Inmigración no autorizada en los Estados Unidos: impacto, representación de los medios y reforma de la legalización

Unauthorized immigration in the United States: impact, media representation and legalization reform

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Abstract
This article analyses the effects that unauthorized immigration has caused in different aspects in the United States (US), the media portrayal and treatment undocumented people and the legalization reform initiative receive by different media channels. Considering and contrasting different academic analysis and using contemporary examples in order to highlight the several issues undocumented people face on an everyday basis, the article offers an overview of possible future scenarios regarding the legal instability of the people affected by their migratory status and how likely it is that they will be offered legalization.

Key words: immigration; reform; legalization; amnesty; undocumented; immigrants; media; representation; portrayal

Resumen
Este artículo analiza los efectos que la migración desautorizada ha causado en diferentes ámbitos en los Estados Unidos (US), la representación y trato mediático que personas indocumentadas y la reforma migratoria reciben de parte de diferentes medios. Considerando y contrastando diferentes análisis académicos y usando ejemplos contemporáneos para resaltar las variadas situaciones que personas indocumentadas enfrentan diariamente, este artículo ofrece una visión de posibles escenarios futuros en cuanto a la inestabilidad legal de la gente afectada por su estado migratorio y qué tan posible es que se les ofrezca legalización.

Palabras clave: migración; reforma; legalización; amnistía; indocumentados; inmigrantes; medios; representación

Introduction

"The unauthorized resident immigrant population is defined as all foreign-born non-citizens who are not legal residents. Most unauthorized residents either entered the United States without inspection or were admitted temporarily and stayed past the date they were required to leave. . ."

- United States Department of Homeland Security.

Historically, the United States (US) has been one of the most preferred destinations for immigration. It attracts 20% of the international migrant community. From the US population (316 million), 13% are immigrants, without counting the U.S. born children of immigrants, not including the unauthorized residents (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

The US has been opened to immigration since at its origins it was actually encouraged in order to populate the country (U.S. Immigration Amnesty Information & Services, 2015).
In 2014 the estimation for the number of unauthorized immigrants in the US was approximately 11 million; half of it comes from Mexico. The numbers of primary and secondary students who have at least one unauthorized immigrant parents make up 7% (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

Being an unauthorized immigrant means having privation of public benefits such as health and education. An unauthorized immigrant is not legally allowed to work and any company that do otherwise can be severally punished and the worker's status can end up in jail and deportation. Besides, illegal residents have been subjects of discrimination by American citizens claiming that the borders should be closed.

In this paper the pros and cons that unauthorized immigrants represent to the US will be analyzed and whether it would be beneficial or not to grant them citizenship. The media representation of the unauthorized immigrants as individuals and the portrayal of the issue to the audience will also be explored. Following, the potential immigration reform that many politicians advocate for and the points that have caused more debate about it will be studied accompanied by the role of the media on the topic when informing the public.

Unauthorized Immigration: Debate
The presence of unauthorized immigrants has always been subject of discussion. Amongst the most discussed areas are: economy, security, human trafficking and health. Following it will be exposed the effect that unauthorized immigration allegedly causes in each one of them.

Economy
Illegal immigration has always been an important part of the American economy for being the exploitable labor force, which due to its status has to accept lower wages and no work benefits. Since 1965, discrimination changed from a racial base to an "illegality" based marginalization towards not only Mexican but other Latin American workers, who later would become more important to the US economy.

Most of the jobs that undocumented immigrants have in the US are in the following three categories explored below, and these three categories have many things in common: they are low paid jobs, with few benefits and difficult and unstable schedule and no job security. They also involve seasonal or night shifts and generally are heavy, unpleasant, dirty and even dangerous, and the three of them are essential to the functioning of the postindustrial US economy.

Agriculture

Among the agricultural labor force, 42% of the workers are migrants, 75% were born in Mexico and only 23% in the United States. About 4% of undocumented immigrants work in agriculture and according to The National Agricultural Worker Survey by the Department of Labor, approximately 50% of the agricultural workers was at some point undocumented (Lorentzen, 2014).

"In-Source" work

In source refers to a company closing down an operation and moving it somewhere else where it will represent cheaper labor, lower taxes, fewer environmental or health and safety regulations, or other financial incentives. One type of in source work is construction. This type of work is also attractive to undocumented workers for being a little more stable than agriculture (they are a year-round jobs) and they have to do more with machinery and manufacturing for which they are considered as a step up from farm labor to immigrants.

Service sector work

This kind of work is relatively new and has emerged in the last decades. In this category the following groups are identified: fast-food service, domestic work, newspaper delivery, and landscape workers. These new work sectors are a result of the consumption increase and of the entry of women into the workforce. The limited work options for undocumented immigrants have made them synonymous of food preparation and clean up in the US restaurants industry.

The rise of undocumented workers in the US has grown together with the rise of the invisible and exploited labor they have to perform, which in one way or another benefits everybody in the country due to the fact that it underlies almost all the goods and services used in the country (Lorentzen, 2014).

The argument that undocumented workers depresses labor market and creates more competition for jobs is weakened by the claims of those economists who argue that the low wage of undocumented workers can increase the wages of citizen workers. By increasing productivity, undocumented workers increase capital available for investment, hiring and wages.

Through their work, the money they spend and the taxes they pay, unauthorized immigrants sustain the jobs for other workers in the US economy, and by legalizing them, their wages and productivity would increase, therefore they would spend more in the American economy and pay more taxes, creating more jobs. Also, deporting the approximately 11 million undocumented workers would be far costlier than legalizing them. This unjust system towards immigrants gives the US a sense of legalized inequality. It benefits American materially and makes them consume more than necessary, something that is linked to the underpaid work of

undocumented workers. The high level of consumption of the US and other industrialized countries relies on the labor of workers who are legally excluded (Lorentzen, 2014).

Crime
A report made by the Immigration Policy Centre showed that while illegal immigrant population increased threefold between 1990 and 2013, the violent crime rate including aggravated assault, robbery, rape and murder declined by 48%, property crime also declined by 41%. Also, a report by the Public Policy Institute of California found that immigrants are underrepresented in the prison system. Critics on this issue argue that even though unauthorized immigrants broke the law by entering the country without permission, they are not predisposed to commit crimes (Riley, 2015).

Health
Every year, approximately 600000 Mexican migrants arrive in the US and 400000 are deported, however the same deported migrant can come back more than once. Additionally, 260000 Mexican migrants were apprehended in the border. This volume of migrants traveling across the border makes the region an important setting for monitoring the mobile's population health. From the health point of view, migration is a multistage process that involves five phases: pre-departure, transit, destination, interception and return. Unauthorized immigrants living in the US are more prone to contract HIV. Many migrants live in environments with more men than women or vice versa and limited social behavioral control. Undocumented migrants suffer loneliness, social exclusion, geographic isolation, fear, poor living and working conditions and limited access to healthcare, including access to HIV testing and prevention services. Given the amount of unauthorized immigrants that cross the border for the first or second time, HIV risk is a serious issue to address when talking about the border protection.

Transit is defined as the time that the traveler spends between the origin and the destination. For many undocumented immigrants transit phase happens in the Mexican northern border with the US. This area has been suggested to be a nexus of mobility, drug use and prostitution (Martinez-Donate, 2015).

Human Trafficking
The availability of cheap, migrant labor has contributed to the increase of businesses and households in the US, and the demand is constantly increasing. Unauthorized immigrants commonly fill open positions for nannies, gardeners and handymen. The fact that immigration policies have become more restrictive and focused on securing the US-Mexico border shows that what seems to be created to fight against human trafficking is in another way fueling it. Sometimes it seems to be pushing potential immigrants into the hands of smugglers. Because of the enforcement of border security, illegal immigration is more difficult, costly and dangerous, which means smuggling cost is higher and there are more chances for a migrant to become trafficking victim both during and after their journey. Human trafficking divides in different forms including sex trafficking and coerced labor.

Human trafficking is considered an immigration problem and many argue that the way to fight it is to create immigration reforms and provision of safe and reasonable opportunities for potential immigrants (Lorentzen, 2014).

Unauthorized Immigration: Media Representation
In this paper, media representation of the unauthorized immigration issue has two aspects:
- The portrayal of unauthorized immigrants as individuals in the US media.
- Approach of the media towards the unauthorized immigration issue in the US.

Portrayal of Unauthorized Immigrants in the US Media
Latin Americans represent 52% of the American Foreign population. They, as other minorities in the US such as Italians, Africans, Asians, Russians, etc. are subjects of stereotypes by the media. Stereotypes like "Asians are good at math" can be considered positive whereas other ones like "All Irish people are alcoholics" are the opposite. When a negative stereotype is used to promote a hostile agenda such as racism or sexism, it becomes prejudice, which is defined as the portrayal of a group of people in an unfairly unfavorable way.

Although Latin Americans are the largest minority in the US, they remain underrepresented. Only 6.5% percent of characters in TV is identified as Latino proving that they are under focused in the media, and when they are represented in the media they are portrayed as people with thick accents, perpetrators of crime, low income and performing not prestigious jobs, hence they look in a more negative way than Caucasians. It has been claimed that such negative portrayal towards Latinos affects their own self-perception and self-esteem. That is why as compensation, the availability of media channels in Spanish benefit the Latino community in the US (Ferguson, 2009).

Entertainment shows are good examples to see how undocumented workers are portrayed:

The Strain is a relatively new show broadcasted on FX. The show is about a plague taking over New York and an American doctor (Caucasian American) leading a group to fight the infected and find a cure for the disease. Part of the cast is Miguel Gomez, who plays Augustin Elizalde, a Mexican gangster who lives with his ex-inmate brother and his mother. In the show, Augustin performs the 'dirty jobs' involving dodgy deliveries and killing infected more than the other characters (Fx, 2014). This is an example of the many negative stereotypes that are being reinforced through TV entertainment in the US.

Positive portrayals of Latin immigrants in the US are less common but they do exist. One of the main characters of a show called "Modern Family" is a Colombian woman played by Sofia Vergara. Her role is a wife and mother. Although the thing that makes her stand out most in the show is her very thick accent, it is noticeable how, in comparison to other mother roles in the show, she is more caring of her family, looking after them and concerned about their problems (ABC, 2015). Negative portrayals in the media can promote prejudice towards unauthorized immigrants coming from Latin America. In contrast, positive portrayals can help non-immigrants to be aware and concerned of the issues that people who come to make a new life in the US face, and make them more open to integration (Ferguson, 2009).

Approach of the Media towards the Unauthorized Immigration Issue in the US.

The director of the British Broadcasting Corporation stated that television news is a form of entertainment; therefore, action events are more entertaining than other ones. Images of riots, bombings, earthquakes, massacres and other violent acts get more air time that people helping each other to prevent or fix the ones mentioned before. This choosing of what to cover is not necessarily because people on the media are evil but because they are trying to entertain the audience. However, by trying to entertain they are also influencing the audience towards thinking that violence or disastrous events are common. When news about illegal immigration is broadcasted, there will be more audience watching people getting caught while crossing the border, or when the police are performing raids than if the media show undocumented being helped by them (Aronson, 1972).

On the illegal immigration issue, media is a powerful tool. Acting in a chain reaction, the way in which news pieces are presented influences the way policy makers take decisions about the issue. The direction of the law is going to be mostly managed depending on these policies. Two methods are used by the news to persuade audiences:
1. The central route: Elaboration of information using facts and logical arguments to influence the audience's thinking.
2. The peripheral route: superficial triggers influencing thought (i.e. the use of cues).

In addition to the use of any of these two methods a contextualization of the story using examples is also important, mostly through story framing (Soderlund, 2007).

Most stories are going to be subject of framing, because regardless the objectivity that a news piece is written with, the writer is the one who is going to decide what is more important and choose one story over another, this fact allows us to see the bias of different media channels (Olesen, 2008). In 1997, when policies were becoming harder for undocumented residents, the media coverage was framed towards sympathy and appealing to the idea that society should help those lacking human needs (Soderlund, 2007).

When communicating, the style media uses affects its persuasiveness. It is argued that an emotional message persuades people more than a logical message. Journalistic standards require a news story to present controversial issues such as unauthorized immigration. In 2006, media covered a protest called "A Great American Boycott" or "A Day without an Immigrant" which called immigrant community to abstain from buying, selling, working and attending school in order to demonstrate how much labor from unauthorized immigrants is needed (Hamilton, 2006). In pro immigration rallies such as the one mentioned, the images broadcasted of people protesting, waving American flags and demanding an amnesty and legalization are an example of how news can show images in a way that they emotionally influence the audience and persuade them to support pro-immigration policies (CNN, 2008).

On the 15th of October 2015, The Philadelphia Inquirer released an article written by Michael Matza titled "Restaurants putting immigration reform on the menus". The article is about Cristina Martinez and her husband Ben Miller, owners of "Barbacoa" a Mexican Restaurant in South Philadelphia that are also using it as a platform to perform activism for the undocumented immigrants working in American kitchens. The article narrates how Cristina moved to the US to earn a better salary and improve herself. It also states how immigrants are

essential for the restaurant industry that represents $550 billion per year. Based on interviews made to restaurant owners, the article also shows how they acknowledge that unauthorized immigrants are hard-working tax payers and consumers who are willing to do low-level kitchen jobs that culinary school graduates refuse to do (Matza , 2015).

Oppositely, a segment on Fox News on the 6th of July 2015 hosted by Bill O'reilly called "The Vilification of Donald Trump" works as a review on one of the many Trump's speeches, and mentions statistics related to Mexican drug cartels smuggling people across the border, which is not secured and has not been secured since the Amnesty signed by Ronald Reagan in 1986. It is also mentioned in the clip that 72% of the inmates in federal prisons are Mexicans, and just after, it mentions a specific case of a 32 year old girl, Kate Steinle, murdered by an illegal immigrant in San Francisco, a so called "Sanctuary city" that refused to keep Kate's illegal alien murderer in custody. O'Reilly says 'Kate Steinle paid for that irresponsible and unconstitutional decision with her life' (Fox News, 2015).

In both articles there are used specific cases from a person directly related to the issue. The news article mentions the hard-working habits of Cristina Martinez and Bill O'Reilly appeals to the emotional message by using Steinle's death as a result of illegal immigration. These two media styles look to persuade the audience in two different directions respectively.

Another way to persuade a news story is by using key words. In immigration related news, some pieces use the term "illegal alien", whereas other use "undocumented worker". "Illegal" connotes something more than only how someone got to the US. It implies a constant break of the law disregarding if they have full time jobs, pay taxes and behave according to the society they are in. "Alien" is used for things that don't belong and are completely different, things that can potentially be hostile. In the other hand, "Undocumented" suggests that the problem is nothing else than a simple bureaucratic paperwork that anyone can be subject of and it doesn't even suggest the illegal entrance to the country. Also, "worker" implies hard work and family support.

However, the persuasiveness to the audience also depends on the knowledgeability of them and those who are more knowledgeable on the topic can potentially detect the media bias (Soderlund, 2007). Other facts such as patriotism play important roles on the level of influence media is going to have in the audience. Patriotism is the positive identification with someone's country. However, patriotism can be divided in two groups:

Blind patriotism: refers to the patriots who uncritically support the in-group policies and see any critics to the country unpatriotic. Constructive patriotism: without losing the identification to the country, the person who evaluates the country's policies in a broader way and self-critically looks for solutions towards positive change (Ommundsen, 2014).

Media in the US and its approach towards illegal immigration is divided. A study found that amongst media channels in the US, mainly Fox News is biased against unauthorized immigration causing the same effect in its audience. On the other hand CBS audience is characterized by the opposite effect (Facchini, Mayda, & Puglisi, 2009).

In 2009, a CBS report talked about children of unauthorized immigrants who had been deported back to Mexico. The reporter mentions the quantity of children who were forced to move even though they are born US citizens. It is noticeable how images of the parents assuming the guilt and mothers crying about the fact that they want to have a better life with their US citizen children in the US (CBS, 2009).

Another clip from Fox News shows how a couple of Mexicans cross over the fence between the United States and Mexico. While the images are shown the reporter questions that the Department of Border Security insists that the border is "safer than ever" (Fox News, 2015).

Based on the media persuasive tools mentioned before, it can be seen in these two clips about the same topic how key terms and words are used such as "safer than ever?" "Crossing the border" "crisis". Emotional appeals are also present in the specific case of the family with the US Citizen children who were forced to move to Mexico in order to not be separated from their families.

However, after the election in which Obama won for his second term of presidency some changes in the media happened in regards to the coverage of illegal immigration. From 2012, the way in which the media talked about border enforcement started to change. The issue was treated as part of a larger agenda of immigration policy reform but not as a solution to illegal immigration (Delimpaltadaki, 2013).

The term "illegal alien" has also modestly declined. As a replacement between 2010 and 2013 other terms started to be more used such as "undocumented" or "unauthorized". By 2013 only Fox News used the term "illegal alien" (Delimpaltadaki, 2013).

This different factors involved in media persuasion suggest that to acquire a complete perception on the unauthorized immigration issue, there has to be a determined fit between the media channel and the knowledgeability of the audience. The audience has also the power to accept or reject what they get from the media. Theoretically, if a person with constructive patriotism watches negative portrayals about unauthorized immigrants, it will be more difficult to persuade him to be against them.

Immigration Reform

In 1986, under the Ronald Reagan administration, The Immigration Reform and Control Act was passed in the United States. This Act was aimed, amongst other things, to the legalization of unauthorized immigrants who had lived permanently and without breaking the law since before the 1st of January 1982. This Act benefited nearly three million undocumented immigrants and stabilized their legal situation in the country. Critics to the passed bill were mixed between people seeing it as a haphazard and careless action and others as a humanitarian triumph (Orrenius & Zavodny, 2001).

After the reform in 1986, the last attempt to pass another reform was in 2007, which would have allowed undocumented immigrants to live and work in the US with a work authorization card. It would have also created a temporary worker program which required workers to go back to their countries after two years in the US and enter it only after one year.

The bill did not get the sixty necessary votes to pass and was scrapped (Council of Foreign Relations, 2007).

Historically, the US have benefited from their long history of immigration, which has increased economic productivity and the cultural diversity amongst American citizens. However, in the last few years, stricter enforcement practices at the border have been fueled by concerns about terrorism and illegal migration. In 2004 the budget destined to increase border security went from $6 billion to 10$ billion. It has been argued that these events have influenced American society and strengthened anti-immigrant hostility (Kim, 2011).

The solution to the 11 million unauthorized immigrants living in the US is one of the most disagreeable issues in American politics. On one side some advocate and appeal to the fair requirement for all the unauthorized immigrants who have stablished their lives in the country yet are unable to exercise their civil rights or engage any kind of integration with the rest of the society. On the other side there are those who argue that Amnesty is unfair and illogical to the national interest. It is unfair to all the immigrants who are waiting for their legalization under the rules and illogical because it rewards something the law doesn't allow and encourages more illegal immigration in the future.

The reality of the situation is that a legalization program is not an instantaneous process in which all unauthorized immigrants are granted legal immigration status and it doesn't forgive without consequences the fact of people having entered the US without permission, but it would, under specific criteria provide a pathway to legal status for those who have earned it.

But even if the majority of American politicians agreed in creating a legalization program, other issues are visible. The current immigration system has a "Band-Aid approach" which looks for a solution to the problem (the amount of undocumented immigrants in the US) rather than looking at the motives that make people want to enter the country illegally and stay (Gans, Replogle, & Tichenor, 2012).

A legalization program is not only about solving the actual problem but also to prevent from it happening again. For this, there are certain considerations to have:

1. Partial versus complete legalization: Partial legalization refers to legalization programs directed to a very specific group of unauthorized immigrants. Through conditions and very strict criteria some people are able to stabilize their legal status in the US, however the vast majority remains not able to apply.
2. "One Shot" versus "Rolling" legalizations: "One shot" legalization refers to the act of legalizing a large amount of undocumented immigrants only one time, an example is the Immigration Reform and Control Act signed by Ronald Reagan in 1986. This type of legalization would involve high costs for the government. "Rolling" legalization refers to have repeated, rolling-basis legalization. This would represent lower costs but it would also encourage increase unauthorized immigration.
3. Benefits of the legalization program: As it was mentioned before, a legalization program would offer a pathway to status legalization, but it wouldn't be instantaneous. It is a phased system which would first look to grant undocumented immigrants the legal right

to stay in the country temporarily, and impose stricter requirements for those who want to stay permanently.

4. When debating about the passing of a legalization program, there are points and counterparts which are precisely what have made the decision be far to take (Gans, Replogle, & Tichenor, 2012).

Economic benefits: The Migration Policy Institute argues that a legalization program would push undocumented immigrants to switch from informal to formal economic markets in order to satisfy workers demand. The fact that their legal status doesn't force them to hide anymore would also stop potential exploitation creating an increase in tax revenues and wages.

Safety and security: Unauthorized immigrants have to avoid any official institutions, such as health care providers or schools due to fear of deportation. This makes them rely in emergency rooms which represent a higher health care cost and longer wait times. Unauthorized children are destined to hit a ceiling for his education due to their inability to get federal tuition assistance or work authorization. Ultimately, unauthorized immigrants are scared of calling the police if they witness a crime out of the risk of being consequentially deported. A legalization program would allow unauthorized immigrants to feel safe and look for legitimate health care providers, pursue education and cooperate with the police if needed.

Oppositely, amongst the reasons to be against a legalization program is the position of other researchers that claim that it would increase national security threats. The US doesn't know anything about unauthorized immigrants and the propositions of a legalization program suggest that it would be rushed and disorganized. Therefore, it is suggested that it might jeopardize national security by taking a large amount of people whose backgrounds are uncertain. Another objection argues that by earning legalization, unauthorized immigrants would cause a disparate impact in poorly educated African American and Hispanic US citizens and the availability of low-skilled and unskilled jobs (Gans, Replogle, & Tichenor, 2012).

Media Representation of the Legalization Program Debate

The different media framing on the immigration reform debate are based on two main arguments: On one side there are those who claim that national security is threatened and on the other side those who argue that stricter immigration laws would harm US economy by reducing workforce. However, by 2012 the public discourse about an immigration reform has been more positive than before. This change also made media change its ways on how the immigration reform debate is shown. The discourse about immigration started to be focused heavily in an immigration reform including the Latino vote. Along with this it was considered president Obama's role in the effort for a change of policy (Delimpaltadaki, 2013).

Media coverage started to focus more on the reform debate noticing that the Conservatives started to talk about the need for an immigration solution on order to regain Latino Voters' trust. However, media only covered the issue focusing on the strategy to gain votes, leaving out reasons why Latinos cared about immigrations and Republicans' attitude towards immigrants.

An article on the Tampa Bay times titled "Rubio gains as GOP loses Hispanic votes" mentions:

Romney's defeat brought many lessons, none more stark than the problem Republicans face with Hispanics. […] Because Hispanics are the fastest growing group in the country and the white vote is declining, Republicans must perform better or perish. Party leaders have turned to Rubio to address a newfound interest in immigration reform, but Rubio's own experience tracks the gyrations the GOP has felt on the issue. Another thing covered is the never ending debate between Democrats and Republicans on the immigration issue. Media coverage was done assuming that no agreement will ever get achieved.

On an episode of CNN's Newsroom, one of the correspondent's states:

And it really speaks to just how sensitive of a subject this is. Yes, right now there does seem to be some momentum. There does seem to be more agreement than you have seen in some time about the fact that something needs to be done. But make no mistake. This is treacherous political territory. And her co-correspondent replied '...Thank you. It is way too soon to know whether this is really the year something gets done on immigration, actually gets done, but it's definitely got Washington talking' (Delimpaltadaki, 2013).

After Obama won the elections for his second term as President, Republican politicians made up 43 percent of all spokespeople in media, but for the first time in a long time, they were advocating for an immigration reform. In contrast, opponents to an immigration reform made up only a third in comparison for those pro-reform. Their discourse was based on the "law and order" sense and mentioned high cost due to illegal immigrants and a necessary enforcement of the law instead of changing it (Delimpaltadaki, 2013).

Conclusion

Overall, it can be argued that unauthorized immigration is actually benefiting the US more than affecting it. Unauthorized immigrants and the low wages they get are important facts to determine the price that the products they manufacture will be sold at. However, unauthorized immigration represents a threat towards other potential immigrants by encouraging human trafficking and facilitating the spread of diseases along the US-Mexico border and further. Law border enforcement is necessary to stop more illegal immigration but it is important to address immigration solutions for the 11 million unauthorized immigrants who already call the United States home (Delimpaltadaki, 2013).

Even though Latin American people are the largest minority in the US and the Latino vote is increasing, they still are portrayed negatively in the media affecting both Latino Immigrants and Americans making the integration difficult between both of them. The coverage of illegal immigration issue is exercised by using emotional appeals and influences the audience into feeling empathetic or rejecting unauthorized immigrants, which depending on the knowledgeability of the audience will have a major or minor effect. Though, in the last few years due to the increase of the Latino vote, even political opponents are advocating for an immigration reform and the media negative portrayal of unauthorized immigrants has decreased,

but unfortunately the media still treats the possibility of an immigration reform as far from happening. It is worth mentioning that even with the political changes that have happened in the last years, Fox News remains strongly biased against unauthorized immigration being the only channel still using the term "illegal alien" when referring to the issue. Based on the media tools used toward the unauthorized immigration issue, it is suggested that in order to get more audience pro a legalization reform, the image of unauthorized immigrants has to be treated in a more positive way and highlighting their contribution to the American society. This can potentially improve the perception of unauthorized immigrants in the US leading to people's support towards a legalization reform and ultimately influencing the policy decision makers.

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