

# COVID-19 and Future Migration Flows

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## Most likely economic scenario?

- Heterogeneous economic damage
  - Differences by country
  - Hard-hit subgroups of the population
- (Some) economic fallout will persist for years
- Rolling out of vaccines will take years, much less in rich developed countries
  - Implications for death toll & aftereffects
  - Implications for economic effects
  - Implications for immigration policy

# Stylized effects on different households

## Living in high income country

### **If personally economically unaffected**

- Probably relatively few relevant changes

### **If personally economically hard-hit**

- More reason to send labor migrant
- Preferred destination countries may change mid-/post-crisis
- Preferred destinations are in reach
- Some diversion likely, persistence possible (networks etc.)

# Stylized effects on different households: Living in poor/middle income country

## **Personally unaffected**

- Possibly slightly fewer reasons to migrate
- Preferred destination countries may change
- Preferred destination countries more difficult to access (at least in short run)

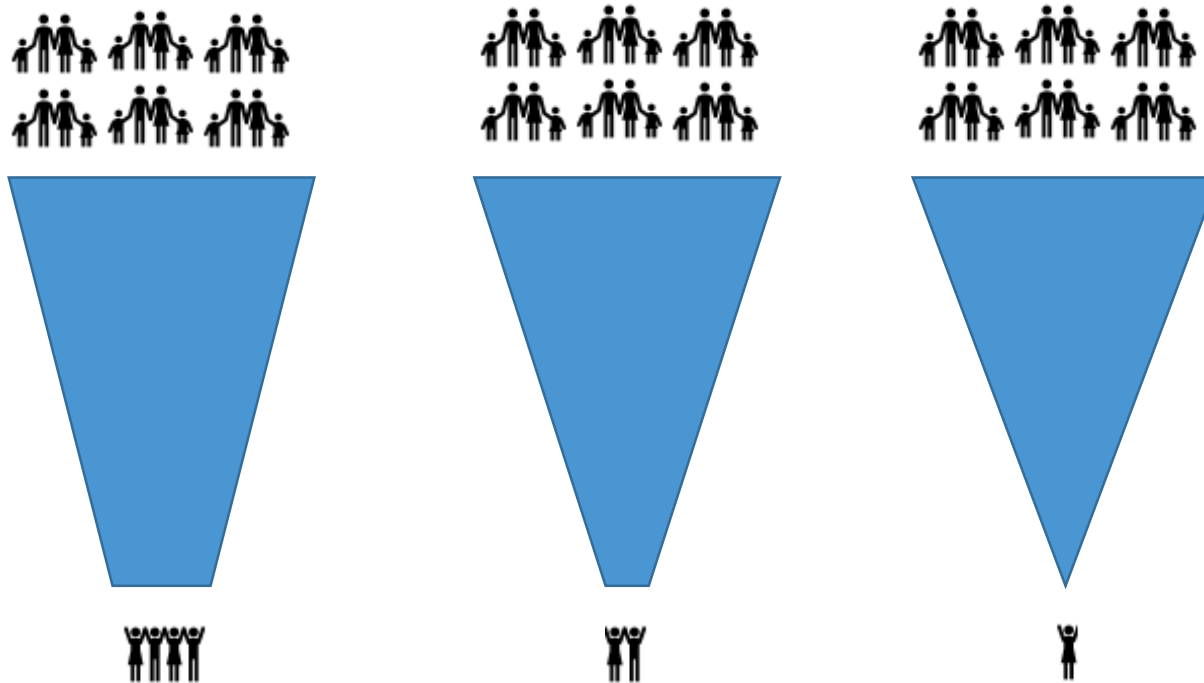
## **Personally strongly affected**

- More reasons to migrate
- Credit constraints may become binding
- Preferred destination countries may change
- Preferred destination countries more difficult to access (at least in short run)

## Possible outcome

- Inequality in severity of economic/health effects of COVID-19 shock
  - Between country
  - Within country
- Shock may exacerbate global and within-country inequality be affecting migration outcomes
  - Esp. in EMDE

# Immigration policy: The most important determinant of flows! **How restrictive will future policy be?**



# What might happen to policy?

Public attitudes towards immigration typically become more restrictive in crises

- Effects not strongly linked to whether individually affected
- Socio-tropic concerns more important
- Difficult to tell how large the turn to restrictive policies will be, likely to depend heavily on political/media environment in country
  - Even more polarization in public attitudes towards migration over the next years?
- Effects on future migration flows?

## Summary

1. Think beyond nations. Heterogeneity matters!
2. Willingness to migrate unlikely to fall in medium/long
3. Migration policy is the most important (and partly endogenous) determinant



Thank you!



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# Key drivers of migration

- Labor migration
  - Heterogeneity! Increasing inflows in well-to-do countries
  - Some diversion of flows
- Family reunification
  - Dependence on context/rules, unlikely to fall
- Education
  - Demand for education will not fall
  - Visa for education may be attractive legal way into EU/US
  - Not everyone still able to afford
- Asylum flows
  - Great source of uncertainty