# Domestic Violence Case Neg

### Utilitarianism Good

#### Prefer utilitarian approaches to policy that cast aside empathy --- valuing how discussions make us feel rather than the truth of the discussion ensures disastrous decision-making

**Bloom 14** [Paul Bloom, Brooks and Suzanne Ragen Professor of Psychology & Cognitive Science at Yale University, “Against Empathy, Boston Review, September 13, 2014, <http://bostonreview.net/forum/paul-bloom-against-empathy>]

When asked what I am working on, I often say I am writing a book about empathy. People tend to smile and nod, and then I add, “I’m against it.” This usually gets an uncomfortable laugh. This reaction surprised me at first, but I’ve come to realize that taking a position against empathy is like announcing that you hate kittens—a statement so outlandish it can only be a joke. And so I’ve learned to clarify, to explain that I am not against morality, compassion, kindness, love, being a good neighbor, doing the right thing, and making the world a better place. My claim is actually the opposite: if you want to be good and do good, empathy is a poor guide. The word “empathy” is used in many ways, but here I am adopting its most common meaning, which corresponds to what eighteenth-century philosophers such as Adam Smith called “sympathy.” It refers to the process of experiencing the world as others do, or at least as you think they do. To empathize with someone is to put yourself in her shoes, to feel her pain. Some researchers also use the term to encompass the more coldblooded process of assessing what other people are thinking, their motivations, their plans, what they believe. This is sometimes called “cognitive,” as opposed to “emotional,” empathy. I will follow this convention here, but we should keep in mind that the two are distinct—they emerge from different brain processes; you can have a lot of one and a little of the other—and that most of the discussion of the moral implications of empathy focuses on its emotional side. Some degree of emotional empathy is bred in the bone. The sight and sound of another’s suffering is unpleasant for babies and, as soon as they are mobile enough, they try to help, patting and soothing others in distress. This is not uniquely human: the primatologist Frans de Waal notes that chimps will often put their arms around the victim of an attack and pat her or groom her. Empathy can occur automatically, even involuntarily. Smith describes how “persons of delicate fibres” who notice a beggar’s sores and ulcers “are apt to feel an itching or uneasy sensation in the correspondent part of their own bodies.” John Updike writes, “My grandmother would have choking fits at the kitchen table, and my own throat would feel narrow in sympathy.” And empathy can be extended through the imagination. In a speech before he became president, Barack Obama stressed how important it is to see the world through the eyes of those who are different from us—the child who’s hungry, the steelworker who’s been laid off, the family who lost the entire life they built together when the storm came to town. . . . When you think like this—when you choose to broaden your ambit of concern and empathize with the plight of others, whether they are close friends or distant strangers—it becomes harder not to act, harder not to help. Obama is right about this last part; there is considerable support for what the psychologist C. Daniel Batson calls “the empathy-altruism hypothesis”: when you empathize with others, you are more likely to help them. In general, empathy serves to dissolve the boundaries between one person and another; it is a force against selfishness and indifference. It is easy to see, then, how empathy can be a moral good, and it has many champions. Obama talks frequently about empathy; witness his recent claim, after his first meeting with Pope Francis, that “it’s the lack of empathy that makes it very easy for us to plunge into wars. It’s the lack of empathy that allows us to ignore the homeless on the streets.” In The Empathetic Civilization (2009) Jeremy Rifkin argues that the only way our species will survive war, environmental degradation, and economic collapse is through the enhancement of “global empathy.” This past June, Bill and Melinda Gates concluded their Stanford commencement address by asking students to nurture and expand their empathetic powers, essential for a better world. Most people see the benefits of empathy as akin to the evils of racism: too obvious to require justification. I think this is a mistake. I have argued elsewhere that certain features of empathy make it a poor guide to social policy. Empathy is biased; we are more prone to feel empathy for attractive people and for those who look like us or share our ethnic or national background. And empathy is narrow; it connects us to particular individuals, real or imagined, but is insensitive to numerical differences and statistical data. As Mother Teresa put it, “If I look at the mass I will never act. If I look at the one, I will.” Laboratory studies find that we really do care more about the one than about the mass, so long as we have personal information about the one. In light of these features, our public decisions will befairer andmore moral once we put empathy aside. Our policies areimproved when we appreciate that a hundred deaths are worse than one, even if we know the name of the one, and when we acknowledge that the life of someone in a faraway country is worth as much as the life a neighbor, even if our emotions pull us in a different direction. Without empathy, wearebetterable tograsp the importance of vaccinating childrenand responding to climate change. These acts impose costs on real people in the here and now for the sake of abstract future benefits, so tackling them may require overriding empathetic responses that favor the comfort and well-being of individuals today. We can rethink humanitarian aid and the criminal justice system, choosing to draw on a reasoned, even counter-empathetic, analysis ofmoral obligation and likelyconsequences.

#### Reducing existential risks is the top priority in any coherent moral theory, not just Util

Plummer, PhD, 15

(Theron, Philosophy @St. Andrews http://blog.practicalethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/05/moral-agreement-on-saving-the-world/)

There appears to be lot of disagreement in moral philosophy. Whether these many apparent disagreements are deep and irresolvable, I believe there is at least one thing it is reasonable to agree on right now, whatever general moral view we adopt: that it is very important to reduce the risk that all intelligent beings on this planet are eliminated by an enormous catastrophe, such as a nuclear war. How we might in fact try to reduce such existential risks is discussed elsewhere. My claim here is only that we – whether we’re consequentialists, deontologists, or virtue ethicists – should all agree that we should try to save the world. According to consequentialism, we should maximize the good, where this is taken to be the goodness, from an impartial perspective, of outcomes. Clearly one thing that makes an outcome good is that the people in it are doing well. There is little disagreement here. If the happiness or well-being of possible future people is just as important as that of people who already exist, and if they would have good lives, it is not hard to see how reducing existential risk is easily the most important thing in the whole world. This is for the familiar reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. There are so many possible future people that reducing existential risk is arguably the most important thing in the world, even if the well-being of these possible people were given only 0.001% as much weight as that of existing people. Even on a wholly person-affecting view – according to which there’s nothing (apart from effects on existing people) to be said in favor of creating happy people – the case for reducing existential risk is very strong. As noted in this seminal paper, this case is strengthened by the fact that there’s a good chance that many existing people will, with the aid of life-extension technology, live very long and very high quality lives. You might think what I have just argued applies to consequentialists only. There is a tendency to assume that, if an argument appeals to consequentialist considerations (the goodness of outcomes), it is irrelevant to non-consequentialists. But that is a huge mistake. Non-consequentialism is the view that there’s more that determines rightness than the goodness of consequences or outcomes; it is not the view that the latter don’t matter. Even John Rawls wrote, “All ethical doctrines worth our attention take consequences into account in judging rightness. One which did not would simply be irrational, crazy.” Minimally plausible versions of deontology and virtue ethics must be concerned in part with promoting the good, from an impartial point of view. They’d thus imply very strong reasons to reduce existential risk, at least when this doesn’t significantly involve doing harm to others or damaging one’s character. What’s even more surprising, perhaps, is that even if our own good (or that of those near and dear to us) has much greater weight than goodness from the impartial “point of view of the universe,” indeed even if the latter is entirely morally irrelevant, we may nonetheless have very strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Even egoism, the view that each agent should maximize her own good, might imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. It will depend, among other things, on what one’s own good consists in. If well-being consisted in pleasure only, it is somewhat harder to argue that egoism would imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk – perhaps we could argue that one would maximize her expected hedonic well-being by funding life extension technology or by having herself cryogenically frozen at the time of her bodily death as well as giving money to reduce existential risk (so that there is a world for her to live in!). I am not sure, however, how strong the reasons to do this would be. But views which imply that, if I don’t care about other people, I have no or very little reason to help them are not even minimally plausible views (in addition to hedonistic egoism, I here have in mind views that imply that one has no reason to perform an act unless one actually desires to do that act). To be minimally plausible, egoism will need to be paired with a more sophisticated account of well-being. To see this, it is enough to consider, as Plato did, the possibility of a ring of invisibility – suppose that, while wearing it, Ayn could derive some pleasure by helping the poor, but instead could derive just a bit more by severely harming them. Hedonistic egoism would absurdly imply she should do the latter. To avoid this implication, egoists would need to build something like the meaningfulness of a life into well-being, in some robust way, where this would to a significant extent be a function of other-regarding concerns (see chapter 12 of this classic intro to ethics). But once these elements are included, we can (roughly, as above) argue that this sort of egoism will imply strong reasons to reduce existential risk. Add to all of this Samuel Scheffler’s recent intriguing arguments (quick podcast version available here) that most of what makes our lives go well would be undermined if there were no future generations of intelligent persons. On his view, my life would contain vastly less well-being if (say) a year after my death the world came to an end. So obviously if Scheffler were right I’d have very strong reason to reduce existential risk. We should also take into account moral uncertainty. What is it reasonable for one to do, when one is uncertain not (only) about the empirical facts, but also about the moral facts? I’ve just argued that there’s agreement among minimally plausible ethical views that we have strong reason to reduce existential risk – not only consequentialists, but also deontologists, virtue ethicists, and sophisticated egoists should agree. But even those (hedonistic egoists) who disagree should have a significant level of confidence that they are mistaken, and that one of the above views is correct. Even if they were 90% sure that their view is the correct one (and 10% sure that one of these other ones is correct), they would have pretty strong reason, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, to reduce existential risk. Perhaps most disturbingly still, even if we are only 1% sure that the well-being of possible future people matters, it is at least arguable that, from the standpoint of moral uncertainty, reducing existential risk is the most important thing in the world. Again, this is largely for the reason that there are so many people who could exist in the future – there are trillions upon trillions… upon trillions. (For more on this and other related issues, see this excellent dissertation). Of course, it is uncertain whether these untold trillions would, in general, have good lives. It’s possible they’ll be miserable. It is enough for my claim that there is moral agreement in the relevant sense if, at least given certain empirical claims about what future lives would most likely be like, all minimally plausible moral views would converge on the conclusion that we should try to save the world. While there are some non-crazy views that place significantly greater moral weight on avoiding suffering than on promoting happiness, for reasons others have offered (and for independent reasons I won’t get into here unless requested to), they nonetheless seem to be fairly implausible views. And even if things did not go well for our ancestors, I am optimistic that they will overall go fantastically well for our descendants, if we allow them to. I suspect that most of us alive today – at least those of us not suffering from extreme illness or poverty – have lives that are well worth living, and that things will continue to improve. Derek Parfit, whose work has emphasized future generations as well as agreement in ethics, described our situation clearly and accurately: “We live during the hinge of history. Given the scientific and technological discoveries of the last two centuries, the world has never changed as fast. We shall soon have even greater powers to transform, not only our surroundings, but ourselves and our successors. If we act wisely in the next few centuries, humanity will survive its most dangerous and decisive period. Our descendants could, if necessary, go elsewhere, spreading through this galaxy…. Our descendants might, I believe, make the further future very good. But that good future may also depend in part on us. If our selfish recklessness ends human history, we would be acting very wrongly.” (From chapter 36 of On What Matters)

#### Predictions are possible and useful

**Mearsheimer, 01** (John, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, 2001 p. 8, googleprint)

As a result, all political forecasting is bound to include some error. Those who venture to predict, as I do here, should therefore proceed with humility, take care not to exhibit unwarranted confidence, and admit that hindsight is likely to reveal surprises and mistakes. Despite these hazards, social scientists should nevertheless use their theories to make predictions about the future. Making predictions helps inform policy discourse, because it helps make sense of events unfolding in the world around us. And by clarifying points of disagreement, making explicit forecasts helps those with contradictory views to frame their own ideas more clearly. Furthermore, trying to anticipate new events is a good way to test social science theories, because theorists do not have the benefit of hindsight and therefore cannot adjust their claims to fit the evidence (because it is not yet available). In short, the world can be used as a laboratory to decide which theories best explain international politics. In that spirit I employ offensive realism to peer into the future, mindful of both the benefits and the hazards of trying to predict events.

#### Claims to moral obligation undercut political obligation and allow for violence to occur

Isaac, 2002

            (Jeffrey C., James H. Rudy professor of Political Science and director of the Center for the Study of Democracy and Public Life at Indiana University, Bloomington, “Ends, Means and politics,” *Dissent*, Spring) – <^.^>

As writers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Max Weber, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Hannah Arendt have taught, an unyielding concern with moral goodness undercuts political responsibility. The concern may be morally laudable, reflecting a kind of personal integrity, but it suffers from three fatal flaws: (1) It fails to see that the purity of one’s intention does not ensure the achievement of what one intends. Abjuring violence or refusing to make common cause with morally compromised parties may seem like the right thing; but if such tactics entail impotence, then it is hard to view them as serving any moral good beyond the clean conscience of their supporters; (2) it fails to see that in a world of real violence and injustice, moral purity is not simply a form of powerlessness; it is often a form of complicity in injustice. This is why, from the standpoint of politics— as opposed to religion—pacifism is always a potentially immoral stand. In categorically repudiating violence, it refuses in principle to oppose certain violent injustices with any effect; and (3) it fails to see that politics is as much about unintended consequences as it is about intentions; it is the effects of action, rather than the motives of action, that is most significant. Just as the alignment with “good” may engender impotence, it is often the pursuit of “good” that generates evil. This is the lesson of communism in the twentieth century: it is not enough that one’s goals be sincere or idealistic; it is equally important, always, to ask about the effects of pursuing these goals and to judge these effects in pragmatic and historically contextualized ways. Moral absolutism inhibits this judgment. It alienates those who are not true believers. It promotes arrogance. And it undermines political effectiveness.

**Utilitarianism is the only moral framework and any alternative is contradictory to nuclear age**

Nye, 86 (Joseph S. 1986; Phd Political Science Harvard. University; Served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; “Nuclear Ethics” pg. 18-19)

The significance and the limits of the two broad traditions can be captured by contemplating a hypothetical case.34 Imagine that you are visiting a Central American country and you happen upon a village square where an army captain is about to order his men to shoot two peasants lined up against a wall. When you ask the reason, you are told someone in this village shot at the captain's men last night. When you object to the killing of possibly innocent people, you are told that civil wars do not permit moral niceties. Just to prove the point that we all have dirty hands in such situations, the captain hands you a rifle and tells you that if you will shoot one peasant, he will free the other. Otherwise both die. He warns you not to try any tricks because his men have their guns trained on you. Will you shoot one person with the consequences of saving one, or will you allow both to die but preserve your moral integrity by refusing to play his dirty game? The point of the story is to show the value and limits of both traditions. Integrity is clearly an important value, and many of us would refuse to shoot. But at what point does the principle of not taking an innocent life collapse before the consequentialist burden? Would it matter if there were twenty or 1,000 peasants to be saved? What if killing or torturing one innocent person could save a city of 10 million persons from a terrorists' nuclear device? At some point does not integrity become the ultimate egoism of fastidious self-righteousness in which the purity of the self is more important than the lives of countless others? Is it not better to follow a consequentialist approach, admit remorse or regret over the immoral means, but justify the action by the consequences? Do absolutist approaches to integrity become self-contradictory in a world of nuclear weapons? "Do what is right though the world should perish" was a difficult principle even when Kant expounded it in the eighteenth century, and there is some evidence that he did not mean it to be taken literally even then. Now that it may be literally possible in the nuclear age, it seems more than ever to be self-contradictory.35 Absolutist ethics bear a heavier burden of proof in the nuclear age than ever before.

#### Our impact comes first---only impact you can’t recover from

Bauman 95 [Zygmunt, University of Leeds Professor Emeritus of Sociology, 1995, Life In Fragments: Essays In Postmodern Morality, p. 66-71]

The being‑for is like living towards‑the‑future: a being filled with anticipation, a being aware of the abyss between future foretold and future that will eventually be; it is this gap which, like a magnet, draws the self towards the Other,as it draws life towards the future, making life into an activity of overcoming, transcending, leaving behind. The self stretches towards the Other, as life stretches towards the future; neither can grasp what it stretches toward, but it is in this hopeful and desperate, never conclusive and never abandoned stretching‑toward that the self is ever anew created and life ever anew lived. In the words of M. M. Bakhtin, it is only in this not‑yet accomplished world of anticipation and trial, leaning toward stubbornly an‑other Other, that life can be lived ‑ not in the world of the `events that occurred'; in the latter world, `it is impossible to live, to act responsibly; in it, I am not needed, in principle I am not there at all." Art, the Other, the future: what unites them, what makes them into three words vainly trying to grasp the same mystery, is the modality of possibility. A curious modality, at home neither in ontology nor epistemology; itself, like that which it tries to catch in its net, `always outside', forever `otherwise than being'. The possibility we are talking about here is not the all‑too‑familiar unsure‑of‑itself, and through that uncertainty flawed, inferior and incomplete being, disdainfully dismissed by triumphant existence as `mere possibility', `just a possibility'; possibility is instead `plus que la reahte' ‑ both the origin and the foundation of being. The hope, says Blanchot, proclaims the possibility of that which evades the possible; `in its limit, this is the hope of the bond recaptured where it is now lost."' The hope is always the hope of *being fu filled,* but what keeps the hope alive and so keeps the being open and on the move is precisely its *unfu filment.* One may say that the paradox *of hope* (and the paradox of possibility founded in hope) is that it may pursue its destination solely through betraying its nature; the most exuberant of energies expends itself in the urge towards rest. Possibility uses up its openness in search of closure. Its image of the better being is its own impoverishment . . . The togetherness of the being‑for is cut out of the same block; it shares in the paradoxical lot of all possibility. It lasts as long as it is unfulfilled, yet it uses itself up in never ending effort of fulfilment, of recapturing the bond, making it tight and immune to all future temptations. In an important, perhaps decisive sense, it is selfdestructive and self‑defeating: its triumph is its death. The Other, like restless and unpredictable art, like the future itself, is a *mystery.* And being‑for‑the‑Other, going towards the Other through the twisted and rocky gorge of affection, brings that mystery into view ‑ makes it into a challenge. That mystery is what has triggered the sentiment in the first place ‑ but cracking that mystery is what the resulting movement is about. The mystery must be unpacked so that the being‑for may focus on the Other: one needs to know what to focus on. (The `demand' is *unspoken,* the responsibility undertaken is *unconditional;* it is up to him or her who follows the demand and takes up the responsibility to decide what the following of that demand and carrying out of that responsibility means in practical terms.) Mystery ‑ noted Max Frisch ‑ (and the Other is a mystery), is an exciting puzzle, but one tends to get tired of that excitement. `And so one creates for oneself an image. This is a loveless act, the betrayal." Creating an image of the Other leads to the substitution of the image for the Other; the Other is now fixed ‑ soothingly and comfortingly. There is nothing to be excited about anymore. I know what the Other needs, I know where my responsibility starts and ends. Whatever the Other may now do will be taken down and used against him. What used to be received as an exciting surprise now looks more like perversion; what used to be adored as exhilarating creativity now feels like wicked levity. Thanatos has taken over from Eros, and the excitement of the ungraspable turned into the dullness and tedium of the grasped. But, as Gyorgy Lukacs observed, `everything one person may know about another is only expectation, only potentiality, only wish or fear, acquiring reality only as a result of what happens later, and this reality, too, dissolves straightaway into potentialities'. Only death, with its finality and irreversibility, puts an end to the musical‑chairs game of the real and the potential ‑ it once and for all closes the embrace of togetherness which was before invitingly open and tempted the lonely self." `Creating an image' is the dress rehearsal of that death. But creating an image is the inner urge, the constant temptation, the *must* of all affection . . . It is the loneliness of being abandoned to an unresolvable ambivalence and an unanchored and formless sentiment which sets in motion the togetherness of being‑for. But what loneliness seeks in togetherness is an end to its present condition ‑ an end to itself. Without knowing ‑ without being capable of knowing ‑ that the hope to replace the vexing loneliness with togetherness is founded solely on its own unfulfilment, and that once loneliness is no more, the togetherness ( the being‑for togetherness) must also collapse, as it cannot survive its own completion. What the loneliness seeks in togetherness (suicidally for its own cravings) is the foreclosing and pre‑empting of the future, cancelling the future before it comes, robbing it of mystery but also of the possibility with which it is pregnant. Unknowingly yet necessarily, it seeks it all to its own detriment, since the success (if there is a success) may only bring it back to where it started and to the condition which prompted it to start on the journey in the first place. The togetherness of being‑for is always in the future, and nowhere else. It is no more once the self proclaims: `I have arrived', `I have done it', `I fulfilled my duty.' The being‑for starts from the realization of the bottomlessness of the task, and ends with the declaration that the infinity has been exhausted. This is the tragedy of being‑for ‑ the reason why it cannot but be death‑bound while simultaneously remaining an undying attraction. In this tragedy, there are many happy moments, but no happy end. Death is always the foreclosure of possibilities, and it comes eventually in its own time, even if not brought forward by the impatience of love. The catch is to direct the affection to staving off the end, and to do this against the affection's nature. What follows is that, if moral relationship is grounded in the being-for togetherness (as it is), then it can exist as a project, and guide the self's conduct only as long as its nature of a project (a not yet-completed project) is not denied. Morality, like the future itself, is forever not‑yet. (And this is why the ethical code, any ethical code, the more so the more perfect it is by its own standards, supports morality the way the rope supports the hanged man.) It is because of our loneliness that we crave togetherness. It is because of our loneliness that we open up to the Other and allow the Other to open up to us. It is because of our loneliness (which is only belied, not overcome, by the hubbub of the being‑with) that we turn into moral selves. And it is only through allowing the togetherness its possibilities which only the future can disclose that we stand a chance of acting morally, and sometimes even of being good, in the present.

### US Abusive

#### Escaping to the U.S. will land the women in more abusive situations

YWCA 2017

Newly - arrived immigrant survivors may face additional forms of abuse that women of color and Native women born in the United States may not, including: threats of deportation despite immigration status, possible language barriers, lack of knowledge of the American legal system, threatening to report employment status if survivor works "under the table", threatening to deport her and keeping the children, withdrawal of petition to complete legalization status, intimidation by destroying important documents such as an identification card or passport. In addition, there are some barriers that make reaching out for help and obtaining culturally and linguistically appropriate support services more challenging for many communities of color. Equally as important to note, these barriers are often also seen as factors for resilience, including: cultural barriers/resiliencies, economic barriers, threat of homelessness, job insecurity, religious barriers/resiliencies, fear of law enforcement and other systems, including child protective services.

#### US faces high rates of domestic violence – high likelihood of asylum victims facing domestic violence in the US

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** **18** (National Domestic Violence Hotline, “Get the Facts & Figures,” <http://www.thehotline.org/resources/statistics/>) // AF

On average, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence or stalking by an intimate partner in the United States — more than 12 million women and men over the course of a year.[i] Nearly 3 in 10 women (29%) and 1 in 10 men (10%) in the US have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by a partner and report a related impact on their< functioning.[ii] Nearly, 15% of women (14.8%) and 4% of men have been injured as a result of IPV that included rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.[iii] 1 in 4 women (24.3%) and 1 in 7 men (13.8%) aged 18 and older in the United States have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.[iv] IPV alone affects more than 12 million people each year.[v] More than 1 in 3 women (35.6%) and more than 1 in 4 men (28.5%) in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.[vi] Nearly half of all women and men in the United States have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (48.4% and 48.8%, respectively).[vii] Females ages 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 generally experienced the highest rates of intimate partner violence.[viii] From 1994 to 2010, about 4 in 5 victims of intimate partner violence were female.[ix] Most female victims of intimate partner violence were previously victimized by the same offender, including 77% of females ages 18 to 24, 76% of females ages 25 to 34, and 81% of females ages 35 to 49.[x]

### Circumvention

#### Trump will circumvent the plan – he will continue his trend of enforcing hard- line immigration policies – family separation proves

**Lind 18** (Dara Lind, “The Trump administration’s separation of families at the border, explained,” 6/15/18, <https://www.vox.com/2018/6/11/17443198/children-immigrant-families-separated-parents>) // AF

As a matter of policy, the US government is [separating families](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/5/8/17327512/sessions-illegal-immigration-border-asylum-families) who seek asylum in the US by crossing the border illegally. Dozens of parents are being split from their children each day — the children labeled “unaccompanied minors” and sent to government custody or foster care, [the parents](https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/5/8/17327512/sessions-illegal-immigration-border-asylum-families) labeled criminals and sent to jail. Between October 1, 2017 and May 31, 2018, at least 2,700 children have been split from their parents. 1,995 of them were separated over the last six weeks of that window — April 18 to May 31 — indicating that at present, an average of 45 children are being taken from their parents each day. To many critics of the Trump administration, family separation is an unpardonable atrocity. Articles depict children crying themselves to sleep because they don’t know where their parents are; one Honduran man [killed himself in a detention cell](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/a-family-was-separated-at-the-border-and-this-distraught-father-took-his-own-life/2018/06/08/24e40b70-6b5d-11e8-9e38-24e693b38637_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.a8cca7590df2) after his child was taken from him. But the horror can make it hard to wrap your head around the policy. Family separation isn’t sudden, nor is it arbitrary. While the Trump administration claims it’s taking extraordinary measures in response to a temporary surge, it is entirely possible this will be the new normal. Here’s what you need to know to understand it.