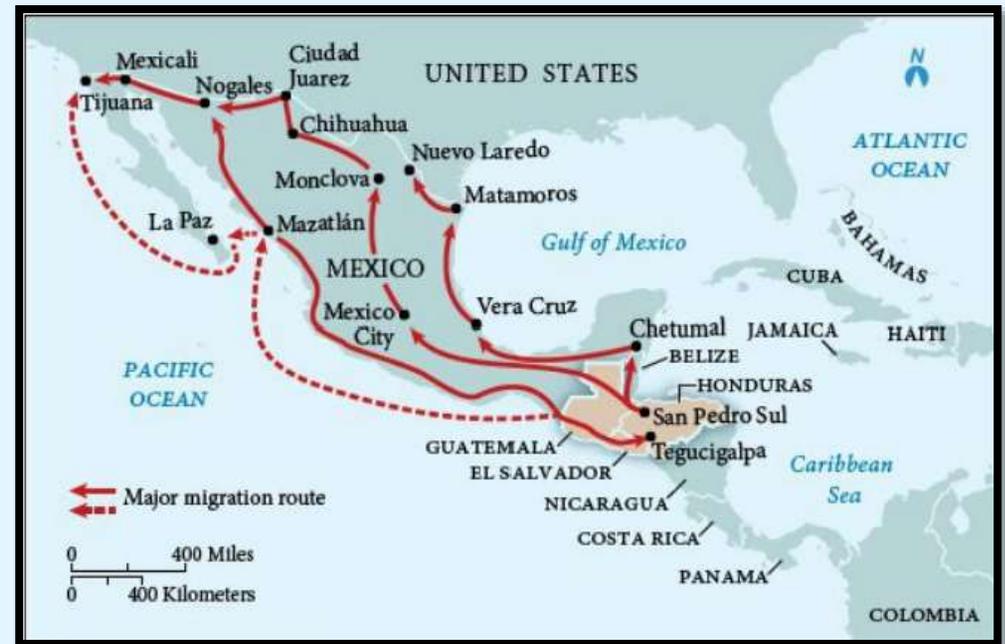


Great Decisions 2020

Feb 12 - Class #5: Illegal
Immigration from Central
America



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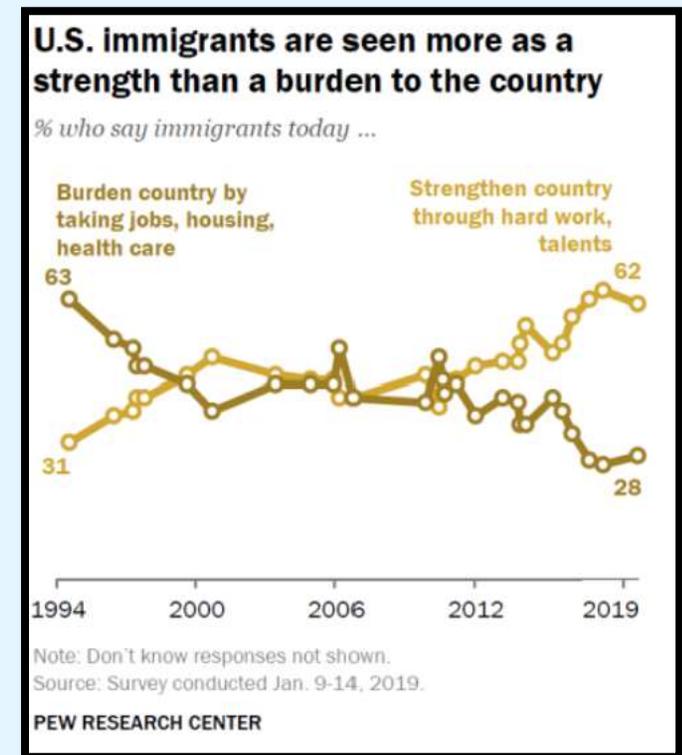
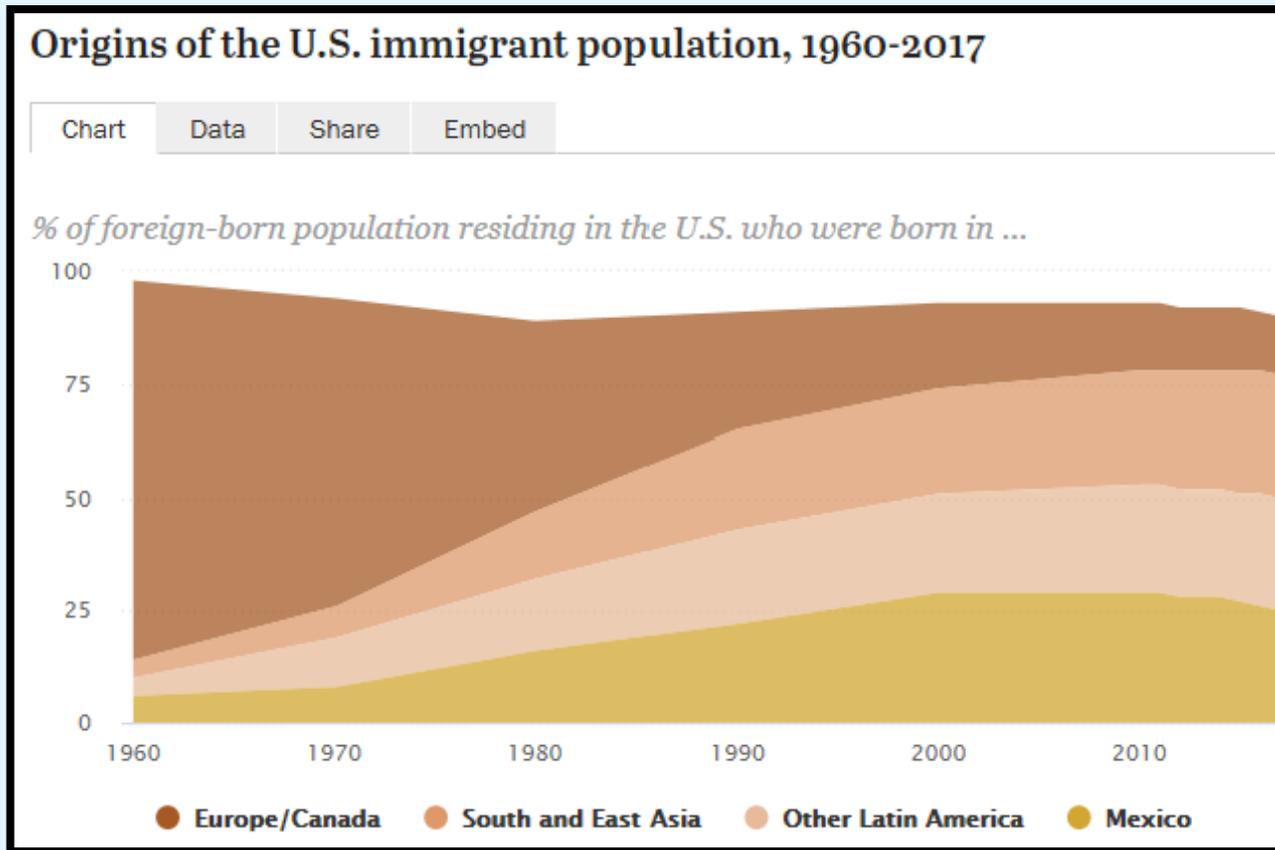
Topics

1. Trends in immigration
2. Background of Northern Triangle
3. U.S. relations and immigration policies
4. Causes and remedies of illegal immigration and drugs



Largest immigrant origin shifted from Europe/Canada to Mexico but now split

Surprisingly, U.S. views of immigrants have improved

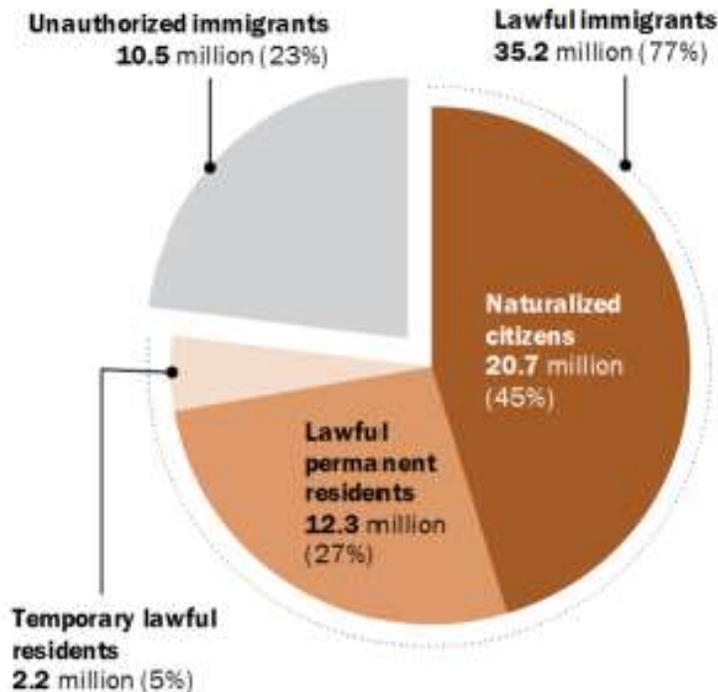


Unauthorized Immigrants, 23% of U.S. foreign born

All Foreign born: $47.9/325.1=14.7\%$

Unauthorized immigrants are almost a quarter of the U.S. foreign-born population

Foreign-born population estimates, 2017



Unauthorized Immigrants from Mexico decline while Central America increase

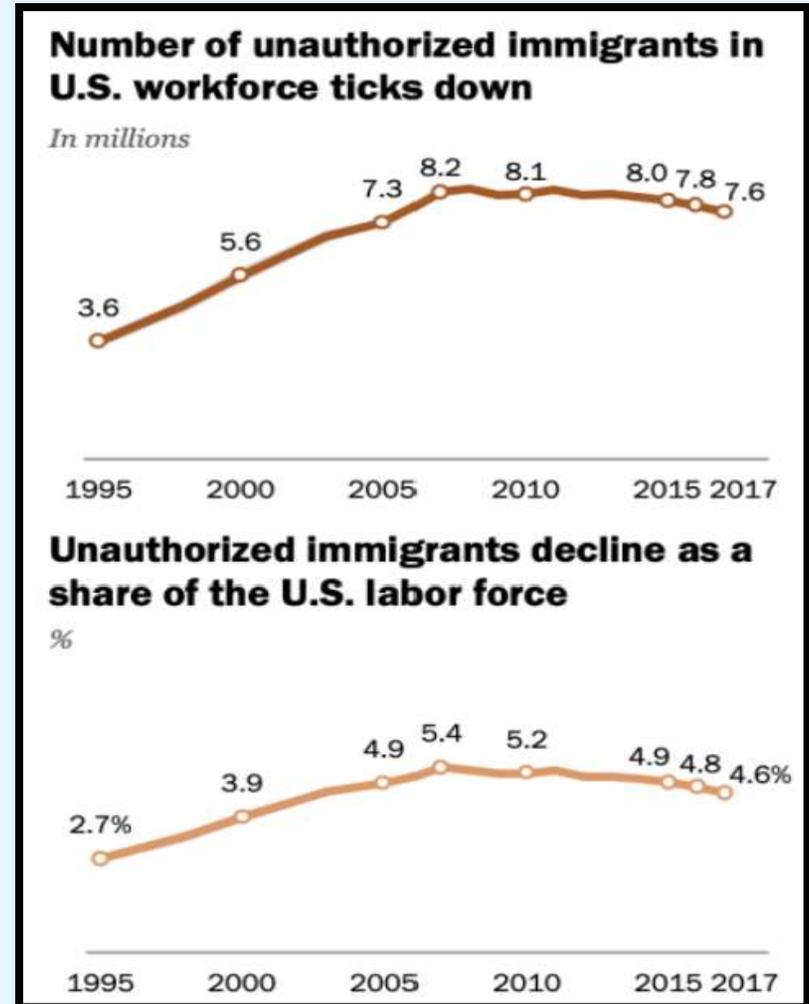
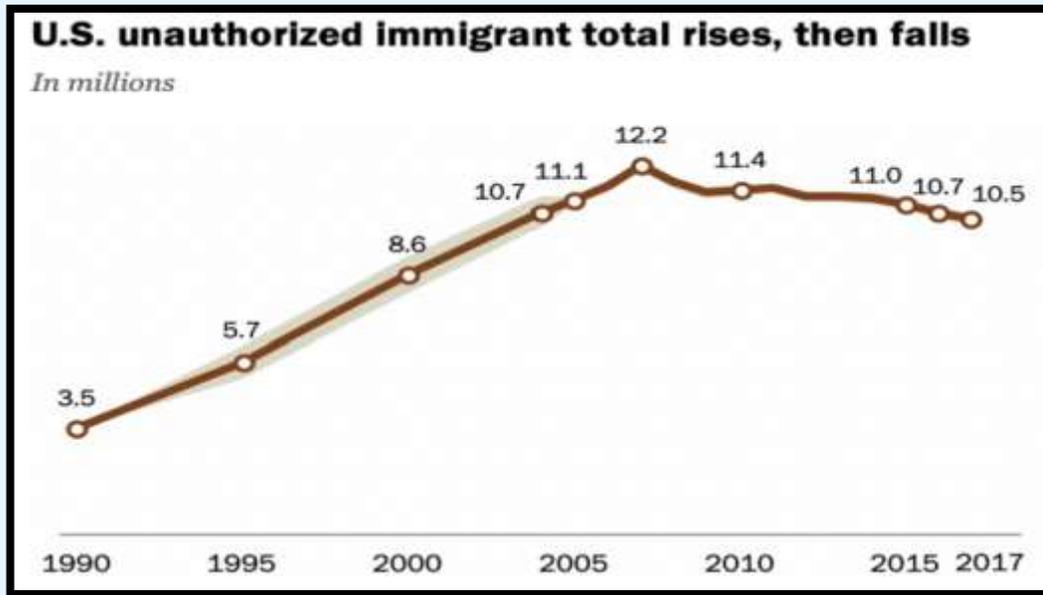
Estimated unauthorized immigrant total declines or holds steady from most regions

In thousands

	2017	2007	Change
Latin America			
Mexico	4,950	6,950	-2,000
Central America	1,900	1,500	+400
South America	775	900	-130
Caribbean	475	475	—
Other regions			
Asia	1,450	1,300	+130
Europe, Canada	500	650	-150
Middle East	130	140	—
Africa	250	250	—
U.S. total	10,500	12,200	-1,750

Unauthorized immigration peaked 2006 and then declined

Unauthorized immigrant decline in workforce



pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/12/us-unauthorized-immigrant-population-2017/

Third of labor force increase
lawful immigrants,
unauthorized declined

Most immigrants have
more education than
U.S. born

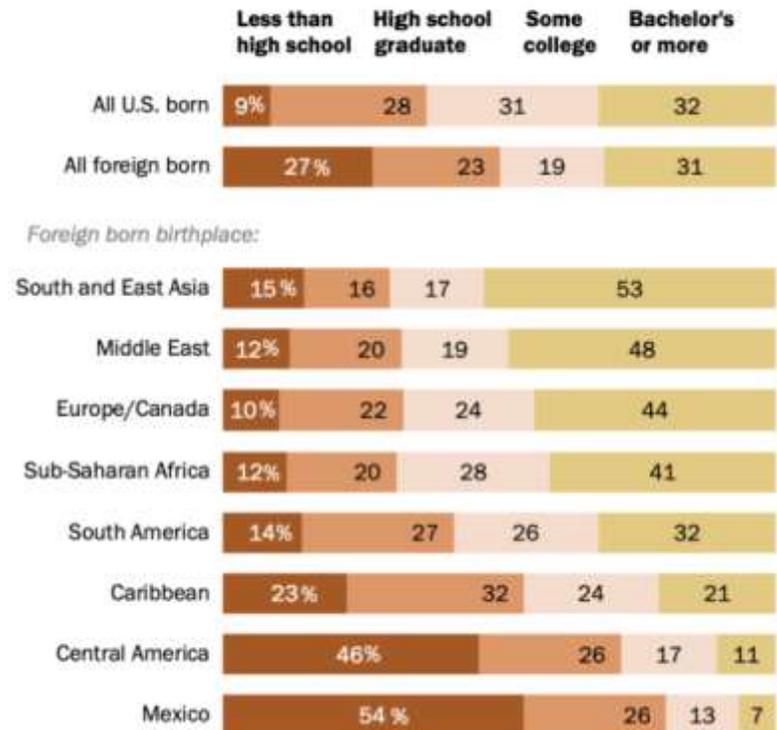
**Total U.S. labor force grows since 2007,
but number of unauthorized immigrant
workers declines**

Labor force estimates, in millions

	2017	2007	Change
U.S. total	164.4	153.3	+11.2
U.S. born	135.7	127.9	+7.8
Lawful immigrant	21.2	17.2	+4.0
Unauthorized immigrant	7.6	8.2	-0.6

Educational attainment among U.S. immigrants, 2017

% among those ages 25 and older

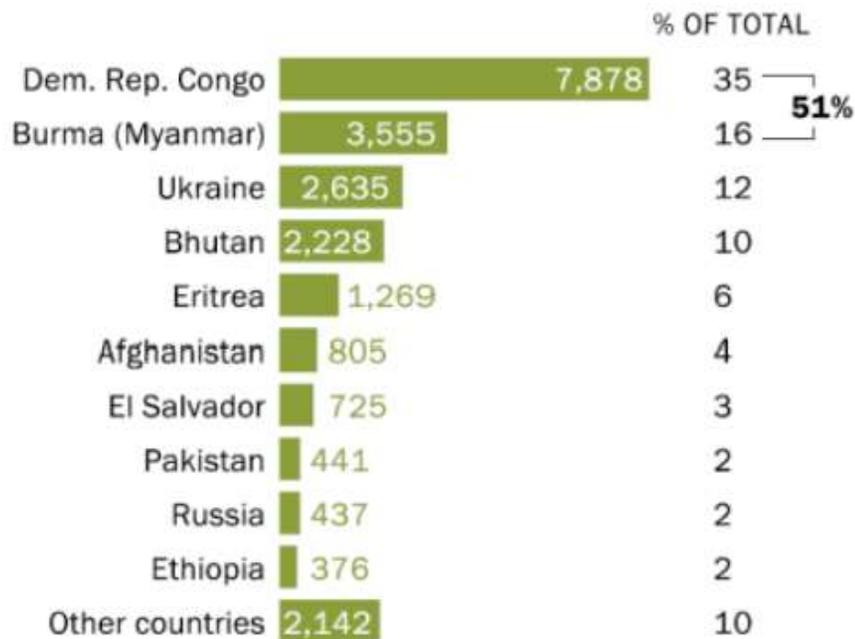


Refugees mostly from Africa and Asia not S. America

Deportees declining and majority of not criminal

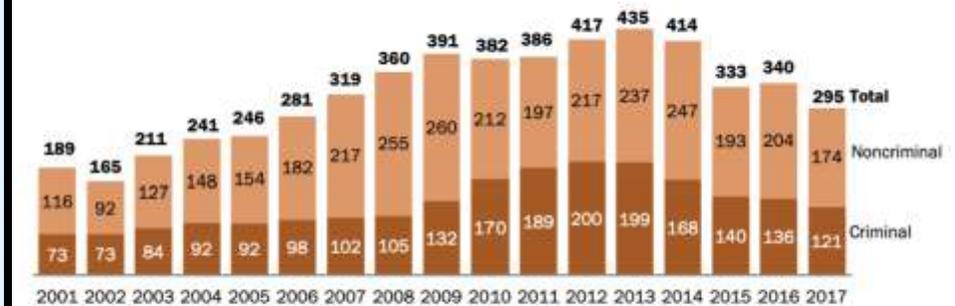
More than half of U.S. refugees in 2018 were from D.R. Congo and Burma

Number of refugees entering the U.S. in fiscal 2018, by origin country



U.S. deportations of immigrants slightly down in 2017

In thousands, by fiscal year and criminal status



Note: Criminal status is based on prior criminal conviction. Data refer to removals by U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security publications. Data for 2001-2004: "Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2010." Data for 2005-2014: "Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2014." Data for 2015, 2016 and 2017 from "Yearbook of Immigration Statistics" for each respective year.

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Synopsis of Northern Triangle history

- Mayan civilizations under Spanish rule for 3 centuries, and independent since 1840s
- “Banana Republics” – 20th century of dictatorships, corruption, death squads, military coups, heavy-handed U.S. and U.S.-based companies influence ...
- Prone to natural disasters of hurricanes, volcanoes, floods, etc.
- Agrarian, very low incomes and high murder rates
- Pathways for illegal drug trade to U.S.
- U.S. influences both with stick (sanctions and interventions) and carrot (aid)
- U.S. - largest importer and exporter
- U.S. remittances \$17 Bil (5-8% of GDP)



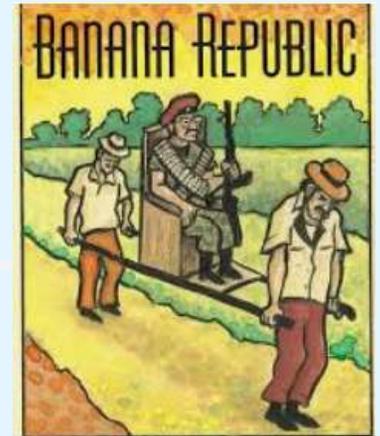
Small, low income, agricultural, trade with U.S., low tax share GDP

Economies of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, 2017

Indicator	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras
GDP (PPP) (bil. \$)	52	138	46
GDP - per capita (\$ PPP)	8,000	8,200	5,600
Population (millions)	6.5	17.2	9.2
Labor force - in agriculture (%)	21%	31%	39%
Population in poverty (%)	33%	59%	30%
Murder rate/100,000 (rank)	62 (1)	26 (9)	42(3)
Exports -(% to US)	46%	34%	35%
Imports -(% from US)	37%	40%	40%
Taxes (% GDP)	24%	11%	20%

Source: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gt.html (1/31/2020)

Northern Triangle – U.S. dominance of Banana Republics in 20th century



- Politically unstable, economy depends on export of product such as bananas or minerals
- Society extremely stratified into large impoverished working class and elite ruling-class plutocracy
- Servile dictatorship that abets, for kickbacks, exploitation of large-scale plantation agriculture
- By 1930s, United Fruit controlled 80–90% of bananas in U.S. and largest landowner in Guatemala gave it great power over small countries
- U.S. ignored it, corporations managed the country, become sole employers, and controlled roads, rails, ports they had built
- CIA deposed Honduran democratically elected gov't in 1954



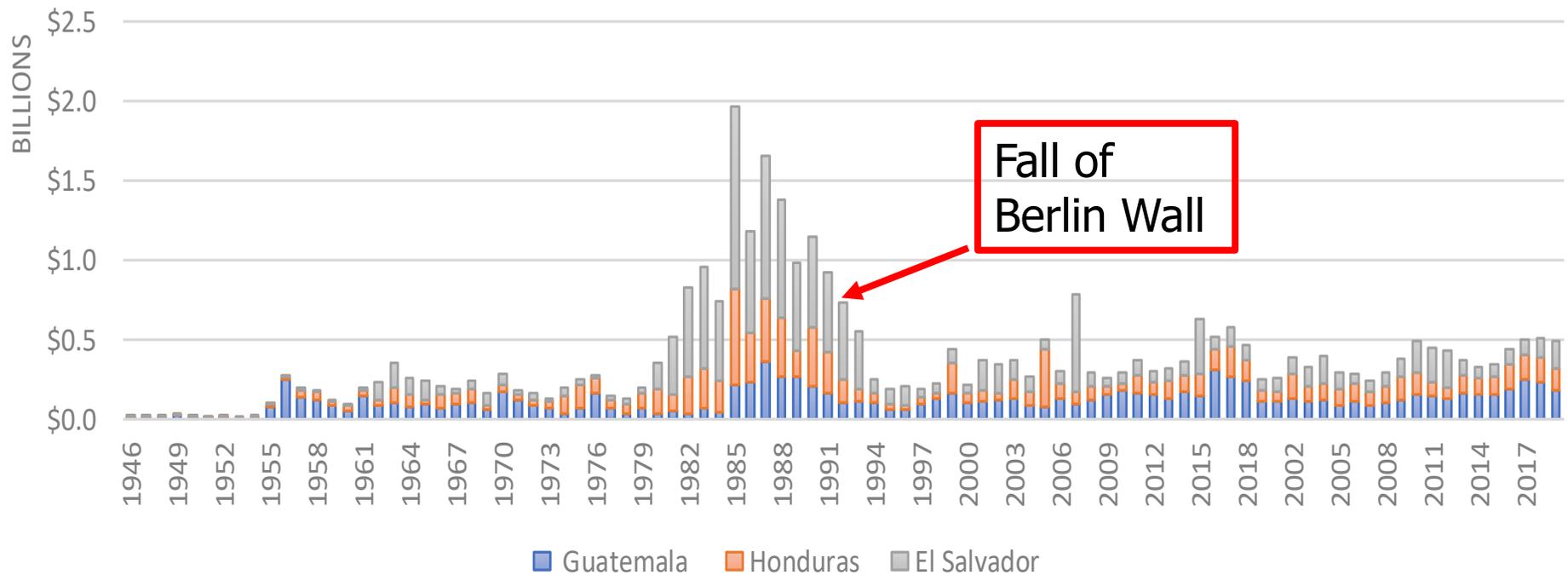
Northern Triangle pathway for drugs to U.S. and murderous

- U.S. largest single consumer of illicit drugs in world, with majority coming from outside
- Strategically located between cocaine production areas in South America and drug routes through Mexico to U.S.
- Central America has world's highest murder rates



U.S. Aid to Northern Triangle soared during Cold War and sunk afterwards

US Total Foreign Aid Northern Triangle (US constant \$)



Data are total obligations in constant dollars by country from 1946 to most recent year, from explorer.usaid.gov/data



U.S. relations with Northern Triangle

- U.S. dominant presence in Central America 100 yrs.+
- During Cold War, U.S. supported authoritarian regimes and opposed left-wing forces supported by Moscow
- In 1980s, U.S. spent billions fighting left-wing guerrillas
- Promising democratic improvements in 1990s but polices impacts limited
- Now, again debate over rising undocumented immigration from Northern Triangle
- Since 2008, undocumented immigration from Mexico decreased but Northern Triangle increased



Why the rise in immigration Northern Triangle?

- Lack of economic opportunities – 1/3 to 1/2 in poverty
- Desire to reunite with family- 82% migrants have relatives in U.S. – nearly half undocumented
- Widespread violence and criminality - 80% of cocaine enters U.S. via Northern Triangle
- Some governance improvement but still corruption
- Despite being dangerous and costly, take the risk
- Now, families, children, and asylum-seekers much more prevalent



Trump's tough stance against illegal immigration

- Advocates border wall to stop migrants and drugs
- Zero-tolerance policy of undocumented immigration and tighten the rules on asylum claimants
- Pressured Mexico to stop the flow of people and cut aid to Northern Triangle for not stopping migration to U.S.
- Guatemala designated "a safe first country" for asylum-seekers
- Most drugs enter U.S. in small boats or smuggled across illegal border crossings
- U.S. immigration system-woefully inadequate and swamped and Congress can't agree on a fix



Suggestions for future

- Policy focus on structural factors pushing people to migrate
- Engaging region with properly funded programs
- Stiffer controls over U.S. exports of guns
- Addressing massive demand for drugs in U.S. that creates overwhelming incentives for criminal groups
- U.S. immigration system needs reform-but so far has been blocked by political conflict
- U.S. tighten down and prevent criminal organizations from using financial institutions to hide and launder their money
- Address 9 million undocumented workers now in U.S. - surprising 72% believe should be allowed to stay



Illegal Immigration from Central America

Summary and Conclusions

- Northern Triangle countries some of world's poorest and most murderous
- Migrants to U.S. increasing to escape poverty, lack of opportunity and drug violence
- U.S. has long and checkered history in region
- U.S. drug use and gun exports add to criminality
- Trump has clamped down on illegals and amnesty, much needed reforms blocked
- Long-term solution - bolster democracy and economic opportunity in the region



U.S. relations with the Northern Triangle

- There is a migration crisis and fractured societies at the heart of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador
- In Central America law and order is breaking down-they have world's highest murder rate
- Living conditions are hard
- Climate change is impacting them
- Food is scarce- children undernourished – at age 9 they're 6 inches shorter than in U.S.
- Young population, many lack jobs
- As a result of bad conditions, 800,000 to 1.3 million are fleeing annually from endemic dangers and persecution
- Corruption at top and street gangs at bottom



Cocaine worsens Northern Triangle's problems of violence and corruption

- Geographically at chokepoint between supply of cocaine in Andes and demand for it in U.S.
- Serve as a bridge for cocaine trafficking
- Law and order has broken down - every business in Guatemala pays extortion to gangs
- Drug cartels and street gangs reign - some of street gangs have roots in U.S.
- Salvadorans came to Los Angeles and lacking opportunities began to form gangs and then went back home as drug thugs



People unsafe and flee for their life

- People are not safe at their home and have lost faith in the situation is going to change
- Violence is born of desperation - little opportunities for advancement
- These countries are ruled by oligarchs who want to keep their privileged position
- Great inequality - rest of people lack opportunities
- People lack security and businesses have difficulty succeeding



Why not more progress?

- Price of coffee has fallen hurting small producers and laborers with many fleeing to city slums
- In slums they encounter and often join criminal gangs
- Drug cartels are violent - intimidate and take control of areas
- Drug cartels have taken much land from peasants
- Countries have very low tax revenues-for example in Guatemala only 11% of GDP
- Elites oppose raising taxes - don't want to pay plus government is ineffective
- Lack of safety and security results in elite using private security forces – now, 7 private security guards for each police officer



Past U.S. policies of intervention to contain communism

- U.S. has intervened many times in Latin America
- We've taken a dual approach of the Monroe Doctrine (keep others out) and big brother approach (intervention)
- Roosevelt instituted good neighbor policy
- But in 20th century the area was a Cold War battleground
- After Cuba turned communist and affiliated with Soviets, U.S. overriding concern was winning Cold War and keeping communism from spreading
- Accordingly, U.S. supported dictators to oppose leftists
- U.S. policy was containment to oppose communism
- For example, in 1954 we intervened in Guatemala and ensuing civil war lasted for over 30 years



Evolving policies after the Cold War of Bush and Obama

- When peace came in 1990s, U.S. boosted assistance and supported fledgling democracies
- With the civil wars over, it was assumed that development would naturally follow, and U.S. aid dwindled
- But then in 2007, President Bush visited and got a firsthand view of gang violence and drug cartels
- U.S. focused on trade (Central America Free Trade Agreement) trade not on human rights
- Obama championed Alliance for Prosperity, which continues
- In 2013, unaccompanied child crisis began with families desperate to get their kids out of terrible situation in Central America



Trump has taken a hard line and used harsh rhetoric

- Trump has taken a hard line against immigration and emphasized building the wall
- Trump has pressed Mexico to clamp down upon Central American migrants crossing it as a transient country
- In 1980s and 1990s most of immigrants were Mexican - now only 10% and much higher percent is from Northern Triangle
- Huge caravans of migrants crossing Mexico pose a major challenge to Mexico
- Mexico could do more reducing people crossing over into U.S., but it too has limited resources



The question of amnesty

- U.S. argues that many do not qualify for asylum-they are not fleeing religious, racial, national or ethnic individual persecution - they are fleeing for their lives!
- Also results in parents leaving their children to cross because of amnesty policies
- U.S. wants Guatemala to serve as a “safe third country” with people first seeking asylum there
- Guatemala is where most migrants from Northern Triangle initially cross a border
- But, neither Guatemala nor Mexico are safe places due to their continued drug violence
- U.S. in past has been a beacon of hope and some complain it shouldn't force people fleeing to their second choice



Long-term strategy: what can the U.S. do for Northern Triangle?

- Over long-term, U.S. can best stabilize this broken region by economic, social and political development
- U.S. has a responsibility to stabilize countries in this region
- They have some potentials in agriculture, light industry, and certain service sectors
- U.S. is re-evaluating its checkered legacy in South America
- Unfortunately, peace and prosperity in Northern Triangle still seem more distant than ever



U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle

- U.S.'s had a dominant presence in Central America for more than a century
- Today now again center of political debate as a result of rising undocumented immigration from Northern Triangle
- The reasons are multiple: widespread violence and criminality, economic inequality, rural poverty, desire to unite with family already in U.S....
- Since Great Recession, undocumented immigration from Mexico has steadily declined while that from the Northern Triangle has increased
- It has overrun the U.S. immigration system-woefully inadequate due to decades of political blockage



Trump's "zero-tolerance"

- Trump has proclaimed "zero-tolerance" including:
 - Curtailing right to asylum
 - Separating children from their families to expedite deportation
 - Increasing raids and arrests of undocumented
- These policies have deeply divided U.S. and cause suffering while doing little to stem illegal immigration
- Recent surge in undocumented immigration requires understanding the historical background



Historical background – U.S. Interventions

- U.S. has intervened several times in region to protect U.S. interests
- During Cold War, U.S. supported authoritarian regimes and opposed left-wing forces supported by Moscow
- During 1980s, U.S. spent billions in economic and military aid for El Salvador and Guatemala regimes and their fight against left-wing guerrillas
- More than 200,000 were murdered in Guatemala Civil War
- 75,000 deaths in El Salvador- mostly by government-backed death squads
- Honduras did not have the civil conflict, but it was affected by the instability and violence of its neighbors



Lower U.S. priority after Cold War came to an end in the late 1980s

- Central American governments came together and laid groundwork for democratic elections in Nicaragua in 1990, and national peace Accords in El Salvador in 1992 and got Guatemala in 1996
- While these deals were promising, they were hard to put into practice
- Decades of conflict had left infrastructure in ruins, public services almost nonexistent, poverty rampant, inequality appalling and very weak corrupt and inefficient state
- The region became less of a priority for U.S.
- El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala had expansion of criminal groups and armed gangs in 1980s and 1990s



Central pathway for drugs to U.S.

- Northern Triangle is strategically located between cocaine production areas in South America and drug trafficking routes that go through Mexico and into U.S.- largest consumer of drugs in the world
- Former members of paramilitary forces and intelligence services recycle themselves as criminal organizations
- As U.S. War on Drugs, limited drug pathway in Caribbean, it was replaced by drug trafficking route through Central America
- Furthermore, El Salvador gangs living in Los Angeles were deported
- These dangerous criminals is a reason why Northern Triangle is becoming one of the highest murder rates in world



Mexico's war on drugs

- Mexico launched a war on drugs in 2006 led to criminal groups increasing their presence in Northern Triangle
- U.S. under the Bush administration launched a multibillion-dollar assistance package to boost Mexico's efforts
- In reality most of the assistance from the U.S. provided training and equipment for the widely distrusted security forces
- It neglected much-needed reforms to state institutions and all but guaranteeing impunity for police abuses and corruption



Recent migration to the U.S.

- Undocumented immigration from Northern Triangle is not new
- In 1998 President Clinton granted Temporary Protection Status to undocumented immigrants from being deported to 50,000 Hondurans who came to U.S. after hurricane Mitch
- In 2001, President Bush did the same for 200,000 Salvadorans who had fled a catastrophic earthquake
- Undocumented immigrants rose during 1990s and early 2000- the majority from Mexico
- In 2000, 1.6 million were detained while trying to enter illegally

TPS is an immigration status granted to foreign nationals who are living in U.S. without legal status, and who are therefore potentially eligible for deportation, but who are from countries that are determined in a crisis.



The contrast of Mexican and Northern Triangle immigrants

- In 2007 undocumented immigrants in U.S. peaked at 12.2 million of which 6.9 million were from Mexico and 1.5 million from the Northern Triangle
- Between 2007 and 2017 unauthorized immigrants from Mexico in U.S. declined by 1.5 million while those from Northern Triangle rose 400,000
- Those from Mexico were largely young males looking for jobs who sneaked across border whereas those from Northern Triangle were families and unaccompanied minors who request asylum in U.S.



Why the rise in immigration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras?

- Lack of economic opportunities at home with 1/2 in poverty
- Desire to reunite with family - 82% of recent migrants from Northern Triangle already have relatives living in the U.S.
- There's already 1.2 million Salvadorans, 880,000 Guatemalans and 500,000 Honduras in U.S.-nearly half undocumented
- Widespread violence and criminality in Northern Triangle-especially linked to drug trafficking
- More than 80% of all cocaine entering U.S. passes through the Northern Triangle
- Weakness of democratic institutions - lack of healthcare and education and high degrees of corruption and tax avoidance



Democratic governance: breakthroughs and setbacks

- Has been some improvement countries since 1990s, however, now signs of declining democratic governance and rule of law
- In 2015, president and vice president of Guatemala forced to resign after being charged with corruption
- In 2016, their successor was also ousted for corruption
- In 2019, Guatemalan government forced shutdown of UN backed International Commission Against Impunity In Guatemala (CICIG)
- In Honduras in 2009, president was removed from office by military
- In El Salvador, a former president is in prison accused of embezzling \$250 million



Policy responses in the U.S.

- Migrating is tough-must travel more than 2000 miles across violent areas
- Parts of trip are made by foot and some through Mexico by bus or freight train
- Some pay human smugglers \$3,000 to \$10,000 each and then pay several thousands more to coyotes who help them across the border



Now, families, children, and asylum-seekers much more prevalent

- Some form huge caravans to try to protect each other
- A large presence of children is new - partially due to their special protections under U.S. law which makes them more likely to stay
- For example, unaccompanied minors can only be detained for a few days at border, after which they must be given to foster homes or relatives in U.S.
- Family groups are similarly protected and must be allowed to stay in U.S. after 20 days while their case is being processed
- In view of backlog of 800,000 asylum requests pending by 2018, many migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras get to stay in U.S. indefinitely after requesting asylum



Policies under Obama

- Obama administration launched U.S. strategy for engagement in central America focusing on the Northern Triangle
- Congress funded with \$1.2 billion programs to aid
- These programs were complemented by Alliance for Prosperity
- At same time, Obama increased pressure on Mexico to stop migrants from crossing its territory to U.S.
- Mexico increased its deportations by 70%



Trump's policy

- Trump campaigned with tough stance against illegal immigration and promised to build a border wall to stop migrants and drugs
- Most drugs that enter U.S. do it in small boats or smuggled in through illegal border crossings
- Trump launched a zero-tolerance policy toward undocumented immigration: Tighter rules on asylum claimants
 - Prohibiting them from seeking employment
 - Families who have applied for asylum can be detained indefinitely
- Trump is also sought to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) status which would allow deportation of over 300,000 who have been here since the 1990s-but so far courts have halted it



Trump's policies increase to limit asylum seekers

- Trump is increased pressure on Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to stop migrants from reaching the U.S. border-and many are piling up on border are waiting for their asylum request to be heard
- Trump also pressured Mexico to stop flow of migrants and has halted aid of over \$0.5 billion to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras for their failure to stop migration to the U.S.
- Guatemala has been designated "a safe third country" for asylum-seekers
- If this comes into fruition, U.S. would be able to deport thousands to Guatemala
- But they are far from being safe in Guatemala



What lies ahead

- Punitive approaches will not likely deter desperate people from migrating
- Policy must focus on structural factors driving people to try to migrate – i.e. reduce the “push”
- This requires engaging and assisting the region
- Stiffer controls over export of guns – 70% of guns collected from criminals are from U.S.
- Massive demand for drugs in U.S. creates overwhelming incentives for criminal groups



Reforms the U.S. should consider

- Prevent criminal organizations from using financial institutions to hide and launder their money
- U.S. immigration system needs reform-but so far has been blocked by political conflict
- Need to address the nearly 9 million undocumented workers now in U.S.
- Public opinion polls indicate that the vast majority of U.S. citizens support improving living conditions of asylum-seekers
- A surprising 72% believe undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in U.S.



Prevalence of drug use in the U.S., 2018

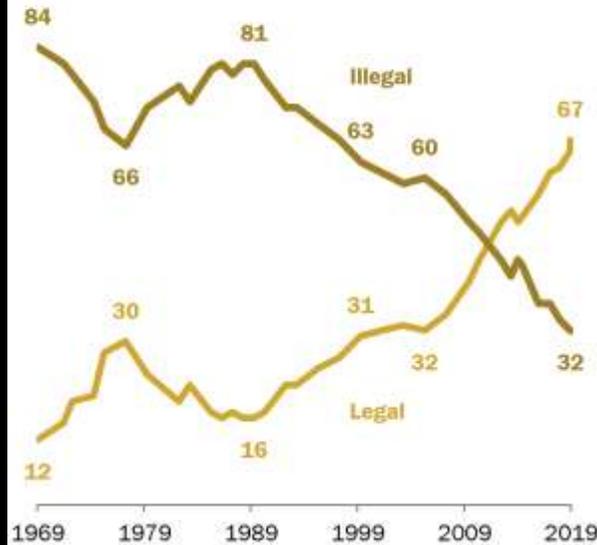
- 40.2 million - used cocaine in their lifetime
- 43.5 million used marijuana
- 526,000 – had heroin dependence
- 808,000 - consumed heroin
- 33.9% - Lifetime prevalence use of any illicit drug for grades 8, 10, and 12
- 44,941 - male drug overdose deaths

<https://www.statista.com/topics/3088/drug-use-in-the-us/>



U.S. public opinion on legalizing marijuana, 1969-2019

Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal, or not? (%)



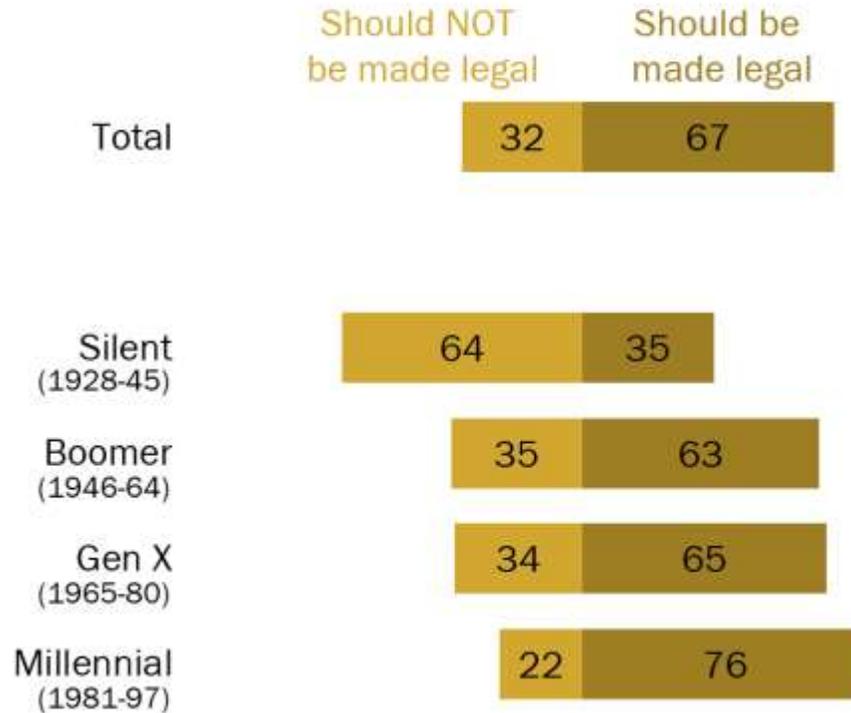
Where recreational marijuana is legal in the U.S.

States that have legalized small amounts of cannabis for adult recreational use, November 2019



Majorities across generations – except Silents – favor legalizing marijuana

% who say the use of marijuana ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 3-15, 2019.

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Pros of Drug Decriminalization (not legalization)

1. Portugal decriminalized drugs and discovered both addiction rates substance abuse rates decline. Those that use are not jailed, but treated, costs of treatment typically is lower and recovery rates higher.
- 2 . When drug use is penalized, it becomes more difficult for individuals who take drugs to find meaningful employment.
3. When drug use is illegal, a counter-culture arises that celebrates and encourages its use. When it is legalized, that counter-culture begins to disappear. Addiction can be treated more like a disease instead of being treated like a legal problem.
4. Decriminalizing drug use doesn't make it legal. It just takes the legal penalties away from at-risk individuals. Selling and distributing the drug would still be criminal.
6. Could reduce violence about 4-7% of homicides are considered to be drug related. As drug laws have been loosened and certain activities decriminalized, violent conduct has been reduced at the same time.
7. Could reduce mental health costs - 76% of jailed inmates charged with drug-related crimes suffer from at least one mental health issue
8. Drugs aren't the primary problem for violence - alcohol is a factor in 40% of all violent crimes
9. Decriminalizing drugs reduces the stigma, allowing people to have more control over their life once again.

Cons of Drug Decriminalization

1. It may create an atmosphere where experimentation is encouraged and create more health problems
2. It would reduce prices and lead to more and wider use
3. Although costs of incarceration would be reduced, cost of treatment would rise to expand the added number of individuals who would seek help
4. Although the purpose may not be to legalize drugs with a decriminalization effort, there is always the potential that this could happen. For strong drugs, such as heroin or meth, benefits of decriminalizing its use could be less than the risks to society of strong drugs that can cause behavioral changes that lead to violence.
5. Because drugs can be harmful or cause of violent behavior, there must be strong controls placed upon the use of these substances to protect the safety of the general population.

Reasons For Legalizing Prostitution

- Victimless Crime - consenting adults should have freedom of choice
- Having sex without a fee is legal, so charging for something not illegal should not make it illegal
- Legalized prostitution reduces crime rates, rapes, and human sex trafficking. Human sex trafficking decreases because legalized prostitution decreases the need for pimps and increases the number of prostitutes.
- Where legalized, risk of sexual transmitted diseases is lower because prostitutes have better access to doctors, medicines, and contraceptives and have periodic testing for STDs
- Has always existed and proven impossible to completely eradicate; therefore, make a business that can be regulated, monitored, and taxed
- With less stigmatism, would be easier for prostitutes to transition to other more respectable work

Reasons Against Legalizing Prostitution

- Most cultures and religions believe prostitution to be morally wrong and should only have sex with spouse
- Considered degrading to everyone involved
- Many prostitutes do not choose their profession; but forced into it because of economic needs with no or few alternatives
- Prostitution has a very high rate violence compared to other professions even where prostitution is legal
- Prostitution promotes the spread of diseases, since not everyone uses protections
- Legalized prostitution results in a higher rate of unmarried men and husbands cheating on their wives