

The Journey from the Northern Triangle of Central America to the USA



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What We Should Understand

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What is the Northern Triangle of Central America?

- Guatemala
- El Salvador
- Honduras



CENTRAL AMERICA HOMICIDE RATES, 2016



0-25 PER 100,000

26-50 PER 100,000

51-75 PER 100,000

Source: InSight Crime, U.S. Department of State

Credits: Danielle Renwick, Julia Ro

COUNCIL on
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

About Guatemala

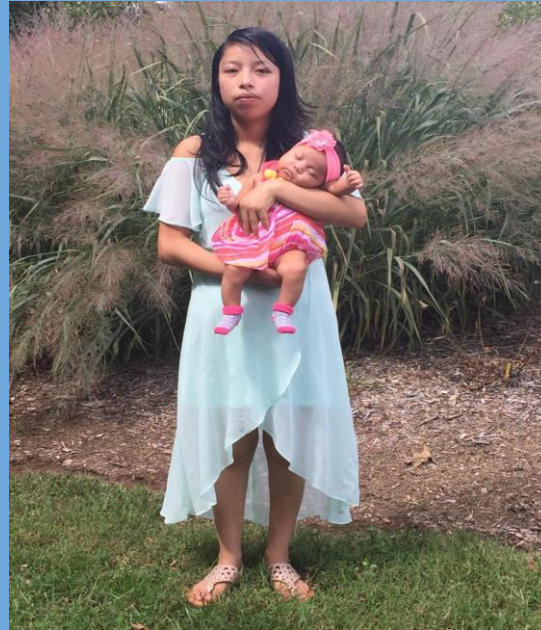
- Beginning in the early 1900s Guatemala was ruled by several dictators backed by United Fruit Company (not Guatemalan owned)
- Civil war from 1960-1996 (genocidal massacres of indigenous peoples)
- 41% are pure Amerindians (indigenous - no European ancestry)
- 41% of Guatemalans are *mestizo* (mixed indigenous and European descent)
- And the rest comprise other groups.....



Tell Me More About Guatemala!

Of the 41% indigenous Guatemalans - MOST of those are from the K'iche' group,

Also spelled Quiché



Telma's Story - Guatemala



Why didn't Telma just "get in line" for her visa?

To even qualify for a TOURIST visa (which still means - NO work authorization), one must prove with documentation to the US Embassy:

Document steady employment that pays \$2000 a month (this is A TON of \$\$\$ in Guatemala)

Show their round trip airfare ticket

The Guatemalan MAY be asked if they own land (which helps with their visa request)

People **WOULD** come with authorization if this were a possibility. The people who **CAN** come with authorization are the people whose lives don't depend on getting **OUT** of Guatemala (or El Salvador, or Honduras, etc. etc.).

These countries all suffered colonial exploitation and civil wars and have **NEVER** recovered, leaving a void for gangs and lawlessness to control.

Human Smugglers - the Coyotes

Because there's not a legal way for asylum seekers to get authorization in the USA (YET), many resort to using smugglers - called *coyotes* in Spanish.

They cost anywhere between \$2,000-\$10,000 and do NOT guarantee arrival to the USA

El Salvador - Murder Capital of the World 2015-2016



El Salvador....

It is the smallest country in Central America

It is the most densely populated of all Central American countries

Its history is **COMPLICATED**



It gets worse...

A few wealthy families created an oligarchy, controlled the country's biggest export, can you guess what that export is?

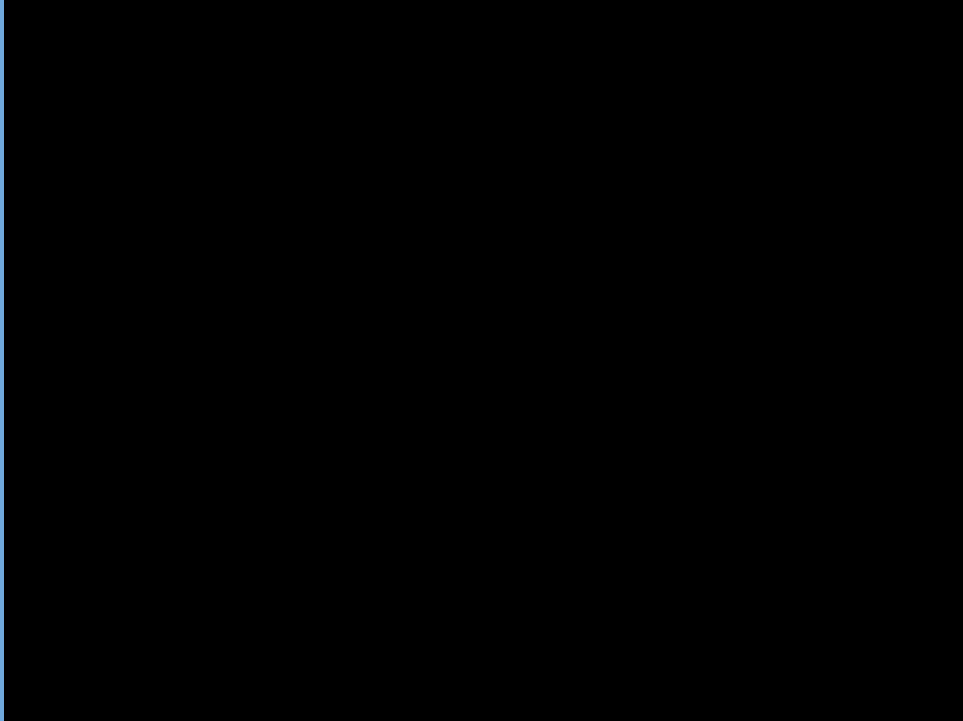


And these families didn't "share the wealth" by any means and things got worse, and worse, and...stayed that way. A few families own all, and everyone else is very poor.

COFFEE!!



Yohanna's Story



Let's Talk about Honduras



Let's Talk about Honduras

The photo on the previous slide is of some Garifuna people - approximately 150,000 speakers

Used to be referred to as *Spanish Honduras* to differentiate it from *British Honduras* (now Belize)

History similar to Guatemala and El Salvador and for this reason...

LOTS of gang violence, extortion, and reasons to leave!

An Unaccompanied Minor from Honduras



A Few Important Terms:

Asylum- Escaping persecution from their native country and haven't received official permission yet from host country.

Undocumented - The sensitive term to refer to a person who has not yet received authorization for lawful residence in the host country.

Important Note: ALL these people want authorization, they are Americans by choice (not birthright), they are trying to get authorized status, it just takes a LONG TIME and they're patiently waiting and showing up for their immigration hearings.

What are current Asylum criteria?

They must prove that they have a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country on account of: race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

They also must first go to a country of “first asylum” to file their asylum request.

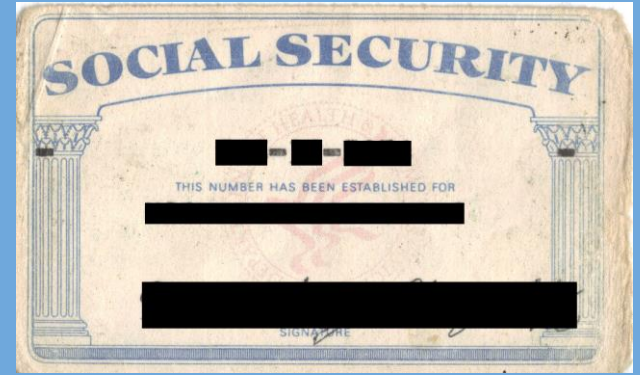
The US does not have this agreement (yet?) with Mexico.

So How Are They Working?

There are three ways:

- 1. Under the table in cash**
- 2. *Al chueco* - a made up Social Security Number**
- 3. *Al chueco* - an existing Social Security**

Those using a Social Security Number are paying into: medicare, Social Security, local, state, and federal taxes, and NOT getting benefits



Scenes from the Border







Questions?

