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# RISEing Issues, September 2018

UNI RISE

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## RISEing Issues

### September 2018

#### “Child separation”: the grim reality

Collin Lint

Even though forced child separation from migrant families is not official U.S. government policy anymore, child detention continues to be a large problem along the U.S. border. Currently detention of migrant children has skyrocketed since this passing summer. According to the New York Times, migrant children detained at federally contracted shelters has reached a total of 12,800 individuals this September compared to 2,700 individuals in May (Dickerson 2018). A majority of these children are teenagers who have traveled alone from Central America fleeing poverty and violence. This comes at a time when the Trump administration has issued stronger guidelines for which sponsors are required to claim the immigrant children. Sponsors are typically other family members or friends of the children immigrating, yet this system has been exploited in the past. Such measures that the administration has imposed include requiring fingerprints from those who are claiming sponsorship. Yet, there are sponsors who are reluctant to come forward to claim the children due to the fact that they could be undocumented.

“Traditionally, most sponsors have been undocumented themselves, and therefore are wary of risking deportation by stepping forward to claim sponsorship of a child” (Dickerson 2018). The Trump administration argues that this is done for the safety and well-being of the children by protecting them from malicious sponsors. Evelyn Stauffer, the press secretary for the Department of Health and Human Services states, “Children who enter the country illegally are at high risk for exploitation by traffickers and smugglers” (Dickerson 2018). Yet, by continuing to keep children detained in these camps, leading Democrats have argued that there is considerable threat to the development and well being of the children. Mark Greenberg, who oversaw the care of the migrant children under President Obama, states that the longer the children are detained the more anxious and depressed they are likely to become and that “when that happens children may try to harm themselves or escape, and can become violent with the staff and with one another” (Dickerson 2018).

Efforts are being made by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES), the Texas Civil Rights Project, and other groups to provide services in law and translation to victims of child and family separation.

Interested in addressing these topics (and many more)?

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Meetings: Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

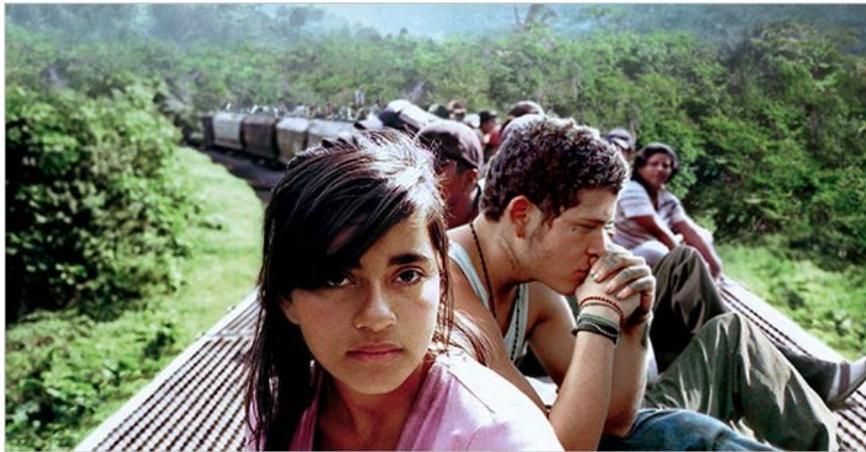


## RISEing Issues September 2018

### Immigration simulation

Kelsey Chidley

While illegal immigration is a constantly contested topic in American politics, little attention is paid to the actual costs, monetary and physical, that are expended by immigrants who undertake the arduous task of crossing the United States' southern border. One method of transportation from Honduras and Mexico to the US is by train. Freight trains running on northern routes in Mexico have served as transportation to thousands of immigrants who ride on top of the train in order to approach the US border. Besides the fear of being apprehended by police or border patrol agents, immigrants on this journey face countless other dangers. As reported by NPR, the trains themselves are often referred to as “La bestia” - the beast—due to the danger of falling off and being caught on the tracks (Sayre 2014). Immigrants often complete the journey on foot, by bus, or through any other combination of methods. Once they arrive, there is no guarantee that they will make it past the US border.



*Image from **Sin Nombre**, a movie that depicts a train journey from Honduras to the United*

On September 22nd, 2018, Dr. Cooley's Spanish Advanced Conversation & Reading class hosted an immigration simulation in the Center for Multicultural Education. The class researched the simulation by conducting interviews with immigrants who had made the journey, as well as watching documentaries filmed on location in Mexico. The simulation was based around 4 locations that an immigrant might encounter in their journey. Participants had to roll dice or draw cards to determine their next step. After the simulation, there was a debrief session, where many participants voiced frustration at the feeling of being subject to chance or the moderators' whims. Many of the participants, as well as the students putting on the simulation, cited this as an eye-opening experience, stating that they had never considered the true immensity of the journey that some immigrants take to get to the United States.

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