

# Cited work essay example

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## **Immigration – The American Dream**

The story *Second Lives* describes the lives of people who define the USA as their chance to lead better lives. The story revolves around two characters, Nelson, a young Mexican who lives, with his family in the capital of Mexico, and his brother, Francisco, who lives in the USA. Nelson leads a virtual life through the pictures of his brother, and at the same time, experiences the sacrifice that his parents give so that their older son can fulfill the American Dream. Is the American Dream a myth for them? The American Dream is a myth that still echoes in the ears in all of those people who have "Red Passports" and see the USA as their second chance to succeed in life and ensure the future for their children.

The immigrants, legal and illegal, still believe in the American Dream. They choose to look on the other side when they see an injustice in America. If we compare the life that Nelson's parents led in Baltimore, it can be noticed that the neighborhood that they lived in was not a secure place for anyone. "The district they lived in was one of the poorest in the country at the time" (Alarcon 1). Despite the Vietnam War and the civil riots, they had something that no one could take away from them - hope. This is the main reason why do people from Third World countries long for America. On the other hand, people who are the USA citizens like Francisco take this status for granted. They do not possess that kind of hope that would lead them towards a better life. Based on the civil wars, the current Islamophobia, and the racial discrimination that still exists in the USA it would be difficult to believe in the American Dream. The dominant mass culture has made everyone believe that the American Dream is a nice house in the suburb, two children playing

in the backyard, and the pool that is being cleaned by a Mexican immigrant. Is this the fulfillment of the American Dream for this young Mexican immigrant? Regardless of the citizenship that one might have, the racial and ethnical discrimination exists even in America. The result of that is the sense of lost expectations that many immigrants carry.

In his book *Immigrants and the American Dream*, William A. V. Clark provides reasons of why immigrants consider America as the Promise Land. The reasons for why millions of people dream of America as the Land of Promise can be found in the global domination of the American mass culture and everything that it offers. The sense of illusion is that everything in the USA is possible. The ability to make money, to lead a life like the pop-stars that people watch on MTV everyday represent things that make people to pursue their dreams and reach the shores of America one day. As cited by Clark, "The individual immigrants have always focused on material well-being and prospects for a better future, either in America or upon returning home with some tangible wealth (2). For immigrants, the American Dream is a chance to make money and return home where they can lead a middle-class American live. However, the second generation of immigrants, like Francisco from the story *Second Lives* does not think about the American Dream in the same way as his parents. Clark also states that "Some of the native-born are ready with an outright rejection of its mythology, but the immigrant population is embracing the opportunities offered by the American tradition of hard work, long hours and often menial tasks" (3). Francisco is a standard representative of the second generation of immigrants who rejects the opportunities of being a native American and forgets his origin.

The American Dream has become a phenomenon. Due to the individual experiences of immigrants who have succeeded in America, the American Dream still exists as a modern fairy tale that is passed on from generation to generation. The American Dream represents the change for hoping and dreaming for a better life for many immigrants. Unfortunately, many unwanted immigrants spend their lives at the margins of the American society. Their lives are transformed into a statistics and numbers of the American administration. However, a place where one can freely walk and a place that provides a shelter and food represents for many the American Dream. Today, many immigrants dream of such a place and in this case the USA represents an American Dream.

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