

African migrants to North Texas defy Trump's disparaging depiction

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President Donald Trump is wrong about migrants from Africa, and he is putting at risk an important source of educated labor for the U.S. and especially for North Texas.

Trump recently grumbled his bias against allowing people from countries that he famously described with a vulgar phrase to migrate to the U.S. He specifically made reference to El Salvador, Haiti and African countries. Not surprisingly, he is particularly keen on migrants from Norway.

Many pundits have strongly pointed out that many whites whose ancestors migrated here centuries ago came from what were then backward countries. Still, they helped build a great country here.

Demographers often remind us that migrants who come to the U.S., even from Trump's least favorite countries, are not a random lot. Instead, they are highly selective along attributes such as motivation, age and socioeconomic status.

African migrants, particularly those originating from Nigeria, have always possessed favorable human capital characteristics, most notably education.

While Trump implies that hordes of Africans are arriving on U.S. shores, nothing is further from the truth. According to the 2016 American Community Survey's five-year estimates, approximately 344,000 Africans—black ones, to be more precise—25 years of age and older migrated to the U.S. between 2005 and 2015, compared to nearly 450,000 Europeans.

Among these African migrants, Nigerians represent the largest group, accounting for nearly one-fifth of all migrants from this continent during the last decade.

Approximately one-third of black Africans 25 and older migrating between 2005 and 2015 as well as U.S.-born whites have at least a bachelor's degree. But 54 percent of Nigerian migrants have at least that level of education.

Slightly more than one-fifth of black African migrants arriving in the last decade are now U.S. naturalized citizens compared to only 12 percent of European migrants.

More than four-fifths of African migrants speak English well or very well as do 95 percent of Nigerian migrants,



Ogechi Nwadinobi, left, and Jameson Onyebuchi, take a selfie at, A Taste of Nigeria, Saturday October 3, 2015, at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Arlington Texas. (Rick Moon/Special Contributor)

as English is Nigeria's official language.

Nearly 90 percent of African, including Nigerian, migrants arriving in the last decade are employed.

U.S. born Nigerian-origin children excel in the United States. Sixty percent of native-born blacks 25 and older who identify their ancestry as Nigerian have at least a bachelor's degree. In fact, 26 percent of members of this group who are in the labor force have a college degree with a major in a highly coveted STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathemat-

ics) field. Only 7 percent of U.S.-born whites in the labor force can make that claim.

Nigerian and more generally African migrants defy Trump's depiction—they are not losers.

Why should any of this matter in Texas?

Texas leads the nation in the number of black immigrants originating from Africa with 144,000 and Nigeria with 54,000. Among the nation's metropolitan areas, the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington Metropolitan Area has the fifth largest African (64,000) and Nigerian (18,000) migrant populations.

Once again, Trump is clearly wrong on his perception of migrants. Migrants from Nigeria and from throughout Africa make important contributions to our country. These people come here with dreams, hunger and a passion for improving their own lives and that of their children and families, and in the process they keep the American conception alive.

Ironically, while Trump wants to shut the door for Africans to enter our nation, he has no problem with his cronies going to do business there. Four months ago in September, he boasted to a group of African leaders that so many of his friends go to Africa to get rich. For Trump, migration is a one-way street: we can go to African countries to pillage resources and exploit their labor, but their people cannot come here to better their lives and enrich our nation.

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