the undocumented workers are coming from. It ends up reading as a bizarre take where the environment can and should be protected in certain areas, which would not change other climate issues such as global warming. Instead, the article encourages Americans to be "global citizens" and meet the carbon emissions of the UN at the time the article was published, and not diving into environment issues on the global scale.

But who is funding this organization? The only statement the CIS gives about where they get their funding from reads, "Our research and analysis has been funded by contributions and grants from

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<sup>16</sup> Bloomberg, "The 8 Companies That Cause More Pollution than the Entire U.S." *Agweb.com*, Bloomberg News, 8 Mar. 2017, [www.agweb.com/mobile/article/the-8-companies-that-cause-more-pollution-than-the-entire-us-blmg/](http://www.agweb.com/mobile/article/the-8-companies-that-cause-more-pollution-than-the-entire-us-blmg/).

dozens of private foundations, from the U.S. Census Bureau and Justice Department, and from hundreds of generous individual donors.”. Again, for a nonpartisan organization, there seems to be hesitation in disclosing who supports the CIS financially. It would be easy if those funding this organization ended up having a clear political leaning. Instead, the main contributor according to organization watchdog group *Philanthropy Watch* is The Colcom foundation. The Colcom foundation was in 1996, funded by heiress Cordelia May with the goal of environmental preservation. The organization focuses on both population control and immigrant control in order to further the goal of environmental preservation. The creator of the foundation also supported another John Tanton Immigration venture, FAIR.<sup>17</sup> Both CIS and FAIR use the concept that immigration damages the environment and argue for its protection. In keeping with the Colcom organization’s worries of overpopulation, the organization also helped fund Planned Parenthood.

It is difficult to find those who identify, at least openly as supporters of more restrictive immigration and harsher penalties for illegal immigration while remaining dedicated to liberal ideas. Senator Joe Donnelly, a Democrat from Indiana, supports trump immigration policy based on concerns of safety, along with the CIS fear of job loss for blue collar workers, while Angela Nagel, a writer who identifies as liberal, has written a defense of closed borders in order to further liberal ideas. And while popular Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has explicitly refuted the idea of open borders and its association with the left, although he has called for “comprehensive immigration reform” in the same statement, which would ease immigration enforcement rather than promote it.

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<sup>17</sup> Rojc, Philip. “Who Supports Trump's Favorite Immigration Think Tank?” *Inside Philanthropy*, 21 Apr. 2017, [www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2017/4/21/center-for-immigration-studies-funders](http://www.insidephilanthropy.com/home/2017/4/21/center-for-immigration-studies-funders).



Angela Nagel is a political commentator who has written the book "*Kill All Normies: Online culture Wars From 4Chan And Tumblr To Trump and The Alt-Right*" and the article "*The Left Case Against Open Borders*". In it, Nagel associates the concept of open borders with Neoliberalism and unrestrained capitalism. By opening borders, the ones who benefit are neither the native or foreign workers, but the employers that hire them, for this provides them a large and cheap source of labor that is easy to exploit. She also suggests Bernie Sanders dismissing the idea of open borders, with Sanders calling it "a Koch brothers' proposal" as "confusing the narrative" for liberals in the current political climate. Nagel also writes "There is no getting around the fact that the power of unions relies on their ability to restrict and withdraw the supply of labor, which becomes impossible if an entire workforce can be easily and cheaply replaced. Open borders and mass immigration are a victory for the bosses". This article fits well with the themes of worker solidarity of the CIS, but neither Angel nor this work are referenced on CIS site. She also interestingly calls into question the theological integrity of the current mainstream leftist thought, "But the Left need not take my word for it. Just ask Karl Marx, whose position on immigration would get him banished from the modern Left. Although migration at today's speed and scale would have been unthinkable in Marx's time, he expressed a highly critical view of the effects of the migration that occurred in the nineteenth century. In a letter to two of his American fellow-travelers, Marx argued that the importation of low-paid Irish immigrants to England forced them into hostile competition with English workers. He saw it as part of a system of exploitation, which divided the working class and which represented an extension of the colonial system".<sup>18</sup> Nagel asserts that the left cannot reconcile the fact Marx saw how immigration can be harmful to workers, and Marx is to be followed without question if one is too be considered a leftist. Despite this, it shows at least some on the left can follow these pro worker, anti-immigration beliefs of the CIS.

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<sup>18</sup> Nagel, Angela. "The Left Case against Open Borders." *American Affairs Journal*, 25 Nov. 2018, [americanaffairsjournal.org/2018/11/the-left-case-against-open-borders/](http://americanaffairsjournal.org/2018/11/the-left-case-against-open-borders/).

The next aspect of this project will examine those whose work appears repeatedly on the CIS and have a strong connection to the organization. Because of this, these individuals make up what CIS stands for, or at least approves of promoting.

The CIS was founded by John Tanton, an eye surgeon from Michigan, with the goal of helping to promote immigration restrictions. Tanton has been a controversial figure due to his connections and racist comments in the past. He "... introduced key FAIR leaders to the President of The Pioneer Fund, a white supremacist group setup to encourage "race betterment" at a 1997 meeting at a private club. Leaked memos show that Tanton has worries of Latinos "outbreeding" White Americans, and writing "'Will Latin American migrants bring with them the tradition of the mordida (bribe), the lack of involvement in public affairs...?'"<sup>19</sup> The organization has hosted articles from race scientists, white nationalists, and anti-Semitic groups and authors in the past<sup>20</sup>.

Despite the Center for Immigration and FAIR forming from the same founder, John Tanton, there is little reference to the fact that the two organizations stem from the exact same man. What is odd is the fact that while the Center for Immigration Studies references FAIR, albeit as a separate organization that showcases the fact that other organizations support their goal of immigration restriction, FAIR currently does not reference the Center for Immigration Studies. Furthermore, both organizations share a high-level member, Peter Nunez, a former US Attorney and lecturer. However, this fact is not referenced.

When I looked online for articles about FAIR, the organization seems to have a more direct connection

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<sup>19</sup> Tanton, John. "WITAN Memo' III." *Southern Poverty Law Center*, 1986, [www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2015/witan-memo-iii](http://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2015/witan-memo-iii).

<sup>20</sup> Iggott, Stephen, Alex Amend. "More Than an Occasional Crank: 2,012 Times the Center for Immigration Studies Circulated White Nationalist Content." *Southern Poverty Law Center*, Southern Poverty Law Center, 23 May 2017

with extreme politics and less of a focus on remaining politically neutral, such as recommending books that clearly advocate for white supremacy, including a sensational article titled “Examples of Serious Crimes by Illegal Aliens” and “How Much Are You Paying for illegal Immigration?” on the front page of their website. The president of FAIR since 2013 has stated “Immigrants don't come all church-loving, freedom-loving, God-fearing...” “Many of them hate America, hate everything that the United States stands for. Talk to some of these Central Americans.”. The question arises; why does the CIS or FAIR not mention the connection in their creation? FAIR was labeled a hate group before CIS was by the SPLC (and published articles attacking the SPLC’s view of the CIS).

Jason Richwine is a writer and infamous for his Harvard PhD. dissertation, which dealt with the IQ of immigrants in America and how that should affect immigration policy. In his abstract for his dissertation, Richwine writes "The average IQ of immigrants in the United States is substantially lower than that of the white native population, and the difference is likely to persist over several generations. The consequences are a lack of socioeconomic assimilation among low-IQ immigrant groups, more underclass behavior, less social trust, and an increase in the proportion of unskilled workers in the American Labor Market. Selecting high-IQ immigrants would ameliorate these problems in the U.S, while at the same time benefiting smart potential immigrants who lack educational access in their home countries. In the same paper, “In short, immigrants do not have low IQ because of negative selection. They have low IQs because they come mostly from low-IQ countries". factors that Richwine suggests cause create low IQ countries include access to nutrition, medical care, and schooling during early years of life”.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Richwine, Jason. “IQ and Immigration Policy.” *Harvard University*, Jason Richwine, 2009, pp. 1–158.

Another important CIS figure who has his fair share of controversy is Stephen Steinlight, a Senior Policy Analyst at the CIS. At a meeting for the Tea Party movement in 2011, He said “There’s no court that will stop Obama from doing anything. And we all know, if there ever was a president that deserved to be impeached, it’s this guy. Alright? And I wouldn’t stop. I would think being hung, drawn, and quartered is probably too good for him.”

Mark Krikorian is the Director of the Center for Immigration studies since 1995. he has made both for and outside of the CIS. Including, “We have to have security against both the dishwasher and the terrorist because you can't distinguish between the two with regards to immigration control.”<sup>22</sup> And while unrelated to immigration but related to the SPLC stating he has racist beliefs, he tweeted, “Obama's Justice Dept has been doing everything in its power for 7.5 yrs to foment race war. Happy now?”<sup>23</sup> He responded to the CIS being labeled as a hate group by the SPLC in 2017 with an article published in The Washington Post. In it, he sees The SPLC as an organization that dismisses speech that it does not agree with as hate groups in order to discredit them. “Since 2007, The Southern Poverty Law center has methodically added mainstream organizations critical of current immigration policy to its blacklist of "hate groups", including the Federation for American Immigration Reform, The Immigration Reform Law Institute and Californians for Population Stabilization, among others. In February, my own organization, the Center for Immigration studies (CIS) got its turn.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “Imagine 2500. “Frank Gaffney's Security Summit Today Set to Fuse Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Muslim Bigotry.” *IMAGINE 2050*, 28 Sept. 2014, [imagine2050.newcomm.org/2014/09/29/frank-gaffneys-security-summit-today-set-to-fuse-anti-immigrant-anti-muslim-bigotry/](http://imagine2050.newcomm.org/2014/09/29/frank-gaffneys-security-summit-today-set-to-fuse-anti-immigrant-anti-muslim-bigotry/).)

<sup>23</sup> Krikorian, Mark, (Mark Krikorian) Obama's Justice Dept has been doing everything in its power for 7.5 yrs to foment race war. Happy now?" July 7, 2016, 9:35 PM

<sup>24</sup> Krikorian, Mark. “How Labeling My Organization a Hate Group Shuts down Public Debate.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 17 Mar. 2017, [www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/how-](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/how-)

Krikorian does not mention that The Immigration Reform Law Institute that defends the CIS is the legal division of FAIR, and both FAIR and the CIS are sister organizations founded by John Tanton. He later distances the involvement of this man, suggesting a desire to separate the ideas of the CIS and their founder. He wrote in defense of the CIS, “the SPLC long ago made a hate figure of John Tanton, a controversial Michigan eye doctor it breathlessly describes as the “puppeteer” of various groups skeptical of current immigration policy, including CIS. But whatever his vices and virtues, they are irrelevant to CIS”. The next most senior person to be involved in the Center is Mark Krikorian, current head of the organization. If anything, it is clear why the CIS is controversial to say the least.

Months after writing this section, news has come out that paints the SPLC in a negative light. After the Co-founder of the organization Morris Dees was fired for undisclosed reasons, the president of the SPLC resigned soon after. Workers quickly came out to news outlets describing the hostile working place of the organization dedicated to equality. Employees of the organization describe "systemic problems with racism and sexism..."<sup>25</sup> over a month later at the time this project was completed, the Center for Immigration Studies has not hosted any articles that comment on this event.

The president of CIS point is to defend the association of the organization with figures belonging to hate groups by writing “CIS’s weekly email roundup of immigration commentary (from all sides) has occasionally included pieces by writers who turned out to be cranks; and a nonresident CIS fellow attended the Christmas party of a group the SPLC dislikes”. Again, the theme of partisanship is focused in these words, and the group that these mentioned writers belong to that the SPLC “dislikes” include VDARE, a website that actively and openly promotes Jewish conspiracy theories and encourages violent

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<sup>25</sup> Silverman, Hollie, et al. “Southern Poverty Law Center President Resigns after a Co-Founder Was Fired.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 24 Mar. 2019, [www.cnn.com/2019/03/24/us/southern-poverty-law-center-splc-dees-cohen/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2019/03/24/us/southern-poverty-law-center-splc-dees-cohen/index.html).

white nationalism.<sup>26</sup> This dismissal of hate groups and their association with the organization is disturbing as there is rarely an attempt to show that the CIS does not relate to these ideas sprouted by their associates.

In 2019 when Twitter removed several of their paid advertisements on the site, referring to the content as “hateful” before quickly putting them back up with no comment from twitter after CIS complained. This was publicized on the twitter feed of Ted Cruz, who blamed this on political censorship of ideas on the internet<sup>27</sup>. These tweets included: “illegal aliens pouring across the border remind us why we need a wall.” another tweet reads “A couple in Oregon was recently killed by a drunk-driving Mexican illegal alien.” The CIS believes that the reason for the removal of these advertisements is that of the phrase “illegal aliens” which they supported with laws and rulings referring to individuals as such. Interestingly, they did not focus on the political content and messages being too different from the politics of twitter.

I reached out to the Center for Immigration and asked if it was possible to interview a member of the Center for Immigration studies for my senior project. I received a quick response, affirming the possibility and offering to speak the same day, and I was asked what my project was on. I was surprised how quickly they responded and how enthusiastic it was. I wrote in an email, “My paper is focusing on the change in rhetoric and discussion topics surrounding immigration in the United States in recent years. If you'd be able to speak later today or sometime this week it would be very helpful, He replied, “We received your email regarding your paper. What specific topics regarding immigration are you looking at? If it's something we can help with, I'd be glad to give you a call later today. After I inquired

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<sup>26</sup>Southern Poverty Law Center. “VDARE.” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, [www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/vdare](http://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/vdare).

<sup>27</sup> Breland, Ali. “Ted Cruz, Twitter Spar over Immigration Tweets from Right-Wing Think Tank.” *The Hill*, 13 Sept. 2018, [thehill.com/policy/technology/406551-ted-cruz-think-tank-and-twitter-spar-over-immigration-tweets](http://thehill.com/policy/technology/406551-ted-cruz-think-tank-and-twitter-spar-over-immigration-tweets)

about when he could talk, he did not respond, and the correspondence ended there. and the conversation ended there. Later, I would speak to someone else for this project.

An example of this populist rhetoric in another country helps one understand the CIS better. Pim Fortuyn was an openly gay professor, author, and politician who ran for political office in the Netherlands on a nativist, populist platform. A major focus for his campaign was restricting immigration of those seeking asylum in the Netherlands. Reasons for doing so included space issues "The Netherlands is full"(A very similar idea to the Center For Immigration Research and to a popular bumper sticker I've seen, a map of the United States made up of the words, "Fuck off, We're full") his view that they had refused to assimilate to the liberal culture of the Netherlands, and that these migrants turned to crime and were a drain on the Netherlands. Rival politicians and the media claimed him as a reactionary populism who achieved attention and moderate success due to his political status as an underdog” Fortuyn stated “I don't hate Islam. I consider it a backward culture. I have travelled much in the world. And wherever Islam rules, it's just terrible. All the hypocrisy. It's a bit like those old reformed protestants. The Reformed lie all the time... Then look at the Netherlands. In what country could an electoral leader of such a large movement as mine be openly homosexual? How wonderful that that's possible. That's something that one can be proud of. And I'd like to keep it that way, thank you very much.” Pim Fortuyn was assassinated by Volkert Van der Graaf, a White Dutch Native two weeks before the Dutch General election of 2002 who committed the act in order to "to stop Mr. Fortuyn exploiting Muslims as "scapegoats" and targeting "the weak parts of society to score points" to try to gain political power."

CIS has some damning things to say about Islam and their practitioners in the United States “A report on Muslim immigrants, CIS calls Jewish advocacy groups "Conventional ethnic organizations anchored

to the mainstream of American political life” while “the Muslim ones overwhelmingly pursue an Islamist agenda far outside that mainstream”.<sup>28</sup> The authors then proceed to indicate that the groups that represent a majority of “the Muslim community” want “special privileges for Islam... Intimidate and silence the opponents of militant Islam... Raise funds for, apologize for, and otherwise forward the cause of militant Islamic groups abroad... and sanitize militant Islam”.<sup>29</sup>

I searched the CIS site to see how they regard the relationship between immigration and LGBT rights. One of their articles, “Same-Sex Marriage and Immigration Rights – An Issue That Could Tear Apart the Open Borders Coalition?”, The author David North sees the issue of recognizing same sex marriage among immigrants (this article was written in 2009, before same sex marriage was legalized nationwide) as creating a significant rift in the “open borders coalition” that seek less restricted migration. The author also states his preference for same sex couple migrants, writing “I recognize that unlike the great bulk of immigrants – who are “breeders” in the vernacular of the gay community – homosexual immigrants tend not to reproduce, thus creating none of the follow-on demographic and environmental impacts of immigrants, generally. So, I would rather see a mix of, say, 20 percent homosexual immigrants to 80 percent breeding immigrants, instead of having 100 percent of the immigrant cohort consisting of people who have children”.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Duran, Khalid, and Daniel Pipes. “Muslim Immigrants in the United States.” *CIS.org*, 1 Aug. 2001, [cis.org/Report/Muslim-Immigrants-United-States](http://cis.org/Report/Muslim-Immigrants-United-States).

<sup>29</sup> Margry, P. (2003). The Murder of Pim Fortuyn and Collective Emotions Hype, Hysteria and Holiness in The Netherlands? *Etnofoor*, 16(2), 106-131. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25758060>

<sup>30</sup> North, David. “Same-Sex Marriage and Immigration Rights – An Issue That Could Tear Apart the Open Borders Coalition?” *CIS.org*, 9 Dec. 2009, [cis.org/North/SameSex-Marriage-and-Immigration-Rights-Issue-Could-Tear-Apart-Open-Borders-Coalition](http://cis.org/North/SameSex-Marriage-and-Immigration-Rights-Issue-Could-Tear-Apart-Open-Borders-Coalition).)



In another article, "Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve" also writes about this "wedge" of recognizing same sex relationships among undocumented immigrants among gay rights activists and religious immigrant rights activists. by James R. Edwards, JR. However, the author calls this arrangement of forces for immigrant rights as "The political marriage made elsewhere than Heaven" and calls for the evangelical groups that work towards amnesty to reconsider their stance due to the homosexual rights stance many supporters of undocumented immigrants take, ending with a citation from the bible to justify his point of more restrictive immigration<sup>31</sup>. This isn't the only time religion has entered the immigration debate. Jeff Sessions, then attorney general used a quote from the Bible in defense of the Trump Administration detaining children of immigrant families separately from their parents, saying "I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13 to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained the government for his purposes. Said. "Orderly and lawful processes are good in themselves ... and protect the weak and it protects the lawful."<sup>32</sup>

the contradicting attitudes towards the issue of gay documented and undocumented immigrants present in the CIS is interesting. The CIS is a website with a dedicated narrative to the restriction of immigration and its enforcement, yet the fact that there are two conflicting perspectives that lead to that conclusion calls into question if the CIS is simply using perspectives that suit its endgame rather than a coherent system of philosophy.

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<sup>31</sup> Edwards, James R. "Choose You This Day Whom You Will Serve." *CIS.org*, 16 Oct. 2012, [cis.org/Edwards/Choose-You-Day-Whom-You-Will-Serve](http://cis.org/Edwards/Choose-You-Day-Whom-You-Will-Serve).

<sup>32</sup> Zauzmer, Julie, and Keith McMillan. "Sessions Cites Bible Passage Used to Defend Slavery in Defense of Separating Immigrant Families." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 15 June 2018, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2018/06/14/jeff-sessions-points-to-the-bible-in-defense-of-separating-immigrant-families/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.8aa7f8187eda](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2018/06/14/jeff-sessions-points-to-the-bible-in-defense-of-separating-immigrant-families/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8aa7f8187eda).

Below is a visualization of the sometimes-complex connections that key figures and organizations related to CIS have.



## Chapter Two: Economics and Albertville

A majority of the articles and talking points that Center for Immigration studies uses to defend its views on immigration is that of the negative effects of illegal immigration on the economy. The Center of Immigration uses neoclassical economics, one of the most popular economic frameworks that emphasizes the direct impact of supply and demand in an economy, as well as the fact that both workers and employers will act rationally in order to make the largest amount of profit. George Borjas, a labor economist with a focus on the effects of immigration on the economy, teaches at Harvard University and is also a key part of the Center's economic beliefs and rhetoric. Borjas has been included on CIS panels with the role of being an expert on immigration labor due to his work and research. There are also numerous articles published on the CIS authored by him.

In a teleconference put on by the CIS, Borjas went over three main concepts regarding the economic perspective of the CIS on immigration. Borjas states that although immigration increases GDP of the country that immigrants come to, most of that goes to the immigrants themselves, who would then use the income in their home country. Second, immigrant workers are mostly unskilled laborers (meaning they are unable to take any job requiring a high school degree or any other level of higher education), and three, this increase in unskilled labor decreases the wages of high school and non-high school educated workers due to undocumented immigrants often being high school dropouts, saturating the labor market and causing producers to pay all workers less due to immigrants willing to take less pay and an increase in workers<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Center for Immigration Studies. "Teleconference Transcript: Immigration and the American Worker." CIS.org, 12 Apr. 2013, [cis.org/Transcript/Teleconference-Transcript-Immigration-and-American-Worker](http://cis.org/Transcript/Teleconference-Transcript-Immigration-and-American-Worker).

Under the topic "Immigration Costs" the first article that appears to answer the question if a border wall between the United States and Mexico would in fact "pay for itself." The article relies on the premise that undocumented immigrants traveling across the border create a net cost of around 80,000 dollars. in 2018. Ultimately the author suggests that if a wall was "partially effective" it would pay for itself by reducing the cost of illegal immigration<sup>34</sup>. These costs are primarily education, with the costs rising the less educated the immigrant is. In another article titled Immigration and the American worker, Borjas writes "For American workers, immigration is primarily a redistributive policy. Economic theory predicts that immigration will redistribute income by lowering the wages of competing American workers and increasing the wages of complementary American workers as well as profits for business owners and other "users" of immigrant labor. Although the overall net impact on the native-born is small, the loss or gain for particular groups of the population can be substantial."<sup>35</sup>

In "The Benefits from Immigration a "very simple (and widely used) formula, Borjas calculates that the added amount of labor coming from a "surplus" of immigrants finds that "the gains from immigration are intimately linked to the wage loss suffered by workers." Of course, it is only mentioned in the footnotes that this formula was created for a textbook that George Borjas himself wrote. Regardless, the protection of American workers at the expense of those who have arrived illegally is a core tenant of the CIS and continues this narrative through a case study example of a union affected by a massive increase, then decrease, of migrant workers. is what CIS believing to be reason why there must be stricter immigration.

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<sup>34</sup> Camaorta, Steven A. "Can a Wall Pay for Itself? An Update." *CIS.org*, 8 Jan. 2019, [cis.org/Camarota/Can-Wall-Pay-Itself-Update](https://cis.org/Camarota/Can-Wall-Pay-Itself-Update).

<sup>35</sup> Borjas, George. "Immigration and the American Worker." *CIS.org*, 9 Apr. 2013, [cis.org/Report/Immigration-and-American-Worker#21](https://cis.org/Report/Immigration-and-American-Worker#21).

Borjas has a connection with Jeff Sessions as well. in a Blog post from 2016. Borjas writes "I have met and “talked shop” with Senator Sessions a few times in the past. Those conversations always struck me as unusual. Unlike some other influential people in the immigration arena whom I have talked to, where I quickly began to suspect that their grasp of the nitty-gritty details was somewhat foggy, it was obvious that Senator Sessions was knowledgeable with and understood precisely what was going on in the immigration field...On top of that, the senator is a very nice and approachable man, both in a professional and social setting. I always came away thinking that this must be what the “Southern gentleman type is all about.”<sup>36</sup> While the nature of Borjas blog is informal, it is odd that in an attempt to vouch for Sessions to become attorney general, he highlighted the fact that Sessions was a “Southern Gentleman”.

In a lecture by Borjas published by FAIR, Borjas finds that there is a decrease in the range of earnings of immigrants in the last couple of decades, and explains this effect as being a result of Immigrants refusing to assimilate and not improve their economic status”<sup>37</sup>, placing blame on the migrant worker’s actions and character versus the current conditions of the country migrants have entered before they even had an effect on the economy, This assumption can be put to the test in a case study of a small southern town in in Albertville, Alabama that dealt with a sudden influx of Latin American Immigrants.

The podcast by Ira Glass and Miki Meek, *This American Life*, is produced by NPR and focuses on unique experiences of those that live in the United States. Episodes 632 and 633 of the podcasts show a small

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<sup>36</sup> Borjas, George. “Senator Sessions for Attorney General.” *Labor Econ*, 18 Nov. 2016, gborjas.org/2016/11/18/senator-sessions-for-attorney-general/.

<sup>37</sup> Rush, Nayla M. “Who Are You Rooting For?” *Fairus.org*, Federation for American Immigration Reform, 26 June 2014, www.fairus.org/sites/default/files/2017-08/Who\_are\_you\_rooting\_for\_June2014-v2.pdf.

town in Alabama that deals with a sudden influx of documented and undocumented immigrants coming from the southern border, and the cultural and economic effects of this event. The podcast finds the migrant workers mostly work in the town's meat processing plants, which require no educational background or job experience. When these poultry plants first opened in Albertville after the second World War, it was one of the largest employers of those in the region. The most common complaint of Albertville natives about the migrant workers were the loss of meat processing jobs seemingly "taken" by them.

Opinions of the migrant's character are mixed amongst the native townspeople. One worker at a meat processing plant stated in an interview, "You don't know whether to trust them or whether not to trust them. And we didn't know whether they were legal, or they weren't legal or what. But there was a lot of them. You know, there's not-- I mean, you can just tell by the way they act." indicating that they are not trusted as the native workers of Albertville, but another worker said "when asked if he was mad at the undocumented immigrants who shared his workplace "No, I wasn't mad at the Latinos. I was mad at management. They were scheming, conniving, taking shortcuts to get them in"<sup>38</sup>. Here is where a common thread is found; that while the argument of if undocumented workers are attempting to assimilate and coexist with the native workers, almost all the workers blame management for this immigrant and labor issue they see.

Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions and former Attorney General of Alabama had a large influence on the current United States policy towards immigration, was quoted by the podcast on the topic of labor and immigration, "...Big greedy businesses who hire illegal workers, and hiring those numbers by the tens or hundreds of thousands, will pull down the wages of American citizens. Why would we do

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that? Why don't we take care of our American workers?" It is noteworthy that an ultraconservative such as Sessions names a business as the perpetrator of this issue, something that he cares about due to his previous position as a senator of Alabama, where he saw this issue take place firsthand. yet, the way Sessions wants to "take care" of American workers not by advocating for protection of workers or placing restrictions of employers, but rather enforcing immigration law in a stricter sense and letting the aftershock of that event take. Seven years later, Sessions says on the same subject "I talked to a business person recently about a factory that they have. The work sounded pretty good to me, and he wants to bring in foreign workers to Alabama. Well, we've got unemployment in Alabama. We've got people on unemployment insurance. We've got people on welfare, and food stamps, and assistance that need to be taking those jobs." This is more in line with the classic Republican ideas surrounding jobs and the fear of misuse of welfare, but still reference the issue of employers using unfair hiring practices in order to secure the most amount of profit. This echoes themes of the CIS that are willing to recognize that labor issues often stem from businesses willing to replace American workers in order to maximize profits, but not willing to punish them for it.

The podcast also references CIS figure George Borjas on the subject of labor and immigration with Borjas book, *We Wanted Workers: Unraveling the Immigration Narrative*, in order to show the prominence of the fact that an addition of workers not only brings changes in the labor market, but also changes in society and culture. Later in the podcast, the hosts go over the supply and demand economics that allege that these undocumented workers are actively hurting the native townspeople.

Jumping back to CIS, In an article on the site titled *Immigration Raids at Smithfield: How an ICE Enforcement Action Boosted Union Organizing and the Employment of American Workers* by Jerry Kammer, a Journalist and Senior Research Fellow for the CIS details how union power can be enhanced by returning the labor

force to native documented workers. An Immigrant raid by ICE in Tar Heel, North Carolina caused an exodus of migrant workers in meat packing plants, many thought to be undocumented. This caused a shift demographic caused more native workers to be hired, thought to be because there were no more undocumented migrant workers, who were preferred for management. Kammer writes “On the one hand, those who favor using law enforcement to force illegal immigrants out of jobs can point to the fact that enforcement at Tar Heel created job openings for native-born Americans and legal immigrants. Had the illegals remained in the jobs, they would not have been available to American workers...On the other hand, those who favor amnesty for illegal immigrants can note that Smithfield management long threatened selective immigration enforcement in an effort to pressure illegal immigrant workers to vote against the union.” This article seems to be written from a classical progressive voice, where the working class are to be protected and those that take their jobs due to their willingness to work in worse conditions are to be treated as an enemy or a tool of the producers, somewhat like scabs who cross picket lines during strikes. Kramer also repeatedly mentions the link between working class black Americans and undocumented immigrants, writing, “Many newcomers found work at Smithfield, gradually building a Hispanic majority at the plant. “They were good people, hard workers,” said Wade Baker, an African American who worked at the plant from 1994 to 2002”, and “Their [undocumented workers] exodus led to an abrupt switch in the plant’s demographics. By the time of the vote on UFCW representation, most workers were once again native-born black Americans, as they had been in the years immediately after the plant opened in 1992.”<sup>39</sup>

This brings us to the CIS’s other argument that is unexpected; that immigration hurts minority groups that are often discriminated against in the United States, predominantly focused on African

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<sup>39</sup> Kammer, Jerry. “Immigration Raids at Smithfield: How an ICE Enforcement Action Boosted Union Organizing and the Employment of American Workers.” *CIS.org*, Center for Immigrant Studies, 13 July 2009, [cis.org/Immigration-Raids-Smithfield-How-ICE-Enforcement-Action-Boosted-Union-Organizing-and-Employment](http://cis.org/Immigration-Raids-Smithfield-How-ICE-Enforcement-Action-Boosted-Union-Organizing-and-Employment).



Americans. Under the topics section is “Black Americans” as a topic to search through the articles it provides. At the top of the page a quote from a CIS member reads “The issue of the impact of immigration on black Americans has long been debated. During the previous great wave of immigration at the turn of the last century, most black leaders such as W.E.B. Dubois, Booker T. Washington and A. Philip Randolph felt that immigration harmed their community. Job competition has traditionally been the key issue, but other concerns exist as well”.<sup>40</sup> This focus seems to be either an earnest attempt at helping the Black working class, or, a way to sway the black working class and those sympathetic to theirs struggles.

It seems like the workers, the CIS, and Jeff Sessions are close to an economic framework that might seem intimidating; Marxism. In this framework, employers receive profits through exploiting their workers; whether it be by charging prices that do not reflect the payment of their workers, weakening unions and labor force that fight for the benefits of the workers and not the owners of production (in this case the meat packing factory management and owners). Employers also benefit from an economic condition known as persistent unemployment, where the difficulty of finding a job makes it difficult for workers to seek better working conditions elsewhere and forcing the worker to stay with their current job no matter the circumstances of the job<sup>41</sup>. Sessions and some of the workers previously interviewed used rhetoric that blame those that manger the meat packing facilities of Albertville by using undocumented workers for monetary reasons. Undocumented workers under this framework do not join unions, thus reducing the power of them and employing them allows them to pay them under the table and theory provides the opportunity to pay them less, increasing profits for those that employ

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<sup>40</sup> Center for Immigration Studies. “Black Americans.” *CIS.org*, Center for Immigrant Studies, [cis.org/Immigration-Topic/Black-Americans](https://cis.org/Immigration-Topic/Black-Americans).

<sup>41</sup> Prychitko, David. “Marxism.” *Mill, On Liberty, Chapter 1 | Library of Economics and Liberty*, [www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Marxism.html](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Marxism.html).

them. In this framework, they essentially function as scabs, workers employed to undercut the effort of receiving a good wage and safe working conditions that the native workers want. However, one cannot take bits and pieces of economic theory from different schools of thought in order to justify policy, as Marxism and Classical Economics are inherently opposed to each other due to the struggle of protecting the average person from oppression versus the free market giving the average person the best opportunity possible. This calls into question worker and employer attitudes and actions along with factors such as income, wages, and social conditions. Some of these authors that will be discussed often write works that challenge Borjas findings and promote labor reform as a substitute for stricter immigration enforcement.

Giovanni Peri is a professor and head of the Department of Economics at the University of Berkley, research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research in Cambridge Massachusetts, and founder of the Migration Search Cluster, a research organization focused on international migration. Like Borjas, He has found that there are little benefits to the wages of non-educated native workers when an immigration influx occurs. However, he differs in his research as he finds that large immigrant migrations tend to show an increase in high school completion among native populations(likely due to the inability of receiving a job without finishing high school due to jobs such as working in the poultry plant as previously mentioned, allowing the opportunity to receive higher earning jobs, and that Increased competition could drive services associated with non-educated labor down, rendering the wages of natives in the area more powerful as there would be cheaper locals good and services<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Peri, Giovanni. "Immigrants, Productivity, and Labor Markets." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2016, pp. 3–29. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/44028256](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44028256).

When the host of *This American Life* asked Giovanni Peri if Albertville workers were out of work due to the influx of immigrants, Peri responded "No. we don't find here a significant difference in the unemployment rate between Albertville and the comparison counties...Because the economy was becoming bigger. And these immigrants coming in in part were consumers. And so, they created demand, also, for other jobs."

The Mariel boatlift was a mass emigration of refugees made up of over 100,000 Cubans between April 15th and October 31st of 1980 from Cuba to Miami. The U.S government under President Carter granted these migrants refugee status and most became integrated in the labor market of Miami as many relatives and other exiles from Cuba resided in the area. this migration ultimately caused a 7% increase of the size of the labor force in Miami, and would create a massive debate among economists about the effect of "unskilled" immigration of workers in America<sup>43</sup>

George Borjas gained fame in the world of economics for his thoughts on this event. It also has a connection to the labor influx that Albertville was affected by, and both cases affect the rhetoric that both pro-immigration and anti-immigration voices use currently.

In a CIS Article "Did the Mariel Boatlift Benefit 'Low-Skill' Miamians", Jason Richwine opens with, "the recent work of economist George Borjas indicates that the boatlift probably caused a decline in wages for Miami workers who did not have a high school degree."<sup>44</sup> This article defends Borjas statement that After the influx of mostly unskilled workers, natives of Miami suffered a slight decrease in wages. The

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<sup>43</sup>Card, David. "The Impact of the Mariel Boatlift on the Miami Labor Market." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol. 43, no. 2, 1990, pp. 245–257. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2523702](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2523702).

<sup>44</sup> Richwine, Jason. "Did the Mariel Boatlift Benefit 'Low-Skill' Miamians?" *CIS.org*, 12 Jan. 2017, [cis.org/Richwine/Did-Mariel-Boatlift-Benefit-LowSkill-Miamians](http://cis.org/Richwine/Did-Mariel-Boatlift-Benefit-LowSkill-Miamians)

opponent of this theory is Alex Nowrasteh, a member of a common enemy of CIS, the CATO Institute. In his deconstruction of this argument, Nowrasteh writes “... his results hinge on the control cities he chose, his exclusion of women, the age group of the workers, whether Hispanics are included, whether high-school-or-less or no-high-school-at-all are included, and whether datasets with the larger samples are used. For the sake of argument, supposing that Borjas made the correct methodological choices on every single point above, the Mariel Boatlift still raised the wages for low-skilled U.S. workers collectively due to wage complementarities. That’s because native-born Miamians with only a high school degree (no associate degree, no education after high school) experienced significant wage *increases* immediately after Mariel relative to workers with the same levels of education in the control groups, or placebos, of other cities. Borjas’ supporters ignore this finding, but he does not. Richwine responds by stating “I am unconvinced by Nowrasteh empirical argument that the HS-and-below group enjoyed a net wage increase from Mariel. He analyzed two separate datasets each with four groups of control cities, for a total of eight estimates. Of those eight estimates, four show a positive wage effect for HS-and-below natives, and four show a negative effect. We can debate which combination of dataset and control group gives the best estimate, but obviously there is a lot of uncertainty here, and taking an average across the estimates is not an appropriate way to deal with it.”<sup>45</sup> In a separate article about the subject by the author Jason Richwine, the CIS discloses that George Borjas was Jason Richwine's advisor for graduate school.

Another economist, David Card challenges Borjas perspective about the Mariel Boatlift and how it finds no evidence of decreased wages or employment among whites and blacks in Miami. Card believes that the rise in unemployment of Cubans comes from the Cuban refugees who were unemployed once they came to Miami of the Mariel Boatlift, and did not affect the Cubans previously

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid*

residing in Miami before the event. He also suggests since the Cuban population outside of Miami only receive marginally higher wages compared to the Cuban population inside of Miami, as it was the "low skill" workers that came from the boatlift that dilute the average wages of Cubans inside Miami<sup>46</sup>.

Giovanni Peri shares similar views that the labor influx did not have a noticeable negative effect on locals after the boatlift and blames Borja's findings of a wage decrease among natives on a margin error that was too large to be accurate<sup>47</sup>.

Below is an excerpt from episode 633 of *This American Life* that focuses on Ira Glass interviewing a citizen of Albertville, Teresa Ferguson about the immigrants in town. The interview's subject is that of welfare use perception and reality, and links back to the Center for Institute Studies talking points.

Tessa Ferguson, the subject of the interview, writes "You get labeled a racist if you just want to even discuss. It's that you're here, and it's against the law, and we're paying for you to be here. You're not paying your taxes. You're going to school free"<sup>48</sup>.

The host then says, "Teresa talks about teacher friends of theirs-- her husband worked for the public schools before he retired-- who have to pick and choose what they buy at the grocery store. And then they see Latino families in the cashier line with food stamps-- and I just want to say, I know they're not food stamps anymore, but that's what everybody in town calls them. Kids who are born here can get them even if their parents are undocumented."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Card, David. "The Impact of the Mariel Boatlift on the Miami Labor Market." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol. 43, no. 2, 1990, pp. 245–257. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2523702](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2523702).

<sup>47</sup> Asenov, Vasil, and Giovanni Peri. *Www.nber.org*, NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH, June 2017, [www.nber.org/papers/w21801.pdf](http://www.nber.org/papers/w21801.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Glass, Ira, and Miki Meek. "633: Our Town - Part Two." *This American Life*, 16 Jan. 2018, [www.thisamericanlife.org/633/transcript](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/633/transcript)

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

This echoes a CIS talking point that illegal immigration costs poor and working-class Americans money through their use of welfare. The word “Welfare Use” is listed as a topic that links to many pages of articles dealing with the CIS writer Jason Richwine mentioned previously states in the article “The Cost of Welfare Use By Immigrant and Native Households”, “In September 2015, the Center for Immigration Studies published a landmark study of immigration and welfare use, showing that 51 percent of immigrant-headed households (legal and illegal) use at least one federal welfare program, compared to 30 percent of native households.<sup>1</sup> "Welfare" refers to means-tested anti-poverty programs. These include direct cash assistance in the form of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); food aid such as free school lunch, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, and food stamps; Medicaid; and housing assistance in the form of rent subsidies and public housing...In order to reduce the cost of immigrant welfare use, either the welfare system or the immigration system must change. The former option is sometimes described as "building a wall around the welfare state" to prevent new immigrants from accessing it. It is easier said than done...Only a full-scale rollback of the welfare state for both immigrants and natives would prevent immigrant families from consuming welfare dollars. Whatever one thinks of that proposal, it is not a policy change likely to occur in the near future.<sup>19</sup> In fact, importing new clients of the welfare state likely makes it even harder to roll back.<sup>20</sup> As long as the U.S. continues to admit large numbers of low-skill immigrants (legal or illegal), then immigrant welfare consumption will remain high”<sup>50</sup> Other articles listed under the topic of welfare use by immigrants include, “An Aid Program that Routinely Discriminates in Favor of Ineligible Aliens”, “Heavy Welfare Use by Legal Immigrants-Yes, Legal Immigrants”, and “Cato Institute Misses the Point on Immigrant Welfare Use-Again”.

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<sup>50</sup> Richwine, Jason. “The Cost of Welfare Use by Immigrant and Native Households.” *CIS.org*, 9 May 2016, [cis.org/Report/Cost-Welfare-Use-Immigrant-and-Native-Households](http://cis.org/Report/Cost-Welfare-Use-Immigrant-and-Native-Households).

The theme of rampant welfare use by minority in the United States can be traced to an idea supported by a conservative base. The CIS and Ms. Ferguson have a somewhat different approach, as they both focus on the fact that his money could go to American citizens. In, “Cato Institute Misses the Point on Immigrant Welfare Use-Again”, the author Jason Richwine writes “the main reason that immigrants use more welfare than natives are simply that immigrants tend to be less educated and subsequently poorer than natives. Welfare use is not a moral failing on the part of low-skilled immigrants any more than it is for low-skilled natives. Our point is that as long as we continue to take in so many low-skilled immigrants (legal or illegal), immigrant welfare use will remain high<sup>51</sup>On the topic of welfare use on the CIS, the quote ““The average immigrant household consumes 33 percent more cash welfare, 57 percent more food assistance, and 44 percent more Medicaid dollars than the average native household. Housing costs are about the same for both groups.”, written by Richwine

Ms. Ferguson states in her interview, “The last time I went through the line, just as an example, the family did not speak English. One child-- probably about 10-- they had several children-- spoke English-- very polite, very nice. They finished with their groceries. Cashier said, your groceries were, like, \$93-- something like that. That will be \$2.69. When you see that time and time and time again...” And later “But you know, we can't take care of everybody. So, you have to look to take care of the people in your own country first.”<sup>52</sup>

The economic justification of immigration comes of the CIS and their favorite economist, George Borjas, comes from neoclassical economics. In this framework of economics is a way of thinking about

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<sup>51</sup> Camarota, Steven. “Cato Institute Misses the Point on Immigrant Welfare Use - Again.” *CIS.org*, 3 Sept. 2015, [cis.org/Camarota/Cato-Institute-Misses-Point-Immigrant-Welfare-Use-Again](http://cis.org/Camarota/Cato-Institute-Misses-Point-Immigrant-Welfare-Use-Again).

<sup>52</sup> Glass, Ira, and Miki Meek. “633: Our Town - Part Two.” *This American Life*, 16 Jan. 2018, [www.thisamericanlife.org/633/transcript](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/633/transcript)

the economy that focuses on the relationship of supply of goods and services in markets as well as the consumers who purchase them. A major tenant for this school of economics is a lack of government restriction on the markets will allow the most efficient(profitable) decisions to be made<sup>53</sup>. Borjas has published several textbooks on economics.

In an economic article explaining the relationship between immigration and wages published on the CIS, Borjas writes, “immigration should lower the wages of competing workers and increase the wages of complementary workers, of workers whose skills become more valuable because of immigration. For example, an influx of foreign-born laborers reduces the economic opportunities for laborers — all laborers now face stiffer competition in the labor market. At the same time, high-skill natives may gain substantially. They pay less for the services that laborers provide, such as painting the house and mowing the lawn, and natives who hire these laborers can now specialize in producing the goods and services that better suit their skills.”<sup>54</sup>

George Borjas does not fall in line with all the strict anti-immigrant views that the CIS has despite his numerous mentions by the organization. Borjas believes that illegal immigration should be fought by higher taxes on companies that employ undocumented workers and giving those earnings to those who are thought to have lost their job because of the employment of these immigrants, rather than building a wall.”<sup>55</sup> This puts him at odds with the current CIS viewpoint judging by the numerous articles which supports the building of wall among the Mexican border in order to combat illegal

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<sup>53</sup> “Classical Economics.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 18 Mar. 2018, [www.britannica.com/topic/classical-economics](http://www.britannica.com/topic/classical-economics).

<sup>54</sup> Borjas, George. “Increasing the Supply of Labor Through Immigration.” CIS.org, [cis.org/Increasing-Supply-Labor-Through-Immigration](http://cis.org/Increasing-Supply-Labor-Through-Immigration).

<sup>55</sup> Bowden, John. “Trump Touts Fox News Report That Border Wall Could Pay for Itself.” *TheHill*, The Hill, 13 Mar.2018, [thehill.com/homenews/administration/378125-trump-touts-fox-news-report-that-border-wall-could-pay-for-itself](http://thehill.com/homenews/administration/378125-trump-touts-fox-news-report-that-border-wall-could-pay-for-itself).



immigration. In an Op Ed about President Trump's Immigration proposal of 2018 in the New York Times, Borjas lays out criticisms that are at odds with the current conservative platform. He stated his issues as “A wall is un-American and won’t work anyway; the planned limits on chain migration are racist; and granting amnesty gives the wrong set of incentives to potential immigrants abroad”. In addition, he wrote that “Those who argue that the wall won’t work have something of a point. Although a wall is a mighty symbol, and symbols matter, it’s far from clear that a wall would stop illegal immigration. Nearly half of the illegal immigrants are visa overstayers; they might land at Kennedy Airport or Los Angeles International Airport with, say, a tourist visa, then overstay the visa and quickly disappear in this big country... The only way to truly curtail illegal immigration may require that all employers use an electronic system like E-Verify to certify the legal status of newly hired workers, accompanied by sizable penalties for employers who break the law”<sup>56</sup>. This echoes the sentiments of the CIS, who have a large “We E-Verify” logo on their homepage and have several articles highlighting its importance in hiring workers in order to make sure they are documented. E-Verify is an online system that allows employers to see if a worker is documented or not. While it is voluntary, many employers under contracted work with the federal government must use E-Verify in order to ensure the legal status of their workers.

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<sup>56</sup> Borjas, George J. “Trump Sets Up a Grand Bargain on Immigration.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 2 Feb. 2018, [www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/opinion/trump-immigration-dreamers.htm](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/02/opinion/trump-immigration-dreamers.htm)

## Chapter Three: Meatpacking and Unions

This section is dedicated to both exploring the meat packing industry and its connection with immigration in the United States as a whole. Both CIS and labor economists that oppose the views that undocumented immigrants are the cause of worsening labor conditions for the American working class. It would be remiss to not mention the Enforcing workers' rights acts as a progressive substitute to immigration reform, as if undocumented workers are able to access workers' rights like their documented native counterparts, then there would be little advantage in hiring undocumented labor and those types of jobs would become unavailable to them, leading to decreased illegal immigration.<sup>57</sup>

Meatpacking production plants are mostly located in the South and Midwest, with just several firms dominating the entire meat packing industry. Immigration rates are higher in states with larger meat packing companies.<sup>58</sup> This could be attributed to the closeness to the border where many immigrant workers come from, as well as a low education and skill requirement, and a lack of regulation among the plants.

Martin Philip, a labor economist residing at the University of Davis California, has studied immigration and its relationship with the meatpacking industry. "slaughterhouse workers earn on average 44 percent less today than they did in 1970. And there's a whole story about how that's happened, how the big

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<sup>57</sup> Gordon, Jennifer. "Tensions in Rhetoric and Reality at the Intersection of Work and Immigration." UCI Law Scholarly Commons, UCLA, 2012, [scholarship.law.uci.edu/ucilr/vol2/iss1/5/](http://scholarship.law.uci.edu/ucilr/vol2/iss1/5/).

<sup>58</sup> Martin, Philip. "Meat and Poultry." *Importing Poverty?: Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural America*, Yale University Press, New Haven; London, 2009, pp. 85–102. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1npjgp.11](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1npjgp.11).

meat packing plants broken unions. Crucial to that story was the ability to replace workers relatively easily.” He finds that after the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 passed by the U.S, there became over two million legalized Mexican immigrants eligible to work. These immigrants were often ‘low skill’ and could not take jobs that required a level of education. These workers provided meat production work that was newly available due to advancements in technology and assembly line workstations that did not require much on-the-job training. Other advantages of hiring these workers was the fact that they would join unions less frequently than their native counterparts. By reducing union membership, employers had more freedom to give workers lower wages, unsafe work conditions, and less benefits, which allowed for expansion and higher profits for employers. This was due to the language barrier encountered by these Latino immigrants, as well many would return to their home countries after a period<sup>59</sup>.

In 1998 through 1999, Immigration and Naturalization Service agents subpoenaed employee information from meatpacking plants to see if there were undocumented workers as part of Operation Vanguard, an immigration enforcement action done in order to combat the employment of illegal immigration. They did this in order to benefit native workers by opening up jobs and the belief that they will join unions and increase wages and better working conditions. Of course, the results of this were not received well by many. Migrant advocates felt that this action enforced discrimination against Latinos as well as documented and undocumented workers, hurt the children of workers who were questioned as they could not work and therefore could not be paid. Even those seeking immigrant enforcement saw the action as only displacing undocumented workers, not removing them from the

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<sup>59</sup> Calamuci, Daniel. “Return to the Jungle: The Rise and Fall of Meatpacking Work.” *New Labor Forum*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2008, pp. 66–77. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/40342745](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40342745).

economy. By the end of the operation, over half a million to remove 3,500 unauthorized workers from meatpacking businesses<sup>60</sup>.

Is it true that if the number of undocumented workers decreased in an area, the jobs come back? After all, CIS and others voicing a pro worker and anti-immigration opinion have their point hinge on the fact that if one were to reduce migration, the jobs they “take” would be available for U.S natives, with the same wages and benefits they are used to<sup>61</sup>.

An issue of migration enforcement that has surprisingly not been discussed as much as one would think has been the effect of it on the length of undocumented immigrants in the United States. Due to an increased difficulty to migrate without being documented, Migrants who intend to stay in the United States for a certain amount of years to receive money and then return back, and repeat this migration of work have now found it more difficult to go back and forth between countries due to increased immigration security. The effect of this has been undocumented workers stay due to the increased risk of repeated trips to remain in the United states, become citizens, and sponsor additional immigrants that they know.<sup>62</sup> This has the opposite effect intended from in increased immigration security.

Economists Bob Hamilton and John Whalley assessed the productivity of low skill workers of poorer countries after they migrated to richer countries such as the United States, and found that due to the higher prevalence of investment funds and technology that allows higher levels of productivity, These migrant workers are more beneficial to the United States and the global economy at large when they

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<sup>60</sup> Martin, Philip. “Meat and Poultry.” *Importing Poverty? Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural America*

<sup>61</sup> Krumel, Thomas P. “Anti-Immigration Reform and Reductions in Welfare: Evidence from the Meatpacking Industry.” *Choices*, vol. 32, no. 1, 2017, pp. 1–7. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/90014641](http://www.jstor.org/stable/90014641)

<sup>62</sup> Gordon, Jennifer. “Tensions in Rhetoric and Reality at the Intersection of Work and Immigration.” UCI Law Scholarly Commons, UCLA, 2012, [scholarship.law.uci.edu/ucilr/vol2/iss1/5/](http://scholarship.law.uci.edu/ucilr/vol2/iss1/5/).

reside in the United States<sup>63</sup>. Granted, most arguments that argue for reduced immigration and increased immigration law enforcement focus not on the issue from a global perspective, but rather from those of the working class and the marginalized, the “losers” of globalization.

Something rarely mentioned by the CIS and other many plants are in southern states with right to work laws<sup>64</sup>, weakening union power, preventing an increase in wages or better working conditions for all workers. These laws are important to working class Americans as they What is interesting is when CIS had an easy opportunity to link a member of government, Bruce Rauner, who hurt labor rights, and was also pro-immigration. Rauner who ran on an anti-union platform in Illinois, put forth an executive order that prevented Unions from taking membership fees of non-union members. This would be challenged by the American Federation of State, Country, and Municipal Employees, which led to a supreme court case about this issue in 2018. In the Legal case of Janus vs AFSCME, The Supreme Court disallowed mandatory union fees for those who chose not to be a union for their profession on the grounds that this violated the first amendment.<sup>65</sup> The consequences of this bill are that Unions are predicted to lose power due to the possibility of losing membership dues from workers who now have the option of not paying fees, yet would still reap the benefits of anything gained by the union.

While the CIS wrote about Bruce Rauner when it came to his immigration stances, they chose not to expose how he directly hurt workers by stripping unions of power. This is somewhat odd considering their reasoning that in order to be pro worker, one also must be anti-immigration.

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<sup>63</sup> “Why We Need the Huddled Masses: The Case for Low-Skilled Migration.” *Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them*, by Philippe Legrain, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Oxford, 2006, pp. 61–88. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qh0hf.8](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qh0hf.8).

<sup>64</sup> Laws that allow union membership to be voluntary at a worksite where a labor union exists. This costs the union dues from potential members, and therefore weakens the union the member would be mandated from joining

<sup>65</sup> illion, Victoria L. *Supreme Court Invalidates Public-Sector Union Agency Fees: Considerations for Congress in the Wake of Janus* (PDF). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service. (July 20, 2018)

One of the largest producers is Tyson Meats, which in order to obtain greater profits, cut costs by constructing plants near the areas where animals were raised to be slaughtered and processed, using assembly line style jobs that reduces the need for training and skill, and placed its plants in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Texas, where union shops were outlawed<sup>66</sup>.

Another factor that the CIS does not touch on is the increased reliance on technology and investment previously mentioned has led to a change in how meatpacking and other “low skill” employers treats employees. While asking that an organization clearly focused on migration and the effects it has on the natives of a country to write about technology may be missing the point, at the end of the day advances in technology

Rather than train and retain employees, workers are more exchangeable due to the low skill nature of the job, therefore immigrant and other “low skill” workers are more desirable by the employers of these plants. This in turn increases pressure to keep wages of workers low to remain profitable as more money now must be used in order to fund the purchasing of technology that allows efficient output of workers. undocumented/unorganized labor is easier to control due to threats of job loss/deportation<sup>67</sup>.

What are the actual conditions of the meatpacking plant? While the purpose of this research is not be a sequel to *The Jungle*, Understanding the conditions of the plants and how they change can give insight

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<sup>66</sup> Kulcsár, László, and Albert Iarol. “Immigrant Integration and the Changing Public Discourse: The Case of Emporia, Kansas.” *Latin American Migrations to the U.S. Heartland: Changing Social Landscapes in Middle America*, edited by Linda Allegro and Andrew Grant Wood, University of Illinois Press, 2013, pp. 222–246. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt2ttb7h.14](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt2ttb7h.14).

<sup>67</sup> Cooper, Marc, et al. “WARNING: Corporate Meat and Poultry May Be Hazardous to Workers, Farmers, the Environment and Your Health.” *Race, Poverty & the Environment*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2000, pp. 30–33. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/41554280](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41554280).

into who they are populated by and why this change occurs In 1994, Donald Stull did a report from the floor of a IBP beef packing plant. "The doors to the guard station were marked in Spanish and Vietnamese-but not in English..."Next to the door was a large poster entitled "5 Reasons to Stay Non-Union" Underneath was a picture of cops in riot gear and newspaper headlines about the length plant closure and the number of people injured at a strike at the Dakota City Plant". Along with disturbing imagery of the meat before being made ready to be consumed, he mentions the presence of both Latino and Vietnamese individuals prevalent in the plant.<sup>68</sup>

When I looked up Vietnamese immigration on the CIS site the only thing present was an article detailing marriage fraud committed by an immigrant in order to reside in the United States titled "Disturbing Marriage Fraud Case"<sup>69</sup>. Another article by Jason Richwine, "Refugee Resettlement Is Costly" briefly mentions refugees coming from south Vietnam after the fall of Saigon during the Vietnam war.<sup>70</sup>

The CIS and their related organizations such as FAIR tend to focus on Latino immigration due to its prevalence in the United States and discusses the "ramifications" of an increased Hispanic population. The CIS focuses on "Central America", "Hispanics" "Latinos" in their writing, not a wide plethora of undocumented migrants. When there was an article on the homepage discussing immigrants, who did not come from central America, it was defending President's Trump's recent claim about prayer rugs being found on the border and its relationship to terrorists.

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<sup>68</sup> Stull, Donald D. "Knock 'Em Dead: Work on the Killfloor of a Modern Beefpacking Plant." *Newcomers In Workplace: Immigrants and the Restructuring of the U.S. Economy*, edited by Louise Lamphere et al., Temple University Press, 1994, pp. 44–77. JSTOR,

<sup>69</sup> North, David. "Disturbing Marriage Fraud Case." *CIS.org*, Center for Immigration Studies, 19 Aug. 2014, [cis.org/North/Disturbing-Marriage-Fraud-Case](http://cis.org/North/Disturbing-Marriage-Fraud-Case).

<sup>70</sup>Richwine, Jason. "Refugee Resettlement Is Costly." *CIS.org*, 10 Aug. 2018, [cis.org/Richwine/Refugee-Resettlement-Costly](http://cis.org/Richwine/Refugee-Resettlement-Costly).

What do Labor Economists think about the reasons for why meat processing plants have turned to documented and undocumented workers? Former Senior Economic Research Office at the University of Cambridge and Director of Studies at Applica, and Michael Broadway, Head of the Geology Department at Northern Michigan University discuss the reason for the increase in undocumented labor in the meat processing field. They reference IBP, now Tyson Fresh Meats Inc, is an American meat packing company who in order to obtain greater profits, cut costs by constructing plants near the areas where animals were raised to be slaughtered and processed, using assembly line style jobs that reduces the need for training and skill, and placed its plants in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Texas, where union shops were outlawed. This explains the focus of meatpacking plants in the south, where labor restrictions and unions tend to be weaker and having larger amounts of available land.<sup>71</sup>

Union membership has been affected by other events besides an increase in migrant workers, something that the CIS does not discuss. Union Membership among the U.S meat producing industry was around 45% during the 1970's. Labor battles and plant closing ended up reducing the salary workers received when they joined a union. This would disincentivize workers from joining a union, Labor battles and plant closing ended up reducing the premium workers get when they join a union, disincentivizing workers to join into union. Two Sociology professors, Bruce Western of Columbia University, and Jake Rosenfeld of Washington University wrote about the changes to the United States economy that had a large impact on union membership during the late 20th century. "As the 1970s and 1980s unfolded, U.S manufacturers also faced increasing competition from European and Japanese exporters in the heavily unionized aerospace, auto, and steel industries....By the 1980s, the unionized share of the workforce had

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<sup>71</sup> Broadway, Michael J., and Terry Ward. "Recent Changes in the Structure and Location of the US Meatpacking Industry." *Geography*, vol. 75, no. 1, 1990, pp. 76–79. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/40571938](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40571938).



been steadily shrinking for three decades....Some firms, such as Toyota's U.S operation, built new union-free plants in the South, far from labor's historic bases in the Midwest and the Northeast.

Subcontracting to small, specialized producers also added to the growing tally of nonunion jobs in manufacturing".<sup>72</sup>

The lack of the CIS using its platform to expose the often terrible working conditions of blue collar jobs that the CIS says it wants to protect such as meat processing plants and the focus on the undocumented Latino population versus other ethnicities lend to either the CIS being highly selective in its works and beliefs about immigration and labor , or worse, only caring if specific races enter the United States and not others. Either way, this is a major setback for the credibility of the CIS.

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<sup>72</sup> Western, Bruce, and Jake Rosenfeld. "Workers of the World Divide: The Decline of Labor and the Future of the Middle Class." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 91, no. 3, 2012, pp. 88–99. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/23217969](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23217969).

## Chapter Four: Interview with A Restrictionist

Jerry Kammer is a former journalist, Pulitzer prize winner, and current Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Immigration studies. The brother of one of my advisors, Keith Rosenblum is friends with Kammer, and put me in touch with him. During an email exchange where I was Bcc'd, Jerry wrote "I will be happy to talk with Jeremy Coppola-with fingers crossed that he hasn't already decided that I am evil because I believe in limiting immigration. One of the interesting dynamics of the current debate is that young people, in their often-admirable embrace of the gospel of inclusion and diversity, sometimes think that we should be willing to issue green cards to anyone who wants them. I don't think a green card is a human right. But if Jeremy does, perhaps I will learn something. I try always to be open to a good argument."

Before I even pick up the phone to call, Jerry has tailored his views so he can have the best chance of convincing me he is in the right when it comes to immigration. He worries that I will see him as "evil" in his introductory email and chooses his words carefully. He has framed his views as reasonable or moderate, while the opponents of his views believe in the maximum amount of immigration.

Within days of contacting Jerry, I was speaking to him. He asked me about college, what I planned to do with my life. As we spoke, I remembered two things; A. He was a journalist, B. A few days before I had received a notification that "Someone" from the Center for immigration Studies had viewed my LinkedIn profile.

Before I began to ask questions, he framed the interview in historical terms, “When I was in college, we had a very formidable generational divide. Nixon was in the White House; the Vietnam War was badly splitting the country. We were finishing a decade. We saw the assassination of JFK, MLK, and the violence in Chicago. And it was a crazy, crazy time. And now we have our craziness that's been amplified by all the effects of social media and identity politics and the divide that fissured the country since then. So, it's an interesting time to be a young person, but then I guess it generally is.”

I asked him about his “job” at CIS and how he fit in. To the question, He said “My title is research fellow... basically, I'm doing the same sort of work and committed to the same standards I followed when I was a reporter.... I started out in Mexico, I was a correspondent for the *Arizona Republic*, and that's how I met Keith Rosenblum... Immigration is a remarkably complex and interesting issue. I came to think for immigration to be successful, it must be limited.”

For Jerry Kammer, immigration is a working-class issue. It is not something that is based on race or stereotypes that are often used during the immigration debate within the United States.

He also said about the organization “While I thought that CIS was taking more conservative positions than I would take, I identify as a moderate liberal and still do, I thought it made a valuable contribution to the debate. Presenting a voice of skepticism. without denying the benefits that the benefits immigration brought to this country...

This was the reason he joined the CIS, his interest in voicing the pro-worker, anti-immigration viewpoint.

When I asked him about how the Trump Administration, he drew a sharp contrast between CIS positions and his own. “If Trump were serious about stopping illegal immigration, he would spend less time on the border wall and more attention to the worksite [Enforcement]. The border wall is a more vivid issue...and it doesn't do anything to offend his friends that employ illegal immigrants.”

I was surprised at this, considering the stances of articles put on the CIS website that argue for the wall and if critical of the government, it is because they did not go far enough in their immigration legislation. Here, Jerry was framing his side of the immigration debate as moderate, along with focused on helping the working class.

I asked him what the target audience of CIS is, he stated, "Boy anybody who is interested in the debate. I really try to write for a general audience. I still think of myself as writing for the mythical average reader. We talked about that in the newsroom, who is our mythical average reader. A lot of newspapers used to say that the mythical average reader has about a seventh grade reading, I always thought that we should expect more of our readers and so I write for those who want to understand the concerns of those of us who want to limit immigration, who believe open borders or even very loose borders would be a bad idea for the country...”

This was the same strategy as before, framing himself and by extension CIS as moderate in the debate, and those arguing against immigration restriction are the extremists.

Barbara Jordan was an American Congresswoman and lawyer from Texas and came to fame when she sat as a member of the House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment of Richard Nixon “During the Clinton Administration, she was named by President Clinton to head a commission on immigration

reform. And she spoke out in her characteristically eloquent voice saying that we need to limit immigration for the interest of American workers. We should not allow the labor markets to be overwhelmed by the immigration of workers you know, employers love a loose labor market and uncontrolled immigration... makes labor markets very loose and therefore has a tendency to drive down wages and make it possible for unscrupulous employers to exploit their workers.”

“If you can label someone as racist, if you can get people to think "oh my goodness" that person is a racist. No one wants to listen to the arguments of a bad person. That is what the SPLC and some other groups have attempted to do... And Barbara Jordan explicitly rejected that as she called for reduced immigration. She also called for an immigration system that was based less on family connections which it is now.... and another way of saying that of course is nepotism. Based on the ability for immigrants to assimilate culturally and economically. She was more in favor of a system more like that say of Canada... [which] as you may know, assigns grades for immigrants and gives them a point value, the criteria being labor skill, the ability to speak French or English; They're assigned a number value and people are admitted on the basis of their score. I think it's a good idea we should have at least some immigration on that basis. The old racist bigoted flags are waved in the faces of people like that, but we should at least discuss it.”

Throughout the interview, Jerry avoided any extreme stances or rhetoric. He kept repeating that these views were worthy of review and debate, not to be dismissed as something that is thrown away due to the perceived racist nature of it.

Jerry relayed an anecdote to me. “You Know, I used to listen to Cspan.... there were a lot of callers who would call in talking about how they were simply unable to compete with unauthorized work crews

from Mexico. You know, the ones I admired most were the ones who did not speak with hostility about the migrants but who clearly felt betrayed by the system and betrayed by our government. And I think our governments allow that abuse to happen[...]That was part of the backlash that led to the election of Donald Trump... yeah there's a call from a black woman who said [immigration] is completely destroying the black community.”

This story combined with his reflection on Barbara Jordan echoes the CIS’s point that immigration restriction is necessary to save jobs for working class black Americans. He was able to call on the words of an iconic black politician helped his case.

“ I saw efforts of some groups, most obviously the southern SPLC intelligence Project... (and a pair of people there named Heidi Beirich and Mark Potok) to stigmatize and vilify restrictionists, claiming they were motivated not by legitimate concerns but by racism, bigotry, nativism, xenophobia, just a witches brew of epithets”

I asked him about the CIS connection to John Tanton, the racist, pro eugenic Michigan eye doctor who had founded and funded the CIS. He replied “I cite the review that Francis Fukuyama, the famous political scientist Fukuyama who also wrote about immigration...he wrote a review of Roy Beck, head of Numbers USA, and it says that Beck raised important questions and deserved to be listened to... But Heidi Beirich says, no Roy Beck goes back to his ties and to understand Roy Beck all you have to do is see that he had a close relationship with John Tanton, and he is guilty of associating with John. And Canton, by the way, is not an evil man. I think he was a very flawed man. His initial interest came out of his concern for the environment and conservation efforts led him to concerns about population growth, which was a big progressive cause years ago.”

Jerry Kammer supplied me with an article he wrote that was available on the CIS website. In “SPLC’s Heidi Beirich: A Character Assassin Under the Banner of “Peace, Respect, and Understanding”. “Heidi Beirich has been instrumental in building the contemptible side of the SPLC....over the past decade Beirich as led an aggressive expansion of the list for the purpose of shaming mainstream socially conservative groups like the Family Research Council and the Center for Immigration Studies, whose staff also includes some moderate liberals like me who think the Democrats have lost their way by renouncing long-held concerns about illegal immigration. Her dirty work has convinced me that her historic soulmates did their work for the notorious French revolutionary tribunals, the bloodthirsty, zealots who sent infidels to the guillotine. Now she is limited to the dark but bloodless pleasure of issuing hate group decrees and watching her stooges rise in furious protest at those who dare suggest that immigration should not be limited”

Kammer asked me if I knew about the landmark immigration and labor case that occurred at a Holiday Inn nearly 20 years ago. “A landmark moment occurred in 1999 with the firing of eight workers at a Holiday Inn Express in Minneapolis after they tried to join local 17 (union organization of the hotel employees and restaurant employees international. The Hotel owners claiming to be surprised to learn they had hired illegal immigrants called the inns with agents and arrested the union organizing troublemakers. But the union rallied around the workers putting up the 18,000 it took to get them out of jail and mobilizing protest on that before their behalf. And that's what led to the lawsuit... And not long after that... The Executive Council. They asked to pass a resolution calling for an end to employer sanctions and for a sweeping amnesty. The historic shift was the lead story on the front page of the Washington Post where the headlines were ‘Unions Reverse on Illegal Aliens’... that was a watershed moment”.

When I looked up this event the first result online was a write up of the event by the Center for Immigration Studies.

I asked Jerry why CATO and CIS seem to have so many articles challenging one another's research and findings, he said. "CATO is a libertarian organization and I think one of its mottos is free markets and free people. So, in other words, let it all hang out. You know what, 'let it rip' capitalism we used to call that when it came to immigration, the 'skin them, fry them, and eat them' school of immigration policy. In other words, just let people come into the country as they want to come, and hell with the interests of American Workers and having a tight labor market, let the employer sort all out and let the market decide."

Here was the CIS blaming employers who hire undocumented workers in order to profit, but here Kammer did not blame the immigrants themselves, but their use in the labor market by employers. The pro worker rhetoric that I believed in, taken in a different direction.

When I mentioned I was part of my College's Student Labor Dialogue, an organization that is dedicated to helping workers on campus interact and bargain with their management, along with publicizing issues and protesting on their behalf if need be. He was ecstatic, "you know that is bringing truth to power, I love reporting like that just point out their inconsistency "so okay you say hey but then you also say please didn't you do? Do you see any contradiction their sir? So that's the Lord's work though congratulations."



I asked him about the Southern Poverty Law Center designating the CIS as a hate group and why they may have taken this action. Jerry said “SPLC did great work at the beginning. I mean it did wonderful work protecting the rights of Southern blacks in the late Jim Crow era. But then it got into the culture wars involving immigration that I regard as cynical and irresponsible and reckless... Heidi Byrick came to work at the outset[of social media] I think in 1999, but of course, we now have all the social media which allow people to represent themselves in their shrillest, most confrontational and insulting voices, as they decided that just disagreeing with someone isn't enough, we must attack their character and their humanity. As a guy who will turn 70 this year, I worry about how that's going to affect your generation.”

Jerry often relates his points to me and my generation. It helps his argument of restriction coming from a place of compassion. This is the CIS at their most reasonable; with Jerry representing the organization and this pro worker, anti-immigration idea, immigration restriction is done as a necessity to protect valuable Americans who need it.

After the interview was over, I felt odd. For as long as I have had political immigration, I had favored immigration amnesty, but I had been presented a view that relied on my leftist attitudes towards the working class. Before beginning research for this paper, I found my pro-immigration and pro working-class beliefs separate from one another. But Jerry’s strategy of linking his urge to protect the vulnerable working class and arguing for more restriction on immigration made me stop and think if I held inherently conflicting ideas regarding these two important issues. As the day went on these feelings faded away as I remember how even the blame is on undocumented immigrant workers versus the businesses that thrive on their conditions. I could see how this argument was something many could get behind, but I still have some doubts. Maybe planting this seed of doubt of my past views was what Jerry intended with this talk.

## Conclusion

I started this project with the assumption the Center For Immigration was using progressive and leftist rhetoric such as the plight of the working class and minority groups to “steal” them away from the left, at least when it came to the belief of less immigration enforcement and pointing them to the idea of more protections for America’s working class at the cost of decreased immigration, or at least increased immigration enforcement. Do I think the CIS deserves the mark of a hate group as the Southern Poverty Law Center gave it? I’m unsure. The Majority of CIS arguments focus on the economic perspective and how immigration hurts disenfranchised groups. However, I cannot ignore many of the works and words of many in the CIS, such as Director Mark Krikorian and contributor Jason Richwine who often focus on racial elements and that remind me of the xenophobia that I originally thought the entire CIS was based off. Along with this, their repeated connections to white supremacist/nationalist, anti-Semitic, pro-eugenic figures such as VDARE founder and CIS contributor Peter Brimelow, CIS fellow Jason Richwine who linked IQ and Race, their own founder John Tanton who was repeatedly proven to have racially charged motives for promoting eugenics. The Fact that CIS refuses to own up to is concerning if not outright damning it to the status the SPLC has given the CIS.

It is one thing to argue about the interpretative effects that immigrants have on economics (and their findings I tend to disagree with), but the racism and questionable beliefs that hides within the CIS (should) make the organization seen in an extremist and untrustworthy light. I can envision a CIS like organization headed by Jerry, an organization that focuses on workers and the disenfranchised, and sees immigration restriction as one of many policies designed to help these peoples. This hypothetical organization would have the convincing elements of CIS with none of the controversial baggage the

current incarnation of CIS holds. Would I still disagree with the organization? Yes, but I could hold a conversation knowing that the opposing viewpoint I am listening to isn't willing to promote racist rhetoric and accept any unscrupulous figure if they will speak out against immigration. But alas, this not reality. CIS might have the strongest anti-immigration arguments hidden amongst their weaker, racism tinged arguments, as they attempt to seduce progressives with their own rhetoric and goals order to gain support, but I cannot in good conscious call this organization one that deserves to be heard out due to all the issues contained within it. Even the most convincing (somewhat) united voice speaking out against immigration has tremendous difficulty shedding its racist roots.

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