

More Than a “Public Charge”: An Investigation of the Targeting of Migrants with Disabilities by the U.S. Immigration Regime

In February 2020, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the updated “Public Charge” grounds for non-admittance into the United States. The rule instantly denies entry to migrants who are likely to, at any point, use a form of government assistance- and has now expanded to include social services relating to health, housing, and nutrition. The radical redefinition of the rule particularly targets migrants with disabilities and their families. Most often, families of migrants with disabilities make the journey to the U.S. in order to attain life-saving medical services that are not available in their home countries, and now must face the impossible choice of having to choose between accessing crucial social services that were originally designed for them or refraining from them to avoid deportation and family separation. This paper examines the intersections of disability and immigration to investigate the targeting of migrants with disabilities by the U.S. immigration regime. Disability-based discrimination has been embedded in U.S. immigration policy for over 100 years, and the targeting of this population continues in ICE detainment centers. Through an analysis of U.S. immigration policy dating back to the late 1800s, this paper links the historical exclusion of migrants with disabilities to the present immigration regime that most harshly victimizes them. The present analysis utilizes a Disability Studies perspective in order to critique the current regulations and fights for social justice and change in favor of inclusion.

2020 Undergraduate Research Showcase Presentation:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAHSg_Q6iI&t=2s