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How did Barack Obama and his Administration deal with immigration policies during his
presidency?

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Abstract

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The topic of immigration has historically represented a significant area of concern for the United States' politics due to the increasing number of individuals that come to the United States every year and remain here unlawfully. The United States has promoted itself as an open-door country by creating programs and policies that welcome and protect the individual's rights of people from other parts of the world. However, throughout time, the number of people immigrating to the United States has increased significantly, leading to the implementation of many different immigration programs. This study was designed to analyze how former President Barack Obama and his administration dealt with immigration policies, and what new programs he introduced during his presidency.

Some of the most remarkable immigration efforts of Obama's administration targeted the deportation of individuals with criminal convictions, the introduction of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and the exercise of prosecutorial discretion. These programs' main goal was to properly channel government resources into the deportation of criminals, prevent the separation of families and innocent people, and the support and protection of youth and professionals brought to the country as children.

The programs introduced under Obama’s administration became some of the most significant immigration policies introduced by our government in the last decade. However, this study showed that these programs only prevented the deportation of thousands of people while temporarily providing them with a work permit. Obama's administration attempted to look after Americans' safety and well-being by focusing efforts on removing those who threaten our country and support undocumented families and children; however, most of his solutions were not permanent. They did not become law allowing future administrations to change, repeal, or replace all programs and practices introduced under Obama's administration.

Introduction

The topic of immigration has become a significant social, economic, and political challenge for our central and state governments due to how immigration affects our society. Our immigration system, the constant changes in its policies, and views have created a volatile political, social, and economic atmosphere (Hill & Lynn, 2016). Throughout time, all former governments have addressed immigration differently, primarily because, in immigration, presidents can veto or sign immigration legislation into law. They can also take the initiative and introduce legislation or oppose it. Lastly, presidents also have formal authority through their cabinet to enforce borders, deportations, and detention centers and control immigration courts (Hernández, 2010). However, this study was designed only to evaluate and analyze how former President Barack Obama and his administration dealt with immigration policies during his presidency.

According to Newton (2012), "Immigration policy has traditionally been understood as a federal prerogative" (p.122). The federal government has historically been responsible for overseeing immigration policies and procedures due to their duty of looking after national security. However, during recent years, the federal government has not made a significant effort to adequately address concerns that the immigration topic has raised (Blair, 2011). As a result, several state governments have reacted to this. They have used their authority to enact their immigration laws to attempt to solve some of the issues that immigration creates. Some states have introduced very drastic immigration policies unaligned with federal immigration laws already in place (Blair, 2011).

Congress' failure to address the increasing issues created by our broken immigration system and new state laws that aim to create immigration policies create tension and conflict

between the powers and responsibilities given to the federal and state government (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015). This conflict led former President Barack Obama to express his interest in fixing our immigration policies. At the beginning of his presidential campaign, he promised to take action on this matter. As a result of these promises, many believed that if he won the presidency, a sort of immigration amnesty could be created (Chiras, 2014). Many hoped that a program similar to Ronald Reagan's 1986 amnesty could pass under Obama's administration (Hernández, 2010). The question remaining is how former President Barack Obama dealt with immigration once he achieved the presidency.

According to Blair (2011), "The Census Bureau predicts that the nation's population will rise to more than 400 million people by the year 2050 with seventy percent of this growth being attributable to immigration generally, including legal and illegal immigrants" (p.203). In 2010 The Washington Post reported that about 11 million undocumented aliens live in the United States (Markon, 2016) and that an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 more undocumented immigrants arrive each year (Blair, 2011).

The United States separates undocumented immigrants into two categories. One category is those who entered the country unlawfully, without the permission or proper inspection of any customs and border patrol officer. The other is those who have lawfully entered the country through proper inspection by using a nonimmigrant visa such as a tourist or student visa, but that overstayed their visa (Delahunty, 2010). These numbers are substantially composed of families that do not choose to come to this country out of luxury. Instead, several of those 11 million undocumented immigrants living among us, came to this country looking after what our founding fathers wanted this country to be since its beginnings, which offers freedom and opportunities. Unfortunately, whether they come to the United States lawfully or unlawfully,

they are forced to leave their families behind without knowing exactly when they will get to return home. Thousands of people worldwide come to this country every year to escape violence, social and economic injustice in their home country. Although immigrants come to this country for countless reasons, their unlawful creates the same political, social, and economic concerns for our society and political leaders (Delahunty, 2010).

Background

A significant reason millions of undocumented people reside in this country results from our administration's past policies that have failed to adequately address the matter. Over the years, our country's immigration laws have changed often due to the shifts in our political, social, and economic views and climate. Cox and Rodriguez (2015) suggested that the historical account of the separation of powers has allowed different presidents to exercise discretionary immigration authority in inconsistent ways. The same separation of powers between state and central government has allowed states to implement their immigration policies, which often contradict federal legislation (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015).

The evolution of the United States' immigration system involves economic and demographic forces, social and political movements. This evolution and combination of forces and movements have prevented a consistent and stable immigration legal system from being established (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015). Since early in history, this country has enforced immigration policies that promoted the United States as an open-door country. Many decades later, our federal government finds itself to have lost control of the borders.

The immigration of individuals to the United States began to increase significantly after World War II (Kammer, 2001). Since then, several immigration statutes have been passed and implemented. Immigration laws reflect the country's current social, political, and economic needs and beliefs. For example, the Immigration Nationality Act (INA) of 1952, established as a matter of discretion, that presidents have the authority to allow non-citizens or people without visas to enter the United States with a parole permit. Former President Eisenhower allowed 15,000 Hungarians to flee the communist crackdown in their country, which led Congress to introduce refugee immigration policies and programs eventually. Other presidents continued

using this discretionary power and allowed large groups of non-citizens from several countries into the U.S. for different reasons (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015). However, after refugees were given priority in the early 1950s, they were removed as a preference category under immigration law in 1980.

As another example, in 1943, the Bracero program was created to import agricultural workers from all American continent parts. During these times, workers were allowed to come to the country during agriculture seasons to work on the fields and return home after the season ended. Administrative agreements created the Braceros program, and it lasted several years (Cohen, 2011). Coutin (2009) reported that “From 1948 to 1964, the United States imported on average, 200,000 braceros a year”—with numbers ranging from at least 107,000 braceros in 1949, to over 400,000 braceros per year in the late 1950s" (p.432). This program helped promote the United States as a country with open doors. Policies such as parole or braceros programs have historically allowed people from other countries to believe that this country is rich in immigrants' opportunities and welcomes.

The United States is promoted mainly as a country of freedom and opportunities; however, other immigration policies are not immigrant-friendly. In 1950, a communist exclusion act passed; such law condemned communism and any person that belonged to or affiliated with this political group. During these times, immigration law penalized or forced deportation of anyone found to be part of a communist organization (Auberach, 1956). The U.S. also condemned any person who belonged to a communist group but provided financial and military support to many Latin American countries that fought communism. This created a secondary effect of long-lasting civil wars, leading thousands of people from those countries to immigrate to the U.S. to flee the wars (Auerbach, 1956). As we can see, there has been a significant shift in

the type of immigration programs and policies introduced throughout time, and this was no exception under our former President Obama's administration.

Literature Review

As of January 2011, there were about 11.7 million undocumented immigrants in our country. A significant percentage of these immigrants face potential deportation each year (Chiras, 2014). An estimated two to four hundred thousand immigrants are deported to their country of origin each year (Das, 2018). According to Delahunty and Yoo (2010), undocumented immigrants make up about 30% of the country's estimated 40 million immigrants (2010). One of eight residents in the nation is undocumented (Hernandez, 2010). These numbers reflect a degree of concern from government officials about Congress's need to enact proper measures and gain control over our immigration system. This literature review examined how former President Barack Obama dealt with immigration and the increased concern about the number of undocumented immigrants in the country.

Hernandez's (2010) article "My Fellow Citizens: Barack Obama and Immigration Policy" was crucial to this study. Hernandez (2010) detailed how Obama prioritized and executed immigration policies during his first year in the presidency. According to Hernandez (2010), when Barack Obama ran for president, he stated that upon election, immigration would be a top priority during his first year due to the increasing issues resulting from immigration (Chiras, 2014). President Obama stated,

I am going to be fighting for comprehensive immigration reform, and we should not pose the question that somehow we cannot achieve that. I believe that the American people desperately want it. That's what I'm going to be fighting for as President (Hernandez, 2010, p.24).

However, by 2007 (before Obama's presidency), over 1,000 immigration bills were introduced throughout all 50 states had been introduced; however, only 576 immigration-related

bills out of 1,059 were enacted (McDonald, 2010). This explains the challenges that Obama's administration faced when dealing with immigration (McDonald, 2010).

Despite former President Barack Obama's promises to address immigration right away, his initial focus as president was the economy followed by healthcare reform. Obama and his administration did not give many signs of working on immigration-related subjects until after his first year as President (Hernandez, 2010). However, once Obama and his administration began to make decisions related to immigration matters, not many people were content or satisfied, especially those who had placed their faith in him. In November 2008, Obama appointed Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano as head of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As Governor, she made some decisions that were not in favor of immigration. For example, in 2005, she declared a state of emergency in Arizona because she stated that the federal government had failed to secure the borders and that she believed that threatened all Arizonans' well-being. That action allowed her to use up to \$1.5 million for Arizona border counties. She stated that she would "provide our law enforcement community with another valuable tool to fight crime related to illegal immigration." (Nevins, 2010, p.32). Indeed, her appointment by Obama shocked many and led many to doubt whether immigration would change positively or negatively (Nevins, 2010). One of Obama's first budget proposals as president was to maintain 20,000 Border Patrol agents for the 2010 fiscal year, representing a much higher number of border patrol agents in previous years. Between the fiscal year 1994 and the end of the fiscal year 2000, the number of Border Patrol agents increased from 4,200 to 9,212. Since then, this number has increased even more (Nevins, 2010).

Deportations

Cisneros (2015) explained that Obama's administration came to be known as one of the strictest administrations in many years. This was due to the significantly increased number of deportations, border patrol officers, and the heightened use of surveillance technologies (Cisneros, 2015).

Under Bush's administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducted several raids without targeting specific individuals, resulting in many noncriminal immigrants' arrest. Obama's administration, on the other hand, recognized that ICE resources were limited and did not count on the capacity of deporting all undocumented immigrants in the country at once. Therefore, he wanted immigration agencies such as ICE to focus their efforts on deporting undocumented individuals with a criminal background, representing a danger to our society (Hernandez, 2010). Indeed, Obama wanted to change the quality of deportees without focusing on the quantity (Golash-Boza, 2016).

Ironically, former President Barack Obama became known by many as "the deporter in chief," based on the fact that there was a significant number of deportations under Obama's administration when compared to previous presidencies (Jordan, 2016). During Obama's first years in the office, there were about 2 million deportations from the United States, which sums more than the total deportations before 1997 (Golash-Boza, 2016).

According to Tanya Golash-Boza (2016), Congress's funding and pressure led ICE to develop an annual goal of 400,000 deportations in 2010. In 2012, ICE surpassed this goal and deported over 419,000 undocumented immigrants, and in 2013, the number of deportations was even higher: 438, 420. Between 2009 and 2015, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) removed about 2.75 million people, the highest number of deportations under any other

presidential administration (Jordan, 2016). The increased number of deportations was due to increased people with family ties to the United States. About 90 percent of those deported under Obama's administration were men, and over 97 percent were Latin American and Caribbean nationals (Golash-Boza, 2016).

Although these numbers caused concern for those who believed in Obama's promises to pass some kind of immigration reform, it is essential to emphasize that Obama's high deportation rates mainly concentrated on criminals rather than children and families. He wanted to secure Americans' safety and well-being while also preventing the deportation and separation of families. He even disapproved of families and children's detention and made it known that they did not represent a priority to the government (Zug, 2015).

Prosecutorial Discretion

Despite having high deportation rates under his Presidency, Former President Obama took other initiatives to deal with our broken immigration system; clearly, the enforcement of the borders was one of them. However, he also made two particular moves that insinuated the federal government's good intentions to regain control of the system while also assisting those in the country undocumented (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015). One of the most prominent policies used by Obama was the use of the exercise of prosecutorial discretion which represented the prevention of deportation against people that are not a priority to the government or that as others describe it, the decision not to enforce statues with which the government disagrees (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010).

As of June 15, 2012, the exercise of prosecutorial discretion allowed government officials to prevent the removal provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) against an estimated population of 800,000 to 1.76 million individuals illegally present in the United

States (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010). Federal officials must often decide whether the removal of an undocumented immigrant makes sense or not. “A favorable exercise of prosecutorial discretion in immigration law identifies the agency’s authority to refrain from asserting the full scope of the agency’s authority in a particular case” (Wadhia, 2016, p. 137).

Although prosecutorial discretion has always been part of immigration law, its use became more widely known under Obama's administration because he wanted to use the resources available to remove those who threaten the American people (Cisneros, 2015). The theory behind prosecutorial discretion falls into two parts, and the first part is related to the economy. The government recognizes that undocumented immigrants in the country that should be removed and deported back to their countries are much higher than the number of immigration agencies and their resources can handle. Therefore, focusing on removing specific individuals is cost saving for the government and allows immigration officers to focus on removing dangerous people (Wadhia, 2016). The second part of this theory involves humanitarian practices. Many of those present in the United States and undocumented are also parents of U.S. Citizens professionals and children, victims of violence back in their country, minors, or natural disasters victims. Therefore, practicing favorable prosecutorial discretion in these people's cases allows the government also to protect them from deportation (Wadhia, 2016).

For the most part, individuals with clean criminal backgrounds, even if in removal proceedings, were most likely given the option of having immigration judges and attorneys exercise favorable prosecutorial discretion in their cases. In other words, many of the people in the deportation process with the court were able to remain in the United States without being

harassed by immigration and, in many cases, with a work permit that allows them to work lawfully country (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010).

Obama's administration used prosecutorial discretion to establish a stage process that enforced deportation. A Department of Homeland Security memorandum released in 2014 explained the three tiers of enforcement priorities for the Obama administration and all the immigration agencies. The primary and most crucial tier was composed of those who represented a national threat to the United States by being associated with gangs, convicted felons, or anyone charged with an aggravated felony. Studies found that 84% of individuals deported from the country in the fiscal year of 2016 fell in the top-priority tier, which means that all of those removed previously convicted of serious crimes (Jordan, 2016). The second-highest priority to the government included those convicted of three or more misdemeanors or one significant misdemeanor, people with several entries to the country, and anyone that had abused a visa or waiver program. Finally, the third tier consisted of non-citizens issued a final removal (Kerwin, Alulema & Nicholson, 2018).

Former President Obama was interested in allocating government resources and budget to process criminals for deportation but not innocent people such as families and children. Although exercising prosecutorial discretion in thousands of people's cases seemed to be a good practice to protect families from being separated, and save government expenses by processing people through the court system and deportation proceedings, many did not agree with Obama's approach to deal with immigration (Kerwin et al., 2018).

Delahunty and Yoo (2010) pointed out that prosecutorial discretion was not adequate. It was a justification of the government not to enforce proper laws (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010). They

also argued that Congress was to for Obama's prosecutorial discretion since the unfunded government could not afford all of the resulting deportation expenses (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010).

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the agency in charge of removing illegal immigrants. As of now, the ICE process about 400,000 undocumented immigrants for deportation on an annual basis. This number only comprises three to four percent of the entire country's undocumented immigrants (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010). Realistically, ICE cannot deport a higher percentage of people. To do so, Congress must increase its funding. Due to the high number of people that are undocumented in the country and that are in the deportation court system, Obama's administration felt that immigration agencies such as ICE should prioritize the removal of who should be removed from the country (Kerwin et al., 2018). Former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano stated in a 2011 letter to the Senate that ICE's priorities should focus on "identifying and removing criminal aliens, those who pose a threat to public safety and national security, repeat immigration law violators and other individuals prioritized for removal." (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010, p.788). Reportedly about a quarter of all criminal deportees in 2012 were charged with drug convictions (Golash-Boza 2016). The Supreme Court also recognized that the exercise of prosecutorial discretion was a vital tool to use, mainly because they acknowledged that it would have been almost impossible to provide enough funding for ICE to deport every single undocumented immigrant in the country (Margulies, 2014). Prosecutorial discretion makes enforcement of law and deportation more manageable and more precise (Margulies, 2014).

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival

Besides the use of prosecutorial discretion, former President Obama further demonstrated his interest in protecting families and innocent people from deportation by the

creation and introduction of a program that aimed to provide temporary relief to youth. In 2014, Obama announced the passage of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival, also known as DACA (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015). This program was created to provide temporary protection from deportation to undocumented immigrants brought to the United States when they were children (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015). Former President Obama announced his decision to start implementing his executive action on DACA, another form of prosecutorial discretion with a memorandum from the Office of Legal Counsel ("OLC") defending the constitutionality and legality of the program (Das, 2018).

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival was inspired by the Dream Act, a similar program that failed to pass at the Congress before DACA was implemented. DACA was introduced through an executive order made by former president Barack Obama. It began to be implemented by the Department of Homeland Security after it became clear that the DREAM Act would not become law (Margulies, 2014). In the early 2000s, several attempts both the Senate and the House of Representatives tried to pass the Dream Act; such a program would have protected youth. It would have created a path for residency and eventually citizenship for all of those who qualified. Congress reviewed the Dream Act proposal in 2006, 2007, 2009, and 2010 but failed to pass it. In December 2010, forty-one senators, including six members of Obama's party, voted against the program (Delahunty & Yoo, 2010). Indeed, former President Obama's support towards the DREAM Act represented an intention to keep up with his promises during his presidential campaign. He further demonstrated his commitment and desire to make positive changes in immigration policies by creating DACA and introducing it through his executive powers (Zug, 2015).

DACA consists of many provisions and measures similar to the ones of the DREAM Act. Both programs' main focus was to protect thousands of immigrants that, although they are undocumented, were raised as if they were Americans, have good moral character, and were educated in this country (Zug, 2015). Thousands of undocumented immigrants came at a very early age to this country, accompanying their parents. For the most part, they attended public schools, learned the language, and grew up and absorbed the American culture. It has been difficult for immigration to adequately address or penalize the cases of those who came to this country at an early age, that were practically raised as Americans but most importantly those who find themselves to be living in this country at not fault or choice of their own (Margulies, 2014). The passage of DACA was intended to protect about 1.2 million youths, but only about fifty-five percent of this group filed their applications when the program first started. By July 2014, about 681,000 applicants had submitted their applications, but only 587,000 were approved (Chiras, 2014).

DACA is a program that gives deferred action relief of deportation to youths and adults that meet the criteria. Under this program, the DACA beneficiaries are eligible to remain in the country with a renewable work permit valid for two years; any potential applicant for the DACA program needs to meet specific qualifications (Chiras, 2014). These included having entered the country before sixteen, earning at least a high school diploma, and no arrest history (Chiras, 2014).

All work permits granted under DACA are only valid for two years; the issuance of a work permit allows people to obtain social security and apply for driver licenses. At the time of renewal, each applicant has to demonstrate that they have continuously resided in the country since July 2007. They are also to demonstrate that while they were protected under DACA, there

have not been arrests in their records; otherwise, DACA gets taken away along with the work permit. In many cases, these individuals get put on the process of removal (Chiras, 2014).

As expected, although DACA seemed like a very fair and sound policy, critics of the program stated that Obama's actions to create and pass such a program were unconstitutional. As a result, almost two dozen states filed lawsuits to challenge the program (Cox & Rodriguez, 2015). Although some people thoroughly disliked the DACA, others simply had a critical opinion of how the program could have improved. Chiras (2014) stated that the program would provide relief to more undocumented immigrants if included less strict provisions. She suggested that the program be less strict regarding continuous physical residence since June 15, 2007. Instead, the program should have covered those that have resided in the country since later dates such as 2009 or 2011. About 90,000 more people could have been covered under the program (Chiras, 2014). Chiras (2014) pointed out the restriction of having entered the country before the age of 16 could be expanded to 18, helping about 180,000 more undocumented youths and adults be eligible for DACA (Chiras, 2014).

Other critics of DACA stated that implementing this program solely through executive means clashes with the separation of powers (Margulies, 2014). Margulies (2014) stated that although DACA is a sensible program, supporting such policy requires much effort because it is a program that violates existing immigration provisions stated in the Nationality Immigration Act (2014). He further compared DACA's passage with the *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer's* (1952) case. Under this case, the court invalidated President Truman's seizure of steel mills during a Korean War labor dispute. The court stated that the power to make such regulation was constitutionally vested in Congress only (Margulies, 2014). In the same way, Margulies argued that the power to make regulations regarding immigration, especially when it

comes down to make the assigned agencies not to enforce laws and authority, is a power that only the Congress has (Margulies, 2014).

Literature Review Summary

Despite promises made by former President Barack Obama on helping the immigration system and the thousands of undocumented immigrants in the country, his administration has the highest number of deportations than any previous administration. Obama's administration enforced the borders to reduce undocumented aliens' illegal entry by increasing the number of border patrol agents and improving the surveillance technology at the borders. Despite presenting a high number of deportations, Obama's administration also introduced DACA through an executive order, which allowed hundreds of thousands of undocumented youths to remain in the country while also working lawfully temporarily. Lastly, this administration also emphasized and utilized the prosecutorial discretion powers and allowed the different immigration agencies to use this authority to prevent the deportation of many individuals based on the government criteria that did not possess any threat to this country.

Research Gap

Based on the research literature, Obama's administration deported the highest number of individuals than previous administrations. However, minimal literature exists to explain why, under previous administrations, Congress did not set high deportations goals as they did under Obama's presidency. Also, minimal data explained that the use of prosecutorial discretion was part of the Immigration Nationality Act since it was established and therefore has been used by many previous administrations. However, it was not until Obama's administration began to use that authority more than usual that many categorized his use of authority as abuse of power. Finally, most data described what DACA is and what it consists of; however, minimal data explains in detail how this temporary protection program is not a law, not a path of citizenship, and a policy that is taken away can cause the deportation of hundreds of thousands of young adults that came to this country as children.

Research Question and Aim

How did Barack Obama deal with immigration under his administration?

This study aims to explore and describe how Obama's administration addressed immigration policies while in power. Especially because while promoting his presidential campaign, Barack Obama expressed a great interest in making significant changes in immigration policy if he was to be elected as president of the United States.

Since Barack Obama was the president of the United States for two terms, the researcher considered that the literature review needed to be condensed to specific areas. Therefore, the researcher reviewed the challenges that the Obama administration had when addressing immigration and three of the most prominent programs/policies introduced under his Administration.

Methodology

The data used to gather all the necessary information to respond to the research question was qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher considered that using these two types of data would allow the audience to understand how and to what extent the Obama Administration addressed immigration matters in the country.

Secondary qualitative data is also suitable to answer the research question of this study to explore and describe the impact of Obama's administration among the undocumented population of this country we must analyze any information available to us that best allow us to better understand policies and their impact in our society. To gather qualitative data, the researcher used the grounded theory and ethnography theory. The grounded theory allowed the researcher to develop a better understanding and conclusion on how the Obama administration managed immigration policies. The collection of data from several journals, articles, and memorandums significantly assisted the researcher to build a better knowledge of the most prominent and significant immigration programs that the Obama administration passed.

Also, the Ethnography method became critical for this study as the researcher closely observed groups and individuals that had and continue to have a great interest in the fair handling and development of immigration policies. The researcher herself has worked in the immigration legal field for the past five years. During that time, she has worked on hundreds of cases and with individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, and political opinions. Over the past five years, the researcher has had immediate access to individuals' case information and progress, and she has observed by firsthand the difference in the adjudication of cases while under previous and present government administrations.

Quantitative data is necessary and suitable to answer the research question because it is critical to identify the numbers of undocumented people that were benefited or affected by the policies and programs enacted by Obama's Administration. The researcher gathered numerical data through a survey to identify numbers such as the total of deportations, and the number of beneficiaries of the programs passed under Obama's Administration. The presentation of quantitative data is also significant in this study because it allowed the researcher to compare and contrast these numbers between Obama's administration and previous administrations.

In order to fulfill the requirement for the degree of Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management and Leadership, the researcher completed a survey using a questionnaire to explore and analyze how the Obama administration handled immigration while in power. Using a questionnaire enables for the survey to be easily available to all participants. The survey will allow all participants to choose to respond to the questionnaire in an anonymous manner in order to allow for more truthful feedback. The questionnaire will have a total of 16 questions and it will consist of two parts. The first part is composed of 6 demographic questions, the second part is composed of 10 open-ended questions.

The population of the study will be current employees from two different immigration law firms that have experience and knowledge of working on the cases of several undocumented immigrants under different presidential administrations. The number of employees from the first firm is a total of 32 and the total number of employees from the second firm is 21. Therefore, a total of 53 participants will be given this survey through an online survey tool named SurveyMonkey.

It is important to the researcher that all participants' backgrounds differ one from another to eliminate the chances of all responses in the survey to be biased by the sole fact all

participants work in the same work field. Therefore, since the researcher has worked in a managerial position in both firms, with the consent of head attorneys and the HR Department, the researcher had access to all participants' files to ensure they all have different biographical information, cultural and religious backgrounds, education, and experience.

The survey will be open for 2 weeks for all participants to complete. It will be required that all questions in the survey are answered and it is estimated that each participant will take an approximate time of 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

The researcher will contact the participants prior to taking the survey to explain the purpose of the survey and its review. The researcher anticipates that at least 75% of participants will complete the survey as they might be motivated by the goal of the survey to express their opinion based on their background, knowledge, experience, and job career.

Conclusion

Former President Barack Obama addressed immigration policy in ways deemed both positive and negative. Marielena Hincapié, executive director of National Immigration Law Center, an advocacy group, stated that "This administration has been the hardest-hitting on undocumented immigrants despite supporting immigrant-inclusive policies" (Jordan, 2016, p online source). Indeed, Obama's main goal was to utilize the government's resources better to deport those that represented a danger to our society to protect Americans' safety and well-being. He also supported and protected thousands of families from separation by allowing government officials to practice prosecutorial discretion in their cases. Also, he supported immigration programs such as the Dream Act aimed to provide a path to citizenship for youth and professionals brought to the country as children. Despite Congress's failure to pass the Dream Act, he introduced a similar program, DACA, under his executive powers to support and temporarily protect thousands of students and young adults from deportation. Former President Barack Obama indeed implemented new ways of interpreting immigration law.

Unfortunately, most of Obama's programs and efforts served as temporary solutions rather than permanent ones, preventing future administrations from maintaining the same practices and programs implemented under his administration. The issues caused by the number of unlawful immigrants in our country require the collaboration of our central and state government, the establishment of a unique and stable immigration system, and a significant policy that helps the federal government maintain control of the borders. Although former President Obama was not successful in fully recovering control of the borders, he showed an effort to address this issue. He tried to make Americans' safety a priority supported the growth

and education of those brought to the country as children, and used his executive powers to help many families from becoming separated.

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Appendix A

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your participation in this survey is crucial for us because based on your experience and opinion, we will learn more on whether immigration policies changed under Obama's Administration or not, and if so, the ways it affected our society. All responses will remain confidential and it will only be used for the purposes of this study. Thank you for your anticipated time in this matter.

PART I

1. What is your Sex?

- Male
- Female
- Other

2. What is your race?

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White
- Other

3. Do you or any of your family members belong to any of the following religions?

- Christian
- Catholic
- Muslim
- Hindu

4. Are you or any other member of your family born in another country that is not the United States?

- Yes
- No

5. How old were you when you began working in the immigration legal field?

- 18-25
- 26-31
- Other

6. What is your educational level?
- Only high school
 - Some college education
 - Had completed one degree or more (Associates, Bachelor's, Master's, JD)

PART II

7. How many government administrations have been in place since you began working in the immigration legal field?
- One
 - Two
 - Three
8. Did you work in the immigration legal field while Obama was president?
- Yes
 - No
9. Based on your experience, did the way in which immigration cases were adjudicated changed once Obama became president?
- Yes
 - No
 - I do not know
10. How many *significant* immigration policies were passed under Obama's administration?
- 1 to 2
 - 3-4
 - 5-6

11. Did any of the policies passed under Obama's Administration allow for more applicants to remain in the United States?

-Yes

-No

-I do not know

12. What was the outcome of most immigration cases under Obama's Administration?

-Most cases were approved

-Most cases were denied

-Half cases denied while half approved

13. Based on the number of new cases you and your coworkers are assigned, did you see an increase in the number of people coming to the United States under Obama's Administration and applying for immigration benefits?

-Yes

-No

-Maybe

14. Based on the cases you and your coworkers are assigned, did you see an increase in the number of deportations under Obama's Administration?

-Yes

-No

-Maybe

15. Based on the cases you have handled, were deportations under the Obama administration mainly focused on individuals with criminal activity?

-Few deportations were focused on criminals

-Most deportations were focused on criminals

- No deportations were focused on criminals

16. Based on your experience and knowledge, has any of the immigration policies or programs passed while Obama was president changed or been removed since he left the office?

-Yes

-No

-I do not know