

**"Immigration and the Golden Rule:
Should wealthier nations have closed borders?"**

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1. Background

It was during my two years of living in Dominican Republic that I encountered firsthand the ills of immigration in the context of hating the other. There was great resentment from Dominicans towards their Haitian neighbors. For many, this resentment seems justified as the nation has had a tumultuous relationship with its neighbor and has grown frustrated with the many Haitians who have crossed the border illegally.

The Island of Hispaniola is shared by two very different countries heading in two different directions. The first, Haiti, is deeply rooted in its African tradition and its French heritage from the early French colonization. The second, Dominican Republic is bent on eradicating its African connection and relies on the fragments of the days of Spanish colonization to reverse this unwanted African influence, and of late, the Haitian influence. There is the constant need to separate *los blancos* from *los negros*.

Although sharing a border, the countries are poles apart on the economic spectrum. The Dominican Republic is one of the most developed of the developing countries of the Caribbean while Haiti remains the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. Many Haitians turn to their neighbor seeking solace from their hopeless economic situation back in Haiti. However, over the years the issue of migration has been a point of bitterness at many intervals on a long tumultuous history, and at times, obliterated civil relationship between governments and even between people.

It is this experience that got me interested in the immigration debate. I have seen how convoluted the arguments can be and that the rhetoric surrounding the immigration argument

is usually focused on the negative impacts, real or not, rather than aiming to fully understand the phenomenon. With this in mind, in this paper I seek to give a balanced evaluation of the impacts of migrants on host countries.

2. Introduction

At the end of the year 2015, the United Nations (UN) reports that the number of worldwide migrants—persons living outside of their country of birth—to be over 244 million people. This is up from the 2010 figure of 222 million and 191 million in 2005. With the shrinking of the world with the flow of information and ease of travel, migration has become a reality that affects almost all corners of the globe, whether it is the receiving countries, the sending countries or consumers of the goods and services that the cheaper migrant labor produces. In 2015, migrants from developing countries living in developed countries send an estimated U.S. \$444 billion in remittances. These funds are used to finance the education, housing, healthcare, food, etc. for family members of migrants, while also helping developing countries in a building up of a much-needed foreign currency for international trade. Host countries are usually beneficiaries of migrants as they fill labor vacancies, foster the development and maintenance of industries, and working for less money and for longer hours often times in worse conditions than local workers.

The United States, because of its prosperity and proximity to several poor countries, it has attracted numerous immigrants. According to the UN, the U.S. has 47 million migrants or 19 percent of the world's total migrants. Like the USA, the Dominican Republic is flooded with migrants; however, almost one hundred percent are from their neighbor, Haiti. Just like many

Central Americans are going to the U.S, they migrate seeking jobs in the hoping of providing a better life for their families.

The complexity of migration raises several questions, which includes the best ways of dealing with those who are forced to migrate. The debate is on as how best wealthier nations can help poorer nations. Is it by sending aid—in the form of money, food, or other needed materials? Or should nations be openly welcoming to migrants and help in assimilating them into their society? It is this debate that I seek to give a perspective using the Golden Rule.

Developing a definition for a migrant has proven to be difficult. However, for this paper, the definition of a *migrant* is a person living in a state other than his or her habitual place of residence temporarily or permanently without adequate legal documents and protecting from the state in which they are in¹.

In the “Ethics of Immigration”, Veit Bader states that “migration is the geographical movement of people in order to settle in other places for longer periods of time” (Bader). The immigration process takes place in three fundamental stages as outlined by Bader: (i) emigration, (ii) first admission, and (iii) the different stages of incorporation.

Several philosophers argue that sovereign states have no duty to admit migrants and it is solely up to the states to decide if they want to offer help to strangers at their borders. However, others argue that nations always have a moral obligation to help those who are in need, and therefore ought to help those come seeking help. The communitarian philosopher

¹ It is worth noting that this does not includes refugees as defined by the United Nations, tourists, or temporary legal workers.

places the ultimate value on the nation and argues that a state's sole responsibility is to its citizens while the cosmopolitan sees the entire world as a home for humanity, therefore, everyone has a responsibility to care for the global good. However, with this philosophical issue, what are Christian philosophers saying? In solving the issue of migration, of what influence is Mt 25:40- "...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (New American Bible)² in shaping the views of these philosophers. Augustine calls us to love all those who we see, not because we just want to love them, but rather love them because God is present in them. With this, isn't it clear that as Christians, there is an obligation to care for all those with whom we come in contact? Is this limited to caring for Christians?

The Golden Rule (GR) is embraced by Christians and other world religions and forms a globalized ethic, which stresses the humanist approach of the ethic of reciprocity, that is, one should always treat another in the way in which they themselves would wish that they are treated if in the similar situation.

The norms of international law, as stipulated in documents such as those issued by the UN³, state that persons have a right to emigrate, but not the right to migrate to a particular country. But the right to emigrate must be coupled with the duty to receive immigrants. If not, of what value is the right to migrate if there is no duty to receive migrants? Over the years, the Roman Catholic Church has urged its members to treat the stranger with respect, and to remember that "you" were once a stranger (Lev 19:34). **In this paper, I seek to answer the**

² All scriptures passages are taken from the New American Bible Version.

³ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

question of how a GR approach ought to shape the way in which countries deal with the issue of migration while defending the position that a Catholic-Christian philosopher and any embracer of the GR (in present conditions) cannot support a closed border.

I will visit several philosophical arguments for open and closed borders. These will include the view of Christians in support of a state's right to close its borders and the Christian view as to why a state needs to have an open border. Then, I will look at factual claims against the presence of migrants in receiving countries. Finally, I will look at the Golden Rule and its applicability to the migration debate. In this section, I will introduce and develop KITA—an acronym designed by the philosopher Harry Gensler, which is designed specifically to facilitate the proper application of the Golden Rule.

3. Moral Arguments for Closed borders

A *closed border* is defined as a border that prevents the movement of migrants from one jurisdiction (country) into another, with limited or no exceptions associated with the movement. Such a border would be equipped with fences, walls, and gates to be opened for extreme circumstances. This goes steps further than what would be a *controlled border* where movement of persons is allowed, though with great restrictions.

The so-called political realist argues that nation states are not constrained by any one particular morality in dealing with foreign nations and foreigners. This develops from the Hobbesian perception that morality consists solely of contracts that are binding only in the presence of a sovereign who is able to enforce penalties. Without a world sovereign, who is capable of punishing states should they break such contract governing a universal approach to

immigration policy, states cannot be morally bound by any punitive contracts (*Stanford Philosophy Encyclopedia*). Thus, the realist argues that a nation has all the right to orient their dealings with foreigners in whatever way they deem necessary. Through the lens of the realist, there can be no duties of any kind owed to foreign states or their citizens, and thus, no duty to have an open border. In other words, the sovereign state has the absolute right to control its border.

Sovereignty can be defined as the absolute authority to govern in a given territory. The United Nations accepts this definition for all nations with legitimate governments that are in compliance with international treaties and laws. Legitimate political nations are morally entitled to self-determination. The philosopher Michael Walzer endorses the position that a state's manifestation of self-determination is the ability to publicly control its borders by regulating immigration in accordance with national priorities. This encompasses three basic premises, "(i) legitimate states have a right to political self-determination, (ii) freedom of association is an essential component of self-determination, and (iii) freedom of association entitles one to refuse to associate with others" (Wellman 10). As we accept an individual's personal self-determination so too should one be willing to accept a state's absolute right to self-determination; that is, screening thoroughly as it deems necessary before deciding if it wants to associate itself with particular individuals. The right to vet foreigners seeking admission is simply a component of a right to self-determination.

Stuart White argues that the right to freedom of association includes the right to choose with whom to associate, and the right to exclude others (White). This is with the aim of conserving order. States limit entrance even at the cost of total freedom of its citizens as they

are unable to invite foreigners at will to their property. This is simply the cost of preventing anarchy. There is a price to order which must be paid. For states, this price is limiting its citizens to whom they are able to invite onto their property. The state is able to justify this action by asking the question of proportionality. That is—if citizens are free to invite whomever they wish, and grant entrance, is the overall burden on the state greater than the burden that would be on individuals if the same freedom is prevented or limited? Wellman argues that there is a general misconception of individual right being perfect and absolute and that being limited in certain aspects is still compatible with the general concept of right (*Wellman and Cole, Debating the Ethics of Immigration 87*). Within the context of a right, the best conditions must be provided for one to exercise that right, and in the case of the right to invite foreigners, the state must limit this right for the collective good. He further argues that immigration laws place a greater restriction on foreigners than it does on locals. Thus, the state is not violating the right of its citizen, rather, just not extending the right to an outsider. As earlier stated, the proponents of closed borders argue that there's no moral obligation for this to be allowed by a state as caring for the outsider could be considered to be at the discretion of the state. However, even if we accept the argument that a state has a right to develop its own immigration policy and ought not be forced by an outside entity to accept a particular immigration policy, the general duty to help needy others ought to make it morally obligated for states to let in those who are in need, once it can do so without seriously crippling its ability to care for its citizens.

Wellman argues that those in control have the right to prevent the free flow of immigrants in the best interest of the state, even if the general populous desires it, or there is a

global demand to help those in need. He goes on to argue that instead of opening borders, wealthy countries would be more inclined, in an effort for global solidarity, to help poorer countries if there were more preventative measures against migrants of these countries invading their territories. The presence of these immigrants forces the host countries to spend more time and resources combating their presence as opposed to using this energy and resource for the benefit of these poorer countries. I have not seen any factual evidence for this; however, there have been some echoes of this in the U.S. with regards to its relationship with Mexico. According to Heyer, the constant flow of immigrants has paralyzed immigration reform as resources are used constantly to combat *illegal migrants* (Heyer 134). Also, closing the borders would supposedly give more incentive to the governments of these poorer countries to act on their own. On the other hand, if they have free movement, more would leave the country, and this is not a guarantee that the ones who remain would be left in better positions.

One must be conscious of the reality that there cannot be any single global policy to immigration. Rather, each state must determine their individual immigration policy, not only because they are sovereign states, but also the fact that each country knows its capacity. Any universal approach would find it difficult-to-impossible to find a method of determining who does what, who take what immigrants, and what numbers. If the head of a state is forced to receive migrants, would it be totally off to ask for the 'best' of the lot? As seen, the arguments for a closed border highlight the importance of political sovereignty, the legitimacy of a state developing its own policy on immigration, and the need to protect its citizens, especially when considering factors such as limited resources and sustainability of its resources.

4. Moral Arguments for Open borders

An *open border* is defined as a border, which enables movement between two sovereign states with little to no restrictions on movement. With this, it allows the free movement of persons across sovereign borders. The term refers solely to the free movement of people and not necessarily of goods and services. It should be noted that my definition of open borders does not eliminate the possibility of restriction. I concede that even though receiving countries have an obligation to migrants, they do have a greater obligation to their citizens and therefore in order to protect its own people, culture, and political structure, countries may restrict the total number of immigrants and exclude potentially harmful immigrants. Also, countries in specific cases may prioritize immigrants with certain needed skills. However, the onus is on the countries to justify the reasons for exclusion and selecting special immigrants.

The question of why we are to have open borders has been constantly asked and is the consternation of many “flourishing” countries that are seen to be the popular destinations for many seeking to escape the struggles of their own countries. Persons migrate for political reasons, the need for work, and the need to fight poverty among numerous other reasons. The arguments for the duty to have open borders come from various ideologies; most tend to focus on the ethical reason for an open border, that of recognizing the fundamental human right to a decent life, even if that means to migrate. There are two central questions at stake that are constantly asked: (i) what can morally justify a state in restricting immigration, and (ii) what gives a state the right to control immigrants?

The answers to both questions revolve around the concept of sovereignty—a state possessing the power of self-determination and deciding unilaterally on its way of proceeding in all aspects of governance, which includes immigration policy. I am willing to concede that sovereignty gives the state the right to control immigrants; however, has very little to do with which policy it morally ought to take in restricting immigrants. The policy that it ought to morally formulate, should be based on the needs of people—those inside and those seeking to immigrate.

In addition, many, including Phillip Cole have argued that this simplistic view of sovereignty, that is, absolute power to self-determination, is neither inconsistent nor irrational in a globalized world where the right to freedom of movement can only be valuable if it is matched with the right to enter. Cole argues that the human right to freedom of movement should supersede a unilateral right to a migration policy (*Wellman and Cole 52*). This shows two generally accepted conclusions, the right to movement⁴ is in itself is a fundamental moral right as it provides the axis for other basic rights, that is, rights to which all humans are morally entitled, as outlined by the philosopher Maurice Cranston in his book, *What are human Rights: rights that can only be fulfilled if it is complemented with the right to enter.*

Envisioning an open border for the movement of people has proved to be laced with complexities. One would assume that all libertarians and egalitarians would defend of open borders. However, this has not been the case as several libertarians and egalitarians find

⁴ Exten Kees Groenendijk, Elspeth Guild, and Sergio Carrera, *Illiberal Liberal States: Immigration, Citizenship and Integration in the EU* (2013), p. 206: “Freedom of movement did not only amount to the right to travel freely, to take up residence and to work, but also involved the enjoyment of a legal status characterized by security of residence, the right to family reunification and the right to be treated equally with nationals.”

themselves supporting closed borders. For this reason, there is a call for libertarians and egalitarians to be consistent in their worldviews, which, resulting from their common view of liberty, would result in a greater push for open borders. The egalitarian believes in the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities. Thus, the migrants should be offered this freedom as well. While the libertarian seeks to maximize political freedom and autonomy, emphasizing freedom of choice, voluntary association, and individual judgment. And since citizens are affected by immigration policies, the government ought not to impose closed borders. However, the basic notions of freedom held by both ideologies seem to become opaque when it comes to the concept of immigration—more so with open borders. The argument is, just as there are free exit and entry of commodities, labor/migrants should be allowed to move freely. Several experts have argued that the free movement of people fits in perfectly with the idea of free movement of goods and services. One such expert is the economist Howard Chang, whose equilibrium theory argues for a liberalized immigration based on three perspectives: *particularist* national economic welfare, the welfare of immigrants, and global economic welfare (Chang).

The cosmopolitan egalitarian combines the moral insight that all humans, whether they are nationals or foreigners, are equally deserving of moral consideration. The minimum view of an egalitarian perspective is that each person has enough for survival, that is, basic rights are met. In today's world, the inequality between nations is astounding. It forces one to ask what makes an individual born in Australia without doing anything privy to a higher standard of living than a person born in Zimbabwe? One answer to that is *luck*. In today's world, we often associate our successes with hard work and frown upon the idea that *sheer luck* is a possibility

for our successes. But, often, luck plays an important part, not taking away from hard work, but certain situations increase one's chances of success. Professor Robert Frank of Cornell University, in an article in the *Atlantic* "Why Luck Matters More than you Think," shares the story of him playing tennis with a friend, and suffering a heart attack. He cites the statistics that over 90% of persons who suffered what he did, don't usually survive and most who do are with significant impairments. However, he concludes that he was lucky that day as an ambulance, that is usually about 30 mins away, was couple blocks away so the EMT was able to revive him and after four days, he was back playing tennis. He is willing to accept that it was *luck* that saved him. He was lucky that the ambulance was close by, also, he's lucky that he is living in the U.S., where there are adequate medical resources and the infrastructure is there to offer this support. If he was in Haiti, he probably wouldn't be lucky enough to tell his story. Being born in a favorable environment is a stroke of luck—a form of luck that migrants were not born with. Some of the most resourceful people I have met have been in the rural areas of the DR, but they lack the environment or *luck* to pursue their full potential and all they are left with is *hard work*.

Why should mere luck be the separating factor for the Australian and the Zimbabwean? The cosmopolitan egalitarian argues that Australians have no justification in preventing Zimbabweans from traveling to Australia in order to take advantage of the superior social, political and economic environment. In the words of the political scientist, Joseph Carens, "citizenship in Western liberal democracies is the modern equivalent to the feudal privilege—an inherited status that greatly enhances one's life chances. Like feudal birthright privileges, restrictive citizenship is hard to justify when one thinks about it closely." (Carens). With this,

egalitarians see open borders as the apt response to the enormous economic inequalities which currently exist between nations. This is not to conclude with an argument that all humans are entitled to equal everything, but all are entitled to equal moral consideration. It is not an issue of the *same*, but one of *enough*. Each individual should have enough for a decent life. The argument can be made that this is not the only way in which wealthier nations can help poorer ones, they could send aid. However, current situations do not show this happening. The sending of aid to these poorer nations could mean that their citizens now have enough, however, this would not address the issue of the right of movement within and outside of one's country.

Libertarians argue that immigration affects both insiders and outsiders, and thus, by closing borders, the insiders, who are members of the sovereignty are affected. Carens offers this example. "Suppose a farmer from the United States wanted to hire workers from Mexico. The government would have no right to prohibit him from doing this. To prevent the Mexicans from coming would violate the rights of both the American and the Mexican workers to engage in voluntary transactions" (257). The government's closed border policy would place a limit on the citizens' right to unilaterally invite whomever they want onto their property while simultaneously interferes with a foreigner's right to a freedom of movement. Thus, the right of all to enter must be matched with the opportunity to execute that right. This brings to the fore the concept of political dependency and the need for it to be mixed with adequate human rights protection—one being the right of an individual to invite whomever they wish to their property and the right of a person to international movements.

States often provide numerous reasons, including maintaining cohesion in society, protecting citizens' jobs from outsiders, national security, etc. for the need to control, limit and close its border to possible immigrants. However, the libertarians ask, is limiting immigration absolutely necessary and/or sufficient to secure the reasons listed? And even if limiting immigration is necessary and sufficient, do those who seek to restrict immigration actually have a moral right to the stated reasons?

States should be willing to aid those in need owing to a basic assumption that people should not benefit or suffer from morally arbitrary natural and social contingencies. For examples: the case of the Zimbabwean been born in Zimbabwe and not Australia, natural talents or handicaps and a Haitian not being born on the other side of the border. States should be more inclined to aid in the global good rather than focusing on their individual successes and growth, especially at the expense of shutting out others. Also, Cole argues that the consequentialist argument, that is, the negative impact of migrants on the state, can adequately be invalidated. These I will take up later in this paper. However, there is no current empirical evidence to support the claims for a closed border (*Wellman and Cole* 164)—about the economic, social, and cultural toll that the invasion of numerous foreigners would have on the state. Thus, immigration policies are shaped by unjustified fear about the state citizen's economic, cultural and political arrangement rather than the actual impact of the invasion of foreigners.

The arguments for open border question the reasons given for the desire to perpetuate closed borders by probing with pertinent questions. One of these questions is, how can imposing immigration policies on foreigners be ethically defended in a society with a strict

human rights policy? In the following section, I will look at this issue through the lens of two Christian thoughts.

5. Christian Views

Like the case of the libertarians and open borders, one would assume that Christians would be more welcoming to the stranger, seeing the image of God in the foreigner. However, there are varying Christians views on how to welcome or treat a stranger.

The different Christian views struggle with the brokenness of human nature. The difference in views lies in how this brokenness is interpreted. How does one maneuver the human being who is born in the image and likeness of God, yet, has fallen from grace? The two distinct views will revolve around seeking answers to this question, and what is the best way to act on these answers in dealing with the broken human. It becomes a question of absolute mercy and grace shown to all in this world versus the concept of a constant searching by the human for an answer to their brokenness, which only ends in the presence of God. The latter reflects the view of the Christian Realist.

5.1 Christian Realist

In this section, I aim at looking at the Christian argument that supports a closed border. However, I find that it is difficult to find distinctively Christian principles that guide Christians to support the closing of borders, deportations, and the labeling of individuals as “illegals.” This is not to say that the arguments of protecting national borders, the economic cost of supporting immigrants, loss of jobs for locals, etc. are not legitimate arguments; however, there is an

absence of an inherently explicit Christian voice. Christians who support closed border often repeat the similar objections of non-Christians. But aren't Christians called to a higher ideal?

Romans 13 offers support to the Christian⁵ supporting a closed border: "Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed, and those who oppose it will bring judgment upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear to good conduct, but to evil" (Rom. 13: 1-3). In this, Paul is instructing the Christian to subject themselves to the law of authority as this allows a government to fulfill its responsibilities to its citizens. These responsibilities would include security, social benefits, and order. Therefore, this is a preferred bible passage for the support of a closed border as it stresses the importance of adhering to those that govern with the understanding that the structure of society is reliant upon it. However, history has shown that governments have been the perpetrators of evils: Apartheid in South Africa, slavery, segregation in the U.S., and Hitler's Germany. With these histories, it is impractical for Christians to commit to unlimited submission to governments, which challenges that interpretation of this passage. In fact, other passages in the Bible go against this type of *blind* submission. Christians must be willing to challenge the commands of their government if orders are seen to be immoral and unjust. We see this resistance in Acts 4:19-20 when the Sanhedrin commanded Peter and John to stop speaking in the name of Jesus—Peter and John replied to this request with "Whether it is right in the sight of God for us to obey you rather than God, you

⁵ <http://cis.org/ImmigrationBible>

be the judges. It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.” In 5:29 Peter was, even more, firm in his answer when the command was requested, “We must obey God rather than men.” This was similar for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego when they refused to bow before Nebuchadnezzar’s idol in Daniel 3 and Daniel himself in chapter 6 refused to comply with the king’s edict against praying to God and continued to pray.

One cannot dispute that government has the right to institute laws and to punish those that break the laws, even foreigners that break the *no-illegal* entry law. However, should the Christian simply look at the breaking of the law and side with the government without understanding the situations that are pushing migrants? In the context of the U.S., Sean Carroll writes in *America Magazine*⁶ “U.S. law keeps migrants from seeking and finding a dignified way of life, a desire which God has for all of us. It forces them into far reaches of the border where they risk being victims of robbery, assault and death on the desert. It keeps family members separated and prevents migrant men, women and children from finding safety through asylum in the United States.” Aren’t these enough reasons for the Christian, like Peter and John or Daniel, to go against the policies of a government on closed border? Isn’t the value of a human life unquestionable in the sight of God? Then, how can the Christian support a policy that continues to put humans at risk and forces them to stay in hopeless situations?

The Christian Realist offers a position, which understands submission to authority and offers reasons for which a Christian could be justified in supporting a closed border. The

⁶ <http://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/02/23/why-shouldnt-people-be-deported-if-theyre-illegal>

Christian realist embraces a worldview that realistically acknowledges the role of self-interest and power in political relations, but simultaneously hopes and aspires to do God's will on earth.

The philosopher and father of the Christian Realist position, Reinhold Niebuhr, argues that Augustine's *City of God* lays the foundation for the Christian realist thought. It is in this work that Augustine presents a realistic view of humankind that was in contrast with the classical view of the human being. The latter's view idealized human's unlimited potential because of their ability to reason. Niebuhr argues that "this difference in the viewpoints of Augustine and the classical philosophers lies in Augustine's biblical, rather than rationalistic, conception of human selfhood with the ancillary conception of the seat of evil being in the self" (*Niebuhr, Christian Realism and Political Problems 123-124*). It is from this concept that Niebuhr argues that human nature is evil because of sin. This sinful nature of the human has forever shaped his movements. It drives his self-centeredness. What can save the human from their brokenness and this self-centeredness? If, the Christian realist, in quoting Augustine, is right about the error of the classical thought which admits human's fault, but however, trusts the human to overcome his limitation through a civilized society, what is left to limit the weakness of human beings?

Individuals in their brokenness are not necessarily interested in society with a view to improving the world, but rather focus on the personal benefits that can be achieved from the world. The Christian Realist argues that for the broken human, desiring to make society better is an impossibility: therefore, this is a reality that must be dealt with and all that governs human beings should be viewed through this lens. However, one human must organize with other humans in order to create any organized society. Hence, how is this possible? As Niebuhr

argues, there is much more to an orderly society than, simply organization. Order must be enforced with power, “since it is impossible to count on enough moral goodwill among those who possess irresponsible power, to sacrifice it for the good of the whole, it must be destroyed by coercive methods and these always run the peril of introducing new forms of injustice in place of those abolished” (*Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society* 21). Human’s brokenness will not be eliminated, but the laws in society, once enforced, will keep human’s brokenness under control.

Victor Romero in quoting Barack Obama states “...the compelling idea that there’s serious evil in the world, and hardship and pain. And we should be humble and modest in our belief we can eliminate those things. But we shouldn’t use that as an excuse for cynicism and inaction. I take away... the sense we have to make these efforts knowing they are, and not swinging from naïve idealism to bitter realism” (312). This embodies the Christian realist view of hope that humans will pursue flourishing, but at the same time, there is the concrete realization that humans often opt for political gain over civic virtue. For the Christian realist, an immigration policy must keep this concept of human’s brokenness at the fore as a plan is developed to care for the stranger. One must be aware of man’s self-interest and the fact that society is the structure which curtails this “evil” desire of the human. Thus, even though human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, and there is hope for man, societal laws must be enforced as this helps to keep much needed societal order.

The Christian realist embraces the Rawlsian perspective that international peace and justice can only be advanced through well-governed societies. Mark Amstutz, a Political Science professor, in his article “Two Theories of Immigration” states, “the foundation of a humane

global order is the stability provided by nations that take care of their own people and respect the sovereignty of other nations” (Amstutz 5). From this, one gathers that the position of the Christian realist is that a state’s true responsibility is to its people always and not to the stranger. With the brokenness of the stranger and the potential to disrupt a society, there is the valid need to keep the stranger out and this brokenness offers justification for the Christian realist. However, it is not that this position is not understandable, but the Christian is called to a different method of evaluating the needs of their neighbors. While there might be a greater gain in maintaining the unit of a nation community, which promotes stability, the Christian is called to risk it by welcoming the stranger. The Christian realist would argue that it is not a case of not caring for the stranger, or even be welcoming to the stranger, but it is important to take a trifecta into consideration—the theological realm, which is caring for the stranger at all expenses, the moral realm, which is doing what is right, and the political realm, which is examining the political implication/impact on the society resulting from the way in which the migrant is treated. This conflating of these three distinct principles, causes the Christian Realist’s understanding of the value of humans, that is, being above all to be clouded with the legitimate political authority of a state. From my understanding, the realist is guided by the question of what are the benefits and drawbacks for the state if it should open its border to an inflow of migrants. If it is seen that the impact is probably negative for the state, then the Christian realist would openly accept “the second best-goal of achieving limitation and balance” (Romero 317). This is what separates the *Christian realist* from the *Christian Welcomer*, the former’s willingness to concede to the state at the expense of the migrant.

The Christian realist is willing to accept the law of the state with an understanding that the brokenness of humans needs to be curtailed and the organization of the state and its laws are methods of keeping this brokenness in check. Protecting borders and conserving resources for citizens first both demonstrate good stewardship of limited gifts. As argued by James Edwards, the Bible recognizes a special obligation to one's family, community, and nation (Romero 338) and therefore offers support for the position of the Christian realist on an immigration policy that is not most welcoming to the stranger. But aren't Christians called to welcome the stranger? To be gracious to their neighbor? To be reminded that they were once strangers in a foreign land, and thus, ought to be more inclined to helping the stranger.

5.2 Christian Welcomer

The following section offers the views of what I call the Christian Welcomer who is more welcoming to the stranger, and looks to offer an understanding of welcoming being a position of providing for the good of one's own people and the good of the strangers.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus seeks to answer the question of who is my neighbor. In responding to the scholar of the law who asked the question, in the hope of understanding to whom he should show love, Jesus tells the story of a man who was beaten, robbed, and left to die on the street. After being passed by two holy men, a Levi, and a Priest, the man is helped by a stranger, a Samaritan. In Jesus' time, Samaritans were hated by the Jews and no charitable action was expected of Jews towards Samaritans. However, with this, as put by Daniel Carroll: "Jesus models a new and different way of looking at persons who are outside the circle of the known and beyond acceptability" (110). In this teaching, Jesus offers a moral

imperative when it comes to the treatment of strangers, which is echoed in the Gospel of Matthew: “...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (25:40).

Rather than starting from Romans 13 and a firm grip on upholding the instituted law, a closer look at the teaching of Jesus invites the Christian to go above and beyond the legalist position of being an absolute subject to the law. The Christian must be reminded that the democratic process legitimizes laws, yet does not guarantee they are just or nondiscriminatory laws, much less fairly applied to vulnerable persons (Heyer 137). This reality challenges the Christian to discern the treatment of those who are unfairly treated by laws. Pope Francis, the leader of the Catholic Church, challenges the Christian to embrace the position of seeing each person being created in the image of God.

On his trip to Lampedusa in 2013, Francis reminds Christians of their obligation to care for their brothers and sisters. He acclaims that there is a need for a “reawakening of consciences” as mankind has lost the sense of “brotherly responsibility.” He further claims that “we have become used to other people’s suffering, it doesn’t concern us, it doesn’t interest us, and it is none of our business.” Francis reminds, not just Christians, but all, that one must revert from this freefall of becoming selfish and blaming the human’s failure on brokenness and personal struggles. In his message for the 2014 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Francis states: “migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more.”

The need to go above and beyond to care for all migrants has been a constant theme throughout Francis' papacy. It calls not only Roman Catholics, but all Christians and people of goodwill to offer care to all those who are in need; to remember that Jesus' teaching challenges us to transcend borders. This vigor to all on behalf of migrants Francis carried with him on his trip to the U.S. in 2015. In both his address to the U.S. Congress and the General Assembly of the United Nations, Francis calls for a special care and a realization of the struggles of migrants. In his address to Congress, Francis states "Our world is facing a refugee crisis of a magnitude not seen since the Second World War. This presents us with great challenges and many hard decisions. On this continent (America), too, thousands of persons are led to travel north in search of a better life for themselves and for their loved ones, in search of greater opportunities. Is this not what we want for our own children? We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal. We need to avoid a common temptation nowadays: to discard whatever proves troublesome. Let us remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Mt 7:12). With this, Christians are called to have a view of optimism, that is, not be discouraged by the challenges that welcoming the stranger will entail, rather see the face of the Christ they claim to support in the many migrants that cross borders seeking a decent life. It is about restoring dignity to persons who have been struggling. This view calls the Christian to embrace the maxim, "your problem is my problem" meaning that I will treat your problem as if it is truly my problem. If this approach is used, how can there be a need for a closed border? Who would willingly shut themselves out of their home?

This is the view of Francis the optimist. He wants the Christian to always see himself or herself in the position of the other person and reflect upon what one would desire in a similar position. In his address to the UN, Francis reminds listeners of the need to serve the common good—a call which pushes us from the comfort of what we consider to be “home” and “mine” and the belief that there is no obligation to let in anyone else. This is with the belief that, I have what I need, someone else’s lacking is not my fault and therefore not of interest to me. He calls the members of the Assembly to have a global look at justice, and the importance of no group (country) considering themselves absolute and so bypasses the need of others who aren’t a part of their nation. He calls these false rights, and claims that “a selfish thirst for power and material prosperity leads both to the misuse of available resources and the exclusion of the weak and disadvantaged.” He goes further by stating that economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offense against human rights. In this, Francis argues for the dignity of the human, and that regardless of human’s brokenness, one should not refuse to be of fraternal help, especially in cases where refusal is fueled by greed.

On a trip to Mexico, Francis calls the Christian to be in the face of an encounter with the stranger. He calls the Christian to reflect on the reasons for which migrants continue to be on the move. The reasons are not specific to Mexican and Central American migrants, but the reasons hold true to migrants throughout the world. Christians are reminded of an intrinsic connection to migrants: “They are our brothers and sisters, who are being expelled by poverty and violence, drug trafficking and organized crime.” There is the call to be aware of the reasons persons are seeking to cross borders and be aware that in Christ, they are brothers and sisters to all.

The Jesuit Dean Brackley, in a 2010 article, *Migrants: Illegals of God's Ambassadors*⁷, wrote about the plight of Central American migrants that journey to the U.S. Bradley states that migrants of Central America are forced to head north to the U.S. as the countries lack the opportunity for a decent life. It's not that these migrants are looking for the sweet life; they leave reluctantly, out of necessity. This is like the many Haitians that have fled and continue to flee to the Dominican Republic in the hope of finding not only a better life, but a life of dignity. Despite the dangers associated with both, especially Central Americans, including Mexicans, that must evade *coyotes*—smugglers of migrants that request fees for their services and torment those migrants that refuse to pay their exorbitant fees, looking to rob and rape migrants and the difficulties of traversing terrains of the deserts. Brackley argues that these dangers won't prevent the migrants and not even the rising wall along the southern U.S. border will stop migration as "hunger is stronger than fear." In line with Francis, he calls for persons to respond with compassion to the many migrants that are faced with massive poverty that has forced them to seek a decent life elsewhere.

How would you treat your siblings? Would they be left outside because you are more interested in a closed door? Is leaving them to be destroyed by the evils listed by both Francis and Brackley more important than the protection of a border?

Before Francis, several Popes were focused on migrants; often citing the many struggles that migrants face, the need for global solidarity, and scripture passages, which calls Christians to a deeper consideration of the struggles of migrants. Benedict XVI in his message for the

⁷ <https://www.ncronline.org/news/peace-justice/migrants-illegals-or-gods-ambassadors>

World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2007 invites all to reflect on the life and struggles of migrants, and especially families that are forced to migrate. He continues by drawing listeners to the story of the holy family (Mary, Joseph, and Jesus), that was forced to leave Egypt in order to flee the persecution of king Herod (Mt. 2:13-15). He cites the words of another Pope, Pius XII, who in 1952 wrote “The family of Nazareth in exile, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, emigrants and taking refuge in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are the model, the example and the support of all emigrants and pilgrims of every age and every country, of all refugees of any condition who, compelled by persecution and need, are forced to abandon their homeland, their beloved relatives, their neighbors, their dear friends, and move to a foreign land” (*Exsul familia*, AAS 44, 1952, 649). Benedict XVI said “In this misfortune experienced by the Family of Nazareth, obliged to take refuge in Egypt, we can catch a glimpse of the painful condition in which all migrants live, especially, refugees, exiles, evacuees, internally displaced persons, those who are persecuted. We can take a quick look at the difficulties that every migrant family lives through, the hardships and humiliations, the deprivation and fragility of millions and millions of migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. The Family of Nazareth reflects the image of God safeguarded in the heart of every human family, even if disfigured and weakened by emigration.”

The message of these two Popes are clear, they are calling persons to see the holy family in the many families who are forced into migration. How would one treat Jesus and his family? One can be assured that the Christian would welcome Jesus and his family with open arms. Then, if one is to do as Benedict XVI is asking, and see Jesus in the strangers, who, like

Jesus, are fleeing hopeless and dangerous situations not be compelled to have an open door—
an open border to this stranger?

“I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Mt 25:35). It is the Church's task not only to present constantly the Lord's teaching of faith but also to indicate its appropriate application to the various situations which the changing times continue to create. Today, the migrant comes before us like that “stranger” in whom Jesus asks to be recognized. To welcome him and to show him solidarity is a duty of hospitality and fidelity to Christian identity itself.” These are the closing words of John Paul II on World Migration Day in 1996. He reminds the Christian that the phenomenon of migration is complex with numerous problems and challenges, which usually results in more stringent laws and tightening of the borders of the countries that are frequented by migrants. However, he urges the church to consider this issue from the standpoint of Christ, whose aim was to integrate all. In quoting Acts of the Apostles, he affirms that “God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (10:34-35). John Paul II clearly accepts that it is a complex situation and that laws are in place to keep order; however, he realizes that in dealing with migrants, one ought not to be reticent or a slave to the law because thousands would suffer from the lack of an adequate response.

This perspective reminds us that the human life is connected to God, and therefore the human person ought to be treated above all. The value of the human life is above all, including laws of the land. In the words of Thomas Aquinas, natural law cannot be changed in its core precepts: good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided. All laws in the eyes of the Christian must fit into this concept—*Lex iniusta non est lex*. At our borders, it shouldn't be a

place of hatred, discrimination, and trouble; rather it should be a place where two cultures meet with love seek to understand each other. It ought to be an attempt to see the presence of God in each other.

The difference in Christian views on the issue of open and closed borders is often owing to the starting point. If the Christian is focused fundamentally on the issues of jobs, national security, and the economic cost of having immigrants, this may lead to a different conclusion than the one who begins with the idea that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of the God they admire. The so-called Christian Realist is willing to concede to the government's approach and recommendation. The Christian Welcomer is more optimistic about a nation's ability to absorb immigrants and is not likely to be overpowered by unsubstantiated claims of the negative impacts of migrants and are more focused on the positives of welcoming the stranger. However, this does not mean that the Christian Welcomer is not open to closing the border to migrants that would do harm to the receiving society and if genuine concerns are substantiated about, for examples, proven terrorist and criminals and the state's inability to host more people.

This calls for a universal ethic that avoids the extreme views of an absolutely open border and a closed border. The Golden Rule offers this possibility on the basis that it doesn't command specific acts, but calls for a concept of understanding and consistency. In the case of the Christian, it calls for the treatment of others with tolerance, consideration, and compassion—all of which is echoed by the Christian Welcomer.

6. Immigrants and the economy

In this paper, I have listed several arguments that have been perpetuated against open borders and in support of a closed border. These include a state's right to self-determination, the preservation of a specific identity, the need for security, and the likely economic strain on the receiving country's economy. In this section, I would like to take a closer at the latter as it seems to connect all the other reasons.

Proponents of closed borders have argued that the influx of foreigners takes away the jobs of locals, and would undoubtedly hurt the economy which can only support a certain number of workers, and without a tight lid keeping immigrants out, the economy would certainly collapse. And then what about the local workers that have lost their jobs? Some have nuanced this by arguing that an influx of workers with a different work ethic would negatively affect productivity. However, most indicators have shown that the opposite is true—migrant workers increase productivity, which results in a reduction in the overall cost of goods for all. Migrants tend to work longer hours for less under poor conditions; often, they work under conditions that locals would reject. John Feffer highlights this in an article in the *Huffington Post* where he reports that the United Farm Workers (UFW) had a campaign called *Take Our Jobs* hoping to get U.S. citizens and legal residents to work in the fields; however, only three (3) persons signed up. This led Arturo Rodriguez, president of the UFW to conclude: "Americans do not want to work in the fields...it's difficult, it requires expertise, and the conditions are horrid."⁸

⁸ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-feffer/they-are-not-taking-our-j_b_733560.html

This is similar for Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic. During the prime of the Dominican sugar industry, the government had difficulty attracting workers to the sugar plantations. All the efforts to get locals to work on the plantations were futile as Dominicans considered the work to be “too arduous and demeaning, and too badly paid” (Ferguson 10), and earlier propaganda by the Dominican government that Haitians and not Dominicans were suited for the “slavery job.” The government turned to their poorer neighbors, Haiti; Haitians were more than willing to work under the horrible conditions. The many cane cutters or *braceros*, along with their families, lived in barracks located on what was called *bateyes*. The number of persons living on *bateyes* peaked at 250,000 with over 75% of the residents being Haitians. The Dominicans living on the *bateyes* often were security guards, shop owners, and usually people with better jobs, though sometimes also menial. According to a report by the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) in 1995, *Beyond the Bateyes*, living conditions on the *bateyes* were deplorable, to say the least. Of the five hundred, 32% had no drinking water and 30% had no access to schools. The barracks were overcrowded, filthy, and had no proper sanitation.

In both these instances, migrants are willing to work in conditions in which locals are unwilling. This might be an indication of the desperation of migrants as they are willing to work in these conditions that are or at least close to being inhumane. But economists seem to agree that migrants and especially those accepting these jobs are important and necessary contributions to the overall economy of the host countries.

There have been many discussions on the impact of Haitians on the Dominican people. Some have argued that the presence of Haitians has been detrimental to the economy and the

culture of the Dominican people. A report produced by the World Bank in 2002, strongly disagrees with the notion of a negative impact of Haitian migrants on the economy of the DR, highlighting that Haitian workers have produced more wealth for the Dominican rich. The cheap and available manual labor has reduced the need for many companies to modernize, and all the extra cost of production is fully absorbed by the cheap labor. To date, no study has shown that the Haitian migrants are a net burden.

In the U.S., the positive impact of migrants on the economy has been better documented. However, it is worth noting that several experts have concluded that migrants do hurt the economy. One such expert is the economist and Harvard professor, George Borjas. He concludes that the overall impact on the economy is negative and mostly affects low-skilled high school dropouts as they compete with migrants for the same jobs (Borjas). However, numerous economists have concluded differently. For example, in an article cited earlier, the attempt to attract citizens to be farm workers proved futile as locals stay away from certain jobs and these are the jobs that migrants often take: construction, agriculture, the garment industry, and the service industry. Migrants are doing jobs that are not wanted by locals. This had led others, including economists Gianmarco Ottaviano and Giovanni Peri to conclude that migrants are actually a complementary workforce to the native labor (Ottaviano and Peri). They further conclude that an immigration-induced supply shock should increase the wage of almost all native workers. Even a critic of immigration like Borjas agrees with this conclusion. However, he points to the fact that it is the employers of immigrants that are the greatest beneficiaries.

Borjas remains adamant that while migrants, both legal and illegal, contribute positively to GDP, the migrants themselves are the ones who benefit largely in the form of wages and

other social benefits. The remainder, which he calls “immigration surplus” to GDP, which is \$35 billion comes from reducing the wages of natives in competition with immigrants by an estimated \$402 billion a year, while users of immigrants have an increased in profits in the range of \$437 billion (*Borjas, Immigration and the American Worker*). However, this is an issue of distribution, something migrants cannot directly affect. Still, their presence helps in benefitting most, if not all natives as their “cheap” labor helps to reduce the cost of local products for all consumers as well as being consumers themselves.

The news agency CNN published an article on March 6, 2017,⁹ reporting the finding of a group of 285 economists surveyed by the National Association of Business Economics (NABE) on the impact of migration on the U.S.’s economy. Of the economists surveyed, just under half (49%) supports an increase in U.S. immigrants and another 27 % believes that there should be no changes to the U.S. current immigration policy. That is, 216 leading economists from companies such as Wells Fargo, AT&T, and FedEx believe that the presence of migrants is critical to the economy of the U.S. Another factor brought up by the report is the low fertility rate of Americans—which hit a record low in 2016. This leads the economists to conclude that, rather than chasing away migrant workers, the U.S needs to recruit more migrants to make up for the reducing labor force.

Earlier, we read about some of the many desperate circumstances, which have caused numerous Mexicans and Central Americans to face the dangerous journey to get into the U.S. where they can hope for a better job, even and especially the jobs that are refused by locals.

⁹ <http://money.cnn.com/2017/03/06/news/economy/donald-trump-immigration/>

Whatever jobs migrants are able to acquire are marked improvements in their quality of life and access to better public services. However, the latter is not the main focus or even a concern for most migrants that are seeking to enter the U.S. Migrants leave their countries to escape the intolerable circumstances, the extreme poverty with a lack of any sight of improvement that they face in their homelands.

In her book, *Migrant Youth, Transnational Families, and the State*, Lauren Hedbrink, tells the story of Deruba, a Guatemalan migrant. At only seventeen years old, Deruba heads north with the hope of working in the U.S. He gives an account of the terrible and hopeless conditions in which he lived in Guatemala. He worked odd jobs to care for himself and his sister as they had no parents. He continues with the horrific account of riding the train, known as *el Diablo* (the Devil) and *El Expreso de la Muerte* (the Death Express) through Central America, seeing others falling from the train, suffering serious injuries and even death, the treacherous trek through the deserts—only to be caught by immigration officers. Deruba shares the final moments before being caught, accepting a bag of chips from the person he later says notified the immigration officers of his presence. While he was grateful for the chips, he cheekily acclaimed that “I didn’t come here to eat a bag of chips.” It is at this time that he shared the story of his real reason for leaving Guatemala and wanting to work in the U.S.—his one concern was to work for two years, go back home to Guatemala, where he was planning on buying a house for him and his sister, Isura, whom he had left unwillingly in a private shelter for street children while he made this journey.

Leaving his sister was a constant source of anxiety for him, but providing for her was also his motivation. He constantly worried about her. He once acclaimed, “she is my only

family. I must take care of her and I failed. But I will make it right. I will" (Heidbrink 91). His concern was not the glamor of living in the more developed U.S., but to secure a livable future for him and his family. This is very typical of migrants that leave their country seeking a better life. Probably, this is what fuel them to be willing to work in conditions that others are not willing to work. This new supply of labor changes the scope of jobs, which employers need to fill—the influx of cheap labor makes certain industries (discussed above) more feasible. The absence of this cheap labor would result in the disappearance of these jobs because of the inability to compete with other states using cheap labor. For example, in Arizona, with a shortage of migrant labor force in 2004, only thirty percent (30%) of the lettuce crop was harvested; the rest was left in the ground to rot, which resulted in losses over \$1 billion. However, if farmers had raised wages to attract local workers to do the harvesting, the losses would have been even greater. Julia Preston, in an article in the *New York Times*, "Pickers Are Few, and Growers Blame Congress," expresses similar sentiments about the losses suffered by pear farmers in California resulting from a similar lack of migrant labor.

The willingness of migrants to work under unfamiliar and horrid conditions for relatively low wages creates an opportunity for economic production that is unavailable with the native population. This uniqueness, even if does create problems for a small percentage of the receiving country's population, generates an overall net benefit that justifies their presence in a nation.

7. Application of the Golden Rule

The Golden Rule (GR) is a widely-known ethic of reciprocity that has survived many generations. It should be noted that it differs from the principle of reciprocity where one gives with the sole intention of receiving in return. Rather, the GR is accepted as an ethic of how one believes that people should aim to treat others as they themselves would like/consent to be treated in similar situations. Its universality, within religious circles as well as numerous ethical traditions (Blackburn 101), makes its use largely understandable.

Over the years, the GR has been met with numerous criticisms. One of the more convincing criticisms is that of Immanuel Kant. Jeffrey Wattles, in his book, *The Golden Rule*, articulates Kant's fundamental criticism of the GR: "To Kant, the golden rule cannot be applied universally, for it fails to address our essential *duties* as humans—whether they be to ourselves or to others." In a footnote in *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant concludes that the GR cannot legitimately be adopted as a supreme, overriding principle. That is, the GR does not conform with the principle of his categorical imperative, rather, it directs how a person of a particular behavior should treat another. In addition, the GR is not one from which all types of duty can be derived. From Kant, I take away the idea that the GR does not offer a sufficiently transparent morality and that a global ethical system cannot logically be centered solely on what's wanted or preferred but must be on what is *right*. He concludes that the categorical imperative offers this universality while the GR simple doesn't. However, the philosopher, Harry J. Gensler in his book, *Ethics and the Golden Rule*, offers an answer to this criticism by Kant.

With his criticism, Kant raises the issue that because of the duty of obligation to others, the GR can mislead, using the example of a criminal being sentenced by a judge. He argues that the GR might give a criminal a basis for objecting to the punishment of the judge. To this, Gensler responds with the GR's clause of consistency. He writes that a consistency norm, which is integral to the GR requires us not to combine, "I do A to another" and "I'm unwilling that if I were in the same situation then A be done to me (Gensler 16). To this, he adds that GR is about our present reaction to a hypothetical situation, it isn't about how we'd react if we were in that situation.

For clarity, let's use one of Gensler's examples: imagine you are a nurse about to give a baby who has been stung by a bee a shot. The baby is crying and refuses to take the shot, however, as a nurse, you know that without the shot, the baby will have more pain or could even die. Appealing wrongly to the GR, one could conclude that the nurse should not give the baby the shot because if the nurse was the baby, the nurse wouldn't want the shot. This follows, but is a wrong use of the GR. The question to ask is "am I now willing that if I were in the same situation then this be done to me?" The answer would be yes since as a nurse you know the dangers of a bee sting and the relevance of the shot. This is the proper application of the GR. It is in this application that the response to Kant's objection lies: the response of the judge ought to simply be "I can send you to jail, because I'm now willing that if I were in your position (as a dangerous criminal) then I be sent to jail" (Gensler 17). The GR allows one in some cases to act against what others want. The danger of a wrongly worded GR could be equivalent to the platinum rule— "Treat others as they want to be treated." This could prescribe evil/immoral actions, like setting a dangerous criminal free.

Gensler goes on to clarify other fallacies, notably: the doormat fallacy—addressing the misconception that one should ignore their own interest, the third party fallacy—addressing the issue that the GR only allows a person to think of themselves and the other person directly involved while ignoring all others, and the easy GR fallacy—addressing the assumption that GR gives an infallible test of right and wrong that takes only seconds to apply.

The philosopher Marcus Singer argues that owing to the earlier discussed fact that the GR does not direct a specific type of action that can be morally evaluated in itself, but rather, offers a rationale for generating such rules, it should not be considered a rule, but a principle (Singer). However, this criticism, does not take away from the value and application of the GR. Take, for example, the command of “do nice things.” From this very generalized command, the nature of the GR allows one to arrive at specific actions from generalized principles. If your favorite professor has been sick for a while, you may want to do a “nice thing,” however, the general rule of “do nice things” doesn’t tell you exactly what to do, but the application of the GR could tell you to give chocolate cake to this professor as this is their favorite thing or to not give the professor anything with broccoli as it is hated by the professor. The general rule tells one what to do—that which is right or wrong while the GR provides the basis for an application. Gensler concludes that this ought to be embraced as a plus, but the “goldenness” of the GR relies on the principles of consistency, conscientiousness, and impartiality.

Gensler has coined a method, which facilitates the application of these and the avoidance of the typical fallacies, and thus, a wise application of the GR. The four-step procedure is known as KITA (Gensler 23). Before we get into the explanation of KITA, I would like to insert a short story that shows the GR and outlines some of the typical fallacies.

“A woman disliked her old father-in-law who lived with her family, and she insisted he be removed to a dilapidated unheated room outside the house. One winter day the old man, who was suffering from hunger and cold, asked his grandson to bring him a blanket. The boy found a rug and asked his father to cut it in half for the grandfather. “Take the whole rug,” the father said. “No,” replied the boy. “I must save half for you for when you are as old as grandfather and have to live in a similar dilapidated unheated room outside the house.” The man quickly realized what he was doing and that which will happen to him, and restored his old father to a warm room in the house, and from that time on he took care of his needs and visited him every day.”¹⁰

The above story shows an example of the GR and a proper application. The man was willing to adjust his action after realizing what he would expect to be done to him in a similar situation. In this story, readers see a quick application of Gensler’s KITA. The acronym stands for *Know*—how would my action affect others, *Imagine*—what would it be like to have this done to me in the same situation, *Test*—test for consistency: am I now willing that if I were in the same situation then this be done to me, and *Act*—act towards others only as you’re willing to be treated in the same situation. However, what does this mean for the immigration?

7.3 Application of KITA

KITA is designed specifically to help persons avoid the fallacies that would misapply the GR. It calls one to use knowledge and imagination, as we too, would want others to use these before making decisions that affect us. The next step, test, offers checks and balances to see if we are

¹⁰ Adapted version of the Brothers Grimm’s *The Old Man and His Grandson*.

following the GR, and act is the execution of GR itself or shows the failure of the application of the GR.

The proper application of KITA requires that one considers all who would be affected by an action. In the case of immigration, not only is the effect on the immigrant important, but also that on the citizens of the receiving country. Therefore, for any proposal involving the GR about immigration to be acceptable, we must, after informing ourselves of the facts and exercising our imagination, be willing that it be followed regardless of where we imagine ourselves in the situation, that is, a citizen or a migrant. With this, I am going to use KITA to test my argument for moderately open borders—using the argument that “immigrants are a drag on the economy and are taking the jobs of the locals and therefore, borders should be closed.”

7.3.1 KNOW

In this stage, the goal is to gain knowledge about the situation and about all parties involved. In the previous section, I discussed the different factors; two of which are, the lack of opportunities in their home countries and the desire to provide for their families as the reasons for migrants leaving their countries. The U.S. is a popular destination because of its proximity (for most, Mexicans and Central Americans) and the opportunities it provides.

We read that overwhelmingly, economists conclude that migrants are not a drag on the economy of the U.S. nor are they taking away the jobs of the locals. In addition, with the inflow of migrants, new jobs are created, which potentially lessen home responsibilities, especially for the highly skilled workforce, allowing them to do more productive jobs. Think of the fact that increasingly, high-skilled workers are women married to high-skilled husbands. With the

increase in low-skilled labor willing to do everyday housework—laundry, cleaning, childcare, gardening, high-skilled workers are able to spend more time on their jobs, which overall, increases the productivity of the country.

It is without a doubt that an inflow of migrants increases the labor supply, however, the U.S. civilian labor force grew from 60 million workers in 1950 to 160 million in 2017¹¹, and there has been no long-term increase in the unemployment rate. In fact, the current unemployment rate is a low 4.7%¹². This supports the claim by economists that migrants' jobs actually complement those of locals rather than replaces them. Immigrants have different skill sets.

The facts do not support the claim that migrants are taking away the jobs of locals. As with the case of farmers in Arizona and California, it is not easy to find locals to replace the labor force provided by migrants. The industry would suffer either because owners cannot afford to pay higher wages or locals are unwilling to engage in arduous jobs. The pear farmers in California were willing to pay higher wages, still, they were unable to attract enough workers for harvesting.

The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania¹³ in 2016 produced a report highlighting the fiscal impact of immigrants on the U.S. economy. In this report, the authors conclude that, even though results vary from state to state, the overall net impact on the economy is positive. Since migrants are usually of working age, they impose relatively small costs to social security and other welfare entities. However, it is true that migrants usually pay

¹¹ https://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet?request_action=wh&graph_name=LN_cpsbref1

¹² <https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000>

¹³ <http://www.budgetmodel.wharton.upenn.edu/issues/2016/1/27/the-effects-of-immigration-on-the-united-states-economy>

less in federal, state, and local taxes, but this is as a result of the fact that they usually are less educated, and thus, have lower incomes than those of locals. The report shows that migrants are less likely than comparatively low-income locals to receive public assistance; and when they do take public assistance, the average value of benefits received is below average. This implies a smaller net cost to the federal government to a comparatively low income local.

Now that we have equipped ourselves with the knowledge of the actual impact of migrants on the economy and the better understanding of the jobs that are being taken by migrants, we move to the second step; having the response to the question of “how would my action affect others”—farmers and other industries that rely on immigrant labor would suffer huge losses, citizens would be paying higher prices for numerous goods, others would lose jobs, the U.S. GDP would be 11% or \$1.6 trillion smaller, the unemployment rate would not decrease, but likely increase, etc.

7.3.2 IMAGINATION

This step offers a challenging position. It is here that we must have a role reversal, thinking of those who are affected. This imagination of roles is the foundation of the GR and requires an honest application, that is, using the knowledge we have gained to put ourselves in the position of the migrants and of citizens. Imagine that all (undocumented) migrants are deported back to their country of origin and the borders are closed to future low-skilled migrant workers. Are you willing that if you were in the migrant’s place then, you be forced to stay in a country where living a decent life is impossible? Think of the story of Deruba who is simply seeking an opportunity to provide for his sister and live a decent life—needing as little as \$6,000 to buy his

dream house in order to not live on the streets anymore. If you were in Deruba's position, would you want the U.S to close its borders to you? And the many others who are simply hoping to do an honest job and provide for their families.

Now, think of the citizens that would be affected by the lack of immigrant workers. The farmers, that without this labor would be forced to close their businesses because of the soaring costs? The employers in other industries that rely on migrant labor. The shoppers who buy goods and services at cheaper prices resulting from the cheaper labor. The highly skilled husbands and wives who are able to pursue their careers resulting from the availability of migrant labor, which covers the everyday chores while parents are at work.

With this knowledge and imagining ourselves in the position of both the migrants and the citizens—we are to ask the question, “what would it be like to have this done to me in the same situation.”

7.3.3TEST

Getting to this third step, we have gained knowledge, by learning the facts and by better understanding the situations of migrants. Also, we have adequately imagined ourselves in each role; putting together a reality of what it means to be a migrant coming to work in the U.S., what triggers that migration, the dangers of coming, and the jobs that are available and taken by migrants. The largely positive impacts on citizens and how citizens would be affected by the absence of this complementary labor force.

It is in this step that we challenge our personal thoughts against the facts and see if we are being consistent with our beliefs and application of the GR. We now ask ourselves, “am I

now willing that I'd be treated this way if, I was in the place of the affected individual?" Should borders be closed? We then ask the following questions; (i) as a citizen should the border be closed to my labor force and the entity that makes goods and services more affordable to me? As a migrant, would I want the border to be closed to me? If your answers to these questions are in the negative—the GR requires that we reject the idea of a closed border.

7.3.4 ACT

The final step of the GR reminds us to “treat others as you would like/consent to be treated in the same situation.” The GR commands us to act in the way that would be consistent with that which we would want for ourselves if we were in the similar situation. If our actions and beliefs are not consistent, it is required that a way is found to reconcile the two. A proper application of the GR requires this consistency. This confirms my premise that the correct application of the GR rejects a closed border on the facts that are provided.

7.4 Other claims from proponents of closed border

Another popular claim by proponents of a closed border is that immigrants are criminals and therefore will increase the crime rate and so the American borders should be closed to them. On the contrary, reports have shown that immigrants are less likely than native-born Americans to commit crimes. Jacob Stowell et al. found that areas where large numbers of immigrants were present, crimes in these areas were reduced (*Stowell, Messener and McGreever*). The *Cato Institute* in its report entitled, “Criminal Immigrants: their Numbers, Demographics, and Countries of Origin” comes to the same conclusion as they found that immigrants were less likely than native-born Americans to be incarcerated (*Landgrave and Nowrasteh*). These facts

do not change that Americans believe the rhetoric that immigrants are more likely to commit crimes. In fact, most already think that undocumented immigrants or *illegals* are already committing a crime by being in the U.S.¹⁴ The question is—how with the facts reflecting the opposite, there has not been a curbing and correcting of the U.S.’s public opinion and social policies? Often, it seems like the goal is to stigmatize immigrants, then publicize their crimes with the hope that they would be associated with their crimes.

The stereotype of the criminal immigrants has deep historical root. For example, historian Claudia Koonz in *The Nazi Science* notes that the Nazi newspaper *Der Sturmer* started with the purpose of publishing crimes committed by Jews, and continued this trend even when the party was in power. The frequency and harshness of the statistics intensified when the Hitler led government failed to convince most Germans to boycott Jewish businesses. To this, historian Saul Friedlander adds, “until 1938, Hitler’s Ministry of Justice ordered prosecutors to forward every criminal indictment against a Jew so the ministry’s press office could publicize it.”

In the U.S., there is a very similar history of using crime to incite hatred of a particular group. The historian and Harvard professor, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, notes that in the aftermath of slavery, northern newspapers typically identified African Americans accused of committing crimes as *negro* and *colored*. Southern newspapers used *negro criminal* to refer to black offenders while not identifying white offenders by race. Something that has remained in the U.S. culture—in the present day, *Breitbart News* still keeps a special category for “black

¹⁴ It is indeed a crime to enter or reenter the country illegally (U.S. Code Section 1326). However, residing in the U.S. as an undocumented person is actually a civil offense, not a criminal offense. In 1996, U.S. Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which imposes civil penalties on any legal aliens staying in the United States overstaying their visa. To date, there are no criminal penalties associated with overstaying one’s visa (Simes and Walters).

crimes,” which has influenced other websites that keep a track of crimes committed by *illegals*¹⁵. This highlight how individual groups can and have been targeted—using the “blame game.”

The causation rhetoric associated with crimes and immigrants has long fed the fear of natives and shaped political policies. One of the earliest laws that established federal control of immigration was the Page Act of 1875 (*Simes and Walters 462*). This law specifically excluded criminal and prostitutes from entry into the U.S. The immigration Act of 1891 added felons, and others who had been convicted to the list produced in 1875. Ruben Rumbaut et al. note that with the passing of Proposition 187 in 1994, a law designed to crack down on *illegals*, “the people of California ...have suffered and are suffering economic hardship [and] personal injury and damage caused by the criminal conduct of illegal aliens in this state” (Rumbaut, Gonzales and Komaie). Then governor Jan Brewer of Arizona (2009-2015) offered similar sentiment in 2010, “we all know that the majority of people coming into Arizona and trespassing are now (becoming) drug mules.”

The Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (Arizona SB 1070) of 2010, makes the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and give the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally. In endorsing this Bill, Brewer sighted the killing of an Arizona rancher weeks earlier as one of the many crimes that the Bill is to prevent. Patricia Smith in her article “The Great Immigration Debate,” tells the story of Erin Goheen and Andres Gamboa, two students of the University of Arizona. Gamboa whose parents

¹⁵ 1. <http://www.fairus.org/issue/examples-of-serious-crimes-by-illegal-aliens> 2. <https://townhall.com/columnists/katiekieffer/2017/03/13/illegal-immigrant-crime-the-real-story-n2297890>

are Mexican immigrants, claims that the law was highly discriminatory and that locals of Arizona fears are unfounded as immigrants are not prone to commit crimes. While, Goheen, whose parents are white American-born, is delighted with the new law acclaiming “I am more than thrilled about this law...I’ve read it more than 20 times. I have it printed out and take it with me almost everywhere.” This highlights the sharp divide Americans have on the view of immigration. Statistics support Gamboa while the political rhetoric as seen echoed by Jan Brewer continues to influence the view of many.

Like the claim of immigrants being a drag on the economy and taking away jobs, statistics have shown that the claim associating immigrants with a spike in crimes is more a political rhetoric aimed at misleading rather than offering facts. KITA would require that we take the facts into consideration, imagine being in the position of immigrants and also the citizens, test our belief against the knowledge we have gained and then decide if we can support the argument of immigrants being criminals to support an argument for closed borders. With what we have learned, an evaluation using KITA would lead us to the same conclusion as before—the GR with the information provided, cannot support a closed border.

7.5 But does it support open borders?

The GR demands that we consider all who are involved, imagine ourselves in their position, and from this position, make a decision that is consistent with our belief. It does not tell us the specific act that must be done, but offers a guide for the direction that ought to be taken when all the information is considered. As we have read, the popular rhetoric of the negative impacts of immigrants are not true, but immigrants, in more cases than not, make positive contributions

to the society in which they have relocated. This command, under the rubrics of the GR, to be favorable to an open border.

However, if the reality should change and for example, a host country can no longer sufficiently receive migrants while caring adequately for its own citizens—the GR could be used to support a closed border or relegated border—the latter is for which I argue. A relegated border allows a government to be in some control of its borders; to close it to those that would be disruptive to society. However, the onus is on that government to justify its reasons for rejecting immigrants. I am willing to accept keeping out terrorists and criminals and a state's financial or special inability to accept outsiders while providing for its citizens as legitimate reasons for closing one's borders.

Take, for example, a case reported by Kim Mackarel and Charles Forelle in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*¹⁶ on a controversy in a Canadian work program a few years back. The program admitted over 95,000 workers, but there was an allegation that Canadian employers were hiring foreign workers for low wages in order to cut wages, and thus, taking away jobs from Canadian citizens as they would not be attracted by low wages. If this should become the norm, a GR application could support an argument for a relegated border resulting from the concern for the citizens; breaking an implicit contract—a state's responsibility to care for its own. I support the argument that a state owes a greater responsibility to its citizens than it does to foreigners. However, this does not equate to a zero responsibility to the foreigner.

¹⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/some-countries-see-migrants-as-an-economic-boon-not-a-burden-1450881706>

8. Conclusion

The issue of immigration is complex for any nation; a fact that one must first accept before proposing any solution to the issue. There are numerous factors which need to be considered, including a nation's ability to care for migrants, a sovereign's right to protect its borders, the option of helping migrants to stay at home, and the moral obligation to care for others. The Christian is even called to go above and beyond and see Jesus in the face of the stranger, look beyond earthly desires and provide for the stranger. Still, a nation's ability to provide adequately for its citizens should not be compromised. So, what is there to offer a balance, which focuses on one's citizens while adequately caring for the stranger, whose desire is to enter?

In this paper, I have used the Golden Rule to show a method by which the situation of immigration could be approached. The application of KITA seeks to fully understand the situation and from that guides one to a principle that would consider all that is at stake, with the hope that the best interest of all will be considered. However, as we have seen, the use of terms such as unassimilable aliens, unwelcomed invasion, undesirables, diseased, and illegal, shapes the public's image of immigrants without fully understanding what are the factors that are pushing immigrants away from their countries and pulling them into certain receiving states, or the migrant worker's positive contributions. The tenets of the GR allow for this false or misleading rhetoric to be challenged and then from a position of knowledge, move in a more balanced direction.

By no means have I addressed all the possible issues caught up in the web of the open and closed border debate. Two issues worth mentioning are: (i) how should one approach the issue of brain drain if most of the intellectuals of poorer countries seek to migrate to wealthier countries? Should there be greater restrictions on them than low-skilled citizens? And (ii) Should they be a rally for migrants to be better paid for their jobs? Wouldn't this eliminate the need for them? These are issues that arose, however, space didn't allow for adequate responses.

The Golden Rule, through KITA, allows for a thorough evaluation of the argument for closed borders and has shown that under current conditions, an advocate of the Golden Rule cannot support a closed border.

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