

Migration and the legal “right” to work

3 cases of “mega” receiving countries:

- Uganda (S. Sudan, DRC)
- Colombia (Venezuelan)
- United States (Central America)

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Uganda – among the most open countries in world permitting migrants/refugees to work...*does it matter?*

Migration #s: 1.4 million refugees/highest number in Africa

Settlement Camps run by UN agencies + major donors + international NGOs

Right to work + right to free movement

Key limitations:

- 1) Poor absorptive capacity of a highly rural, highly informal (90%+) low-income economy
- 2) Humanitarian aid = major distortion, suppressing local agricultural markets



Colombia – temporary work permits for portion of Venezuelan migrants... does it matter?

Migration #s:

1.6+ million Venezuela migrants since 2015 – largest receiving country in LAC

1 million Colombian internally displaced

Work Permits/Health-Education Access:

PEP – 676,000 (Jan 2020) less 40% of Venezuelans have them, bureaucratically slow

Access to schools, basic health care

Impact - more than 90% Venezuelans end up working in informal sector, despite higher than average education over Colombians



Does it Matter?

LAC Overwhelmed by World's Largest Migration Crisis 5.3+ million

Colombia's mixed record better than its neighbors

New COVID-19 restrictions – formal border lockdown

Implications: Informal, precarious work

- Migrants losing access to informal work (services + agric sectors)
- Evictions from shelters, housing
- 12,000 “Walking” back to Venezuela



United States: most restrictive policy yet greatest absorptive capacity + economic needs

Migration Numbers: 11 million unauthorized immigrants

Economic Impacts:

US Economy 11% larger because of low-skilled pools

Key role in services, agricultural harvesting, meatpacking

No evidence they are “taking American jobs,” except wage effects 15-17 ages, via H1-2B high skilled visas

Work Authorizations:

Limited temporary (seasonal) agriculture programs –

Highly limited skilled worker visas + (H1-B, H2-B programs)

Via refugee admissions - dramatic Trump-era cuts 110,000 Obama to 17,000 Trump 2019 + March 2020 halt)

Dramatically restricting right to enter U.S. and apply for political asylum

20 metropolitan areas with the largest number of unauthorized immigrants

2014 estimates



Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on augmented 2014 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Well before Trump, U.S. – Mexico border crossings falling; border not principal source of today’s undocumented workers

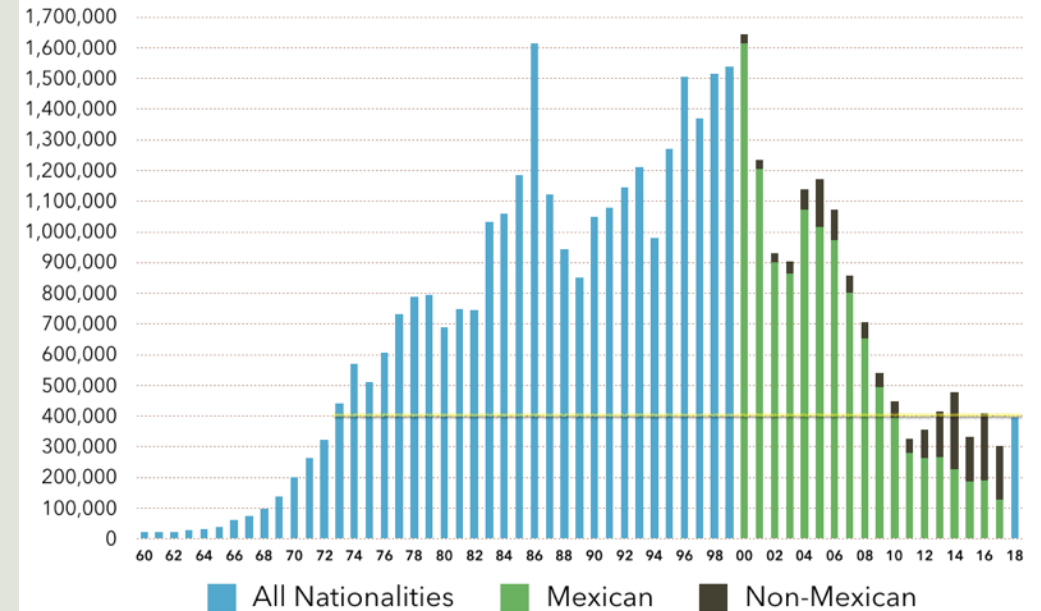
- U.S. border crossings
 - dropping in both numbers
 - changing in composition (more Central Americans and families)

- Increase in asylum claims at legal borders - Central Americans fleeing most violent region in world (# of homicides)

Progressive Removal of International Right to Apply for Asylum

- Slowdown – US border – cut staff reduced # of claims processed/day,
- “Stay in Mexico or Guatemala” –apply first for asylum first in Mexico or Guatemala
- Total border shutdown to asylum claims + undocumented under COVID-19 (March 2020)

Southwest Border Migrant Apprehensions Have Dropped to Early 1970s Levels



Source: U.S. Border Patrol <http://1.usa.gov/1W4vtwR> <http://1.usa.gov/1W4vuAR>

Trump Administration: new measures to remove legal right to work once you have it (*...or are waiting to have it*)

- Temporary Protective Status (TPS) = Attempt to remove/not renew TPS for over - **500,000** -
- Salvadorans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, Yemen, Nepal (temporarily blocked in the courts);
- DACA Protections for Young “Dreamers” – **800,000** currently have DACA, 1.8 million technically qualify
- New Proposed Conditions to Remove Green Cards - Green card holders who receive any social benefits “wards of state,” ; require proof of health insurance for new green card holders
- Suspend Visas for Green Card Holders Waiting Abroad to Enter U.S. (COVID-19) (**350,000 est**) (agriculture pickers + others exempted)
- Supreme Court upholds Trump Administration deportation of long-term legal permanent resident, if convicted of a crime (April 2020)

For our discussion ...

- In **large scale migration crises** (Africa, South America) current **little attention to workable employment options**, need to work to survive can overwhelm and dramatically worsen and prolong the humanitarian crises, rendering insolvable;
 - Uganda – international support only for classic “food and aid” delivery, and international donors getting weary of supporting “permanent refugee settlements”
 - Venezuela – remarkably small international assistance for the size of crisis, and no interest in supporting Latin American countries economic “absorption” of migrants
- **“Work authorization” relegated to solely a domestic matter** (e.g. United States, Europe – Italy, Hungary) **without international protections** –
 - major route to undermine internationally-recognized rights,
 - subjected migrants to unlawful and highly discriminatory treatment, arbitrary arrest and holding

US COVID-19 Provisions related to immigration

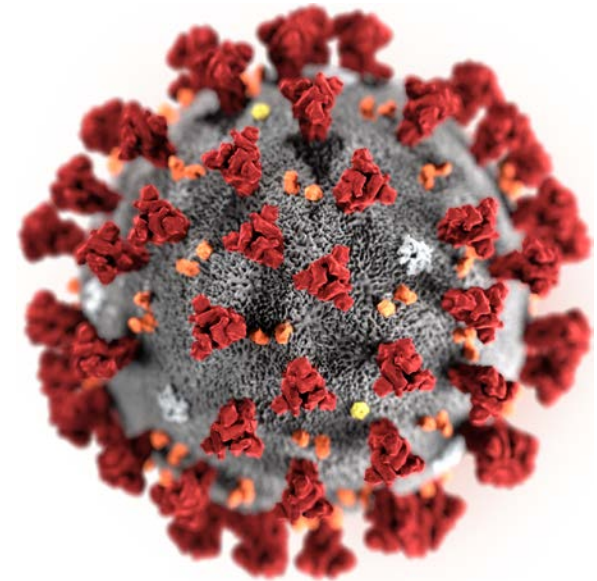
March 20 2020 – Administration will turn away from U.S. borders anyone without proper papers based on provision to “ban people or things that might spread infectious disease” (CDC, Title 42)

U.S. immigration law = allows legal entry of those without papers who claim “well founded fear of persecution”

Leaked memo says they must be turned away “within hours” unless they can convince a border agent and his boss that they will “be tortured” if returned

- **Those with felony convictions can be held in detention**

CBP says “7,000 turned back” (technically only Mexicans and Central Americans can be sent back to Mexico)



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