

Measuring Central American transit migration through Mexico: Challenges and Trends

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PB#14 Central American migrants in irregular transit through Mexico: **New figures and trends.**
Ernesto Rodríguez Chavez



CA transit migration through Mexico



Context: CA migration to the US

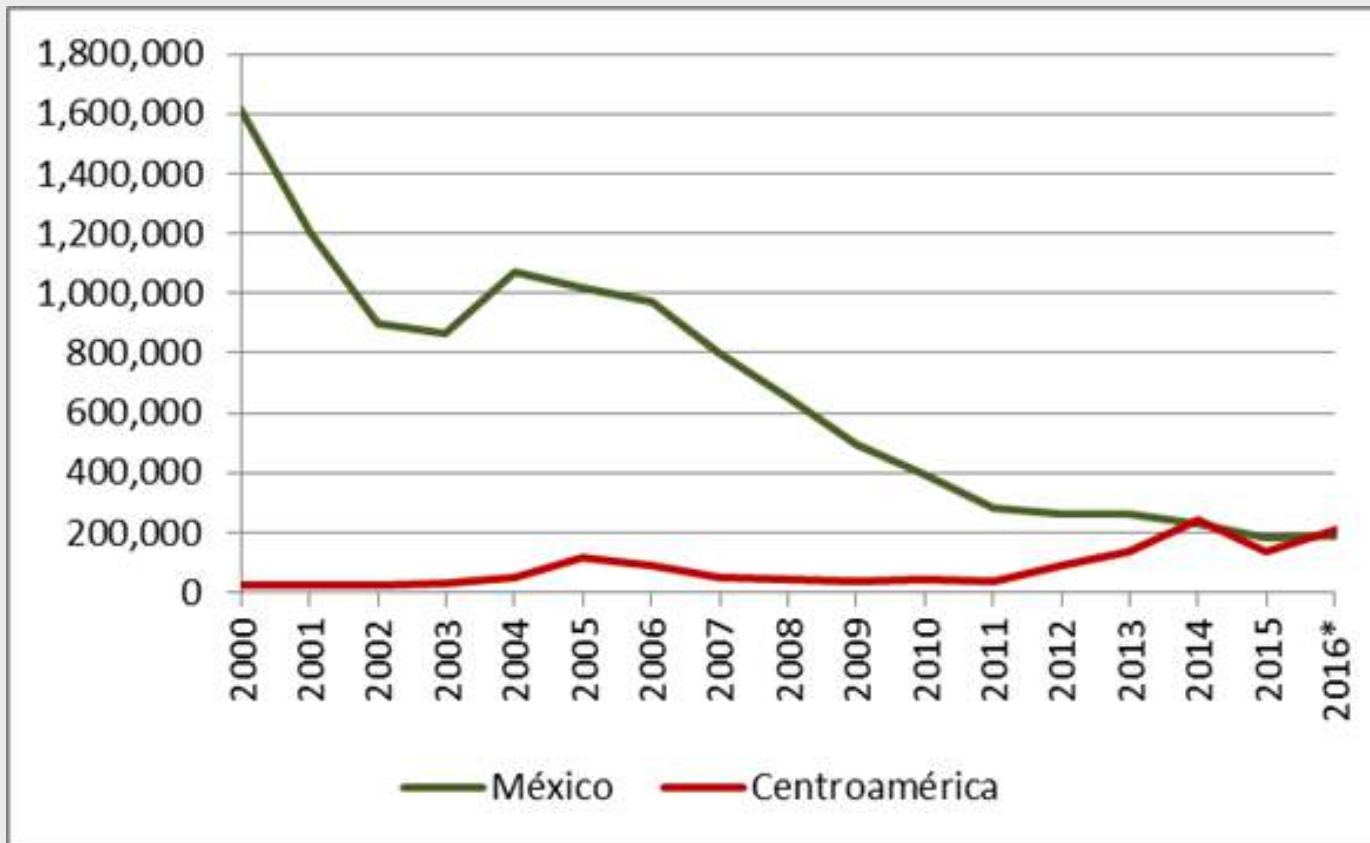


- 2014-16. Unprecedented arrival of **unaccompanied minors** and **women with children** to the US Southwest border
- 2013-16. Shift of undocumented US arrivals:
 - Decline of Mexicans
 - Rise of Central Americans (CA's)
- 2015-17. Increase in refugee protection claims in Mex
- 2017- Anti-immigration policies and new restrictions to protected status claimants in the US.

Shift in apprehensions by nationality



- U.S. Border Patrol, Southwest Sector apprehensions of Mex & CAs FY 2000-2016



Main transit routes



Transit migrants – timing (EMIF SUR)



- Migrants transit time through Mexico to get to US
 - 33% less than a week
 - 58% between 1week and a month
 - 93% less than a month
- 75% of migrants spend at least 1week in a Mexican border town before crossing to the US
- Main border crossing: state of Tamaulipas (58%).
- 98% did not work in Mexico.
- Most CAs did not have previous work experience in Mexico (97%), nor in the U.S. (69%)

Transit & Smugglers (EMIF Sur)



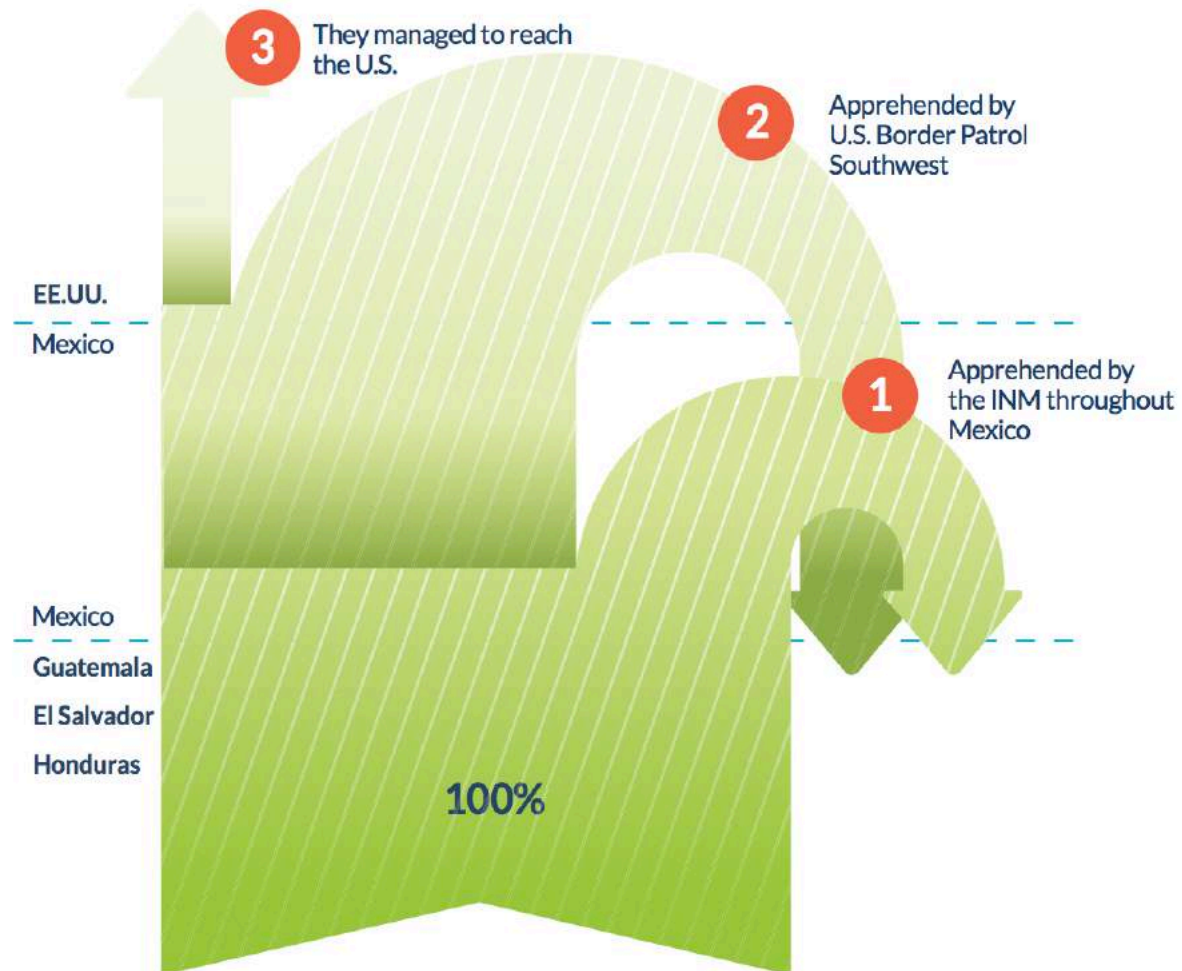
- **CAs returned by U.S. authorities**
- Method of transportation through Mexico
 - 56% by bus
 - 13% by train
- Chain migration
 - 90% migrants have relatives in the US
- **CAs who successfully crossed to US**
 - Hired smugglers:
 - 51% to travel through Mexican territory
 - 65% to cross the U.S.-Mexico border

Transit migration estimates

Residual method



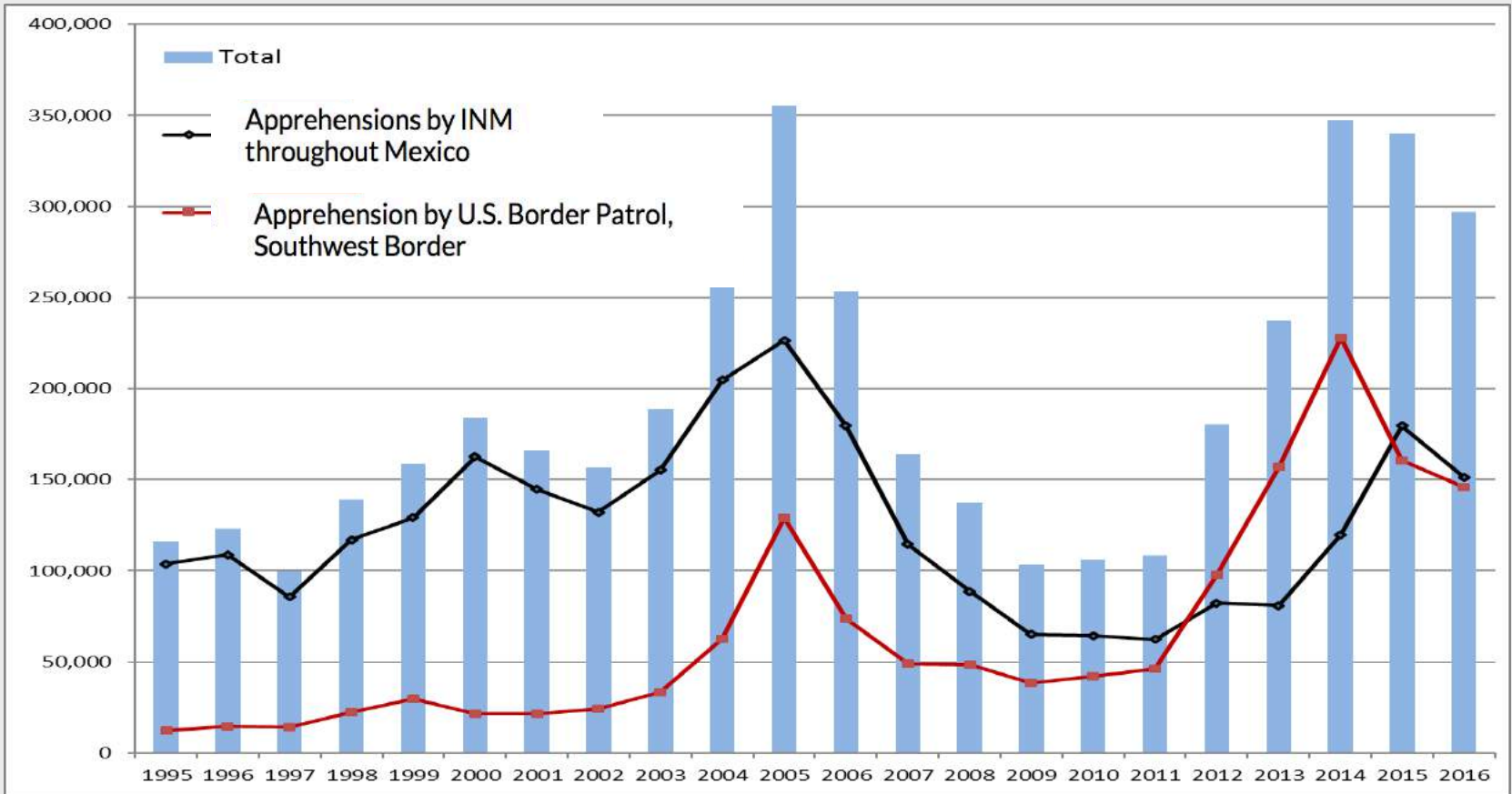
Diagram 1.
Flow of irregular Central American migrants on their way to the U.S. through Mexico based on indicators used to estimate their volume



Apprehensions of C.A. in U.S. & Mex



- Undoc CA migrants apprehended by Mex or US (1995-2016)



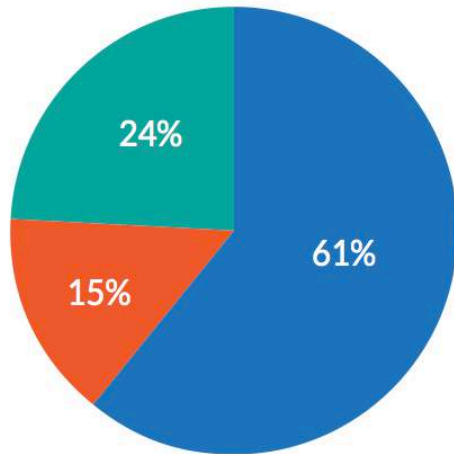
Source: Compiled by Ernesto Rodríguez Chávez based on SEGOB, UPM, INM de México: *Boletín de estadísticas migratorias* and U.S. Border Patrol, Southwest: *Alien Apprehensions by Citizenship* (unpublished data).

US crossing success probabilities

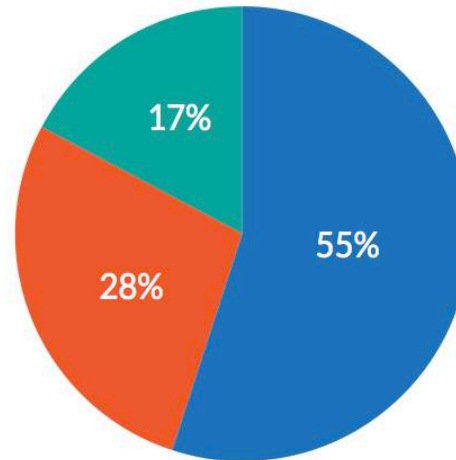


- Where are CAs apprehended? (1995-2014)

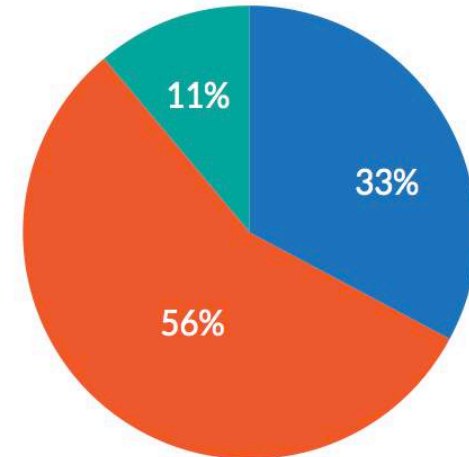
1995-2005



2006-2011



2012-2014



■ Apprehended by the INM throughout Mexico

■ Apprehended by U.S. Border Patrol Southwest

■ They managed to reach the United States through Mexico as irregular migrants

2010s Increase in vulnerability of CAs

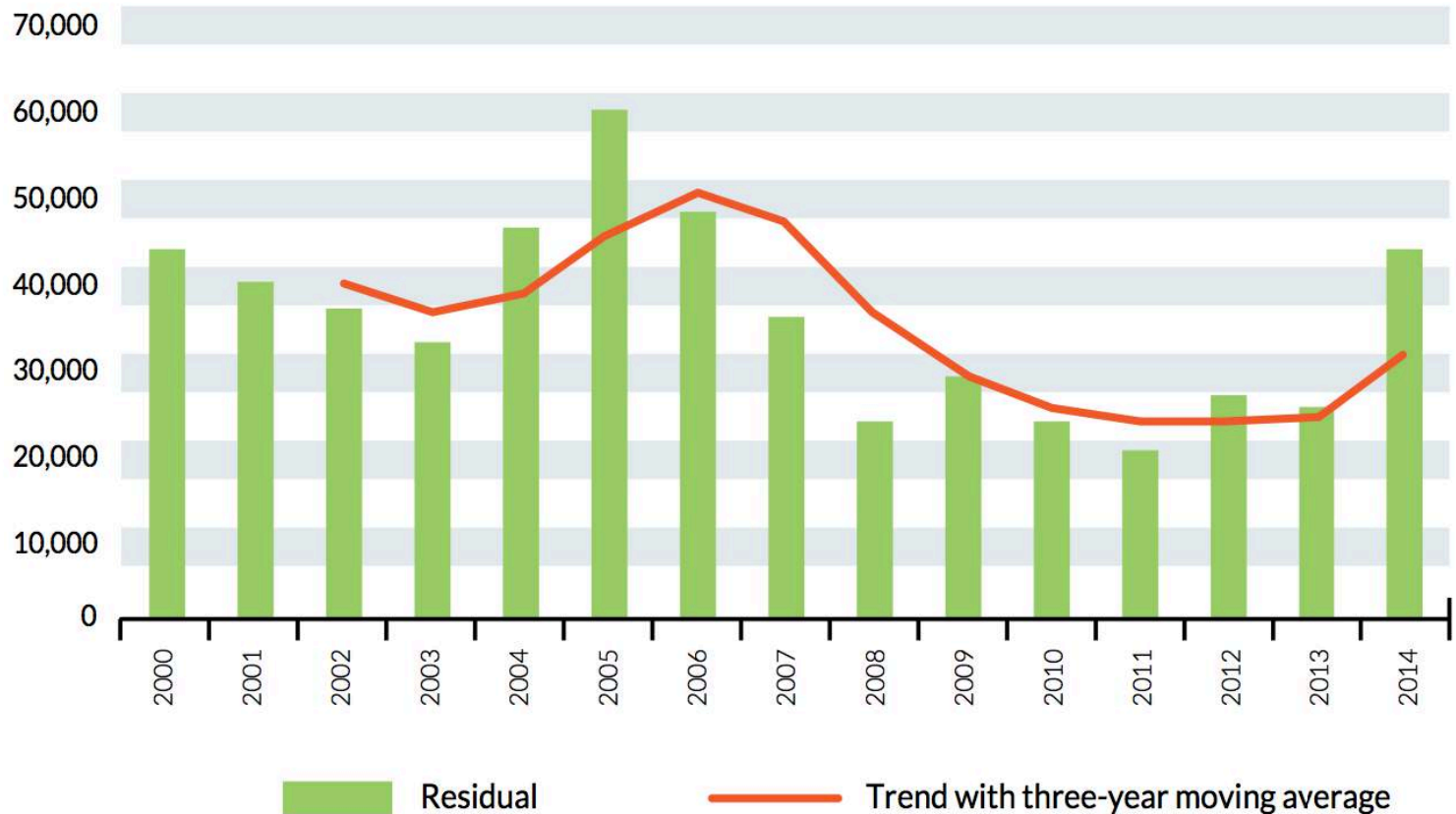


- Plan Frontera Sur (2014-) started sharp increase in Mex apprehensions
- Criminal organizations (extortion, kidnapping, murder, human trafficking)
- Detouring to dangerous routes.
- Corruption & impunity in Mexico
- Less migratory experience.
- Larger participation of unaccompanied minors and women.

Flows of settled undoc CA migrants into the US



Figure 4.
Estimated number
of Central American
undocumented
migrants who
managed to settle in
the U.S., 2000-2014



Rodriguez Chavez
(2017) CANAMID PB14

Source: Author's estimates based on U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) and Current Population Survey (CPS); U.S. DHS, Immigration Statistics y Border Patrol, Southwest Border.

Note: Trend with three-year moving average refers to the average figure for the year drawn from figures for the previous three years, making it possible to smooth annual fluctuations in the short term to approximate estimated residual data.

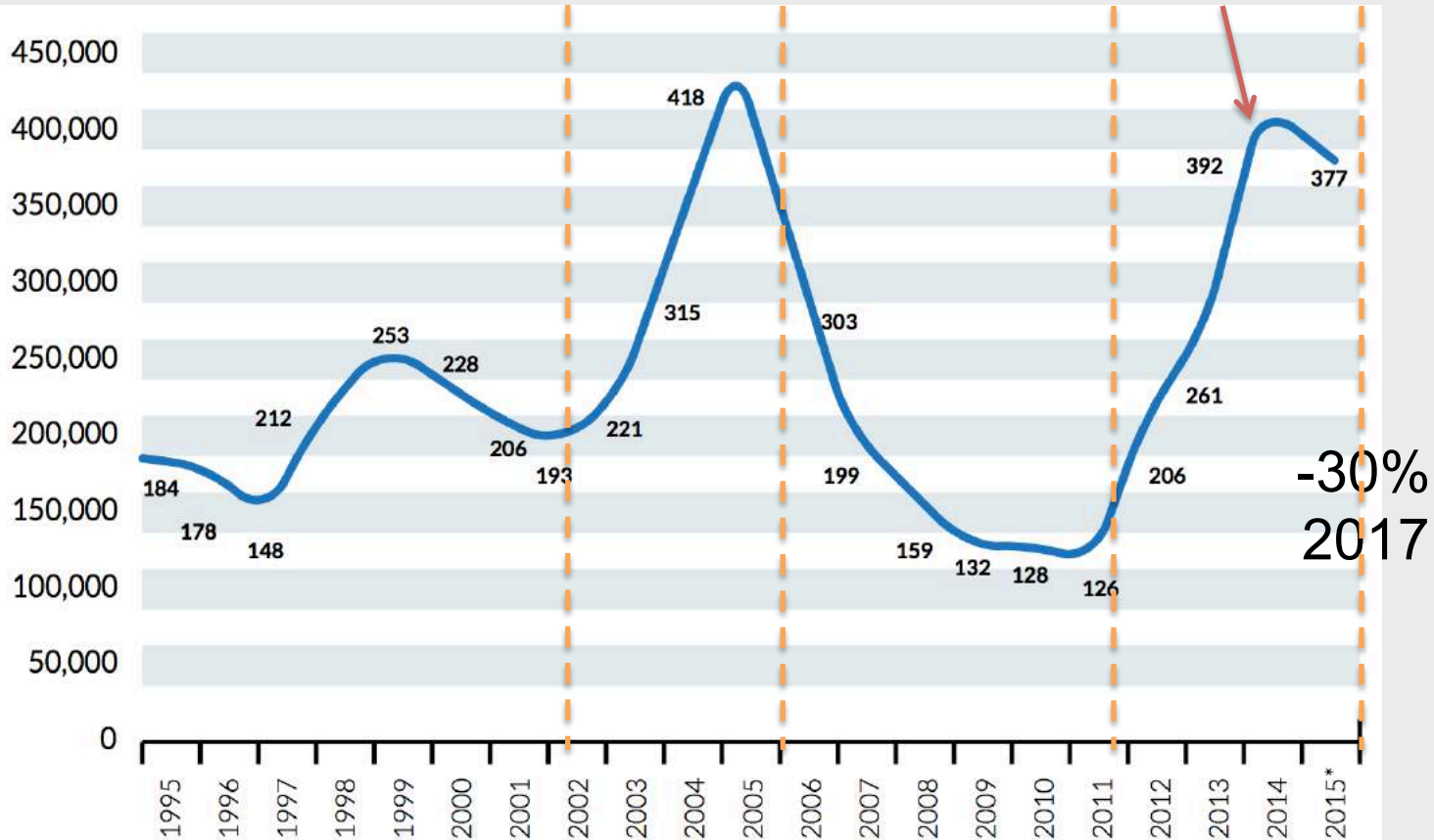
Irregular CA transit flows thru Mex



- Ernesto Rodriguez developed a residual model to estimate transit migration

New peak
2014-15

Figure 5.
Estimated number
of Central American
migrants in irregular
transit through Mexico
to the U.S., 1995-2015



-30%
2017

Apprehended unaccompanied minors & family units



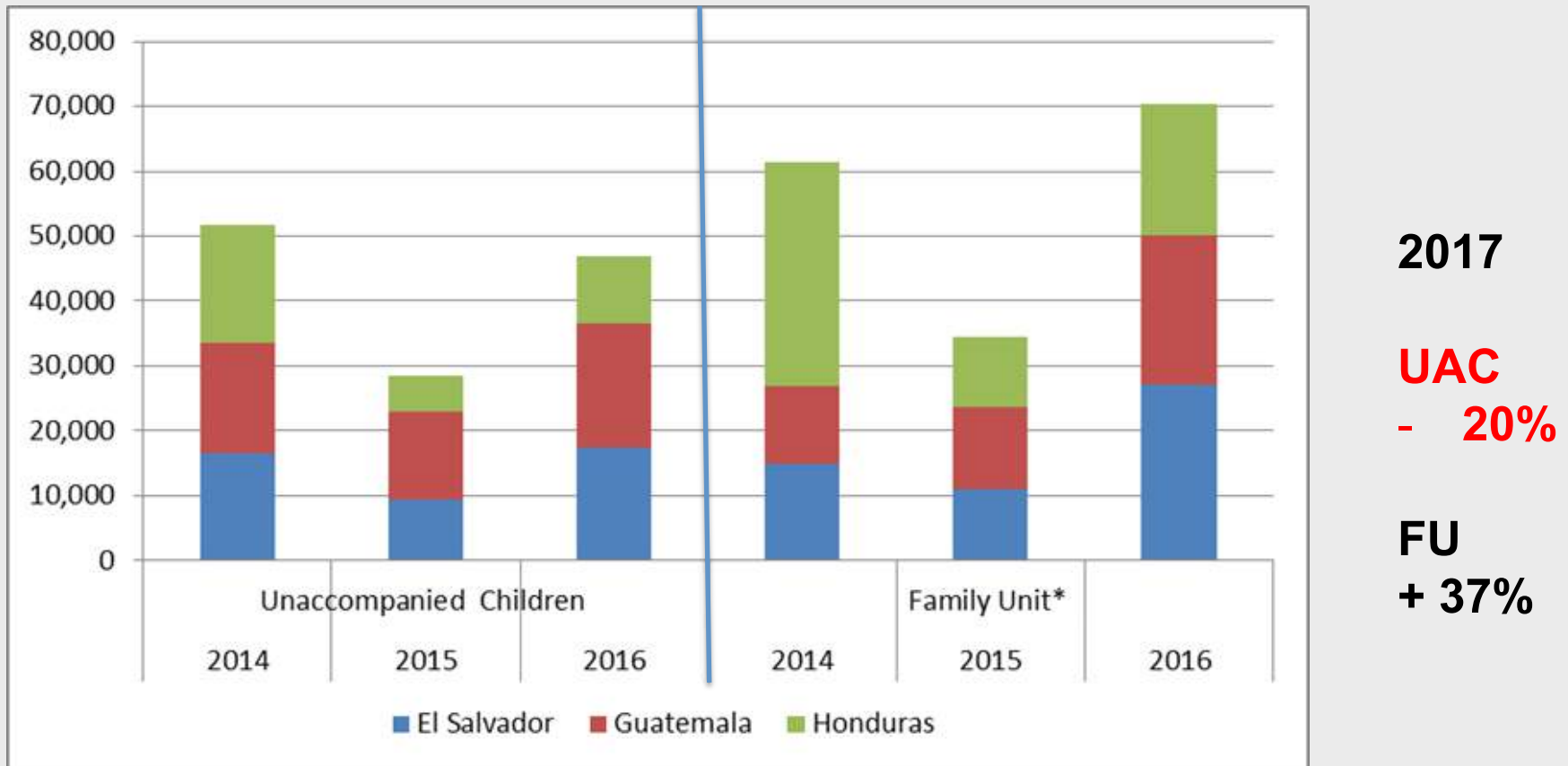
- Apprehensions by INM México and US Border Patrol 2010-2016 (FY)



2017
USBP
- 20%
INM
- 40%

Source: Ernesto Rodríguez Chávez using data from SEGOB, UPM, INM (unpublished monthly data converted to FY Oct-Sept to match US data) and U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Sector. Family Unit Subject and Unaccompanied Alien Children Apprehensions.

US apprehended unaccompanied minors & family units



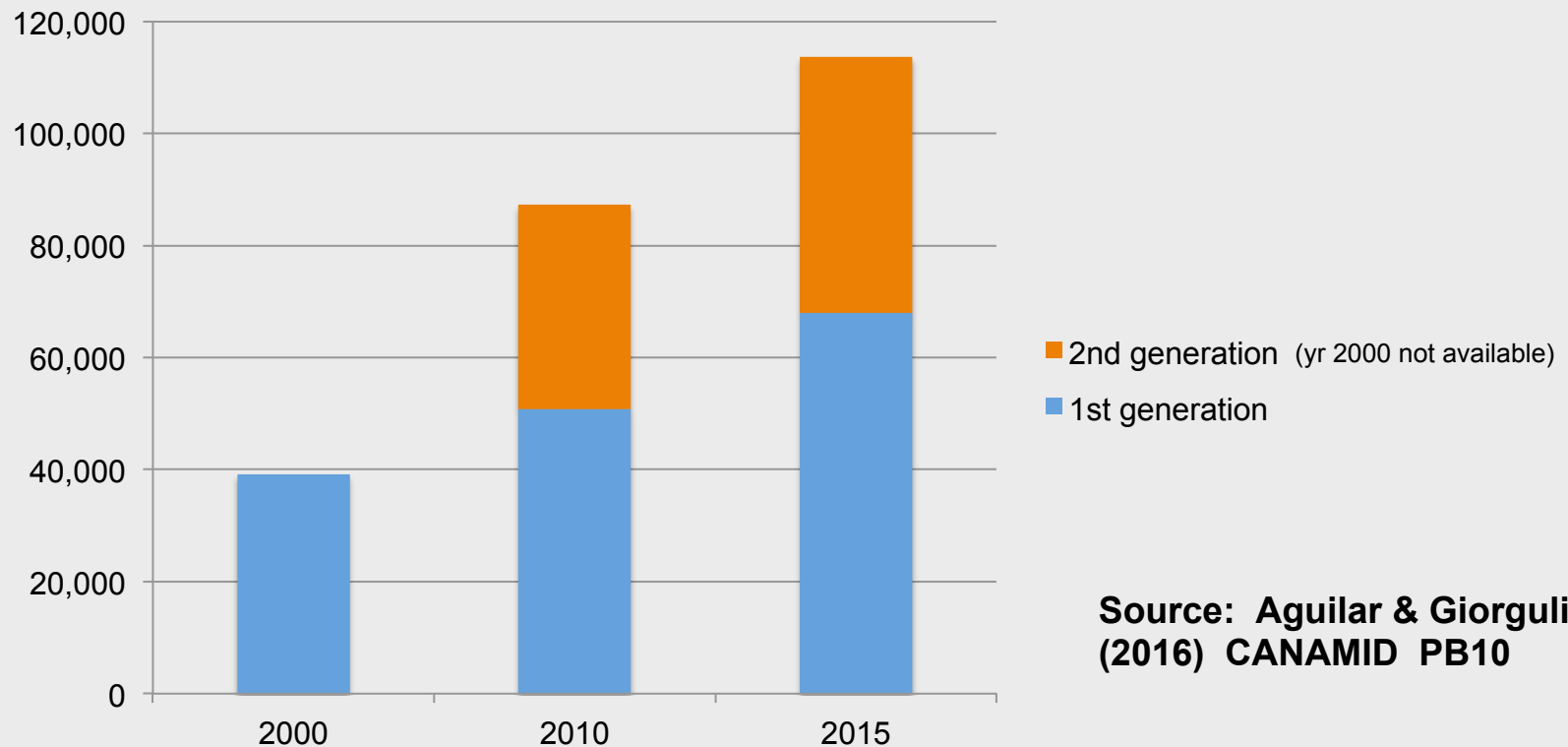
Source: US. Border Patrol Southwest. *Family Unit Subject and Unaccompanied Alien Children Apprehensions Fiscal Year, Oct 2016*

Stock of CA migrants in Mexico



- Migrants born in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras and their children resident in Mexico (2000-2015)

(Census and Inter-censal survey)



Conclusion



- Strong increase in CA undoc flow (2012-16) especially children and women
- Marked periods:
 - + increase (1995-2005) and (2012-2016)
 - decrease (2006-2011) and (2017-)
- Link between CA living conditions & violence and US economy & policy (push & pull factors)
- Methodological challenges across 5 countries
- Data needs beyond transit flows; vulnerability, refuge and settlement in Mexico

Thanks!



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