

# Example of research paper on comparison and contrast between the iguana tree and ...

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



## **Introduction**

The Iguana Tree is a story that is set amid the perilous intricacies of illegal border crossings. The book narrates the suspenseful story of Lilia and Hector a couple who separately journey from the home in Mexico in search of employment and a safe home for their young daughter in the United States of America. This harrowing novel by Michael Stone meticulously reviews the obstacles that each of the characters endures in the pursuit of a new life (Stone 12). These obstacles include abominable acts like rape and murder in addition to manipulation at the perilous start of the border crossing. Further into the book, the author narrates of the odious betrayal in the hands of their family members and their friends, rapacious landowners in the United States of America, and the corrupt official who manipulated them. In exploring the emotions of the characters, the author exposed the inexorable working of the justice systems in the United States of America.

The two characters get a break in the form of Americans who want to assist them with their legal matters and also offer meaningful employment. However, their illegal entry status proves repeatedly to be their main impediment. The choices they make have devastating consequences and in the end, the novel becomes a story of grief, loss and human dignity. This is a lot like many real life experiences of many immigrants. In this regard, this paper will compare and contrast experiences of real life immigrants from the characters in the novel with real life immigrant stories of Luisa Martinez and Henry Kissinger. Although differences exist in the real life stories of immigrants and The Iguana Tree, the book still captures the harrowing indignity that immigrants are subjected to in the new country.

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## Discussion

There are a lot of similarities between the harrowing stories told by immigrants and the experiences narrated by the author in the novel, *The Iguana Tree*. One of the predominant similarities is the motivation from immigrating into another country. These virtues are influenced by the desire for better opportunities. It is the tale of every immigrant that their motivation to cross over the border into another country is motivated by the pursuit of a better quality of life for their families. Of course there are other influencing factors as told by different immigrants (Mize & Grace 87).

As espoused earlier, *The Iguana Tree* features the story of a family whose pursuit of the dream of a better life sees the family of Mexican nationality cross over into the United States of America across the Texas border. The story of Luisa Martinez, a resident of a rural community located in Oaxaca, Mexico up to 1990 echoes the same sources of motivation in immigrating to the United States of America. In her words, Luisa Martinez immigrated into the United States of America in order to give her children the better opportunities in life that at the moment were only available in the United States of America. It is arguable that this source of motivation gives them the zeal and endurance to brave the obstacles and impediments that they meet.

Another similarity between the experiences of the immigrants in *The Iguana Tree* and real life experiences of immigrant stories is the betrayal by family and/or friends. This is a pity, especially because it is the needs of the same family that motivates these immigrants to undertake these illegal actions, as has been discussed previously. In the tale of Luisa Martinez, her husband

abandoned her when she was in dire need of help. To fructify this further, Luisa Martinez had stayed in the United States of America for seven years. Previously, the laws allowed one to apply for any deportation to be suspended after residing in the country for seven years (Arnold 56). Application for suspension of the deportation was denied because she was statutory ineligible. Her battles with the Department of Justice were done without the support of her husband. The betrayal by family is also echoed by the author in his narration of the experiences of the two characters in *The Iguana Tree*. Lilia, who is too impatient to wait for her husband to provide for her family, decides to follow the perilous path followed by her husband. She trusts her life and that of her daughter into the hands of her family members. Her source of motivation is the thought that she will be reunited with her family. This does not happen towards the end of the novel as the author paints the withering of their love.

Another similarity between the real life stories of immigrants and the experiences narrated in *The Iguana Tree* is seen in their experiences with the authorities. There is a lot of manipulation and corruption, all disguised in the context of legal assistance. Luisa Martinez, in her desperation to stay in the country, got the assistance of a lawyer to aid in the legal technicalities of the hearings. Although the lawyer rakes in thousands in dollars, his representation is barely adequate at best. For over seven years, the hearings did not continue and their lawyer did not contact them. Luisa's eldest daughter was also manipulated into being arrested and deported. The protracted hearings did not serve to help Luisa and her children. She was only set up for manipulation and exploitation by the justice system. The

same harrowing experience is narrated by the author through the rapacious landowners in the United States of America and the exploitation of Hector by corrupt officials.

In contrast, there are differences between the experiences in *The Iguana Tree* and the real life stories of immigrants. More often than not, although the stories of immigrants depict endurance, bravery, sacrifice and courage. The untold stories of torn families, physical and emotional turmoil also characterizes some of these immigrant stories. Nonetheless, other immigrant stories turn out quite different in unimaginable ways. These stories are starkly different from the experiences narrated in *The Iguana Tree*.

The immigrant of Henry Kissinger, an immigrant from Germany has very different outcomes compared to the experiences of Hector and Lillie. When he emigrated from Germany during the heart of the Nazi war in 1939, Henry Kissinger lived in the Manhattan immigrant community in Manhattan, New York. The experiences that followed his immigration are very different from the contents of *The Iguana Tree*. He went on to study accounting in the City College of New York. Unlike Luisa who was not afforded citizenship even after residing in the United States of America for seven years, Henry Kissinger was naturalized in 1943, and drafted into the military in the same year. This is very different from the harrowing story of Hector and Lillie. The immigrants in the two stories moved to America to look for opportunities.

While it happened for Kissinger in unimaginable ways, the same cannot be said for Hector and Lillie. Kissinger went on to become a director in Harvard and later a Secretary of State under the Nixon administration. The mark of Henry Kissinger on the America history is engraved deeply by his actions. As

the secretary of state, he brokered the treaty that ended the Vietnam War, a feat that saw him earn the Nobel Prize together with his Vietnamese compatriot. The story of Kissinger is different from that of *The Iguana Tree* in that the motivation for Kissinger was asylum from the Nazi rule, unlike in the novel where the motivation was the pursuit for better economic opportunities. Additionally, the outcome of the two immigrant stories was ascertainedly different.

## **Conclusion**

Immigrants move into other countries, mostly to look for better opportunities to make a better quality of life as has been exemplified by the stories of Luisa Martinez and Hector and Lillie. It is not always that immigrant stories turn out positively for the immigrants. As a matter of fact, immigrants are always running from the law as narrated in *The Iguana Tree* and Luisa Martinez in her story. Part of this is because the entry to the new country is done illegally, and that most immigrants do not pursue naturalization or other statutory provisions in the said country.

It is also important to consider the fact that laws have changed due to the proliferation of immigrants in the United States of America. It is arguable that Kissinger's immigrant story turned out differently from the others because it was in a different time. This notwithstanding, the similarities between real life immigrant stories and *The Iguana Tree* denotes the harrowing loss of dignity that immigrants suffer in the new country. Although differences exist in the real life stories of immigrants and *The Iguana Tree*, the book still

captures the harrowing indignity that immigrants are subjected to in the new country.

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