

DRAFT - EXAMPLE

Building Analysis

Thesis Efforts to discourage Central American migrants from trying to enter the United States have failed to reduce the flow and, by ignoring the reasons for people’s displacement, are actually fueling pressures for them to leave their homeland.

Framing Estimated 1 million people apprehended in U.S. at or near Mexico border in 2019. Dramatic change in composition. In 2008, 90 percent were Mexicans. Now Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Salvadorans represented nearly three-quarters, with two-thirds composed of families or unaccompanied children. Trump Administration increasing arrests, returns, refusals – hoping to show “door is closed.” Numbers entering U.S. going down, but departures from homeland remaining steady.

Drivers & Trends	Driver	Trend
Driver 1:	Pull factor: people think they can safely arrive in U.S., get jobs, and make a better living than they can at home.	Obama and Trump policies – including mass deportations – have sent a clear signal. This driver has become less strong.
Driver 2:	Corruption undermines everything in “sending” countries – undermining even positive programs in security, economy, education, medical, etc.	Despite internationally sponsored efforts, corruption remains extremely corrosive. Governments are tied up in scandals, undermining vigilance and clearing way for my corruption.
Driver 3:	Violence, extortion, rape, and insecurity have presented families with an existential challenge. People feel unsafe in own communities.	While violence ebbs and flows, over years it has become much worse – because of gang power struggles, lack of police, and people’s sense of isolation.
Driver 4:	Gangs are invading families – stealing away youth – because families have been weakened by economic decline and inability to adapt to role of women. Youth are desperate and vulnerable.	Worsening economic conditions – including lack of opportunity – favors gang influence. Gangs are increasingly filling the void left by weak government presence -- even providing social services.

Scenarios
 Scenario 1: The “push factors” continue to produce growing number of people desperate enough to leave their countries – despite risks. Trafficking will increase, and ever-more creative means will be attempted to move migrants northward. “Northern Triangle” governments show little/no ability or desire to stop the flow; corruption is too deep.

Scenario 2:

Although less likely, stories of tragic consequences for migrants trying to reach/enter the U.S. could deter their departure – leaving them in place with ever-increasing levels of dissatisfaction. Popular suffering seems unlikely to shake up governments, to make them begin caring, and humanitarian crisis will be increasingly likely.

Wild Cards

Wild card 1: Another hurricane or earthquake *could* further devastate vulnerable communities, driving even more desperation and attempts to lead.

Wild card 2: Political tensions *could* spark such violence that popular movements convince governments to get serious about rooting out corruption and ensuring that international and national aid reaches the most needy – thereby reducing suffering and “push factors.”

Implications

Implication 1: Based on the more likely scenario, would expect more migration – in quantity and in desperation – as people give up all hope and turn their fate over to alien-smugglers. Elites apparently feel little/no incentive to improve governance and pay for the institutions – and anticorruption efforts – necessary to address the underlying drivers.

Implication 2: Surging “push factors” are likely to fuel internal tensions – between people and government; among political parties; etc. – and between countries. Central Americans passing through Mexico, for ex., have already caused stresses there. The same will happen between Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Implication 3: Youths in affected societies are growing up with education deficits and, in many cases, psychological issues that will further complicate solutions and progress in the future. Malnutrition condemns many children to a life with poor health, without necessary skills, and little chance of becoming contributing members of society.

Other Points

Mexico has played an enforcing role – stopping many migrants – but has not provided leadership in long-term problems, such as growing the economies.

Class and racial divisions have long contributed to inequality and, often, neglectful attitudes toward expanses of affected countries.

Anti-immigrant sentiment among some sectors in the United States apparently does not deter new arrivals.

Migrants from Central America generally become good, contributing members of U.S. society. Insofar as parents’ own education permits, they encourage children to study hard.

Although U.S. political debate does not reflect it, most studies show that the U.S. benefits greatly from the low-cost, effective labor of Central American migrants.
