5 Basic Lessons from the "Crisis" of Central American Migrants:
Poverty and Violence are Root Causes, but US Labor Demand Remains the Key Driver

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Poverty and Violence are Root Causes, but US Labor Demand Remains the Key Driver

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Introduction

The increasing number of migrant children being apprehended at the US border has finally focused media and political attention on the humanitarian plight of Central American migrant families. However, the narrative being advanced by US politicians and the media is a shortsighted distortion of the facts, is bereft of historical context, and could lead to counter-productive policy responses. This storyline centers on the claim that there is a "surging crisis of unaccompanied minors and that it is a Central American phenomenon driven by violent crime and drug trafficking." This narrative is incorrect on all counts, but provides an opportunity to learn five important facts that should guide immigration policy going forward.

1) The total number of children currently being apprehended is roughly half of what it was before the Great Recession. This is representative of a long term cyclical phenomenon rather than an unprecedented surging crisis

2) The increase in the <u>share</u> of "unaccompanied alien children" (UAC) being apprehended is the product of a 2008 law (Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act) that requires border enforcement officials to more accurately interview, classify and legally process the children they catch, particularly if they are from "non-contiguous countries."

3) Central Americans make up a disproportionate share of the UAC population in detention because the 2008 law does not provide Mexican children with the same legal rights and protections.[1] While they constitute a smaller share of the foreign-born population, Central American workers in the US are younger than their Mexican counterparts and are thus more likely to have left children behind and to attempt to bring these children to be with them in the US.

4) The recent increase in Central American children being apprehended at the border is not being driven by an increase in violent crime related to drug trafficking. In fact, the murder rate in El Salvador---mostly among youth gangs battling over turf for micro extortion---has dropped by almost half in the last few years. The murder rate in Guatemala has remained relatively steady over the same period. Honduras has seen relatively lower rates of migration despite a murder rate that has been surging and peaking for the better part of a decade. Our statistical analysis confirms that there is no correlation between changes in the El Salvadorian, Guatemalan and Honduran murder rate and the number of migrants these nations send to the United States

5) The strength of the US job market continues to be the primary determinant of the level and timing of immigration flows. As has been the historical norm for decades, the dropping unemployment rate is now causing the current increase in demand for working-age migrants. New jobs also provide the financial resources with which migrant parents can send for their children. Our statistical analysis supports this conclusion. We found that total border apprehensions increase when the unemployment rate is low and decrease when it is high. Interestingly, we also found that while Central American apprehensions increase during periods of falling unemployment, they stagnate rather than decrease when the unemployment rate rises.

In dispelling myths by examining the full facts, we are in no way attempting to deemphasize the severity of the poverty, violence and humanitarian crisis in Central America. Nor are we suggesting that the 2008 law---much less DACA---"caused the crisis" and should thus be repealed, as some in congress have recently suggested. On the contrary, we are stating that the crisis of Central American juvenile migration is the product of deeply rooted historical and international dynamics that are only now coming to broad public attention. Our most important conclusion is that the current crisis further proves the pressing need for comprehensive immigration reform. This

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1 According to Bipartisan Policy Center's Lazaro Zamora, in his article *Unaccompanied Alien Children: A Primer*, "Under the TVPRA, DHS screens Mexican children within 48 hours of apprehension to determine if the child is a victim of trafficking or has a claim to asylum based on fear of persecution. If the child does not meet that criteria, they are eligible to agree to a voluntary return and speedy repatriation to Mexico. On the other hand, UAC from non-contiguous countries must be transferred to ORR within 72 hours of apprehension and are guaranteed an immigration court hearing."

reform must include legal means for migrants and their families to address the US's demand for their labor. In addition, immigration reform must be "truly comprehensive" and support innovative and cost effective policies that address the root causes of emigration in migrant-sending nations. In the short term, and in the absence of complete immigration reform, we also believe that the due process protections afforded by the 2008 law should be strengthened and should be simultaneously extended to children from Mexico and Canada. Finally the President should act to provide administrative relief to long-term workers and their families, both stimulating the US economy and eliminating the real humanitarian crisis of family separation.
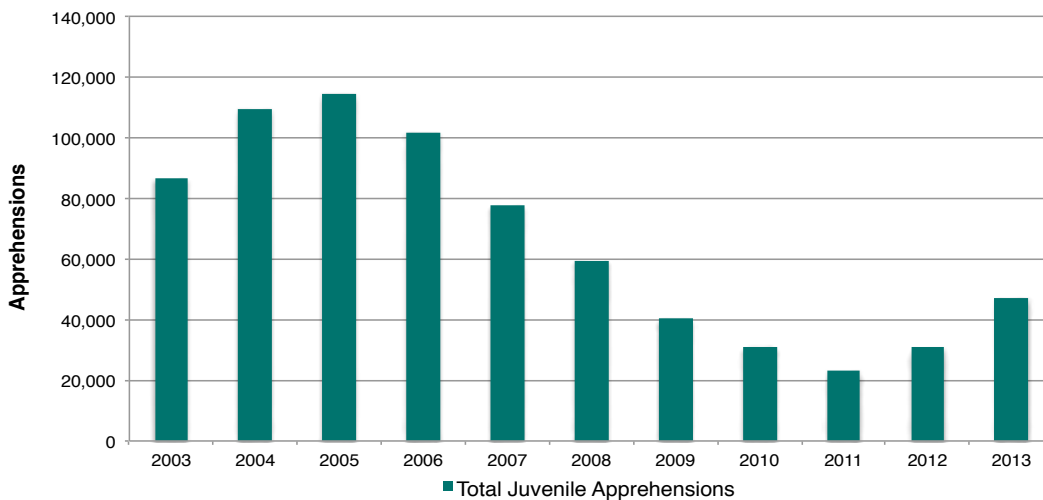
1 There is no "surging crisis"

The number of children being apprehended at the border has increased over the last few years, but these increases hardly constitute a "surging crisis." In reality, the crisis is an old one; what is occurring on the border reflects a predictable cyclical phenomenon rather than an unexpected event. A temporary drop in immigration rates during the Great Recession masks the fact that, despite recent increases, the total number of apprehended children has decreased over the last decade. During that time juveniles have made up only a small share of the total apprehensions each year, and their share of that total has remained relatively consistent.

Most of the coverage surrounding the current "crisis" has used the Border Patrol's recently published data set, which begins with Fiscal Year (FY) 2009. Looking at juvenile apprehension statistics beginning in FY 2003 reveals how relying solely on the Border Patrol's recent data obscures the issue. Juvenile apprehension numbers are actually much lower during the "surge" than they were before the recession (see figure 1). According to a 2007 report published by the Congressional Research Service (CRS); Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues, 114,563 children were apprehended in FY 2005.[2] For comparison, US Customs and Border Protection claims that 47,397 children were apprehended in FY 2013.[3] In other words nearly two and a half times more children were apprehended in FY 2005 than there were in FY 2013, the last complete year of the "surge" for which we have complete annual data.

Figure 1:

Undocumented Minors Apprehended: FY2003-FY2013

Sources: Congressional Research Service. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview." CRS (2014). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/230157.pdf).
--Haddal, Chad C. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues." *Congressional Research Report for Congress* (2007). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.uscrirefugees.org/2010Website/5_Resources/5_3_For_Service_Providers/5_3_2_Working_with_Refugee_and_Immigrant_Children/CongressionalResearchService.pdf).
--U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." *Office of Immigration Statistics* (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
--Sapp, Lesley. "Apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol: 2005–2010." Fact Sheet (2011): U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
--U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile (0-17 Years Old) and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2011, 2012, and 2013 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" DHS, CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
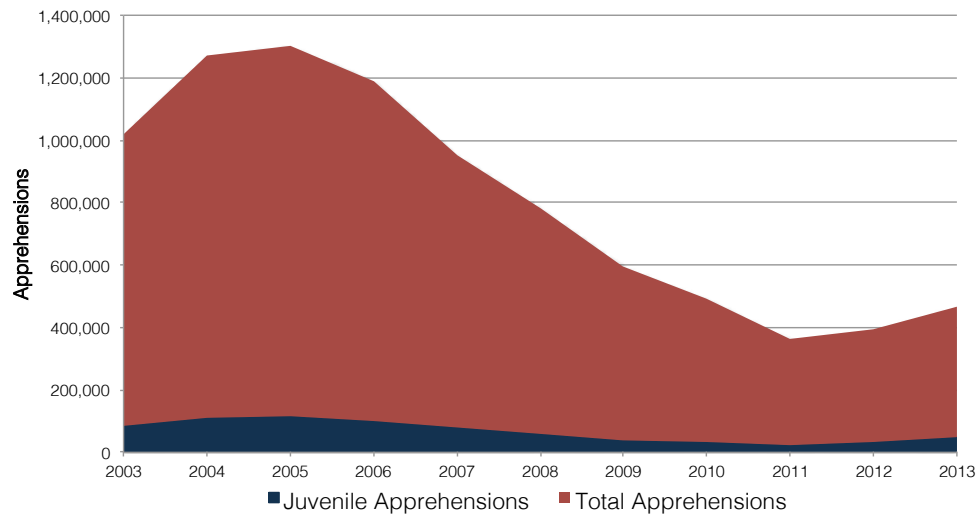
2 Haddal, Chad C. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues." *Congressional Research Report for Congress* (2007). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

3 U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile (0-17 Years Old) and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2013 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

The language of crisis that is circulating in the media and in Washington obscures the bigger picture. We will discuss in some detail the specifics of the children being apprehended, but it is important to keep in mind that these children represent only a fraction of all apprehensions (see figure 2). In fact, children not only represent a small share of all apprehensions, they have represented roughly the same small share for the better part of a decade (see figure 3). This is in spite of the fact that the number of migrants being caught along the border fluctuated widely during that period. In 2006, juvenile apprehensions made up 7% of all apprehensions. [4] In 2013---a year with less than a third as many total apprehensions---juvenile apprehensions constituted only 10% of the total. [5] These numbers show that while record numbers of downtrodden children swarming across the border may make for a compelling news story, it is not a narrative that can stand up to historical and statistical scrutiny.
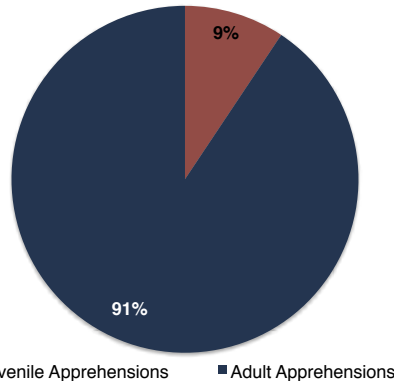
Figure 2:

Juvenile Apprehension as Share of Total Apprehensions: 2003-2013

Sources: Congressional Research Service. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview." CRS (2014). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/230157.pdf).
Haddal, Chad C. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues." *Congressional Research Report for Congress* (2007). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.uscrirefugees.org/2010Website/5_Resources/5_3_For_Service_Providers/5_3_2_Working_with_Refugee_and_Immigrant_Children/CongressionalResearchService.pdf).
U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." *Office of Immigration Statistics* (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
Sapp, Lesley. "Apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol: 2005–2010." Fact Sheet (2011): U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile (0-17 Years Old) and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2011, 2012, and 2013 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" DHS, CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

Figure 3:

FY 2006: Juvenile Apprehension as Share of Total

Source: Congressional Research Service. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview." CRS (2014). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/230157.pdf).
U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." *Office of Immigration Statistics* (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

FY 2013: Juvenile Apprehension as Share of Total
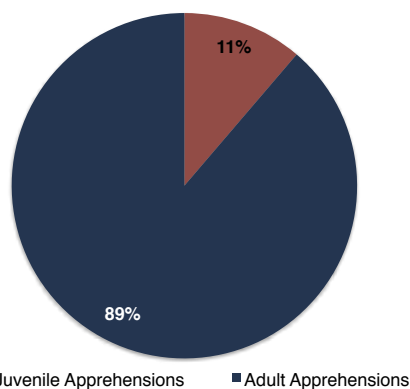
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile (0-17 Years Old) and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2013 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" DHS, CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

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4 Haddal, "Unaccompanied Alien Children".
5 U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." Office of Immigration Statistics (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

2 The surge in the apprehension of "unaccompanied alien children" is an artifact of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008.
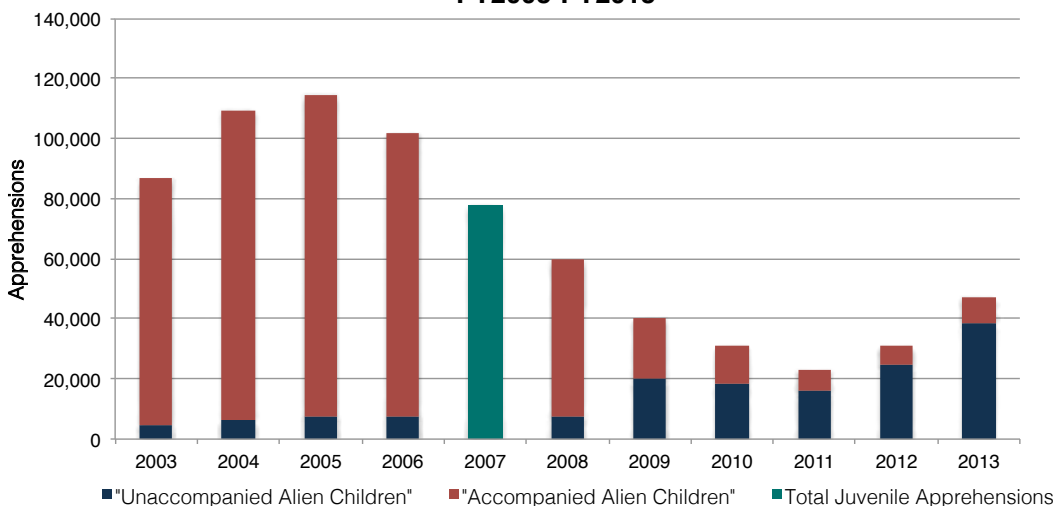
The dramatic difference between the pre-recession and current apprehension numbers is the result of changes in the way that apprehended juveniles were being classified before and after 2008. In 2005, only 6.8% of apprehended children were unaccompanied.[6] In 2013, UAC made up nearly 82% percent of apprehended children (see figure 4).[7] If total juvenile apprehensions are now lower, why are so many of these recently apprehended children being classified as unaccompanied? The answer can be found by examining the ways in which the Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (2008 TVPRA) has altered the Border Patrol's operational procedures.

Almost all of the recent discussion of the 2008 TVPRA has focused on the strain it places on immigration courts, but little attention has been given to how the law changed the way apprehended children are interviewed and classified. The number of unaccompanied children Border Patrol reported apprehending jumped from around 7,500 in 2008 to almost 20,000 in 2009; the year that the 2008 TVPRA took effect (again, see figure 4).[8] This strongly suggests that prior to the 2008 TVPRA misclassification was widespread, and that the law led to changes in the Border Patrol's screening and interview procedures. A 2007 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report titled Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues reinforces the suggestion that the 2008 TVPRA made Border Patrol's classification process more accurate. The report cites claims made by advocacy groups who believe that Border Patrol officials were deliberately misclassifying some of the children. Investigations by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) confirmed that accompanied and unaccompanied children had been intentionally misclassified but also stated that "malicious intent" could not be proven.[9] While it is encouraging that punitive misclassification was most likely not occurring, the DHS and DOJ's confirmation of deliberate misclassification suggests that border enforcement officials viewed classification categories as malleable.

Figure 4:

Apprehended "Unaccompanied" vs. "Accompanied Alien Children:" FY2003-FY2013

Sources: Congressional Research Service. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview." CRS (2014). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/230157.pdf).
--Haddal, Chad C. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues." *Congressional Research Report for Congress* (2007). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.uscrirefugees.org/2010Website/5_Resources/5_3_For_Service_Providers/5_3_2_Working_with_Refugee_and_Immigrant_Children/CongressionalResearchService.pdf).
--U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." *Office of Immigration Statistics* (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
--Sapp, Lesley. "Apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol: 2005–2010." Fact Sheet (2011): U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
--U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile (0-17 Years Old) and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2011, 2012, and 2013 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" DHS, CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

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6 Haddal, "Unaccompanied Alien Children".

7 CBP, "Juvenile and Adult Apprehensions FY 2013".

8 Congressional Research Service. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview." CRS (2014). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/230157.pdf).

9 Haddal, "Unaccompanied Alien Children".

In light of the dramatic increase in UAC apprehensions after the 2008 TVPRA, the confirmation of intentional misclassification suggests that the current "surge" in unaccompanied children is at least partially the product of changing legal guidelines, and of the requirement that the Border Patrol more accurately classify the children that they apprehend. This is a good thing. The 2008 TVPRA helps insure that unaccompanied children are accurately classified and protects their right to due process. These protections should be extended to all immigrant children, including those from Mexico and Canada. However, considering the post-2008 TVPRA increase in UAC apprehension, and the high level of pre-recession juvenile migration, the current levels of UAC apprehension were predictable and should have been planned for by immigration enforcement officials. These officials' current inability to house unaccompanied children, and to handle their legal proceedings in a timely manner, does not stem from an unprecedented increase in child migration, or from a lack of enforcement resources. It is instead the product of well-funded immigration enforcement agencies' lack of foresight.

3 The crisis is not a Central American phenomenon; Mexican migration continues to be the larger component

The "surge" conversation has centered on the predominance of Central Americans among the apprehended UAC. The increasing migration of Central Americans generally is neither shocking nor unexpected; it is instead the latest articulation of a clearly visible trend. However, describing the surge as a Central American phenomenon is inaccurate and may inhibit our ability to accurately diagnose and treat the challenges posed by a cyclical pattern of immigration flows. While Central American immigration is increasing, Mexico still sends many more migrants to the US (see figure 5). Central Americans make up a disproportionate segment of the UAC population in part because of demographic differences between the US's Central American-born and Mexican-born communities, but these differences do not fully explain why so many apprehended UAC are Central American.

Central Americans represent an increasingly large share of the unauthorized immigrant population, but Mexico is still the primary sending nation by a considerable amount (See figure 5). In FY 2012; the year with the most total apprehensions of Central Americans and the least of Mexicans for which nation-of-origin apprehension data is available, 448,697 Mexican migrants were apprehended and only 144,867 Central Americans.[10] Yet, according to CBP, more Central American unaccompanied children were apprehended in 2013, and so far in 2014, than were Mexican UAC.[11] This paints a picture of an apprehended and unaccompanied child population that is the demographic reverse of apprehensions in general. Further analysis is required to fully explain the causes of this dynamic, but demographic differences between these nations' foreign-born populations in the US does provide a partial explanation.

For over a decade Central America's share of apprehended migrants has been rising while Mexico's share has fallen. This change in the national composition of the migrants attempting to cross the border, and the demographic characteristics of the Central American-born population in the US, helps explain why Central American children are coming north in large numbers. Generally, Central American-born residents from the primary immigrant sending nations (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) are both younger and newer to the US than are their Mexican counterparts. Specifically, just over thirty percent of Guatemalan and Honduran-born immigrants in the US are between the ages of 25 to 34, whereas only 23.5% percent of Mexican-born immigrants are in that age range.[12] Young parents in this age range are more likely to have had children who were not old enough to make the trip at the time of their crossing. These children are now reaching the age where they can travel north and, due to the

10 DHS, 2012 Yearbook

11 U.S. Customs and Border Protection. "Southwest Border Unaccompanied Alien Children." CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014. http://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children

12 United States Census Bureau / American FactFinder. "S0201: Selected Population Profile" 2012 1-Year American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Office, 2012. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://factfinder2.census.gov).

Figure 5:
Migrants Apprehended by Nation of Origin FY 2003-FY 2012
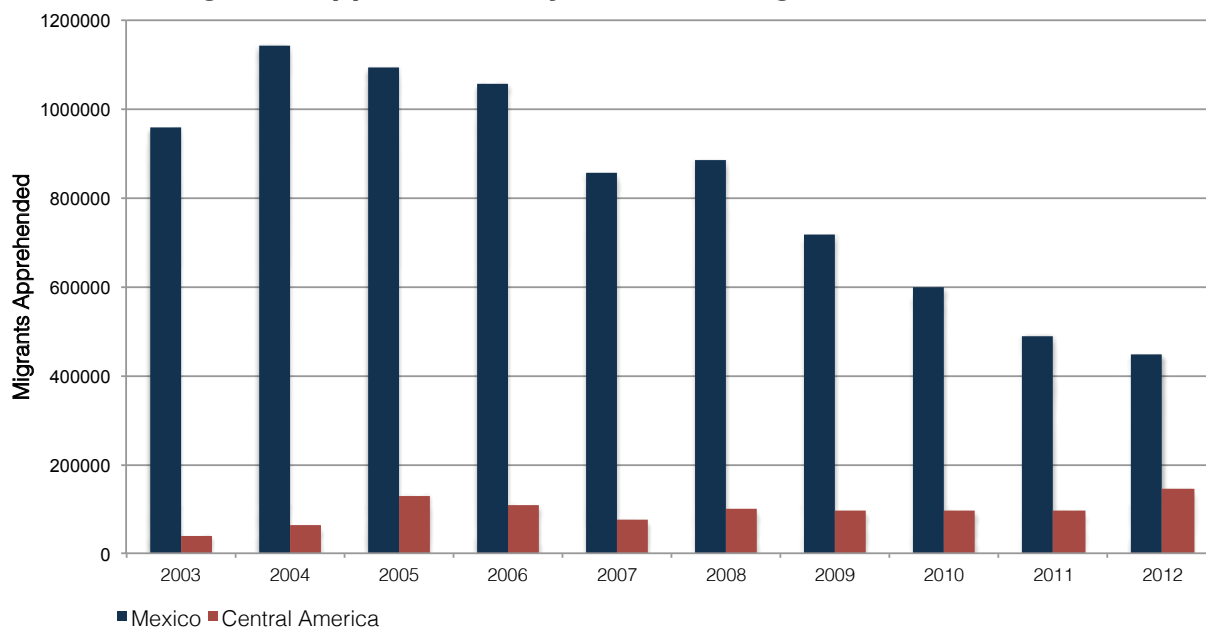
U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." Office of Immigration Statistics (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

length of the recession, this may be the first time that their parents have had the resources to help support that journey. Central American-born immigrants are also more likely to be recent arrivals to the US, which increases the likelihood that they still have children living in their home country. While, the difference is less pronounced with the El Salvadorian-born, Hondurans and Guatemalans generally arrived much later than did the Mexican-born. 45.8 % of Guatemalan-born, and 46.1% of the Honduran-born population arrived in the US between 2000 and 2009, while only 31.6% of Mexicans arrived during that period.[13] While they do not fully explain Central America's disproportionate share of UAC apprehensions these demographic differences are significant.

In conjunction with demographic forces, changes in migratory patterns may also help explain the disproportionally large number of Central Americans in the apprehended UAC population. Currently, the most typical migratory pattern involves three distinct phases. First, working age adults come to the United States looking for work. Once they've found employment, they begin saving. Then they use these savings to smuggle their remaining family members into the country. This pattern has typically characterized the Mexican migratory experience, but in recent years Mexican migration has decreased while Central American immigration has been on the rise. As they have come to constitute an increasing share of the unauthorized population, Central Americans have adopted the migratory patterns of their Mexican predecessors. Many of the children currently being detained along the southwest border are attempting to join family members that are already in the US. A recent Mother Jones article claimed that roughly 90 percent of apprehended and unaccompanied children end up staying with US-based family members before their removal hearings.[14]

The emergence of this migratory pattern in the mid-1990's coincided with a hardening of the border and the militarization of immigration enforcement. In 1985, the budget of the federal agency tasked with immigration enforcement, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), was roughly 585 million dollars.[15] In 2000, the collective budget of the INS's successors, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs

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13 Census, "2012 ACS 1-Year."

14 Gordon, Ian. "70,000 Kids Will Show Up Alone at Our Border This Year. What Happens to Them?" Mother Jones. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014. (http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/06/child-migrants-surge-unaccompanied-central-america)

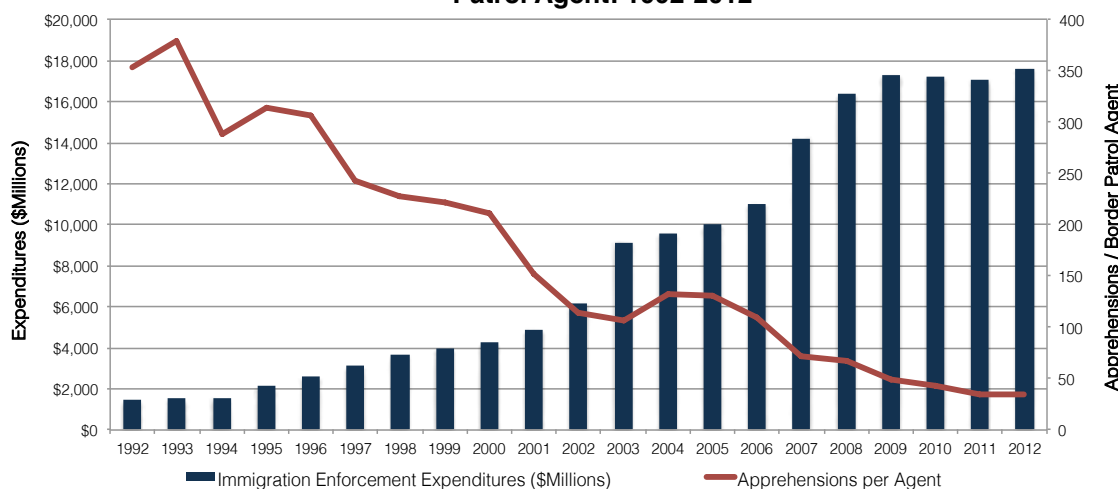15 US Department of Justice (DOJ), Justice Management Division. (2002). Budget Trend Data: From 1975 Through the President's 2003 Request to the Congress. Washington, DC: DOJ. http://www.justice.gov/archive/jmd/1975_2002/2002/pdf/page104-108.pdf

Enforcement (ICE), was just under 4.3 billion dollars (see Figure 6).[16] In 2010, that number had grown to over 17 billion dollars (See figure 6).[17] This has led to an immigration enforcement system that is simultaneously experiencing falling productivity and soaring costs. Annual apprehensions per Border Patrol agent have fallen from just under 380 in 1993 to just under thirty-five in 2012 (see Figure 6). At the same time the financial cost of these apprehensions has skyrocketed. In 1993, taxpayers paid $1,155 per apprehension. In 2012, to cost to tax payers had risen to $27,352. The dynamics of this ineffective, unproductive and inhumane system are described in detail in The North American Integration and Development Center's forthcoming paper, "The Soaring Cost of Catching a Mexican."

All the money spent on border enforcement has had as much success in keeping unauthorized immigrants in the US as it has on keeping them out. It broke long established circular migration patterns, in which immigrants came to the US for seasonal agriculture work and then returned to their home countries. The militarized border also raised the prices charged by people smugglers, or Coyotes, which in turn made circular migration cost prohibitive. It was both safer and cheaper to find permanent work in the US, and to pay the coyotes the one-time cost of bringing your family across after you. Family members too young to work have been coming north ever since. Often they are both underage and unaccompanied.

Figure 6:
Immigration Enforcement Expenditures & Apprehensions Per Border Patrol Agent: 1992-2012

Sources: US Department of Justice (DOJ), Justice Management Division. (2002). *Budget Trend Data: From 1975 Through the President's 2003 Request to the Congress.* Washington, DC: DOJ. http://www.justice.gov/archive/jmd/1975_2002/2002/pdf/page104-108.pdf
p. 106.
-US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). (2004). *Budget in Brief FY 2005.* Washington, DC: DHS. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/budget_bib-fy2005.pdf
-Also Budgets-in-Brief for FY2006, FY2007, FY2009, FY2011, FY2013, FY2015.
US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP). (2014). US Border Patrol Agent Staffing by Fiscal Year FY 1992-FY 2013. Washington, DC: DHS, CBP. http://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/U.S.%20Border%20Patrol%20Fiscal%20Year%20Staffing%20Statistics%201992-2013.pdf
-US Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS). (2013). Immigration Enforcement Actions: 2012. Washington, DC: DHS, OIS. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/yearbook/2012/ENF/table33.xls

4 Central American violence and poverty are still root causes, but do not drive the level of migration.

Violence and poverty remain important root causes of the supply of Central American migrants generally, but changes in poverty and murder rates do not directly correlate with changes in emigration rates. It is critically important to reemphasize that while changes in Central American violence and poverty rates do not explain the recent increase in UAC apprehension, many of the apprehended children still have a credible fear of persecution in their home countries were they to be deported. For this reason, according to US law, these children should be granted asylum and be allowed to remain with their relatives in this country.

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16 Ibid.
17 US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). (2013). Budget in Brief FY 2013. Washington, DC: DHS. http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/mgmt/dhs-budget-in-brief-fy2013.pdf

The recently released Border Patrol data set shows a sharp increase in the number of apprehended children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in 2012, an even sharper increase in 2013, and an extreme increase so far in 2014 (see figure 7).[18] While the numbers of apprehensions from each country are rising at similar rates, these countries are experiencing divergent levels and patterns of violence.

Figure 7:

Unaccompanied Alien Children Encountered by Fiscal Year: Fiscal Years 2009-2013; Fiscal Year 2014 through June 30

Years	El Salvador	Guatemala	Honduras	Mexico
2009	1,221	1,115	968	16,114
2010	1,910	1,517	1,017	13,724
2011	1,394	1,565	974	11,768
2012	3,314	3,835	2,997	13,974
2013	5,990	8,068	6,747	17,240
2014	13,301	14,086	16,546	12,614

A side-by-side comparison of crime and emigration rates shows the limited correlation between the two (see figures 8 and 9). As has been widely reported, Honduras has the highest murder rate in the Western Hemisphere. Between 2000 and 2012, According to the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, the Honduran murder rate almost doubled, from 50 murders per 100,000 people to roughly 90 murders per 100,000 people.[19] Despite Honduras having a larger population than El Salvador, just under 8.1 million compared to just over 6.3 million,[20] and a murder rate that in 2012 was more than double that of El Salvador,[21] there are less than half as many Honduran-born living in the United States.[22] During that same time period, El Salvador's murder rate fluctuated, but ultimately returned in 2012 what it had been in 2000.[23] Yet, the El Salvadorian-born population in the US gained over 450,000 new members, while the Honduran-born population grew by just under 240,000.[24] The Honduran murder rate skyrocketed six years ago, but the increased apprehension of Honduran children began only in 2012. (See Appendix A for a more detailed description of our statistical analysis and findings.)

There is however a long-term relationship between migration and violence in Central America. Immigration to the United States began in earnest during the late 1970s and early 1980s when the region was racked by a series of civil wars. Consummate cold warriors that they were, the Reagan administration played an active role in these conflicts, spending billion in support of death-squad wielding military governments. The relative peace after the wars was disrupted by the US's policy of deporting undocumented gang members. MS-13 and 18th street, the two largest gangs in all three migrant sending countries, began in Los Angeles, and only took hold in Central America after their members were deported en masse.

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18 CBP, "Southwest Border Unaccompanied Alien Children."

19 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Intentional Homicide Counts and Rate per 100,000 Population, by Country/Territory (2000-2012)" UNODC. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.unodc.org/gsh/en/data.html).

20 The World Bank. "Data: El Salvador." Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/el-salvador). AND The World Bank. "Data: Honduras." Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/honduras).
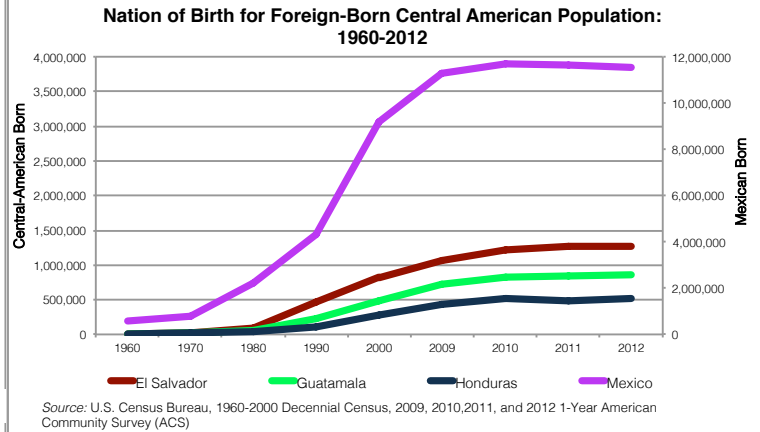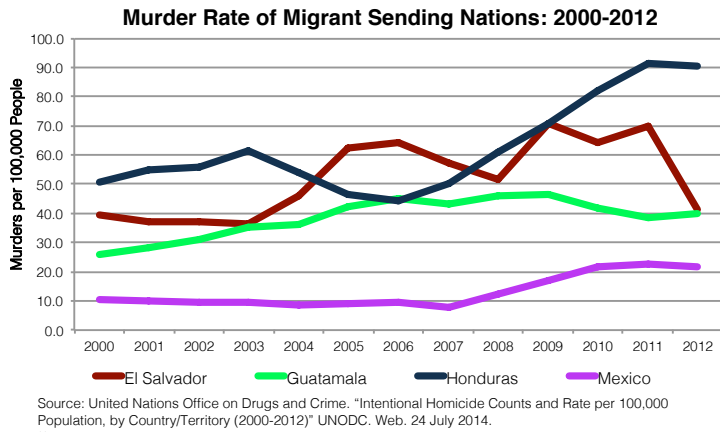
21 UN Office on Drugs on Crime, "Intentional Homicide Counts".

22 Census, "2012 ACS 1-Year."

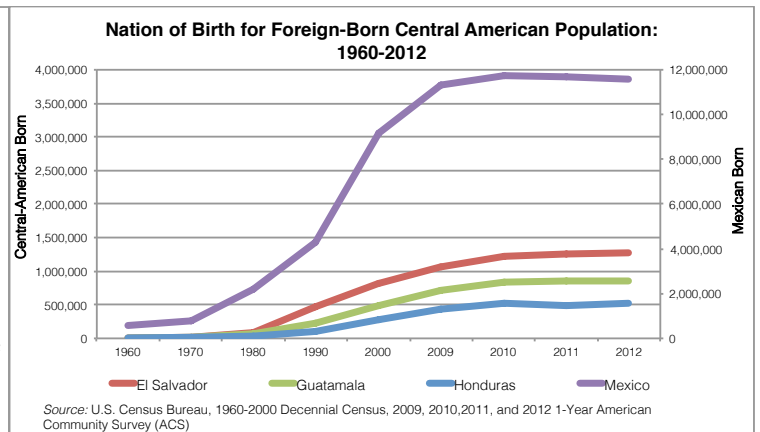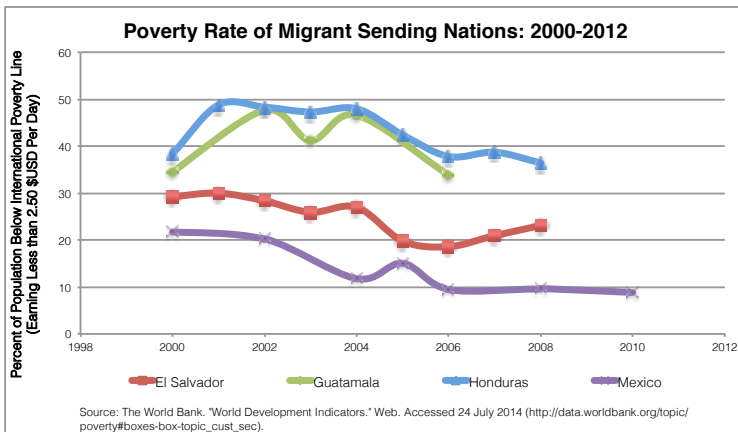23 UN Office on Drugs on Crime, "Intentional Homicide Counts".

24 Census, "2012 ACS 1-Year."

Murder Rate of Migrant Sending Nations: 2000-2012

Nation of Birth for Foreign-Born Central American Population: 1960-2012

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. "Intentional Homicide Counts and Rate per 100,000 Population, by Country/Territory (2000-2012)" UNODC. Web. 24 July 2014.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2000 Decennial Census, 2009, 2010,2011, and 2012 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS)

The World Bank's poverty head-count provides less data points than does the U.N.'s data on national murder rates, but what data is available also shows little correlation between changes in national poverty rates and immigration flows. Calculated according to international standards, the percentage of people making less than 2.50 $USD a day is highest in Honduras, and has been since at least 2000.[25] Honduras is followed closely by Guatemala,[26] while a significantly smaller percentage of El Salvadorians[27] and Mexicans[28] are living in poverty. The order of this list is inverted when one looks at the size of each of these nations' immigrant communities in the US (see figures 10 and 11). While Mexico's population is larger than any country in Central America, and is much closer geographically to the US, these mitigating factors do not apply to the other nations. For countries in Central American the poverty rate has no direct bearing on the rate at which its citizens migrate to the US.

Figures 10 and 11:

Poverty Rate of Migrant Sending Nations: 2000-2012

Nation of Birth for Foreign-Born Central American Population: 1960-2012

Source: The World Bank. "World Development Indicators." Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty#boxes-box-topic_cust_sec).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2000 Decennial Census, 2009, 2010,2011, and 2012 1-Year American Community Survey (ACS)

5 "It's the Economy, Stupid."

The strength of the US job market, above all other factors, determines when migrants are needed and how many come to fill the demand for labor. Statistically, the recent decline in the US's unemployment rate is the principle cause of increased immigration among both adults and children. A long literature of statistical research has shown that as unemployment drops, and jobs become easier to get, the number of undocumented immigrants living in

25 The World Bank. "Data: Honduras." Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/honduras).

26 The World Bank. "Data: Guatemala." Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/guatemala).

27 The World Bank. "Data: El Salvador." Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/el-salvador).

28 The World Bank. "Data: Mexico." Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://data.worldbank.org/country/mexico).

the US increases. When the unemployment rate is high and jobs are scarce, so too are the undocumented. It is not surprising that the economic recovery, coupled with falling unemployment rates, has triggered a dramatic increase in immigration. Nor is it surprising that Central American children represent a relatively large segment of this increase. The length of the great recession, coupled with the more recent arrival and relative youth of the US's Central American-born population, means that for many of them this is the first time they have had the financial capacity to bring their children north.

The historical correlation between the strength of the US job market and immigration flows becomes readily apparent when one makes a side-by-side comparison of the unemployment rate, the unemployment rate among Latinos, and net undocumented migration (see figure 12). In 2000, the average unemployment rate was 4 percent. It was the lowest unemployment had been in a decade and it was a level that hasn't been seen since.[29] Over the course of that year the US's estimated undocumented population grew by over a million people; it was the largest single-year increase between 1990 and 2010.[30] The relationship has been remarkably consistent. In 2010, unemployment averaged a staggering 9.6%.[31] That year the undocumented population lost 200,000 people, the largest decline of any year between 1990 and 2010.[32]

Figure 12:

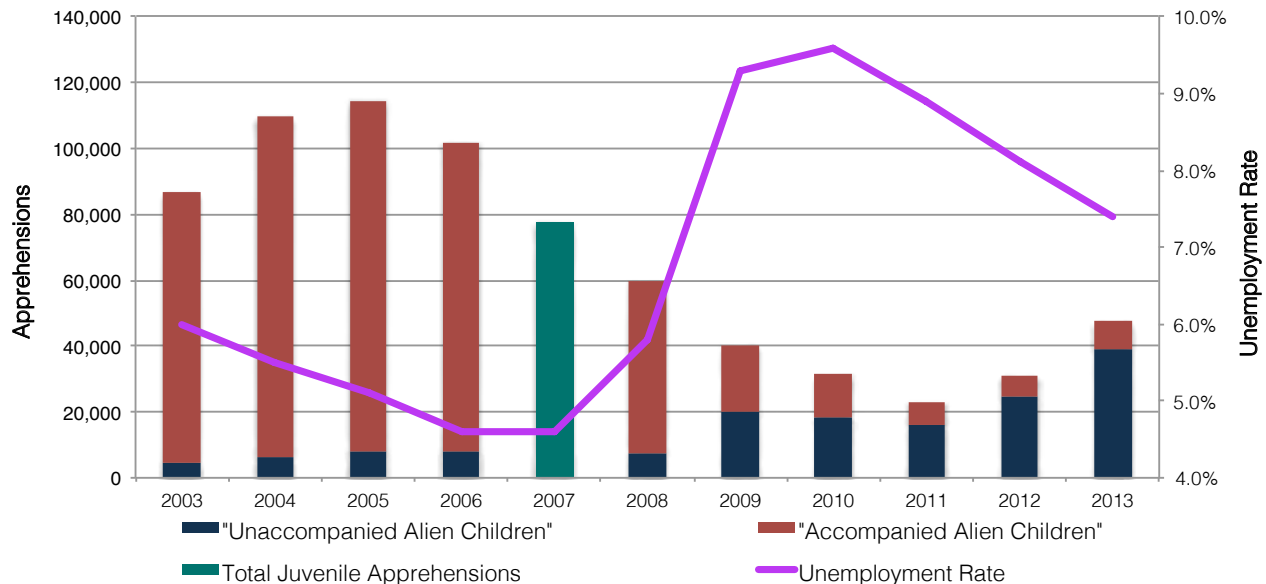## U.S. Unemployment and Net Undocumented Migration: 1990-2012
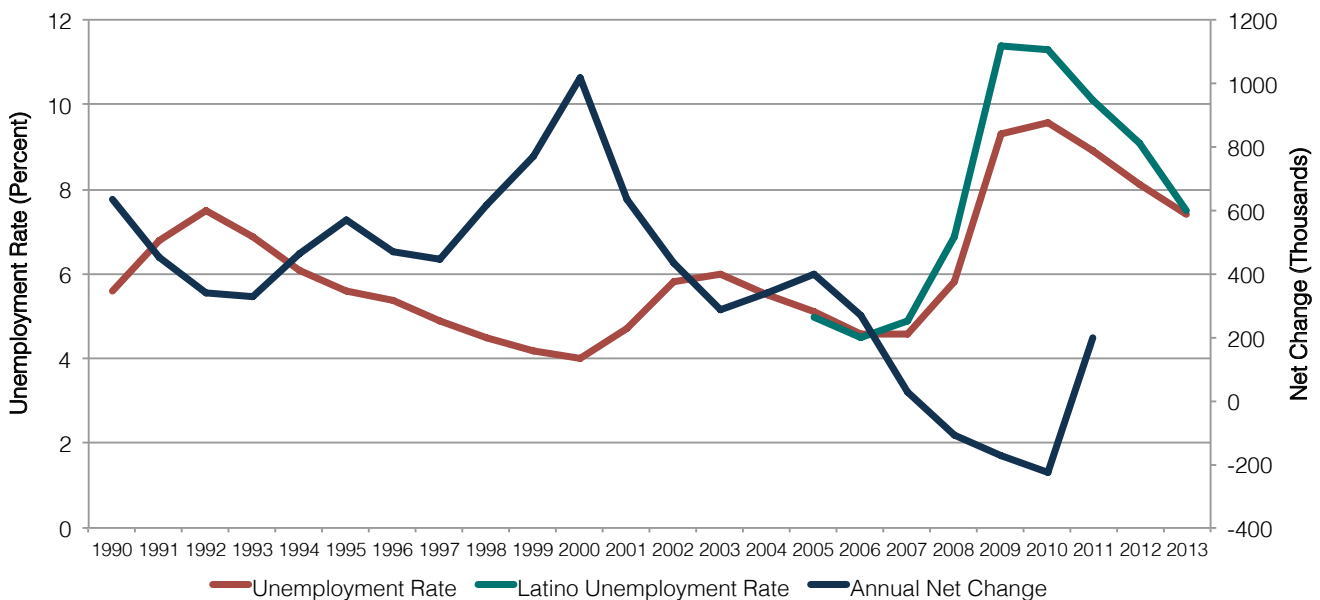
Sources:Warren, R., & Warren, J. R. (2013). Unauthorized Immigration to the United States: Annual Estimates and Components of Change, by State, 1990 to 2010. *International Migration Review, 47*(2), p. 315. doi:10.1111/imre.12022
-US Department of Labor (DOL), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). (2014). *Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population, 1943 to 2013*. Washington, DC: DOL, BLS. http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat01.htm
-Passel, J., Cohn, D., & Gonzalez-Barrera, A. (2013). *Population Decline of Unauthorized Immigrants Stalls, May Have Reversed*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2013/09/Unauthorized-Sept-2013-FINAL.pdf

This correlation between the unemployment rate and juvenile apprehensions is also strong. Superimposing the Latino unemployment rate in the US onto the chart of juvenile apprehensions makes this abundantly clear. The total number of juvenile apprehensions increased when unemployment was low and decreased when it was high (see figure 13). Between 2006 and 2010 the Latino unemployment rate increased from 4.9% to 11.3%,[33] while

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29 US Department of Labor (DOL), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). (2014). "Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population, 1943 to 2013." Washington, DC: DOL, BLS. http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat01.htm

30 Warren, R., & Warren, J. R. (2013). "Unauthorized Immigration to the United States: Annual Estimates and Components of Change, by State, 1990 to 2010." International Migration Review, 47(2),

31 Department of Labor, "Employment Status of Civilian".

32 Warren & Warren, "Unauthorized Immigration to the United States"

33 The United States Department of Labor. "The Latino Labor Force in the Recovery." 5 Apr. 2012. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/reports/hispaniclaborforce/).

total Juvenile apprehensions dropped from 101,952 to 31,291.[34] Figure 13 shows that after the TVPRA in 2008 the number of apprehended UAC also responded to changes in the Latino unemployment rate. Between 2011 and 2013 UAC apprehensions went from 16,067 to 38,833,[35] while Latino unemployment dropped from 10.1% to 7.5%.[36]

Figure 13:

"Unaccompanied" vs. "Accompanied Alien Children" and U.S. Unemployment : FY2003-FY2013

Sources: Congressional Research Service. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview." CRS (2014). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/230157.pdf).
--Haddal, Chad C. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues." *Congressional Research Report for Congress* (2007). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.uscrirefugees.org/2010Website/5_Resources/5_3_For_Service_Providers/5_3_2_Working_with_Refugee_and_Immigrant_Children/CongressionalResearchService.pdf).
--U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." *Office of Immigration Statistics* (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
--Sapp, Lesley. "Apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol: 2005–2010." *Fact Sheet* (2011): U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
--The United States Department of Labor. "The Latino Labor Force in the Recovery." 5 Apr. 2012. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/reports/hispaniclaborforce/).
--U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile (0-17 Years Old) and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2011, 2012, and 2013 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" DHS, CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

Figure 14 illustrates the relationship between total apprehensions and Latino unemployment rate. It shows that the US labor market is the most powerful determinate of changes in the rate at which migrants attempt to enter the US. Our statistical analysis of this relationship confirms that there is a strong and significant correlation between fluctuations in the US job market and the overall number of migrants apprehended along the border (see Appendix A). Interestingly, the historical relationship between Central American migration and the US job market differs from the general trend (see Figure 15). During periods of rising US unemployment, overall apprehension numbers decrease while Central American apprehension numbers stagnate. On the other hand when the unemployment rate drops, Central American apprehension numbers experience explosive growth rates that are relatively higher than the overall rate. Violence and poverty in Central America create migratory pressure and the US job market acts as a pressure valve. When there is demand for Central American labor, this built up pressure is released and the US experiences a significant spike in the number of Central Americans attempting to enter the country.

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34 Haddal, "Unaccompanied Alien Children".
AND
Sapp, Lesley. "Apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol: 2005–2010." Fact Sheet (2011): U.S. DHS: OIS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
35 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2011 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" DHS, CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
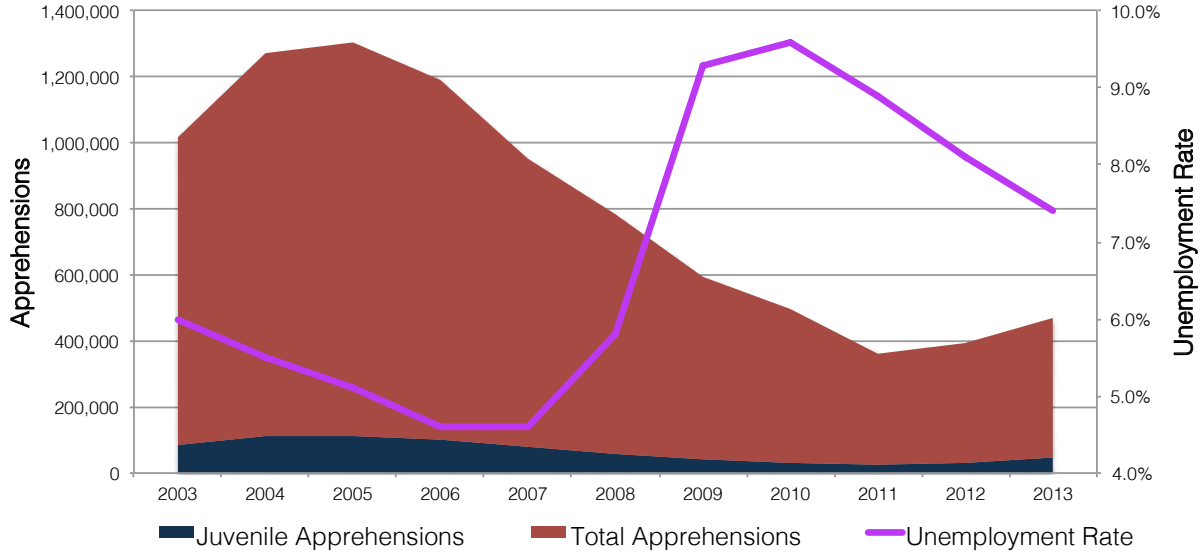AND
CBP, "Juvenile and Adult Apprehensions FY 2013".
36 Department of Labor, "The Latino Labor Force"

Figure 14:

Juvenile Apprehension as Share of Total Apprehensions with Unemployment Rate: 2003-2013

Sources: Congressional Research Service. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview." CRS (2014). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/230157.pdf).
Haddal, Chad C. "Unaccompanied Alien Children: Policies and Issues." *Congressional Research Report for Congress* (2007). Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.uscrirefugees.org/2010Website/5_Resources/5_3_For_Service_Providers/5_3_2_Working_with_Refugee_and_Immigrant_Children/CongressionalResearchService.pdf).
U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "2012 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics." *Office of Immigration Statistics* (2013): DHS. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
Sapp, Lesley. "Apprehensions by the U.S. Border Patrol: 2005–2010." Fact Sheet (2011): U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.
The United States Department of Labor. "The Latino Labor Force in the Recovery." 5 Apr. 2012. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014 (http://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/reports/hispaniclaborforce/).
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. "Juvenile (0-17 Years Old) and Adult Apprehensions - Fiscal Year 2011, 2012, and 2013 (Oct. 1st through Sept. 30th)" DHS, CBP. Web. Accessed 24 July 2014.

Figure 15:

Central American Apprehensions and US Unemployment: 1996-2012

!"#$%&'())
*+!+),&-.$/0&1/)"2)3"0&4.15)!&%#$6/7+)89::;<=>9=)?&.$@""A)"2)B006C$.D"1)!/.D'D%'#$)#$$%&'%()*+,-.&/%01-.2.#2%E=>9FG(),3!+)H&@+)I%%&''&5)=J)K#47)=>9J+)LM&)*16/&5)!/./&'),&-.$/0&1/)"2)N.@"$+)8I11#.4)IO&$C.C&)*1&0-4"70&1/)P./&@+))H&@+)I%%&''&5)=J)K#47)=>9J)EMQ-(RR5./.+@4'+C"ORD0&'&$6&'RNS*>J>>>>>T7&.$'U"-D"1V.44U7&.$'W-&$6"5'U"-D"1V-&%6X%U-&$6"5'W-&$6"5'VI11#.4Y,./.G)+))
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Recently released numbers from the Department of Labor showed a sharp decrease in unemployment in the second quarter of 2014, which has predictably coincided with the height of the UAC surge. In light of these figures, it is unsurprising that the most recent wave of Central American immigration has come as the unemployment rate in the US continues to drop and the economy as a whole is growing. This is why border enforcement officials should have known that economic recovery would be coupled with an increase in UAC apprehensions, and why they should have allotted their considerable resources accordingly.

Root causes of an old crisis

The media's analysis of Central American out-migration has been obsessed with symptoms. Gang violence and the wave of emigration it has supposedly caused are fruits of the same poisoned branch. The surge isn't a recent "phenomenon," it is instead the latest articulation of a complex transnational relationship. For decades joblessness and poverty have been driving children either into the arms of gangs or onto the roads leading north. A report published by The El Salvadorian Policía Nacional Civil estimated that the country's two largest gangs, MS-13 and 18th Street, take in around a combined 60 million dollars in annual revenue. These funds, divied up among the gangs' 45,000 estimated members, provide an average income of just over $1,300 per gang member per year. This number hovers around the very bottom of El Salvador's industry-specific minimum wage spectrum, but it is almost double the national poverty line which 35% percent of the population lives beneath. Faced with limited employment opportunities, young Central Americans have the choice to join a gang and die young, live in poverty, or travel north. All three of these symptoms have the same cure: responsible and sustained economic development. If safe jobs exist, even if they only pay minimum wage, the gang life and the treacherous journey north will lose much of their appeal. In addition, a growing economy will lower the numbers of families living below the poverty line.

Existing proposals, if implemented, could enact the kind of responsible and sustained economic development that would disincentive both emigration and gang membership, while financially empowering the many Central Americans currently living in poverty. One such proposal is the NAID Center's Migrant Savings Bond for Development, or Bono Migrante de Desarrollo. The bono is a savings and local investment tool that would increase financial inclusion and provide access to micro-finance for productive projects, specifically local economic development projects that are linked to environmental conservation, education and biodiversity regeneration. The bono harnesses the productive power of remittances from Central Americans already in the US to create jobs, infrastructure and a more ecologically sound nation for their friends and family at home. The bono would be implemented in two stages. First, hometown association in the US choose to have their collective remittances build an interest bearing eco-development fund, which will then be leveraged as a guarantee fund to attract additional development funding and local investors. This funding is then used to distribute micro-loans for the development projects, which provide jobs to community members. Without these jobs many of these community members might instead join gangs or migrate to the US. The second phase will incorporate technologies that allow any migrant and/or individual to contribute to a guarantee fund via the purchase of a bond using a mobile device, the internet, and a debit card. The bond will pay a return on investment and contribute to strengthening the guarantee fund. This approach will contribute to reaching a larger scale as well as promote financial inclusion and savings and wealth building in transnational communities.

Conclusion

1) The most important conclusion regarding the plight of the unaccompanied children is that the US must comprehensively reform immigration laws to allow for a) the legal entry of workers based on the expected growing

need of immigrant workers and b) the legalized reunification of immigrant workers with their families. There is now wide consensus that legalization of the undocumented, plus moderated legal future flows, will produce over $1.5 trillion in US GDP growth over the next 10-20 years.[37]

2) In order to be truly comprehensive, the reforming of US immigration law must be accompanied by explicit strategies to address the root causes of migrant supply in the principle undocumented sending countries. Last years Senate Bill 744 did not contain a single sentence designed to address the root causes of the international migration phenomenon.

In the absence of congressional action on truly comprehensive immigration reform, the agenda in Washington should focus on:

3) Resisting the temptation to just throw more enforcement money at the problem. The historical enforcement-only immigration strategy over the last 20 years has been incredibly ineffective; when unemployment drops migrant workers attempt to enter the US, regardless of border enforcement spending. In addition, the current strategy has had the unintended consequence of keeping undocumented immigrants in the US. The hardening of the border has driven up the cost of crossing it, which makes circular migration cost prohibitive, and prevents many migrants from returning home when US unemployment is high. The majority of these migrant workers are always going to want to be with their children. Their inability to return home when their labor is not in demand, combined with the expense and danger of crossing illegally, also makes children more likely to undertake the journey unaccompanied by their parents.

4) Strengthen, not weaken the TVPRA. Funds should be provided to allow the law to operate properly and to strengthen the due process protections it offers unaccompanied minors. Simultaneously the TVPRA should be extended to include unaccompanied children from Mexico and Canada.

5) President Obama should use his executive authority in two ways:

a) Build on the DACA model and extend board based administrative relief and legal work permits to 5 million undocumented, including all DACA family members and undocumented parents of US born children. This would boost the economic empowerment of immigrants and eliminate most of the current humanitarian crisis.

b) President Obama should schedule a series of working summits and engage presidents of the region in order to develop model programs of collaboration that address root courses. This would be much more effective than what their current strategy; merely waging a public relations campaign in an attempt to dissuade immigrants from coming to the US. President Obama should begin by redirecting USAID, MCC and other multilateral resources to help leverage the $12 billion dollars of annual remittances into savings and investment projects to create jobs for youths in immigrant sending municipalities.

Appendix A: Statistical Analysis

Our statistical analysis of the relationship between migration, violence and the US job market reveals that the latter is the primary determinate of migration rates. Overall border apprehensions and the US unemployment rate have a strong and significant negative correlation, which means that as the unemployment rate falls apprehensions increase, and vice versa (see figure A). Total border apprehensions and the US unemployment rate have a Pearson Correlation of -.801. When a one-year lag is applied to unemployment---this is used to adjust for the time it takes migrants to react to changes in the unemployment rate---the correlation is shown to be not only strong, but also statistically significant. We found a similar negative correlation between the number of Mexicans apprehended

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37 Hinojosa in Cato and CAP/AIC; CBO numbers reinforced the same conclusion.

at the border and the US unemployment rate (See figure B). This relationship had a Pearson Correlation of -.810, with a one-year lag revealing a correlation that is also strong and statistically significant. We used border apprehensions, as opposed to total apprehensions, because the former does not count criminal apprehensions. These criminal apprehensions are of undocumented immigrants that have been identified through their contact with law enforcement or the criminal justice system. This means that usually they have been living in the US for sometime and therefore these apprehensions are not a strong indicator of migratory flows.

Figure A:

Correlations

		total_border_apprehensions	unemployment	unemployment_lag
total_border_apprehensions	Pearson Correlation	1	-.853**	-.725**
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.000	.001
	N	17	17	17
unemployment	Pearson Correlation	-.853**	1	.832**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000		.000
	N	17	17	17
unemployment_lag	Pearson Correlation	-.725**	.832**	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.001	.000	
	N	17	17	17

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).

Figure B:

Correlations

		mex_border_app	unemployment	unemployment_lag
mex_border_app	Pearson Correlation	1	-.810**	-.723**
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.000	.001
	N	17	17	17
unemployment	Pearson Correlation	-.810**	1	.832**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000		.000
	N	17	17	17
unemployment_lag	Pearson Correlation	-.723**	.832**	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.001	.000	
	N	17	17	17

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).

On the other hand, our statistical analysis of the relationship between migration flows and violence showed little to no correlation between these forces. Mexican border apprehensions had a negative correlation with the nations murder rate. Since potential migrants are unlikely to remain at home because they enjoy increasing levels of violence, we assume there is not a causal relationship between these variables (see Figure C). Mexican border apprehensions and the Mexican murder rate had a Pearson Correlation of -.764. Emigration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras has been steadily increasing for well over fifteen years so for our statistical analysis of these cases we employed a slightly altered methodology. In addition to comparing murder rates and the US unemployment rate to the number of border apprehensions, we also compared these factors to deviations from

the average border apprehension growth rate. In other words, we examined whether apprehension rates above or below the average growth rate were correlated with simultaneous increases or decreases in the murder rate. In the case of El Salvador and Honduras both methods showed no positive correlation between the national murder rate and the number of migrants apprehended at the US border (see Figure D). In Guatemala the first method showed a correlation between the two (see Figure E), but this correlation disappeared when the second method was used to mitigate the statistical noise that long-term migratory growth had created (see Figure F).

Figure C:

Correlations

		mex_border_app	mex_violence	mex_altviolence
mex_border_app	Pearson Correlation	1	-.764[**]	-.216
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.002	.440
	N	17	13	15
mex_violence	Pearson Correlation	-.764[**]	1	1.000[**]
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.002		.000
	N	13	13	11
mex_altviolence	Pearson Correlation	-.216	1.000[**]	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.440	.000	
	N	15	11	15

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).

Figure D:

Correlations

		els_border_app	hond_border_app	els_altviolence	els_violence	hond_violence	hond_altviolence
els_border_app	Pearson Correlation	1	.867[**]	-.289	.540	-.092	-.119
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.000	.277	.057	.765	.700
	N	17	17	16	13	13	13
hond_border_app	Pearson Correlation	.867[**]	1	-.394	.431	-.036	-.243
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000		.131	.142	.907	.425
	N	17	17	16	13	13	13
els_altviolence	Pearson Correlation	-.289	-.394	1	.703[*]	.405	.285
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.277	.131		.011	.191	.344
	N	16	16	16	12	12	13
els_violence	Pearson Correlation	.540	.431	.703[*]	1	.229	.494
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.057	.142	.011		.451	.103
	N	13	13	12	13	13	12
hond_violence	Pearson Correlation	-.092	-.036	.405	.229	1	.866[**]
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.765	.907	.191	.451		.000
	N	13	13	12	13	13	12
hond_altviolence	Pearson Correlation	-.119	-.243	.285	.494	.866[**]	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.700	.425	.344	.103	.000	
	N	13	13	13	12	12	13

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2–tailed).

Figure E:

Correlations

		guat_border_app	guat_violence	guat_altviolence
guat_border_app	Pearson Correlation	1	.738**	.827**
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.004	.000
	N	17	13	16
guat_violence	Pearson Correlation	.738**	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.004		.000
	N	13	13	12
guat_altviolence	Pearson Correlation	.827**	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	16	12	16

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).

Figure F:

Correlations

		guat_borderdev	guat_violence	guat_altviolence
guat_borderdev	Pearson Correlation	1	.514	.296
	Sig. (2–tailed)		.072	.265
	N	17	13	16
guat_violence	Pearson Correlation	.514	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.072		.000
	N	13	13	12
guat_altviolence	Pearson Correlation	.296	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2–tailed)	.265	.000	
	N	16	12	16

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2–tailed).