

The Consequence of Detention Centers on Mental Health of Immigrants Who Have Experience Trauma Throughout Their Lives

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Introduction

There is a need for a better understanding of the relationship between traumatic events, U.S. immigration policies, and the mental health of immigrants. For instance understanding the role of the United States policies and laws, such as zero tolerance, family separation, and detention centers in the mental health of immigrants. This research focuses on Guatemala immigrants who have experienced trauma during the post-war period, migration journey, and post-migration to the United States.

Background

- Guatemala had a Civil War that lasted for 36 years which left the nation in a vulnerable state. During this time, there was the rise of violence and poverty which made it difficult for people to live a normal life.
- The purpose of this research is to understand how these individuals have experienced trauma in their homeland in which they seek out refugee in the United States and are received with hostile treatment that deepens their trauma.

Location



<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19635877>



<https://sites.google.com/site/myp4geography/unit-3-population-and-migration/migration/latin-america-to-usa>

Results

Post-War Trauma

- During and after the Civil War there was an increase of migration to the United States as a result of violence and displacement.
 - The rise of violence through death threats, injuries, death, and other forms of violence.
- Many were experiencing displacement because of physical violence and structural violence.
- Higher rates of PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.
- These issues continue to be part of contemporary Guatemala.
 - For instance, the rise of gang violence, death threats, and murders.
 - "In 2018, 3,881 homicides, 4,246 aggravated assaults, and over 2,500 missing persons" were reported (OSAC 2019).
- Poverty and hunger.
 - 59.3% of the population lives in poverty and 23% in extreme poverty (World Bank).

Migration Trauma

- Immigrants take many risks during their migration to the United States because the routes are not safe. As some of the routes have become more regulated immigrants have been forced to use new routes that are more dangerous than others.
 - These individuals are at high risk of human trafficking, abuse, injury, poor health, and other.

Post-Migration Trauma

- The United States implemented policies, such as zero tolerance, family separation, and the use of detention centers as a response to the current immigration crisis.
 - Zero Tolerance: implemented by Trump and his presidential administration to prevent the illegal entry of immigrants.
 - Used to target the population of Central Americans immigrants.
 - In 2018, around 50,400 Guatemalans were apprehended of 103,500 Central Americans (CBP).
 - Detention Centers: The idea and conditions of detention centers are alike to prisons.
 - around 46% are Central American immigrants (Ryo et al.)
 - Individuals are treated inhumanely.
 - Are not provided with basic necessities, such as toiletries, blankets, medicine, and other.
 - Family Separation: Is another strategy to detour current migration to the United States. implementation of family separation is traumatic for both the children and parents.
 - around 4,200 children have been separated (ACLU)
 - There is no time limit to it.
 - Concerns about illegal adoptions.
 - This causes poor mental health and for children there are long-term consequences that can develop into mental health disorders.

References

- ACLU. "Family Separation by the Numbers." *American Civil Liberties Union*, American Civil Liberties Union, 2 Oct. 2018, www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/immigrants-rights-and-detention/family-separation.
- OSAC. "Guatemala 2019 Crime & Safety Report." *OSAC*, www.osac.gov/Content/Report/5f31517e-62bb-4f2c-8956-15f4aeaab930.
- Project, Borgen. "Current Poverty Rate in Guatemala." *The Borgen Project*, Borgen Project.
- Ryo, Emily and Peacock, Ian. "The Landscape of Immigration Detention Centers in the United States." *American Immigration Council*, 2018.
- "U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Apprehensions by Sector FY2018." *U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Apprehensions by Sector FY2018 | U.S. Customs and Border Protection*, www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/usbp-sw-border-apprehensions.

Interventions

- To understand that most immigrants have experienced some sort of trauma in their lifetime and putting them in detention centers worsens their mental health.
- To only implement family separation to cases that it is a necessity due to the child/children being at risk.
- Provide some sort of mental health screening with cultural understanding and introducing them to social support groups according to their needs.

Conclusion

The findings of this literature review suggest that immigrants have potentially experienced trauma at different stages of their life which puts their mental health at high risk. More importantly that there is an urgent need for interventions in detention centers to diminish trauma and poor mental health of immigrants.

PRE-MIGRATION TRAUMA



<https://todaypanama.com/guatemalas-new-narco-map-less-zetas-same-chaos/>

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

MIGRATION TRAUMA



<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/02/1002101>

POST-MIGRATION TRAUMA



<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-08-19/immigrant-detention-medical-care-lawsuit>