

Upcoming Meetings & Events

STORIES BEYOND BORDERS: VIRTUAL SCREENING & DISCUSSION – JULY 30

On Thursday, July 30 at 6 PM EDT, Action NC, Domestic Workers Alliance, and Working Films will host a virtual film festival screening five short films that show a more complete picture of the attacks on immigrant families and communities. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

WEAPONIZING PUBLIC HEALTH TO END ASYLUM IN THE U.S. – JULY 30

On Thursday, July 30 at 12 PM EDT, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health will host a webinar regarding the Department of Homeland Security's and Department of Justice's proposed rule that would give the agencies expansive authority to deny asylum and block and deport asylum seekers in the name of public health. The panel will discuss the new rule and its implications for public health and asylum in the United States. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

IMMIGRATION AND IDENTITY PANEL – AUG 6

On Thursday, August 6 at 7 PM EDT, The Downtown Columbia Partnership will host a panel with Professor A. Naomi Paik and Laura Briggs to speak to the history of immigration and how it has evolved in the last four years. Abdi Nor Iftin, who posted secret dispatches to NPR when Islamic radicalists took over his home country of Mogadishu in 2006, will share his journey to America and the obstacles he overcame. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



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Understanding Migration: Why “Push Factors” and “Pull Factors” Do Not Explain Very Much

By Mario Bruzzone

Five years ago, Michael Clemens and Justin Sandefur, [in an interesting essay for *Foreign Affairs*](#), wrote that “in many crises, assistance in the original country of origin largely cannot deter departure” of migrants. Elsewhere they wrote, “What each rich country can do is alter what pulls people to that country specifically, once they have decided to flee their own land.” Clemens’ and Sandefur’s larger point was to critique the international governance of migration in its present system, in which underdeveloped countries receive development assistance to deter migration and rich countries compete to be unappealing to migrants. To make their critique, they invoked a common idea: that of “push factors” and “pull factors.”

While there is often a divide between experts who are respected in academia and experts who are respected among policymakers, Clemens is the rare expert who enjoys influence in both worlds. The article’s knowing use “push” and “pull”—employed four and five times—was a risky choice for him. Although common in public debate and among policymakers, academics avoid the use of

push-pull. For academic researchers, push factors and pull factors are useful as far as they help students and the general public to understand that migrants have reasons for leaving and reasons for where they choose to arrive. But push-pull is heuristic, and not an explanation.

This brief discusses the use and limitations of the push-pull model, as a whole and disaggregated as push factors and pull factors.

Read the entire brief [here](#).

ASYLUM COMMENTS

The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have published a [proposed rule](#) that would give the power to the agencies to categorically disqualify asylum-seekers from protection if the government determines they could spread an infectious disease, including COVID-19, in the United States. The new regulation would expand the definition of "a danger to security" to include those who officials determine could spread a contagious disease. Further, the rule would bar asylum-seekers who have contracted COVID-19 while in the United States waiting for an asylum hearing from receiving refugee protections. Submit comments on this rule by August 10 [here](#).

USCIS MANUAL COMMENTS

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has posted a change to its [Policy Manual](#) regarding officers' application of discretion in adjudications. The change would require officers to exercise discretion in adjudicating Employment Authorization Documents (EADs), rather than relying solely on regulatory provisions. Submit comments on this change by August 14 [here](#).

USCRI COVID-19 RESOURCES

[Nonprofit Organizations and the CARES Act](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #1: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act \(March 6\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #2: Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(March 18\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #3: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act \(March 28\)](#)

[COVID-19 Bill #4: Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act \(April 23, 2020\)](#)

[Executive Order: Suspension of Immigration Following COVID-19 Outbreak \(April 23\)](#)

[Flores Enforcement Actions and COVID-19 \(April 27\)](#)

[The HEROES Act \(May 12, 2020\)](#)

[The Impact of COVID-19 in Refugee Camp \(June 9, 2020\)](#)

• Lawsuit Filed on Behalf of Children Detained in Hotels

On July 24, the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) filed an emergency [motion](#) for a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). A DHS contractor has been holding children in hotels, in some cases for weeks, before expelling them "in the interest of public health" under a contested [order](#) issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The plaintiffs seek a TRO (1) requiring DHS to inform the children and/or their parents that TCRP is prepared to represent them if they want counsel, and (2), for any children who wish for counsel to represent them, prohibiting DHS from expelling the children under the CDC order until such time as the court can rule on the legality of the order.

• U.S. District Court Judge Denies Release of Detained Immigrant Parents

On July 22, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Judge James Boasberg [declined](#) to order the release of around 300 detained migrant parents and children held in detention centers despite the spread of COVID-19. The case was *O.M.G., et. al. v. Chad Wolf, et. al.* While Judge Dolly Gee of the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California recently ordered the release of children detained for more than 20 days, the order did not include parents, a specific request made by petitioners in this case. Despite his decision, Boasberg acknowledged the difficulties of the situation, writing, "parents face a difficult choice: release their children to sponsors for an unknown amount of time, or keep their children with them in conditions that petitioners fear are dangerous."

• USCIS Postpones Furloughs

On July 24, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced it would postpone furloughs of 13,400 employees until August 31. On July 21, Senators Pat Leahy (D-VT) and Jon Tester (D-MT) had sent a [letter](#) that urged the agency to stop planned furloughs, also noting that Congress would be addressing potential USCIS financial issues in the next COVID-19 stimulus package. Furloughs had been planned to begin on August 3 due to a COVID-19 related budget crisis. The decision to delay the furloughs appears to be in response to a shift in financial projections for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

• ICE Continues to Block International Students Despite Reversal

Despite the Administration's July 14 reversal of the [rule](#) that required international students in to leave the country if their university moved to virtual coursework, Harvard University Dean Rakesh Khurana [stated](#) that new international students will still be unable to enter the United States. ICE guidance will prevent many universities from welcoming first-year international students in the fall because of the shift to online-only coursework for the fall semester in response to COVID-19.

Around the World in International Migration

• Canadian Court Rules Against Safe Third Country Agreement with United States

On July 22, the Federal Court of Canada invalidated the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) between the United States and Canada. The STCA has been in place since late 2004. The court found that the agreement exposes asylum seekers to unsafe detention conditions and an inadequate asylum system in the United States, in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights. Madam Justice Anne Marie McDonald suspended the court's judgement for six months and gave the Canadian Parliament an opportunity to end or modify the agreement with the United States.

• First Cases of COVID-19 Confirmed in Sahrawi Refugee Camps

On July 27, humanitarian aid workers confirmed the first cases of COVID-19 in the Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria. Since 1975, Algeria has hosted a large proportion of the Sahrawi population in refugee camps near the city of Tindouf, the majority of whom are dependent on humanitarian aid to sustain basic needs such as access to food, water, and shelter. Health conditions in the camps are poor, with anemia affecting over half the population. The camp clinics have no ventilators, few beds, and shortages of medical supplies and protective equipment. The arrival of COVID-19 puts 170,000 refugees at risk.

• Ukraine Institutes New Statelessness Legislation

On July 18, new legislation governing statelessness determination procedures entered into force in Ukraine. The law gives thousands of people who lack a nationality a chance to work legally, study and access healthcare, among other rights and opportunities. In the nearly 30 years since independence from the Soviet Union, statelessness has remained a significant issue in independent Ukraine, as in most former Soviet countries. When the country dissolved into 15 independent countries, many people, especially the elderly, rural populations, and minorities failed to exchange their Soviet passports for those issued by the newly independent countries. In Ukraine alone, the World Bank reported that there were 1.27 million undocumented persons living in the country in 2018. While the change in legislation presents an opportunity for stateless individuals, the demographics of the stateless population present significant challenges for success, given the majority are elderly or live in active conflict zones. The legislation will ultimately provide a pathway to citizenship for individuals who are recognized as stateless.

• Majority in Scotland Believes Country Should Be Able to Set its Own Immigration Policy

On the heels of the finalization of Brexit at the end of January, many experts have anticipated another Scottish independence referendum. A majority of Scottish voters opted to stay in the European Union in the Brexit referendum of 2016, and perceptions are widespread that the UK government focuses on England rather than the whole of the UK, including Scotland. Earlier this month, the Scottish Government's independent expert advisory group on migration and population suggested immigration into Scotland could be halved by the proposed immigration rules set by the UK government. The campaign group European Movement in Scotland recently conducted a poll of 1,127 people in Scotland and a UK-wide poll of 1,022 people. In the Scottish poll, 63.37% of people agreed on having the ability to make different immigration policy choices. Only 44% of respondents in the UK-wide survey agreed. The current Scottish government advocates for higher immigration, especially skilled immigration, indicating a political divide within the UK.

Whispers from Washington

Current Capitol Hill Considerations

Oversight Hearing of USCIS

On July 29, the House Committee on the Judiciary will have an oversight [hearing](#) of USCIS regarding the agency's recent issues.

The hearing will address USCIS's funding crisis, the efficiency and transparency of the agency, and the agency's actions regarding DACA in light of the recent Supreme Court decision. The hearing will have two-panels. Joseph Edlow, Deputy Director for Policy at USCIS, will testify in the first panel. The second panel will hear from non-governmental experts and other witnesses.

The Administration's Attacks on Immigrant Children: Expulsion, Separation, and Detention

Representatives Jayapal (D-WA-07) and Escobar (D-TX-16), co-chairs of the Women's Working Group on Immigration, will host a virtual congressional briefing this Thursday, July 30 at 1PM EST addressing the Administration's actions regarding the safety of vulnerable immigrant children. Register [here](#).

Republican Senators Push for Stimulus Checks for U.S. Citizens Married to Foreign Nationals

Under the [CARES Act](#), almost 2 million Americans without Social Security Numbers (SSNs) were excluded from receiving stimulus checks on account of their marriages to foreign nationals.

Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced legislation June that would include these Americans in the next COVID-19 relief package legislation. "Senator Rubio believes that no American should be denied a federal stimulus check because they are married to someone who is not a U.S. citizen," a spokeswoman for Rubio said on July 23. More recently, Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) has joined Rubio's bill.

The senators' pitch hinges on two ideas: (1) American citizens should not be excluded from government aid based on their choice of spouse, and (2) Republicans should not be alienating any group of voters during an election year.

The introduction of the latest COVID-19 relief package legislation is expected this week before Congress recesses for the month of August.

Global Gigabyte

Sesame Street recently has addressed the needs of kids spending their childhoods as refugees with help from the MacArthur Foundation.

"Ahlan Simsim," or "Welcome Sesame," was created with young refugee children in mind and will teach Arabic-speaking children around the world to cope with some of the traumas associated with extended displacement.

With the help of three new Muppets – Basma, Jad, and their humorous sidekick baby goat, Ma'zooza – created especially for the Arab language show, Sesame Street is teaching refugee children how to manage strong emotions through various techniques, such as deep breathing exercises.

The shows are being broadcast in 20 countries. Sesame Street also has broadcast two specials with Basma and Jad to address kids' needs during the Covid-19 pandemic. The second season is currently in production with plans to release episodes in the fall.

Read more [here](#).

If you have any questions or comments, please contact

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