

MORALLY RIGHT, ECONOMICALLY BENEFICIAL & CULTURALLY ENRICHING.

How Immigration Really Works

The freedom to move is fundamentally important. It enables people to flee persecution, seek a better life, be with the ones they love or simply broaden their horizons. The biggest determinant of someone's life chances is not their talent or hard work but where they were born, migration is life-changing.

The economic case for migration is equally compelling. Just as labor mobility is desirable within national borders, so too across them. Allowing people to move from poorer countries to richer ones that have more capital, superior technologies and better institutions boosts their productivity and that of the global economy.

Although the biggest benefits go to migrants and their children, countries that receive them gain, too. This is largely because migrants are different from natives of a country, and their differences tend to complement local needs and conditions. Some are more willing to do jobs that locals spurn, such as picking fruit or caring for the elderly. Others have skills that natives lack, such as medical training or fluency in Mandarin.

Their diverse perspectives help spark new ideas. More than three-quarters of patents generated at top American universities involve a migrant inventor. In both America and Britain migrants are twice as likely to start a business as locals. Around half of Silicon Valley startups, including Google, LinkedIn, Tesla and Stripe, were co-founded by immigrants.

Migrants' countries of origin tend to benefit too. The money migrants send home—\$466 billion last year—dwarfs rich-country governments' aid and is often better spent. Remittances go straight into people's pockets, pay for better education and health, and are used to start businesses. Migrants who return home also bring with them capital and new ideas.

Migration is culturally enriching too. Along with often providing a greater range of restaurants in an area, it also leads to more creativity in art and music, more exciting football teams and a wider range of friends and partners.

Even so, many people oppose immigration—and not all are irredeemably racist and xenophobic.

They may be ignorant; skeptics worried about the scale of immigration tend to vastly overestimate it.

They may have genuine misperceptions. It may seem like common sense that immigrants take local jobs, until you realize there isn't a fixed number of jobs, and



that migrants also create jobs when they spend their wages. It may also seem obvious that immigrants lengthen hospital waiting lists, although they also tend to pay more in taxes than they take out in benefits and services, see a doctor less often and are disproportionately doctors and nurses themselves.

Many argue that immigrants are a welfare burden. Some indeed may be, as are some locals. But overall, studies, suggest migrants are typically net contributors to public finances. Young immigrants are particularly beneficial to countries with low birth rates and aging populations.

More broadly, because immigration boosts the diversity of skills and ideas, a 1% rise in the immigrant share of the population, low- or high-skilled, tends to raise incomes per person by 2%. That, in turn, tends to raise wages and improve public finances. It's not Donald Trump who makes America great again, it's the country's openness to newcomers.

Others point to pressure on public services, infrastructure and housing. Their supply needs to respond to increased demand (from locals or migrants). When they don't, the impact of austerity or planning restrictions is often blamed on immigrants.

What about overcrowding? Neither America nor Britain are very overcrowded overall. Most people live in cities and suburbs that occupy a small part of the country. While congestion is a downside of densely populated places—one which better public transport and new technologies can alleviate—those who choose to live in cities do so because they offer more jobs, more entertainment and, yes, more people to socialize with.

All developed countries have immigration rules. But to minimize their economic costs, the rules need to be flexible. What of illegal immigrants? Undocumented migrants do valuable work, pay sales taxes and rarely draw on the public purse. While regularizing their situation would reduce exploitation and bolster the rule of law, many object to their presence, arguing that a country has a right to choose who comes in. That said, if low-skilled migrants are in demand but there are no legal channels for them to enter, irregular immigration is inevitable. We should blame politicians for that instead.

Beyond dispelling ignorance and misperceptions, here are six quick suggestions to try to win over skeptics:

* **Personal stories.** People generally relate more to personal stories than to dry statistics.

* **Social contact.** Fear of "the other" tends to dissipate when people get to know each other. So getting people to mix more would help.

* **Appeal to emotions.** Opponents of immigration whip up fear and hate. As well as appealing to compassion for immigrants, supporters could tap into patriotism, arguing how openness makes a country great.

* **Emphasize what unites us.** Diversity is great; so is what people in a particular place have in common.

* **Appeal to other people's values.** Liberal values such as individual freedom and equal rights leave some people cold. But Trump voters may be swayed by stories about immigrants who fought for America; traditionalists may be persuaded by highlighting how Latino immigrants share their family values.

* **Address people's underlying concerns.** As well as pointing out that immigrants aren't to blame for unemployment, stagnant wages or stretched public services, politicians need to implement policies to address these problems.

Yes, some locals may lose out. But any negative impact on local wages or jobs is typically tiny, while research, suggests the impact is generally positive. So this is mostly a problem of misperception. Hardship due to industrial decline or the financial crisis is wrongly blamed on immigrants.

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Molehill Mountain

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You can try and grab on to the many heart-rending, or teeth-grinding, grower stories. Lots to remind us of the beauty of nature that brought us here in between sententious epigrams and philosophical musings. These are supposedly the threads which sold the film to unwary participants, almost all on record regretting their involvement. Some of these threads could be coherent, intensely boring, two hour films of their own. We hear that the film-makers sold their enterprise claiming the evolution/devolution of the weed industry as their theme. Hardly. Not with all the politics left out. To the Rolling Stone, they claimed it was all inspired by the high rate of disappearance in the Emerald Triangle. Others complain that they were promised some history rootedness to this enterprise, but all they got was some one-liners and old photos, with references to naked hippies. Naked!?! In those good old days the South Fork was lined all summer with naked hippies. What must the locals have thought.

The film of course gives us **NO INFO** on the crucial cultural wars that periodically rend the area. Nor the fact that a phony urban building code was violated 5000 or more times by hippy builders re-inhabiting the forest utilizing the innumerable *get-rich-quick* developments popping in every corner with multiple parcels of the 20 acre variety. This furnished the last gold rush for land owners after the fatal exploitation of lumber/fishing/ranching and before the totally unexpected, accidental, weed bonanza.

No mention of the hippies brilliant owner-builder campaign – **United Stand** – that up-ended any establishment plan to pocket hippy dollars and then send us on our way unhoused. The film mentions **CAMP** but not our response: **CLMP, The Civil Liberties Monitoring Project** whose court battles against **CAMP** put a legal court observer in our communities to oversee **CAMP's** routine violations of human rights, modeled on El Salvador and Honduras. And of course the film doesn't mention **COG**, Community Observation Group, the action arm of **CLMP** which borrowed from the Black Panthers' practice of filming cops in action. Nor the place **KMUD** played in alerting people of law enforcement's whereabouts on our country roads. It wasn't bags of weed that created **Redwoods Rural Clinic** in the face of a hostile hospital, but clever thinking that used the Farmworkers this time to actualize a rural clinic. And nothing either about **No Nukes, Central American Solidarity**, the campaigns against Nuclear Weapons and Reagan making America Great Again. No mention of the **volunteer fire departments**, the **Community Centers**, the **Independent Schools**, the **Mateel**, **Feet First**, **Pure**

Schmint, the Credit Union... all the institutions created with the intention of building a new society in the shell of the old.

No mention of **Reggae on the River** – in fact, no Reggae at all. What kind of Emerald Triangle travelogue could go twenty seconds without the dub vibrations of the hippies, with our proudly borrowed Reggae culture. We hear nothing either of our own world-class sound from **Rod and the Ideals**. *Thank Jah?* No thanks. Skip the hippy aesthetics that gave us white new settlers a black sound pulsing through our self-invented **KMUD** community radio waves. Or the dust raising open air Reggae concerts that made us pioneers of the genre. Murder murder murder – but no mention of the underlying hippy *peace and love* vibe that reggae music put forth, no mention of our partly borrowed /partly intrinsic themes of Babylon Redemption, or the way that fits into our far from phony religion of weed where Hemp fulfills the cultural place of other cultures' rice, corn, beans. Our Medicine is never acknowledged.

Nowhere do you hear the resounding shout of **EarthFirst!** There is an incredible absence of any awareness of the creation of the powerful **Environmental Protection and Information Center**, brought into being by the plan to spray us from the air with 2-4D, 2-5T, the infamous agent orange, which was already in the bodies of some of us back from Vietnam. And how the whole community united, both Humboldt and Mendocino, to stop the poisoning of us like rats in our owner built homes. No mention of our struggle with Reaganesque disaster capitalism in the form of Hurwitz' **Maxxam** Corporation. Nor of the martyrdom of Judi Bari, the world class organizer we birthed who strove to unite workers and environmentalist long before the **Battle of Seattle**.

No **EarthFirst!** also means nothing about our tribal consciousness. Make-believe Indians perhaps but our desire to add ourselves to the indigenous nations was primal. It led us to that bare-assed attitude to nature, a totally American, Thoreau-vian desire to Return to Nature, re-inhabiting the decimated landscapes. No mention of mentors like Bill Wapapah from the International Indian Treaty Counsel, who taught us humility and strengthened us in our 7th generation consciousness. And the worst missing piece from the film's soundtrack was **John Trudell** who was our bard.

Get it? What was left out of this film was Everything. We get a bad, post-Gold Rush hangover to remind us of yesterdays binge. *Marijuana Money Molehill Mountain*. Pure commercial distortion finally, *all for the money, by the money, of the money* – guaranteed to make us feel bad about ourselves when we're feeling pretty down already, not to mention suicidal. I want to thank my fellow **Waking Dogs** who made me sit through the series however because-

it inspires me to believe that what was left out is still here.

-Paul Encimer- aka **ThePeoplesWhistle**