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UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN: DISCOURSE CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICY OUTCOMES

by

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March 2017

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This thesis examines the public discourse related to the 2014 increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border to determine the effect, if any, public discourse has had on immigration policy outcomes. In the summer of 2014, the number of unaccompanied children arriving at the nation's border increased. Also that year, the countries of origin of the children changed from those of previous years; more children from Central America were arriving. The increase drew national attention from media and politicians. This thesis describes the public discourse in mass media by systematically examining newspaper articles published in the summer of 2014. It then compares themes in the discourse with immigration policy outcomes to determine if the discourse impacted policy. The researcher concludes it can be difficult to determine if public policy is impacted by, or merely reflects, public discourse. However, for one immigration policy outcome, the postponement of executive action on immigration reform, negative public reaction to the increase in unaccompanied children did impact an immigration policy outcome. The thesis findings advance the knowledge of public discourse about unaccompanied children and the role of public discourse in policy outcomes.

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UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN: DISCOURSE CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICY OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the public discourse related to the 2014 increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border to determine the effect, if any, public discourse has had on immigration policy outcomes. In the summer of 2014, the number of unaccompanied children arriving at the nation's border increased. Also that year, the countries of origin of the children changed from those of previous years; more children from Central America were arriving. The increase drew national attention from media and politicians. This thesis describes the public discourse in mass media by systematically examining newspaper articles published in the summer of 2014. It then compares themes in the discourse with immigration policy outcomes to determine if the discourse impacted policy. The researcher concludes it can be difficult to determine if public policy is impacted by, or merely reflects, public discourse. However, for one immigration policy outcome, the postponement of executive action on immigration reform, negative public reaction to the increase in unaccompanied children did impact an immigration policy outcome. The thesis findings advance the knowledge of public discourse about unaccompanied children and the role of public discourse in policy outcomes.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CIR	comprehensive immigration reform
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DACA	deferred action for childhood arrivals
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	Department of Justice
EOIR	Executive Office of Immigration Review
FY	fiscal year
HHS	Department of Health and Human Service
HSE	homeland security enterprise
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act
LPR	lawful permanent resident
NGO	non-governmental organization
ORR	Office of Refugee Resettlement
SIJ	special immigrant juvenile
TPS	temporary protected status
TVPRA	William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act
UAC	unaccompanied alien child
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2014, an increased number of unaccompanied non-U.S. citizen children began arriving at the United States' southwest border, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection statistics. Unlike previous years, most of the children were not from contiguous countries—Canada and Mexico—but from three Central American countries, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Unlike unaccompanied children from contiguous countries, who may be returned to their countries of origin expeditiously, children from non-contiguous countries face a complex set of legal requirements related to immigration processing and housing. The increased number of children from Central America, combined with the legal requirements for immigration processing and housing, led to crowded immigration detention facilities. These conditions captured mass media attention in the summer of 2014. The federal government, led by the executive branch and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), responded to the increase in unaccompanied children by increasing government resources at the southwest border and announcing efforts to reform U.S. immigration law and policy.

The number of mass media articles discussing unaccompanied children increased over the course of summer 2014. The author researched newspaper articles published in top circulation newspapers from May through September 2014, the height of the increase. Three articles related to unaccompanied children were published in May, 86 articles in June, 241 articles in July, 75 articles in August, and 42 articles in September, 2014. This thesis explores the themes in the newspaper articles as a way to understand the public discourse—the way the idea of the increase in unaccompanied children was constructed as a reality in the public arena—about the increase. This thesis then examines whether the public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children influenced immigration policy outcomes.

Themes in the public discourse largely framed the increase in unaccompanied children in terms of state and local response to the increase, in relation to U.S. immigration policies and in relation to push and pull factors in the children's migration. In public discourse, state and local responses were predominantly described as negative.

The most frequently mentioned U.S. immigration policies were comprehensive immigration reform and recommendations to increase or speed up removal of arriving unaccompanied children. Violence in the children's home countries was most frequently mentioned as a push factor, and family in the United States was most frequently mentioned as a pull factor in migration.

Federal immigration actions taken during and after the height of the increase include actions in the executive branch and hearings and proposed legislation in Congress. Executive branch actions include an increase of DHS resources at the southwest border, the Department of Justice's announcement it would create a program to provide legal services to arriving unaccompanied children, $6.9 million in repatriation aid to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, and the president's announcement of his intention to use executive authority to reform U.S. immigration law. Congressional actions include several public hearings on the increase in unaccompanied children and the introduction of two bills seeking to expedite the immigration processing and removal of children arriving from Central America.

Comparing public discourse with immigration policy outcomes demonstrated it can be difficult to determine if public discourse, as measured by newspaper articles published at the height of the increase, impacted or simply reflected immigration policies toward unaccompanied children introduced or enacted at the time of the articles' publication. Newspapers reported on federal actions taken, which might account for the existence or prevalence of themes found in the articles. For example, the public discourse in the summer framed the increase as a crisis, either humanitarian one or one of government resources. During the same period, the government took actions that are consistent with expected government actions in a crisis. The Department of Homeland Security sent more people to the southwest border, while other agencies announced initiatives to assist with arriving children. The executive branch announced repatriation aid to the children's home countries. Congress held hearings and introduced two bills introduced during the period to expedite the processing and removal of children arriving from Central America. However, newspapers reported on the government actions, including policymakers' descriptions of the increase, so it is difficult to determine if the

public discourse, which included policymakers' discussion of the increase, drove or simply reflected policy actions.

In one area, proposed executive action on immigration reform, however, the public discourse does appear to have impacted federal immigration policy. While comprehensive immigration reform efforts, both in Congress and in the executive branch, existed outside of the increase in unaccompanied children, negative responses to the increase appear to have played a significant role in the postponement of executive efforts at reform. Indeed, negative responses to the increase are the only factor the president mentioned when he announced he was suspending his efforts at executive reform.

This thesis advances the knowledge on public discourse related to unaccompanied alien children, the impact of the discourse on federal immigration policy and the impact of public discourse to the homeland security enterprise. It shows the difficulty of determining if public discourse drove policy decisions or if it reflected policy decisions that were occurring. In one key area, the study shows public discourse did impact a major policy, proposed executive action on immigration reform.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the ability of non-U.S. citizens to enter and remain in the country is regulated by the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The INA is administered and enforced by three federal immigration agencies, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), all of which fall within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Non-U.S. citizens, referred to as aliens in the INA, are required to be inspected and then admitted or paroled into the United States by federal immigration officers.[1]

In addition to the millions of people who legally enter the United States[2] and the hundreds of thousands of people who become U.S. citizens through the naturalization process each year,[3] some non-U.S. citizens enter the country through extralegal methods, without processing by federal immigration agencies. The consequences of this unauthorized migration to the United States by people, considered by the government as aliens without legal status, has generated considerable public attention and discourse over the years.

In the summer of 2014, an increase in the number of non-U.S. citizen children unaccompanied by parents or guardians arriving at the United States' southwest border generated substantial public discourse. This thesis examines the public discourse around the increase. The examination of the public discourse and the way in which ideas and reality are created can aid in understanding phenomena and in understanding public policy responses to phenomena. By examining the public discourse about the increase in

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[1] There are three broad categories by which aliens are admitted to the United States: non-immigrants—people intending to stay in the United States for a short period of time; immigrants—those who intend to live and work permanently in the United States—and refugees or asylees—people fleeing persecution.

[2] U.S. Department of Homeland Security [DHS], Office of Immigration Statistics, *2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/DHS%202014%20Yearbook.pdf, 5–84.

[3] In FY 2014, 773,824 people became U.S. citizens through naturalization. Ibid., 51–52.

unaccompanied children, this thesis helps the reader understand the role public discourse played in shaping one part of homeland security policy—immigration policy.

A.   BACKGROUND

The Department of Homeland Security, one component of the homeland security enterprise (HSE),[4] is charged with securing the nation's borders and administering the nation's immigration laws. During periods of heightened illegal migration to the United States, immigration law and policy receive greater public scrutiny and often change as law and policymakers respond to changes in the public construction of immigration as an idea, the public discourse around immigration.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection's published statistics show in 2013 and 2014, the number of unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border increased, peaking in the summer of 2014. Prior to 2012, less than 20,000 unaccompanied children arrived per year.[5] Beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2012, the number of arriving children began to increase: 24,403 in FY2012, 38,759 in FY2013, 68,541 in FY2014, 39,970 in FY2015, and 38,566 in FY2016 as of June 2016 (see Figure 1).[6]

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[4] As used in this thesis, the homeland security enterprise is the group of federal, state, local, and tribal agencies whose missions are to safeguard the United States from external and internal threats.

[5] U.S. Customs and Border Protection [CBP], "United States Border Patrol Southwest Family Unit Subject and Unaccompanied Alien Children Apprehensions Fiscal Year 2016," last modified October 18, 2016, https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children/fy-2016.

[6] Ibid.

Figure 1. Unaccompanied Alien Children Apprehensions by U.S. Border Patrol,
by Fiscal Year[7]
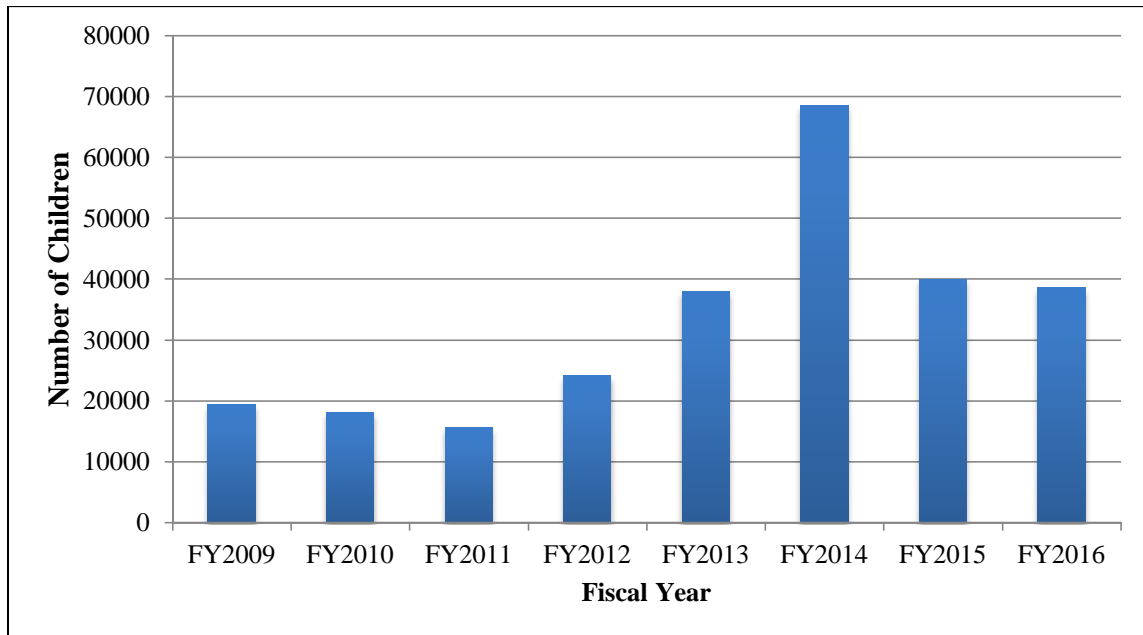
Non-U.S. citizen children who arrive at the United States' borders and ports of entry without a parent or guardian are considered unaccompanied alien children (UAC) by the U.S. government. Complex rules govern their treatment and immigration processing. The *Flores* settlement requires the government provide immigration detention facilities for children who meet certain criteria, including those pertaining to food and drinking water, medical assistance, sinks and toilets and, when possible, separation from unrelated adults.[8] The William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) requires that non-U.S. citizen children arriving without a parent or guardian at the nation's borders and ports of entry be screened for human trafficking and asylum claims. TVPRA also requires children from non-contiguous countries—countries other than Mexico or Canada—be placed in immigration removal proceedings, also known as deportation proceedings, with the Executive Office of

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[7] Adapted from: CBP, "United States Border Patrol Southwest Family."

[8] Flores v. Meese, Stipulated Settlement Agreement (U.S. District Court, Central District of California, 1997).

Immigration Review (EOIR) (the court system that adjudicates removal of non-U.S. citizens from the United States).

After apprehension and detention by immigration officials, unaccompanied children must be transferred to the Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Refugee Resettlement (HHS/ORR) within 72 hours.[9] ORR attempts to place children with parents or family members in the United States while the children's immigration removal proceedings are pending.[10] Ultimately, most children are released from ORR custody and reunite with family members in the United States.[11]

The increased number of unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border in 2012–2014, combined with the complex housing and immigration processing requirements for the population, placed a strain on government resources, who struggled to provide adequate shelter for the children immediately after their apprehension by immigration authorities.[12] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNCHR) Regional Office for the United States and the Caribbean interviewed 404 unaccompanied children who had entered U.S. federal custody after October 2011.[13] Based on the interview data, UNHCR published a report in March 2014 describing the reasons children gave for migrating, including violence and deprivation in their home countries, which acted as push factors, and family members in the United States, who served as a pull factor.[14] The report recommended revising international protections, including U.S. immigration law, to provide legal protections for the children,

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[9] Kate M. Manuel and Michael John Garcia, *Unaccompanied Alien Children—Legal Issues: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions* (CRS Report No. R43623) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R43623.pdf, 9.

[10] Ibid., 11–13.

[11] Ibid., 12.

[12] Julia Preston, "U.S. Setting Up Emergency Shelter in Texas as Youths Cross Border Alone," *New York Times*, May 17, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/17/us/us-sets-up-crisis-shelter-as-children-flow-across-border-alone.html?_r=0, A.15.

[13] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], *Children on the Run* (Washington, DC: UNHCR Regional Office for the United States and the Caribbean, 2014), 5.

[14] Ibid., 6. Push factors are circumstances or phenomena that motivate a person to leave his or her current place of residence. Pull factors are circumstances or phenomena that motivate a person to move to a specific area. See E. G. Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 48, no. 2 (1885): 167–235.

whom the agency described as fleeing violence and poverty and seeking to reunite with family in the United States.[15] The report also noted that in a break with past patterns of migration, the unaccompanied children were increasingly from three Central American countries, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.[16] Prior to 2012–2013, most arriving unaccompanied children were from Mexico.[17]

In the summer of 2014 mentions of unaccompanied children in U.S. mass media spiked. The dataset analyzed in this thesis[18] shows three articles on unaccompanied children in May, 86 articles in June, 241 articles in July, 75 articles in August, and 42 articles in September 2014 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.   Number of Newspaper Articles Discussing Unaccompanied Children[19]

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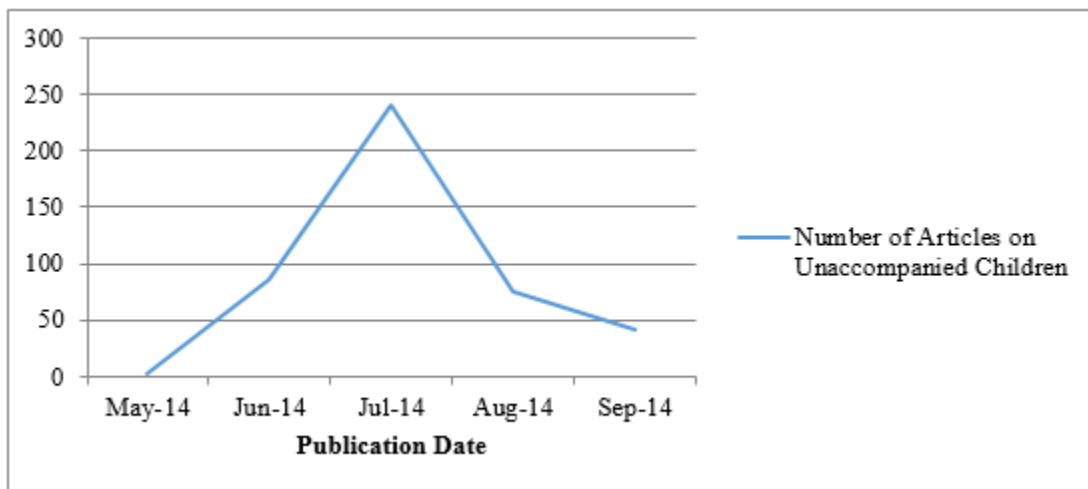
[15] Ibid., 7, 13–14.

[16] Ibid., 6–7.

[17] Ibid., 5.

[18] The research conducted for this thesis discovered 447 articles on unaccompanied children published in top circulation U.S. newspapers between May and September, 2014.

[19] See footnote 31. The numbers for this figure were derived from the author's research of newspaper databases.

As discussed in this thesis, media coverage framed the increase in unaccompanied children as a crisis. Coverage focused on the purported reasons children were leaving their home countries for the United States, the perils of the journey, the U.S. government's response to the increase and political challenges for American lawmakers who wished to reform U.S. immigration law. Media coverage waned as the number of children arriving at the border slowed in the fall of 2014.

Although the unaccompanied children were a small fraction of all migrants to the United States and less than one percent of all immigration actions, including authorized admissions and enforcement encounters,[20] they represented a large increase in this category of unauthorized migration. The increase briefly attracted both political and national media attention, and lawmakers held public hearings on the issue. Federal agencies instituted new programs and modified policies to respond to the increase. As mentioned above, print and electronic media published an increased number of stories on the topic.

Print and electronic mass media are forums for the public exchange of ideas. Discourse analysis, the examination of language to discover how it constructs ideas and reality,[21] of articles in print and electronic media can describe the way phenomena are conceptualized and meanings are created among large groups of people in a society. Understanding the way phenomena are constructed can aid in understanding the way public policies are crafted in response to those phenomena. While public policy is influenced by many factors,[22] this thesis examines the role of public discourse on one area of policy, immigration policy.

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[20] DHS, *2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 5–107; U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "Southwest Border Unaccompanied Alien Children FY 2014," accessed October 15, 2016, https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children/fy-2014. See Appendix A for further information on immigration admission statistics.

[21] James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 34–35, 140.

[22] See James Paul Anderson, *Public Policymaking: An Introduction* (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015), 20–27, 42–50 for a summary of the theories of public policy and the public policy environment, including the roles of political culture and socioeconomic conditions.

This thesis describes the 2014 increase in unaccompanied children, and it describes and analyzes the discourse in mass media about the increase at its height in summer 2014, as well as the government response to the discourse to determine the influence, if any, public discourse had on immigration policy. The analysis focuses on this specific area of homeland security policy—immigration policy during and after a surge of unauthorized migration.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study explores an area that has not been examined in the literature, public discourse related to the increase of unaccompanied children in the summer of 2014. It adds to the body of literature on unaccompanied alien children, immigration discourse, and the influence of discourse on immigration policy. Furthermore, it expands the knowledge in all of these areas, in addition to the understanding of how one part of homeland security policy, immigration policy, is influenced by public discourse.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What were the major themes that emerged in the public discourse about the increased number of unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border in the summer of 2014?

- What role, if any, did public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children play in changing immigration law and policy?

- Is public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children important for the homeland security enterprise?

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

The method of analysis was qualitative discourse analysis of mass media articles published at the height of the increase in unaccompanied children during the summer of 2014. The research design is described in detail in Chapter III. The themes and trends in the discourse were compared to government action on unaccompanied alien children to determine if the discourse impacted immigration policy.

E.   CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis—the problem, the research design, the method of analysis, and the significance of the study. Chapter II discusses the existing literature on unaccompanied children and immigration discourse. Chapter III addresses the research design and method of analysis, discourse analysis, and comparison of the discourse to immigration policy outcomes. Chapter IV reports the results of the analysis. Chapter V describes conclusions based on the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This review explores the literature related to public discourse about unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' borders. Searches of academic databases failed to produce any literature specific to the public discourse about this population. Though literature does examine unaccompanied children and immigration discourse, it does not contain articles examining the discourse about unaccompanied children. This chapter is divided into the following sections and subsections: Unaccompanied Children and Immigration Discourse**.**

A. UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

As discussed below, authors in the literature describe demographics of the summer 2014 increase in unaccompanied children, legal processes related to the children, issues contributing to the increase and domestic, and foreign policy considerations raised by the increase.

1. Unaccompanied Children Demographics and Legal Processes

Academic articles, government reports, and congressional hearing testimony describe this issue and the dimensions of the increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border between 2011 and 2014. As part of congressional hearings held in 2014 and 2015, federal agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO) provided written testimony detailing the number of unaccompanied children, the

percentage increase, changes in countries of origin, and government response.[23] Additionally, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) published a series of reports on unaccompanied children in 2014 and 2015.[24] Agency publications, congressional hearings, and CRS reports show a marked increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the southwest border beginning in 2011 and peaking in 2014, an increase of over 50,000 per year from fiscal year 2009 to 2014.[25] They also note the changes in countries of origin. Prior to 2012, most unaccompanied children were from Mexico. Beginning in fiscal year 2012 most unaccompanied children were from three Central American countries—El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.[26]

CRS reports discuss legal issues surrounding unaccompanied children and the complex immigration and housing issues unique to the population.[27] All non-U.S. citizens, described as aliens in the INA, arriving at the United States' borders or ports of entry are subject to the INA, which is enforced and administered by federal agencies. CBP is the primary federal agency arriving aliens encounter. When a non-U.S. citizen

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[23] *Dangerous Passage: The Growing Problem of Unaccompanied Alien Children Crossing the Border: Hearing Before the Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives*, 113th Cong. (2014) (Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul), https://homeland.house.gov/press/mccaul-opening-statement-hearing-unaccompanied-children-border/; *An Administration Made Disaster: The South Texas Border Surge of Unaccompanied Alien Minors: Hearing before the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives*, 113th Cong. (2014); *Crisis on the Texas Border: Surge of Unaccompanied Minors: Hearing Before the Committee on Homeland Security, U.S. Senate*, 113th Cong. (2014), https://homeland.house.gov/hearing/field-hearing-crisis-texas-border-surge-unaccompanied-minors/; *Securing the Border: Understanding and Addressing the Root Causes of Central American Migration to the United States: Hearing Before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate*, 114th Cong. (2015); *Eroding the Law and Diverting Taxpayer Resources: An Examination of the Administration's Central American Minors Refugee Parole Program: Hearing before the Judiciary Committee, U.S. Senate*, 114th Cong. (2015); *The 2014 Humanitarian Crisis at Our Border: A Review of the Government's Response to Unaccompanied Minors One Year Later: Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, House of Representatives*, 114th Cong. (2015).

[24] Manuel and Garcia, *Unaccompanied Alien Children*; William A. Kandel, *Unaccompanied Alien Children: Potential Factors Contributing to Recent Immigration* (CRS Report No. R43628) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014); Lisa Seghetti, *Unaccompanied Alien Children: A Processing Flow Chart* (CRS Insights 10107) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014); Lisa Seghetti, *Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview* (CRS Report No. R43599) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014); Peter J. Meyer et al., *Unaccompanied Alien Children from Central America: Foreign Policy Considerations* (CRS Report No. R43702) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015).

[25] Seghetti, *Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview*, 2–3.

[26] Ibid.

[27] See footnote 28.

minor arrives at the United States' border or port of entry without a parent or guardian, CBP screens the child for human trafficking or asylum claims, determines if the child can make a voluntary return to his or her country of origin, and, for those who do not qualify for voluntary return, begins a process that places the child in immigration removal proceedings and transfers custody of the child to the HHS/ORR. In turn, HHS/ORR places the child in a residential setting, and, in most cases, ultimately with a parent or guardian where the child remains while any immigration applications and removal proceedings are pending.[28]

CRS reports also describe the legal guidelines the federal government follows with regard to unaccompanied alien children. Authors agree the TVPRA of 2008 and the *Flores* settlement agreement of 1997[29] shape the federal government's policies and processes towards unaccompanied alien children. The *Flores* settlement requires the government, when it encounters unaccompanied alien children, to provide basic services, including food, water, medical assistance, toilets and sinks, supervision to protect the children, and separation from unrelated adults when possible. Additionally, the TVPRA requires arriving unaccompanied alien children to be screened for human trafficking and asylum claims. These legal requirements, combined with a higher than average number of arriving unaccompanied children and inadequate government resources to respond to the increase, created overcrowded detention facilities, which captured media attention in 2014.

2. Issues Contributing to the Increase in Unaccompanied Children

As described below, authors in the literature examine suggested reasons for the increase of unaccompanied children and the shift in countries of origin. Prior to fiscal year 2012, most unaccompanied children encountered by the U.S. government were Mexican citizens or nationals. Beginning in fiscal year 2012, most unaccompanied children were citizens or nationals of three Central American countries, El Salvador,

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[28] Manuel and Garcia, *Unaccompanied Alien Children*, 12.

[29] Flores v. Meese, Stipulated Settlement Agreement.

Guatemala, and Honduras, an area that is frequently called the "Northern Triangle" of Central America.

Why did more children from the Northern Triangle begin to migrate to the United States at that time? To find reasons for the increase after 2011, authors examined push and pull factors,[30] a long-standing method for analyzing migration motivation. The most frequently mentioned push factors are societal violence in the children's home countries, domestic violence, and deprivation.[31] The most frequently mentioned pull factors are reunification with family members in the United States, the desire to have a better life in the United States, and changes in U.S. immigration policy.[32]

The UNHCR report, *Children on the Run*, Davey and Terrio discuss the complex interaction between push and pull factors and that no single factor is driving the increase in unaccompanied children. Civil wars and natural disasters in the 1980s and 1990s prompted large migrations out of the Northern Triangle.[33] Many migrants traveled to the United States, where they settled, often without legal immigration status. The unaccompanied children migrating to the United States after 2011 frequently cited the desire for family reunification in the United States as a factor in their decision to migrate.[34]

As the population of Central American citizens without legal status in the United States grew, and violent street gangs associated with the population, including the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and 18th Street (M-18) gangs, gained public attention the U.S.

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[30] Push factors are circumstances or phenomena that motivate a person to leave his or her current place of residence. Pull factors are circumstances or phenomena that motivate a person to move to a specific area. See E. G. Ravenstein, "The Laws of Migration," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 48, no. 2 (June 1885).

[31] See for example UNHCR, *Children on the Run*; Kandel, *Unaccompanied Alien Children*; Clare Ribando Seelke, *Gangs in Central America* (CRS Report No. RL34112) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34112.pdf, 4.

[32] See for example UNHCR, *Children on the Run.*

[33] Megan Davey, "The Central American Foreign Born in the United States," Migration Policy Institute, April 1, 2006, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/central-american-foreign-born-united-states.

[34] UNHCR, *Children on the Run*, 24; Susan Terrio, "Dispelling the Myths: Unaccompanied, Undocumented Minors in U.S. Immigration Custody," *Anthropology Today* 31, no. 1 (2015): 15–16.

government increased immigration enforcement targeting gang members.[35] Deported gang members established gang cliques in their countries of origin, and the gangs have subsequently evolved to transnational criminal organizations with ties to Central America, Mexico, and the United States.[36] The Central American cliques have engaged in violent crime, including murder, kidnapping, and human trafficking.[37] Gang violence in Central American countries is often cited as one of the push factors for the increase in unaccompanied children traveling to the United States.[38]

UNHCR and Congressional Research Service reports discuss deprivation and domestic violence as push factors.[39] The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) interviewed 404 unaccompanied children who arrived in the U.S. after 2011 and reported domestic violence and forms of deprivation, including poverty, as push factors named by the children.[40]

The literature also identifies pull factors that draw unaccompanied children to the United States including family reunification, the desire for a better life in the U.S., and recent changes in immigration policy. As mentioned above, in the wake of civil wars and natural disasters, many Central Americans migrated to the United States, leaving children behind with family members. The UNHCR report *Children on the Run* states 329 of 404 interviewed children (81 percent) mentioned family or opportunity as reasons for traveling to the United States.[41] It was the single largest theme in the report. The original cause for family separation—the migration of parents who left children in their home countries—has its own set of push and pull factors, including civil war and natural

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[35] U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), "Operation Community Shield," last accessed October 13, 2016, https://www.ice.gov/national-gang-unit.

[36] Department of the Treasury, "Transnational Criminal Organizations," last updated April 21, 2015, https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/tco.aspx.

[37] Seelke, *Gangs in Central America*.

[38] See for example UNHCR, *Children on the Run*; Kandel, *Unaccompanied Alien Children*.

[39] UNHCR, *Children on the Run*; Kandel, *Unaccompanied Alien Children*; Seelke, *Gangs in Central America*, 4.

[40] UNHCR, *Children on the Run, 7*.

[41] Ibid., 23.

disasters. This highlights the complexity of the push and pull factors in the increase of unaccompanied children journeying to the United States.

The last pull factor mentioned is changes in U.S. immigration policy, including humanitarian programs and proposed comprehensive immigration reform (CIR). Kandel discusses asylum, special immigrant juvenile (SIJ) status, relief for victims of human trafficking, deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA), and temporary protected status (TPS).[42] Although they may not qualify for DACA, an executive program created in 2012 and TPS, a humanitarian program created in 1990 and expanded in the 2000s, arriving unaccompanied alien children might qualify for some form of humanitarian relief; however, it is not clear how strong a pull factor humanitarian programs are. Both Terrio and UNHCR state children either do not name or very infrequently name humanitarian programs created or expanded in the last three or four years as a factor in their migration.[43] However, misunderstanding of existing programs and rumors of a new immigration status may have served as a pull factor for children migrating to the United States after 2011.[44]

As reviewed in this section, the literature discusses the complicated push and pull factors in the increase in unaccompanied children migrating to the United States. Between 2011 and 2014. In addition, it helps frame the issue of the increase in unaccompanied children and provides insight into broad social forces that played a role in shaping the motives for migration during the 2014 peak.

3.   Domestic and Foreign Policy Considerations

The literature also discusses U.S. domestic and foreign policy issues that were raised by the increase in unaccompanied children. The primary domestic policy analyzed is immigration, and the primary foreign policy area analyzed is reducing the flow of unaccompanied children.

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[42] Kandel, *Unaccompanied Alien Children*, 17–20.

[43] Terrio, "Dispelling the Myths," 14; UNHCR, *Children on the Run*, 9–11.

[44] Muzaffar Chishti and Faye Hipsman, "The Child and Family Migration Surge of Summer 2014: A Short-Lived Crisis with Lasting Impact," *Journal of International Affairs* 2, no. 68 (2015): 100.

For this research, U.S. immigration policies are closely examined, and it includes analyses (as discussed above) of the role of current policies in the unaccompanied children increase. In addition, as described below, authors of the literature make policy recommendations, including changes to asylum, refugee, and unaccompanied children housing policies. UNHCR, Chen and Gill, and Chishti and Hipsman suggest expanding or changing criteria for existing humanitarian immigration statuses, such as asylum or refugee status.[45] Terrio recommends changes to unaccompanied children's immigration processing, including incorporating the "best interest of the child" criteria (a criterion not currently used in immigration determinations) in immigration policy.[46]

The literature analyzes the impact the 2014 increase of unaccompanied children has had on U.S. immigration policies. Beyond recommendations to change existing asylum and other humanitarian immigration programs, Chishti and Hipsman also argue negative public response to the increase in unaccompanied children negatively impacted the Obama administration's plans for comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) and executive immigration actions.[47] In addition, they describe the strain placed on immigration courts, which are administered by the EOIR, and highlight the role backlogged immigration hearings have had in the unaccompanied children increase. Specifically, due to large backlogs, the government was not able to efficiently hold immigration hearings for the children, which led to their release to family members in the U.S. as their cases were pending with the court.[48]

The literature also describes and analyzes the impact of the increase to the U.S. immigration system as a whole and the role of that system in helping to create the conditions that captured media attention in 2014. As mentioned in the previous section, the TVPRA's and *Flores* settlement's housing and immigration processing requirements, combined with an unexpected increase in the number of unaccompanied children arriving

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[45] See, for example, UNHCR, *Children on the Run*; Chishti and Hipsman, "The Child and Family Migration;" Annie Chen and Jennifer Gill, "Unaccompanied Children and the U.S. Immigration System: Challenges and Reforms," *Journal of International Affairs* 2, no. 68 (2015);.

[46] Terrio, "Dispelling the Myths," 17–18.

[47] Chishti and Hipsman, "The Child and Family Migration," 106.

[48] Ibid. 107–108.

at the border, severely strained the government's capacity to house and process the children. Once released from immigration and HHS/ORR custody, children then faced a severely backlogged immigration court system. As mentioned above, as their immigration hearings were pending, the children were released to family members in the United States. Although the children's release to family members was not a legal admission to the United States, it did reunify children with their families on U.S. soil. This confluence of events may have added to the perception in sending countries that children would be allowed to remain in the United States[49] and thus helped to fuel the increase.

Foreign policy considerations discussed in the literature focus on addressing root causes of the increased migration and the role of Mexico, as a transit country for the children attempting to gain access to the United States, in the increase. Chen and Gill and Chishti and Hipsman recommend foreign assistance from the United States to sending countries to decrease the strength of the push factors societal violence, domestic violence, and deprivation.[50] Meyer also mentions the capacity of sending countries, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, to receive and process unaccompanied children who have been removed from the United States and the potential role of the United States in helping repatriated children.[51]

Written testimony prepared for congressional hearings discusses the role of international partners in the increase of unaccompanied children. Chair Michael McCaul of the House Committee on Homeland Security has argued transnational criminal organizations, including drug cartels, would exploit the U.S. Border Patrol's focus on the increased number of children; this, he argued, diverted attention from enforcement activities.[52] Chair McCaul and other U.S. lawmakers called for Mexico, as a transit

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[49] Ibid., 107.

[50] Chen and Gill, "Unaccompanied Children," 126–127; Chishti and Hipsman, "The Child and Family Migration," 108–109.

[51] Meyer et al., *Unaccompanied Alien Children*, 13–16.

[52] *Dangerous Passage: The Growing Problem.*

country for unaccompanied children, to increase its immigration enforcement efforts and repatriate unaccompanied children before they reached the U.S. border.[53]

In congressional hearings, lawmakers also called for changes in immigration law and processes to allow for faster deportation of arriving unaccompanied children, which, they argued, would serve as a deterrent for future potential migrants.[54] Migrant rights groups have advocated for changes in immigration law that would provide more protections for unaccompanied children.[55] In particular, migrant rights groups have argued that faster deportation hearings would erode due process rights.[56]

B.   IMMIGRATION DISCOURSE

The literature also contains analyses of U.S. immigration discourse. It discusses the way immigration and immigrants as ideas are discursively constructed in the United States. The major themes in literature are the United States as a nation of immigrants,[57] immigrants and immigration as perceived threats to the United States,[58] and the need for immigration reform.[59] Unaccompanied children are not mentioned in the literature on immigration discourse.

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[53] Ibid. See also, *Crisis on the Texas Border.*

[54] David Rogers, "House Panel Sets aside Money for Child Migrants," *Politico*, last modified June 24, 2014, http://www.politico.com/story/2014/06/child-immigrants-house-money-120-million-108240.

[55] Chen and Gill, "Unaccompanied Children;" Chishti and Hipsman, "The Child and Family Migration." Annie Chen and Jennifer Gill are members of the Vera Institute's Center on Immigration and Justice. The Vera Institute is an organization that advocates for justice systems, including immigration system, reforms. Muzaffar Chishti and Faye Hipsman are members of the Migration Policy Institute, an organization that analyzes immigration policy.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Jan Michael Kotowski, "Narratives of Immigration and National Identity: Findings from Discourse Analysis of German and U.S. Social Studies Textbooks," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 13, no. 3 (2013): 298–299, doi: 10.1111/sena.12048; Sharon Quinsaat, "Competing News Frames and Hegemonic Discourses in the Construction of Contemporary Immigration and Immigrants in the United States," *Mass Communication & Society* 17, no. 4 (2014): 580–581, doi: 10.1080/15205436.2013.816742.

[58] Kotowski, "Narratives of Immigration;" Quinsaat, "Competing News Frames;" Craig O. Stewart, Margaret J. Pitts, and Helena Osborne, "Mediated Intergroup Conflict: The Discursive Construction of 'Illegal Immigrants' in a Regional U.S. Newspaper," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 30, no. 1 (2011): 9, doi: 10.1177/0261927X10387099.

[59] Quinsaat, "Competing News Frames," 581, 592.

C. SUMMARY

In summary, the literature discusses unaccompanied children in terms of demographics, motives for migration, and domestic and foreign policy considerations. It portrays the increase in unaccompanied children as a problem requiring policy solutions. It also discusses U.S. immigration discourse. It does not, however, address discourse about unaccompanied children. This thesis examines the discourse about unaccompanied children during the height of the recent increase, summer 2014, and attempts to determine if the discourse influenced immigration policy outcomes.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis examines the summer 2014 increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border, describes and analyzes the public discourse in mass media about the increase at its height that summer, and describes and analyzes government response to the discourse to determine the influence, if any, public discourse about the increase had on immigration policy. The method of analysis is public discourse analysis, the examination of language in the public domain to determine how it constructs ideas and phenomena.[60] The public discourse is compared to immigration policy outcomes to determine if policy was influenced by discourse. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of discourse analysis, the sources searched and used for text to analyze, the steps in the analysis, data collection rationale, and the appropriateness of the research design.

A. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis is a qualitative research method. As a qualitative method, it is a way of understanding the meaning humans give to problems or phenomena. The researcher collected data in its natural setting for this thesis—in mass media documents that are part of the public discourse about immigration and unaccompanied children. The researcher analyzed the data and built from the specific to the general.[61] The method assumes reality is socially constructed and can be understood by examining phenomena in the context they occur.[62]

1. Steps in the Discourse Analysis

First, the researcher identified data for analysis. The dataset is a quota sample of mass media articles published at the height of the increase of unaccompanied children,

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[60] The method is adapted from Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* and Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967).

[61] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2014), 4.

[62] Ibid., 184–185. Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

May through September 2014. This period contains the spike of newspaper articles related to unaccompanied children.[63] The criteria used to include a text in the dataset were:

1. The text mentioned the key words "unaccompanied alien children," "unaccompanied minors," or "immigrant minors."

2. The text was published in one of the following top-circulation newspapers——the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Miami Herald*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*.

3. The text was published between May and September 2014.

Searches in the ProQuest and NewsBank databases returned over 500 articles that met the above criteria (see Table 1). Non-relevant articles were identified and removed from the initial list of articles. Using a random number generator on the website www.random.org, the researcher randomly selected 10 articles for June through September of the remaining 447 articles as the dataset for analysis.[64] May had only three articles, all of which were included in the dataset.

Table 1.   Dataset Selection

	Number of articles in population of 447	Number of articles in the dataset (texts for analysis)
May	3	3
June	86	10
July	241	10
August	75	10
September	42	10
Total	447	43

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[63] See the Table 2 for further information on the number of articles published between May and September, 2014. The author's research did not yield articles on unaccompanied children prior to May, 2014.

[64] See Appendix B for a complete list of articles in the dataset.

The researcher then summarized the 43 cases. In each article summary, the researcher recorded the way the increase in unaccompanied children was framed and any emerging themes—prominent, recurring ideas noted by the researcher. After summarizing the articles, the researcher analyzed the articles to refine emerging themes discovered in the first review. Themes were examined, refined, and summarized to determine how the increase in unaccompanied children was constructed as an idea or presented as a reality. For each theme the researcher asked:

- How does this theme explain or frame the causes and effects of the increase?

- How does this theme explain or frame the consequences of the increase?

Chapter IV describes the procedure for and provides a detailed example of how the researcher identified and described themes.

Using Atlas.ti, the researcher coded each article with themes encountered in its text.[65] Codes were short descriptions or contractions of the original theme. Each theme received its own unique code. The article itself, rather than sections of the article, was coded. The researcher then counted and recorded the number of times a theme or narrative occurred within the dataset and recorded the number, by month, in a table. This allowed a chronological comparison of themes with immigration policy outcomes.

2. A Comparative Analysis of the Public Discourse and Federal Immigration Policy Outcomes

After completing discourse analysis of mass media articles on unaccompanied children published during the height of the increase, the researcher examined whether and how the discourse influenced federal immigration policy outcomes.[66] The researcher created a timeline showing unaccompanied children-related government actions, congressional hearings, changes in immigration law or policy, new immigration programs, changes in immigration prosecutorial discretion, congressional appropriations and executive actions. The timeline spanned May 2014 to October 2015—the time of the

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[65] See Appendix C for a complete list of codes and Appendix D for a complete list of themes.

[66] See Anderson, *Public Policymaking*, 20–27, 42–50 for a summary of the theories of public policy and the public policy environment, including the roles of political culture and socioeconomic conditions.

height of the unaccompanied children increase to a year and a half later. The researcher selected a period of immigration policy beyond the height of the increase based on the assumption that federal immigration policy impacts would occur during and after the height of the public discourse about the increase. If later policy outcomes referenced ideas in the discourse at the height of the increase, it might show long-last impacts of the discourse.

The researcher compared the timing and content of government actions with the themes developed in the unaccompanied children discourse analysis, asking the following questions:

- Did themes from one area (the public discourse or immigration policy) occur in the other area?

- If so, did one precede the other?

As a final step, the researcher analyzed and summarized the results.

3. Homeland Security Implications

One of the research questions this thesis attempts to address is, how is public discourse related to the increase in unaccompanied children important for homeland security, as an enterprise and an idea? The DHS has two core immigration-related missions—to "secure and manage our [the United States'] borders," and to, "enforce and administer our [the United States'] immigration laws."[67] The three federal immigration agencies—USCIS, CBP, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) reside within DHS. Although DHS is not the sole component of the homeland security enterprise, it is a large and important one. Influences on immigration policy, one of which unaccompanied children discourse may be, help to shape the creation of and change in laws and policies that one part of the homeland security enterprise enforces and administers.

In summary, the research method of this thesis is discourse analysis of media articles published during the height of the increase in unaccompanied children in 2014. It

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[67] U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Our Mission," last modified May 11, 2016, http://www.dhs.gov/our-mission.

is a comparison of the discourse themes to immigration policy outcomes and an examination of the homeland security implications.

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IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter discusses the themes in the public discourse about unaccompanied children, describes federal immigration policy outcomes related to unaccompanied children and analyzes the relationship of public discourse about unaccompanied children to immigration policy outcomes for the population.

A. PUBLIC DISCOURSE ABOUT UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

The researcher read and summarized the 43 articles in the dataset.[68] After summarizing the articles, the researcher analyzed the text of the articles to refine emerging themes—prominent, recurring ideas noted by the researcher—discovered in the first review. Themes were examined, refined, and summarized to determine how the increase in unaccompanied children was constructed as an idea or presented as a reality. For each article the researcher asked:

> What are the main ideas of this text? Does the text describe the increase in unaccompanied children in terms of causes or consequences? Does it describe the increase in relation to U.S. immigration policies? Does it describe the increase in some other way?

Chapter III discusses the research method. The following example reiterates the method, so as to place the method and the analysis side by side. The example text is taken from a *New York Times* article, "Immigration delay decried; President Obama's postponement of changes promised this summer draws flak from all sides, leaves many up in the air."

1. Frustrated by Congress's lack of action, he vowed at the time to use the power of

2. his office to overhaul the system at the end of the summer. White House

3. officials had signaled that the president was considering drastic changes that would allow

4. millions of immigrants living in the country illegally to temporarily avoid deportation.

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[68] See Appendix B for a full list of articles in the dataset.

5. The pressure to act grew complicated as a wave of thousands of unaccompanied minors

6. from Central America began arriving at the border over the spring and summer, crowding

7. detention centers and rocketing immigration into the headlines.

8. Eventually, the self-imposed deadline proved too big of a political risk, and Obama

9. partly blamed that surge and the subsequent public outcry and confusion over it for his

10. decision to postpone action.

11. "The politics did shift midsummer because of that problem," he said in the television

12. interview…[69]

Line 1 references an issue not explicitly stated in this text—congressional attempts to comprehensively reform immigration U.S. immigration law. Lines 1–4 discuss the president's plans to use executive authority to change immigration policy without waiting for comprehensive immigration reform to be passed by the congress. Lines 5 through 12 discuss the increase in unaccompanied children as a factor in the president's decision to delay executive action on immigration reform and specifically naming the increase as a reason for delay. By doing so, this text frames the increase as a hindrance to congressional or executive immigration reform.

This text contains themes related to the impact of the increase of unaccompanied children on U.S. immigration policies. After analysis, the text's article was coded with the themes:

- Executive action on immigration reform: The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to executive actions taken by the president to reform immigration policy.

- Comprehensive immigration reform: The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to attempts to comprehensively reform U.S. immigration law.

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[69] Christi Parsons, Kathleen Hennessey, and Lisa Mascaro, "Immigration Delay Decried; President Obama's Postponement of Changes Promised This Summer Draws Flak from All Sides, Leaves Many up in the Air," *New York Times*, September 7, 2014, A1.

After the researcher had compiled a final list of original themes,[70] she reviewed all of the articles in the dataset to ensure original themes from the final list were coded in their corresponding articles. She then reviewed the original themes and created meta themes. The meta themes emerged as the researcher asked, do the original themes have common characteristics in the way they describe the increase in unaccompanied children or some aspect of the increase? The following example demonstrates how the meta themes were constructed:

- **Original theme:** Comprehensive immigration reform

- **Original theme description:** The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to attempts to reform U.S. immigration law.

- **Meta theme:** U.S. Immigration Policies

- **Meta theme construction/meaning:** The original theme "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" focused on attempts to reform U.S. immigration law or policy. Other themes shared this primary focus, including recommendations for specific policy changes, including increasing or decreasing deportation for migrating children. The themes that were added to the meta theme of "U.S. Immigration Policies" were:

  - Comprehensive immigration reform

  - Deportation—increase

  - Deportation—decrease

  - Republican opposition to president's immigration policies

  - Democratic support of president's immigration policies

  - Executive action on immigration reform

  - Policy problem

  - Border security

  - Emergency funding

  - Child refugee

Table 2 contains meta themes and original themes; frequency follows in Figure 3.

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[70] See Appendix D for a complete list of original and meta themes.

Table 2.   Meta themes, Descriptions, Original Themes and Overall Frequency[71]

Meta Theme	Meta Theme Description	Original Theme	Original Theme Frequency	Meta Theme Frequency
Children's Experience	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to the children's migration experiences, both on the journey to and after arrival in the U.S.	Journey Hazards	6	17
		Vulnerability—children	5	
		Legal Representation for Children	4	
		Mexican Detention Centers	1	
		Reunification Difficulties	1	
Crisis	The increase in unaccompanied children is described as a crisis.	Crisis—Government Resources	8	16
		Crisis—Humanitarian	8	
Push and Pull Factors	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to push and pull factors (issues that are driving the migration).	Push—Violence	**10**	29
		Immigration Court Backlog	3	
		Pull—Family	8	
		Pull—Permiso[72]	2	
		Family Sending for Children	2	
		Push—Poverty	4	
State/Local Response	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to state and local response to the increase.	Local Response—Negative	**16**	42
		Local Response—Positive	8	
		Resource Competition	7	
		National Guard	2	

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[71] Each article was coded with a theme only once. For example, if the article mentioned violence as a push factor in migration three times, family reunification as a pull factor two times and positive local responses once, it was coded with the themes, "push-violence," once, "pull-family," once and "local response—positive," once.

[72] Permiso is Spanish for permit.

Meta Theme	Meta Theme Description	Original Theme	Original Theme Frequency	Meta Theme Frequency
		Threat	5	
		Child—Criminal	1	
		Democratic Conspiracy	1	
		Immigration - Positive	1	
		Parents Irresponsible	1	
U.S. Immigration Policies	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to U.S. immigration policies.	Comprehensive Immigration Reform	**10**	40
		Deportation—Increase	8	
		Republican Opposition to President's Immigration Policies	7	
		Deportation—Decrease	2	
		Executive Action on Immigration Reform	4	
		Policy Problem	3	
		Border Security	3	
		Democratic Support of the President's Immigration Policies	1	
		Emergency Funding	1	
		Child Refugee	1	

Figure 3.   Meta Themes, Overall Frequency
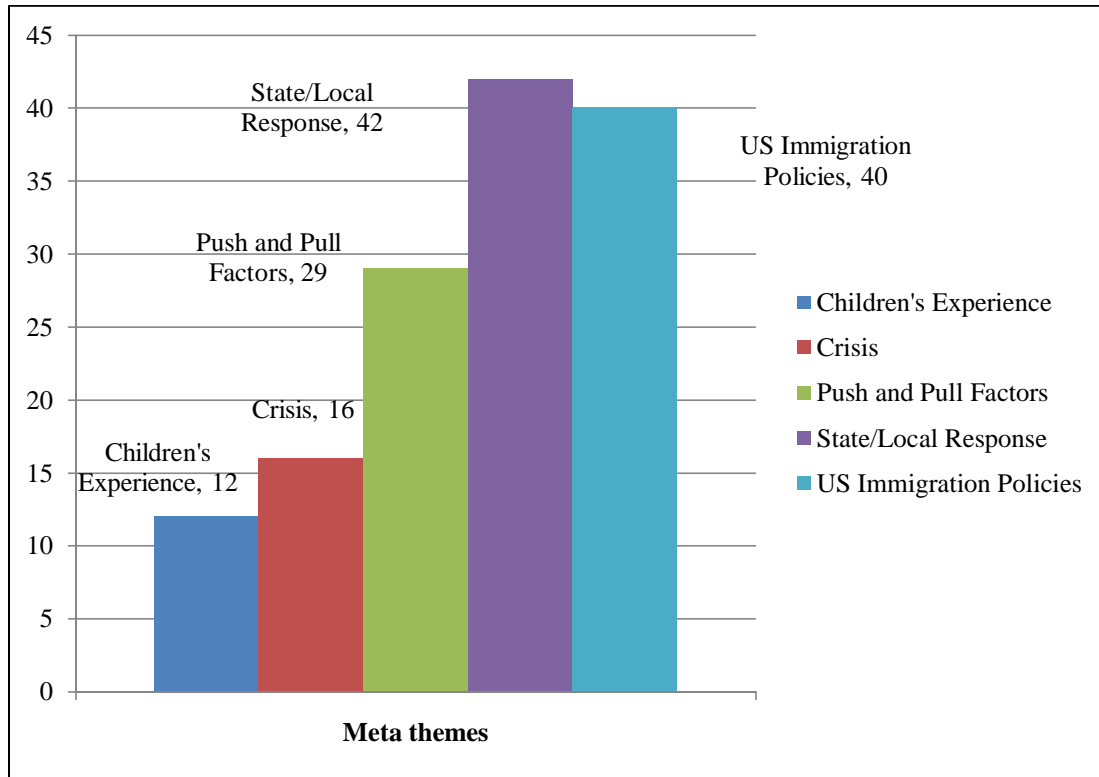
Meta themes show broad trends in the public discourse. Additionally, they describe broad trends in the way the increase in unaccompanied children was constructed as reality in the public arena. The meaning of an event, in this study, the increase in unaccompanied children, and responses to it can be understood by understanding how the event it is conceptualized or constructed. Understanding the construction of the idea of the increase in unaccompanied children helps to understand government, including the homeland security enterprise, response to it.

The most frequently occurring meta themes are state/local response, U.S. immigration policies, and push and pull factors. These themes show the discourse largely focused on the increase's impact to the United States, specifically immigration policy and state and local communities. As Figure 4 shows, the focus of the public discourse shifted over the course of the summer. Examining that shift provides further understanding of the ways of constructing the reality of the increase changed over time.

Figure 4.   Meta Themes, Frequency by Month[73]
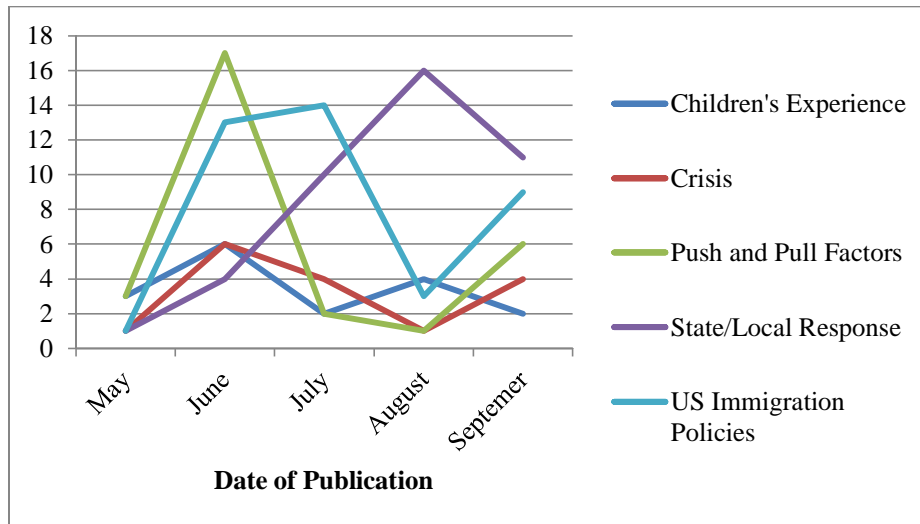
Figure 4 shows trends in the meta themes, by month, at the height of the increase in unaccompanied children. Predominant meta themes change by month. Push and pull factors is the leading meta theme in May and June. U.S. immigration policies is the leading meta theme in July, and state/local response is the leading meta theme in August and September.

Examining the trends in the original themes within the meta theme provides greater insight to the public discourse. Figures 5–8 show the frequency of original themes within the meta themes of state/local response, U.S. immigration policies and push and pull factors, the most frequently occurring meta themes. The leading meta theme in June was push and pull factors, which frames the increase in unaccompanied children in relation to issues that may have contributed to it. As the charts demonstrate, within push and pull factors, the predominant original themes are the push factors of violence and poverty and the pull factor of family in the United States. Violence in children's home countries as a push factor is the second most frequently occurring original theme

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[73] Each meta theme contains multiple original themes. Therefore, although 10 articles for June, July and August were analyzed (and 3 articles were analyzed for May), the monthly meta theme totals are over 10 because the monthly total includes all of the original themes that were coded in the dataset and captured in a meta theme.

throughout the period of this study. Family as a pull factor is another strong theme throughout.

In July, the meta theme U.S. immigration policies led the public discourse. Within the meta theme, the most frequently occurring original themes are comprehensive immigration reform and deportation—increase. These themes frame the increase in relation to attempts to comprehensively reform U.S. immigration law and in relation to deportation policies, with a strong emphasis on increasing or speeding up deportations of arriving children.

In August, the leading meta theme changed to state/local response, with the predominant original themes of local response—negative, local response—positive, resource competition, and threat. The original themes frame the increase in unaccompanied children in largely negative terms. The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as unwelcome, competition for resources and, at times, as a threat to local communities or the country. While local response—positive does have two spikes, in July and September, the themes indicate an overall strong negative state and local response to the increase in unaccompanied children.

In September, the meta themes of state/local response and U.S. immigration policies were the leading themes in the public discourse. During this period, the flow of children had slowed as had media coverage of the issue.[74] Also during this period, as discussed below, the president made a major policy announcement on comprehensive and executive immigration reform efforts.

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[74] CBP, "United States Border Patrol Southwest Family."

Figure 5.   Five Most Frequent Original Themes within Meta Theme Push and
Pull Factors, Frequency by Month
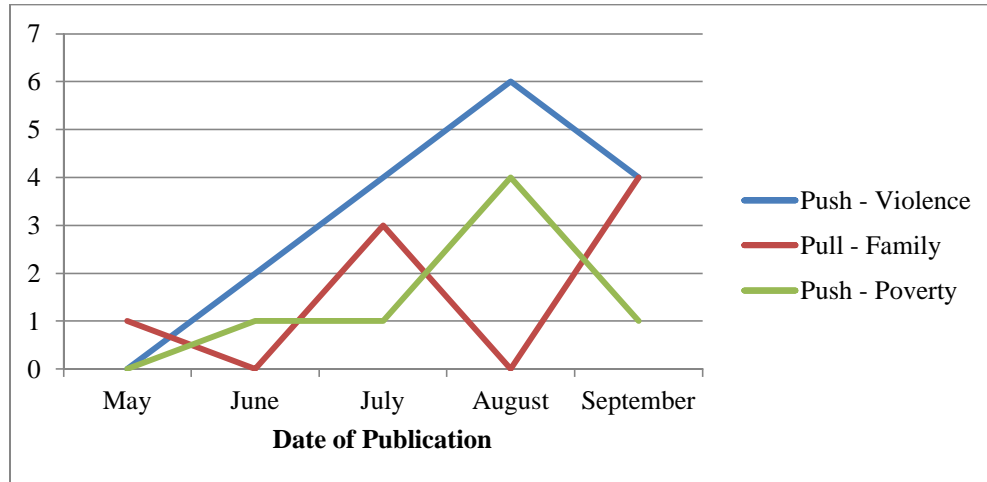
Figure 6.   Five Most Frequent Original Themes within Meta Theme U.S.
Immigration Policies, Frequency by Month
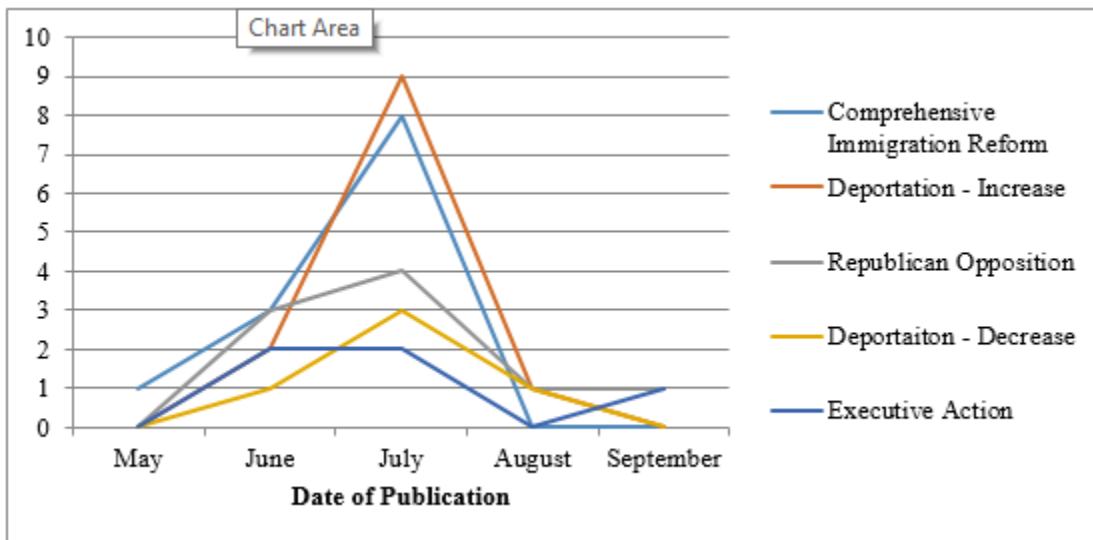
Figure 7.   Five Most Frequent Original Themes within Meta Theme State and
Local Response, Frequency by Month
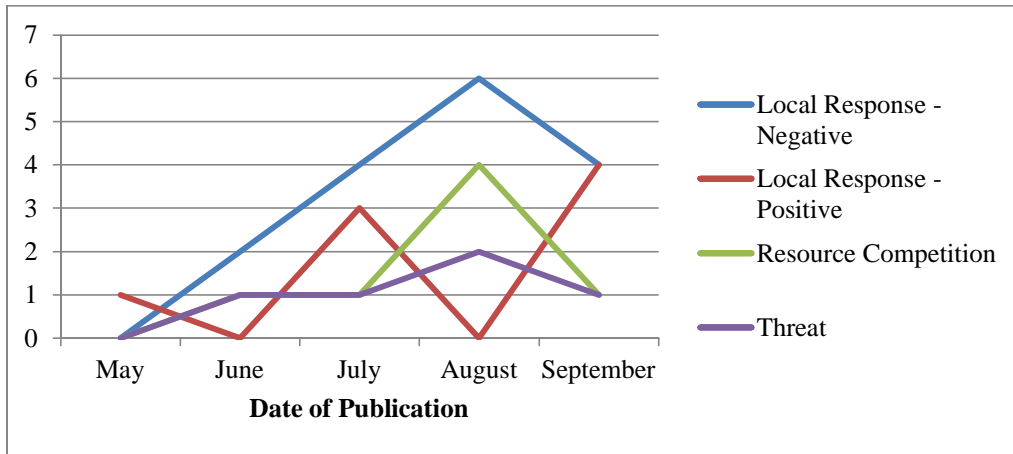
Examining the overall most frequently occurring **original** themes, themes the researcher discovered in the first analysis of the dataset, which the researcher then combined into meta themes, also provides greater insight to the focus of the public discourse. Figure 8 shows the most frequently occurring original themes.

Figure 8.   Most Frequently Occurring Original Themes
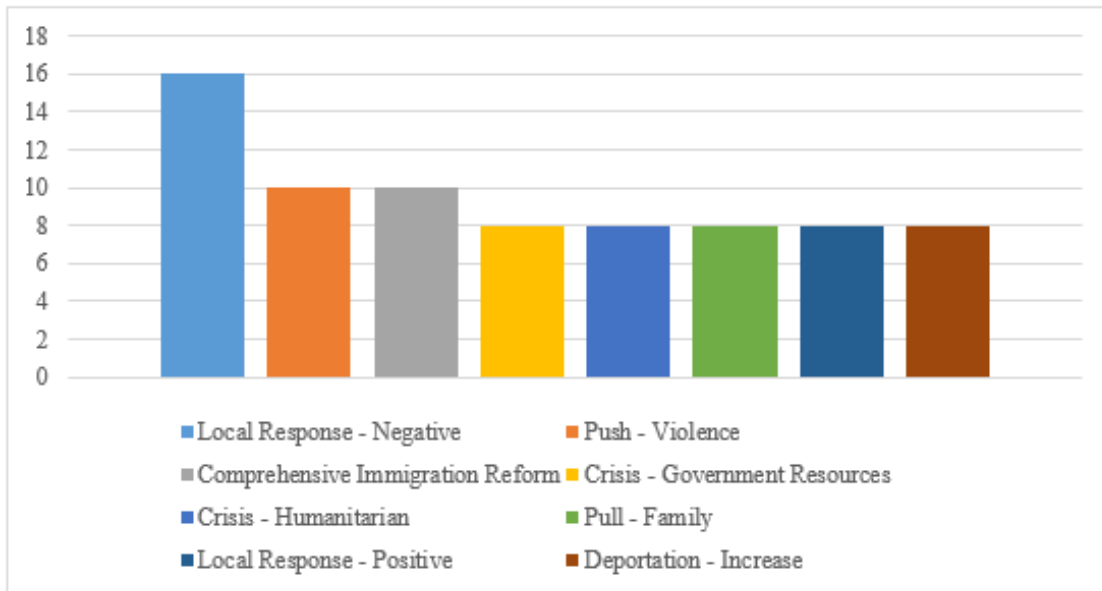
The single most frequently occurring original theme (local response) describes the increase in relation to negative local responses, which outnumbers positive responses by 16 to 8. Push and pull factors in the migration also feature prominently. Additionally, violence as a push factor and family in the United States as a pull factor occur as original themes 20 times combined. The increase is described as a humanitarian and government crisis equally. Comprehensive immigration reform and recommendations to increase or speed up deportation of arriving children are the leading U.S. immigration policies mentioned.

B.   SUMMARY OF TRENDS IN THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE

In this study, the predominant meta themes at the height of the increase in unaccompanied children show a change in focus in the public discourse over the summer of 2014. In the early summer, the public discourse largely focused on causes of the increase. In mid-summer, the focus changed to U.S. immigration policies, and in late summer and early fall, the discourse largely discussed negative state and local responses. Strong original themes in the discourse include negative local responses to the increase in arriving children, the push factor of violence and pull factor of family in the United States, description of the increase as a crisis, discussions of the increase in relation to comprehensive immigration reform, and recommendations to increase deportations of arriving children.

This thesis asks if public discourse around the increase in unaccompanied children influenced immigration policy outcomes. If the discourse did influence policy outcomes, the outcomes should reflect or align with the ideas in the themes. In this study, negative local response to the increase, recommendations to increase or speed up deportations of the recently arrived children, and attempts to comprehensively reform U.S. immigration law are predominant. The next step in this study is to compare the predominant themes with policy outcomes.

C. FEDERAL IMMIGRATION POLICY RELATED TO UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

The researcher examined public records and news articles, including congressional hearings, federal agency publications, and mass media articles to determine if any immigration policies related to unaccompanied alien children were created or changed during the height of the increase in May 2014 through the end of the year. The period was selected with the assumption that if public discourse influenced policy, it could do so at the time of and in the time following the increase. The timeline in Tables 3–5 show the most frequently occurring meta and original themes, by month, and federal immigration actions related to unaccompanied alien children.[75]

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[75] See Appendix E for a complete list of federal immigration actions during this time period.

Table 3.   Timeline: Themes in Unaccompanied Children Public Discourse and Federal Immigration Actions, by Month
(May–September, 2014)

May 2014		June 2014	
Public Discourse	**Federal Immigration Action or Policy**	**Public Discourse**	**Federal Immigration Action or Policy**
Most Frequently Occurring **Meta** Themes: Children's Experience Push and Pull Factors Most Frequently Occurring **Original** Themes: Vulnerability—Children Pull—Family		Most Frequently Occurring **Meta** Themes: Push and Pull Factors U.S. Immigration Policies Most Frequently Occurring **Original** Themes: Push—Violence Pull—Family	June 2—Department of Homeland Security announced a surge of resources to the southwest border June 6—Department of Justice announced program for attorneys for unaccompanied children June 20—Administration announced $6.9 million repatriation aid to Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras June 24—U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security hearing, "Dangerous Passage: The Growing Problem of Unaccompanied Children Crossing the Border" June 25—U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary hearing, "An Administration Made Disaster: The South Texas Border Surge of Unaccompanied Alien Minors" June 30—President Obama announced his intent to use executive authority to change immigration policy, due to congressional inaction on comprehensive immigration reform legislation (Senate Bill S.744, see above)[76]

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[76] Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Julia Preston, "Obama Says He'll Order Action to Aid Immigrants," *New York Times*, June 30, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/01/us/obama-to-use-executive-action-to-bolster-border-enforcement.html.

Table 4.   July and August 2014 Timeline

July 2014		August 2014	
Public Discourse	**Federal Immigration Action or Policy**	**Public Discourse**	**Federal Immigration Action or Policy**
Most Frequently Occurring **Meta** Themes: US Immigration Policies State/Local Response Most Frequently Occurring **Original** Themes: Comprehensive Immigration Reform Local Response—Negative	July 8—President Obama requested $3.7 billion in emergency funds from Congress for border security and response to unaccompanied children[77] July 14—Senator John Cornyn and Representative Henry Cuellar introduced the Helping Unaccompanied Minors and Alleviating National Emergency (HUMANE) Act to revise William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) to allow faster removal of Central American unaccompanied children[78] July 16—Senator John McCain and Senator Jeff Flake introduced the Children Returning on an Expedited and Safe Timeline (CREST) Act, to allow faster removal of Central American unaccompanied children[79]	Most Frequently Occurring **Meta** Themes: State/Local Response Most Frequently Occurring **Original** Themes: Comprehensive Immigration Reform Local Response—Negative	

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[77] Michael D. Shear and Jeremy W. Peters, "Obama Asks for $3.7 Billion to Aid Border," *New York Times*, July 8, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/09/us/obama-seeks-billions-for-children-immigration-crisis.html.

[78] Ashley Parker, "Lawmakers from Texas Will Offer Border Bill," *New York Times*, July 14, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/15/us/politics/lawmakers-plan-bill-to-confront-surge-in-young-immigrants.html.

[79] John McCain, "McCain and Flake Bill Addresses Border Crisis," July 17, 2014, http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=d39076b7-a35e-4a9c-a8e5-c866b135c2c8.

Table 5.   September 2014 Timeline

September 2014	
Public Discourse	**Federal Immigration Action or Policy**
Most Frequently Occurring **Meta** Themes: State/Local Response U.S. Immigration Policies Most Frequently Occurring **Original** Themes: Local Response—Negative Local Response—Positive	September 7—President Obama announced postponement of executive immigration actions[80]

D.   PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND IMMIGRATION POLICY OUTCOMES

As mentioned above, the focus of the public discourse shifted over the course of the summer of 2014. Early in the summer, push and pull factors in the migration, in addition to U.S. immigration policies, were prominent meta themes. In mid-summer, the public discourse largely focused on U.S. immigration policies and state and local responses to the increase. In late summer and early fall, the public discourse focused on state and local responses with predominately negative responses.

In June, federal immigration actions and policies included DHS sending a surge of government resources to the southwest border, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announcing a program for attorneys for unaccompanied children, the Obama administration announcing repatriation aid for sending countries, a congressional hearing that focused on the hazards of the children's migration route, and the president's announcement of his intent to use executive authority to change immigration policy (executive immigration reform). These actions focused on responding to the increase, understanding the reasons for the increase, helping the migrating children, and reforming

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[80] Barrack Obama, interview by Chuck Todd, *NBC Meet the Press*, September 7, 2014, http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meet-press-transcript-september-7-2014-n197866.

U.S. immigration policy. Additionally, they share a focus with the prominent meta themes in May and June of children's migration experiences and push and pull factors in the migration.

In July, the public discourse focused on U.S. immigration policies with an increasing focus on state and local responses. Within the meta theme of U.S. immigration policies, the leading original theme was comprehensive immigration reform. The federal immigration actions and policies in July include a request from the president for $3.7 billion in emergency funding to respond to the increase and the introduction of two congressional bills that sought to reform the TVPRA to allow for faster removal of children from Central America.[81] The federal immigration actions and policies in July correspond with one of the leading meta themes, U.S. immigration policies. Furthermore, two pieces of federal legislation sought to speed up the removal of arriving Central American children.

In August, the public discourse focused on state and local responses, which were largely described in negative terms. The researcher did not find new federal immigration actions or policies during this month, which may be due to the annual congressional recess that occurred in August.

E.   **DID THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE ABOUT UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN INFLUENCE FEDERAL IMMIGRATION POLICIES FOR THE POPULATION AT OR AFTER THE HEIGHT OF THE INCREASE?**

This study shows that from June through August 2014, the height of the increase in unaccompanied children, the public discourse, and federal immigration actions and policies about the increase shared some thematic foci. In June, both the public discourse and federal immigration actions focused on reasons for the increase in children's migration and responses to it. In July, the public discourse and federal immigration actions focused on U.S. immigration policies related to unaccompanied children.

While it is possible to say the prominent discourse themes and policies that share those themes occurred at the same time, it is not possible to definitely determine if the

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[81] Shear and Peters, "Obama Asks for $3.7 Billion."

public discourse influenced immigration policies for unaccompanied children during this period. The newspaper articles in the dataset reported on federal immigration actions occurring during those months. Political and policy actions may have driven the discourse, or the public discourse may have driven political and policy outcomes during June, July, and August.

However, a notable immigration policy event in September does indicate public discourse influenced outcomes on another immigration issue, executive action on immigration reform. In early September, the president announced he would no longer seek to use executive authority to reform immigration law before the November elections.[82] In an interview on September 7, President Obama said:

1. This problem with unaccompanied children that we saw a couple of weeks ago,

2. where you had from Central America a surge of kids who are showing up at the

3. border, got a lot of attention. And a lot of Americans started thinking, "We've got

4. this immigration crisis on our hands." And what I want to do is when I take

5. executive action, I want to make sure that it's sustainable.[83]

The president linked his decision to postpone his proposed executive immigration actions to public perceptions of the increase in unaccompanied children as a crisis. In line 1 he said, "we saw a couple of weeks ago," which corresponds with August, the month in which negative local and state responses lead the themes in the public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children. In lines 3–4, the president described his perception of public perception. He argued the "surge" (line 2) became a "crisis" (line 4) in the public's mind, and this hampered his ability to enact executive immigration reforms. The president's perception of the American public's negative reaction to the increase in unaccompanied children follows a month in which negative state and local responses dominated the public discourse. The president also attributed his decision to delay his

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[82] Barrack Obama, interview by Chuck Todd.

[83] Ibid.

planned immigration reforms to the public perception, or discourse, associated with the increase. In this instance, the public discourse does appear to have influenced an immigration policy outcome.

This chapter has examined the public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children, described immigration policy outcomes during, and after the height of the discourse and described an instance in which public discourse influenced an immigration policy outcome. The next chapter discusses the findings and relevance to the homeland security enterprise at greater length.

V.   FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis examines the recent summer 2014 increase in unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border, describes and analyzes the public discourse in mass media about the increase at its height in that summer 2014, and describes and analyzes government response to the discourse to determine the influence, if any, public discourse about the increase had on immigration policy. The method of analysis is public discourse analysis, the examination of language in the public domain to determine how it constructs ideas and phenomena. The public discourse is compared to immigration policy outcomes to determine if policy was influenced by discourse. This chapter answers the original research questions:

- What were the major themes that emerged in the public discourse about the increased number of unaccompanied children arriving at the United States' southwest border in the summer of 2014?

- What role, if any, did public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children play in changing immigration law and policy?

- Is public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children important for the homeland security enterprise?

A.   THEMES IN THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Five meta themes consistently occurred in the public discourse about unaccompanied children in the of summer 2014, the height of the increase: children's experience; crisis; push and pull factors; state/local response and U.S. immigration policies. In May, push and pull factors and U.S. immigration policies occurred most frequently. In July, push and pull factors declined as a meta theme and the public discourse focused almost exclusively on U.S. immigration policies. In August, the meta theme state/local response greatly outnumbered all other meta themes. In September, state/local response and U.S. immigration policies occurred almost equally.

Meta themes describe broad categories in the public discourse. This study shows the public discourse described the increase largely in terms related to U.S. response to the increase, with a lesser, but still significant, emphasis on children's migration experience

and reasons for the migration. The predominant themes construct the increase in terms of U.S. immigration policies and state and local response. While there was an early emphasis on reasons for the increase in migration, push and pull factors, this quickly diminished.

Original themes in the discourse show a complex construction of reality about the increase. The themes crisis—humanitarian and crisis—government resources occur equally, showing a shared emphasis on constructing the increase as a crisis, but with different foci for the crisis, one emphasizing arriving children's plight in immigration detention and one emphasizing the U.S. government's struggle to respond to increased numbers of arriving children. Similarly, the original themes (local response—negative and local response—positive) share an emphasis on constructing the increase in terms of its impact to local communities, and the frequency of construction of the increase as a negative impact to local communities occurred twice as frequently as the construction as a positive impact to a community. When the discourse focused on the themes of push and pull factors, the push factor of violence in the children's home countries and the pull factor of family in the U.S., violence as a push factor occurred slightly more frequently than family as a pull factor. Within the meta theme U.S. immigration policies, the original themes comprehensive immigration reform and deportation—increase occur the most frequently, and comprehensive immigration reform occurred slightly more often. The themes construct the increase in relation to U.S. immigration law and share the assumption that it should be changed due to the increase in unaccompanied children.

Meta themes and original themes in the discourse are significant because socially constructing the increase as a crisis creates the public environment in which the homeland security enterprise, including the Department of Homeland Security and the immigration agencies, responded to an event or an issue—in this instance the increase in unaccompanied children. Meta themes show a change in focus in the public discourse over the course of the summer in 2014 from a focus on issues related to the children to U.S. immigration policies to negative local responses to the increase. Original themes show a complex construction of reality with some shared assumptions: the increase was described as a crisis; it was described in terms of its relation to U.S. immigration policy;

and it was described in terms of its impact to local communities, with negative impacts occurring most often in the discourse.

B.   RELATIONSHIP OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE TO IMMIGRATION POLICY

In May,[84] the most frequently occurring themes in the public discourse were migrating children's vulnerability and the pull factor of family in the United States. The following month, June, the DHS announced it would send a surge of resources to the southwest border to respond to the increase; the DOJ announced it would institute a program to provide legal representation for unaccompanied children; the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security held a hearing on the increase in unaccompanied children; and the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary also held a hearing on the increase. The DHS response does not appear to have been directly impacted by the leading themes. The DOJ response, to provide legal representation for children (the government is not required to provide legal representation to non-U.S. citizens in immigration removal proceedings) does appear to correspond to the construction of the increase in terms of the children's vulnerability.

In June, the most frequently occurring themes in the public discourse were push and pull factors in the children's migration, and the push factor of violence and the pull factor of family in the U.S. as the most frequently occurred original themes. Federal immigration actions that month include a DOJ announcement of legal assistance for arriving children, the Obama administration's announcement it would provide $6.9 million in repatriation aid to arriving children's home countries, and the president's announcement of his intent to use executive authority to change immigration policy. These actions partially align with the public discourse's emphasis on push and pull factors in migration. Providing repatriation aid to sending countries, for example, could be a factor in decreasing migration to the United States. Repatriation occurs after deportation though, so the aid would have occurred after children were removed from the

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[84] It is important to note the dataset for May had only three articles, rather than ten for the other months, as the author's research only yielded three articles for that month.

United States. DOJ's announcement of legal aid for children was also an offer of assistance after removal proceedings had been initiated for the children.

In July, the most frequently occurring meta themes in the discourse were U.S. immigration policies and state/local response. The most frequently occurring original themes were comprehensive immigration reform and local response—negative. Federal immigration actions during the month included President Obama's request for $3.7 billion in emergency funds from Congress for border security and response to the unaccompanied alien children increase and the introduction of two bills in Congress that sought to speed up removal of arriving children from Central America.[85] The president's request for emergency funding aligns with two of the previous month's, June's, often mentioned original themes, crisis—government resources and crisis—humanitarian. Moreover, the congressional bills introduced during the month align with U.S. immigration policies and a theme that rose steadily over the summer, deportation—increase.

In August, the most frequently occurring meta theme was state/local response. The most frequently occurring original themes were comprehensive immigration reform and local response—negative. The author was not able to discover any federal immigration actions during the month, possibly due to Congress's August recess. However, the themes for the month continued the trend of increasingly negative responses to the increase in unaccompanied children and the focus on reforming U.S. immigration law.

In September, the most frequently occurring meta themes were state/local response and U.S. immigration policies. The most frequently occurring original themes were local response—negative and local response—positive. That month, President Obama postponed proposed executive action on immigration reform. In the interview in which he discussed the postponement, he referenced negative public perception of the increase in unaccompanied children and the difficulty that created in enacting reform.[86]

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[85] Shear and Peters, "Obama Asks for $3.7 Billion."

[86] Barrack Obama, interview by Chuck Todd.

The president's postponement of planned executive actions and his attribution of negative public perception of the increase in unaccompanied children as a reason for the postponement aligns with the public discourse's increasing focus over the summer on negative local responses and the description of the increase in relation to comprehensive immigration reform efforts.

This study demonstrates it can be difficult to determine if public discourse, as measured by newspaper articles published at the height of the increase, impacted or simply reflected immigration policies toward unaccompanied children that were enacted at the time of their publication. Newspapers reported on federal actions taken, which might account for the prevalence of different themes. For example, the public discourse in the summer framed the increase as a crisis, either humanitarian or for government resources. During the same period, the government took actions that are consistent with a crisis. The Department of Homeland Security sent more people to the southwest border. Other agencies announced initiatives to assist with the population. The executive branch provided aid to countries from which the children were coming. Congress held hearings and introduced legislation. However, newspapers reported on the government actions, including policymakers' descriptions of the increase, so it is difficult to determine if the public discourse, which included policymakers' discussion of the increase, drove or simply reflected policy actions.

In one area, however, proposed executive action on immigration reform, the public discourse does appear to have impacted federal immigration policy. While there were comprehensive immigration reform efforts, both in Congress and in the executive branch, outside of the increase in unaccompanied children, negative responses to the increase appear to have played a significant role in the demise of executive efforts at reform. Indeed, negative responses to the increase are the only factor the president mentioned when he announced he was suspending his efforts at executive reform.

C.   SIGNIFICANCE TO THE HOMELAND SECURITY ENTERPRISE

Why is public discourse about the increase in unaccompanied children important for the homeland security enterprise? Two core homeland security missions are to,

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"secure and manage our [the United States'] borders," and to, "enforce and administer our [the United States'] immigration laws."[87] The laws that govern border security and immigration are made by law and policymakers who are, as this study shows, impacted by public discourse about immigration. Furthermore, this study shows a major change in immigration policy, proposed executive immigration reform, was delayed due to negative local response, the single most frequently occurring original theme in the public discourse, to the increase in unaccompanied children.

Public discourse, then, can impact the basis of border security (immigration law and policy) and the enforcement and administration of the nation's immigration laws by impacting the laws and policies that are enacted by law and policymakers. This directly impacts the homeland security enterprise, which is charged with delivering border security and the administration and enforcement of the nation's immigration laws.

This thesis advances the knowledge on public discourse related to unaccompanied alien children, the impact of the discourse on federal immigration policy, and the impact of public discourse to the homeland security enterprise. It shows the difficulty of determining if public discourse drove policy decisions or if it reflected policy decisions that were occurring. In one key area, the study shows public discourse did impact a major policy—proposed executive action on immigration reform. Areas for further research include discourse analysis around other highly publicized immigration events and immigration policy outcomes, discourse analysis of immigration as part of homeland security, and discourse's influence on public policy in other areas.

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[87] Department of Homeland Security, "Our Mission," last modified May 11, 2016, https://www.dhs.gov/our-mission.

APPENDIX A.   IMMIGRATION STATISTICS FOR FY2014

In fiscal year 2014,[88] approximately 180.5 million non-immigrants, 700,000 immigrants,[89] 70,000 refugees, and 23,500 asylees were admitted to the United States—all authorized immigration actions that are part of the legal immigration system (see Figure 9).[90] During that same year, approximately 680,000 aliens were apprehended by federal immigration authorities, 223,253 aliens were determined to be inadmissible to the United States at ports of entry, 414,481 aliens were removed from the United States, and 162,814 aliens were allowed to return to their originating country (see Table 6).[91]

Figure 9.   FY2014 Immigration Actions[92]

Immigration Actions, FY 2014

- Nonimmigrant Admissions (180,500,000)
- Immigrant Admissions / Adjustment of Status (1,06,518)
- Refugee Admissions (69,975)
- Asylee Admissions (25,533)
- Naturalizations (707,000)
- Alien Apprehensions (680,000)
- Aliens Found Inadmissible (223,253)

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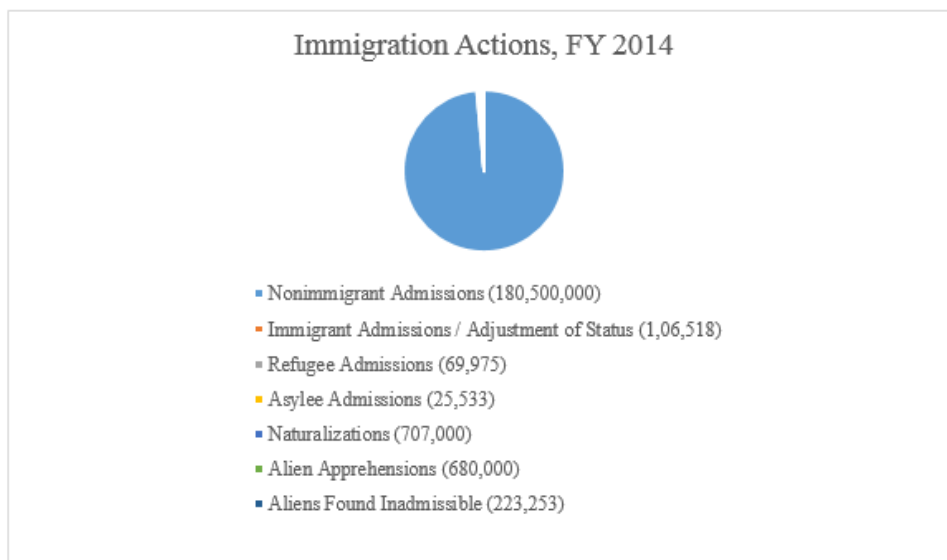
[88] FY2014 is the most recent year publicly published statistics are available.

[89] This number includes people who were admitted as immigrants at ports of entry (consular-processed immigrants) and those who adjusted status to lawful permanent resident inside the United States. An immigrant is a non-U.S. citizen who is permanently, legally residing in the United States. After admission to the United States or adjustment of status an immigrant becomes a lawful permanent resident. A lawful permanent resident (LPR) is issued a "green card" as evidence of his or her LPR status. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Glossary*, s.v., "lawful permanent resident," accessed October 15, 2016, https://www.uscis.gov/tools/glossary/.

[90] DHS, *2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 5–65.

[91] Ibid., 91–103.

[92] DHS, *2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, 5–65, 91–103.

Table 6.   Immigration Actions, FY 2014[93]

Type of Immigration Action	Authorized Immigration or Enforcement Action	Number	Percentage of Total Immigration Actions	Total Authorized or Enforcement	Authorized or Enforcement as % of Total Immigration Actions
Nonimmigrant Admissions	Authorized	180,500,000	98.2%		
Immigrant Admissions /Adjustment of Status	Authorized	1,016,518	0.6%		
Refugee Admissions	Authorized	69,975	.04%		
Asylee Admissions	Authorized	23,533	.01%		
Naturalization	Authorized	707,000	.4%	182,317,083	**Authorized: 99.2%**
Alien Apprehensions	Enforcement	680,000	.4%		
Aliens Found Inadmissible	Enforcement	223,253	.1%		
Aliens Removed from the U.S.	Enforcement	414,481	.2%		
Aliens Allowed to Return	Enforcement	162,814	.09%	1,480,548	**Enforcement: 0.8%**
Totals:		183,797,574	100.04%[94]	183,797,574	100%

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[93] Ibid.

[94] The total percentage is slightly over 100 percent due to rounding.

APPENDIX B.   NEWSPAPER ARTICLES (DATASET)

The dataset is a sample of mass media articles published at the height of the increase of unaccompanied children, May through September 2014. Ten articles were selected at random from each month, excluding May, which only had three articles, all of which were included in the dataset. The criteria used to include a text in the dataset were:

1.   The text mentioned unaccompanied alien children, unaccompanied minors or immigrant minors.

2.   The text was published in one of the following top-circulation newspapers—the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Miami Herald*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*.

3.   The text was published between May and September 2014.

Searches in the ProQuest and NewsBank databases returned over 500 articles that met the above criteria. Non-relevant articles were identified and removed. The researcher randomly selected 10 articles for each month of the remaining 447 articles as the dataset for analysis. The articles in the dataset are listed in Table 7.

Table 7.   Dataset

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
1	5/11/14	*Miami Herald*	Child Migrants at Risk of Death	Cely, Nathalie	Opinion	Main themes: the hazards of children's journey to the US; family reunification as the primary driver of children's migration; need for comprehensive immigration reform Secondary themes:	CIR Journey Hazards Pull—Family Vulnerability Children
2	5/17/14	*NY Times*	U.S. Setting Up Emergency Shelter in Texas as Youths Cross Border Alone	Preston, Julia	News	Main theme: the increase in unaccompanied children overwhelmed government agencies and is a crisis for the U.S. government Secondary themes: gang violence as a push factor; family reunification as a pull factor; youth and vulnerability of the children	Crisis—Gov Resources Pull—Family Push—Violence Vulnerability Children
3	5/20/14	*Miami Herald*	Children's Village Holds Fund-Raiser	Miami Herald Staff	News	Main themes: announcement of a fundraiser for a local shelter that provides services to unaccompanied children Secondary themes:	Local Response—Positive
4	6/4/14	*New York Times*	Wave of Minors on Their Own	Robles, Frances	News	Main themes: rumor of a "permiso" allowing children or	Pull—Permiso

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
			Rush to Cross Southwest Border			families with children to remain in the US; family reunification as a pull factor in migration; Secondary themes: violence and poverty as push factors in migration;	Pull—Family Push—Poverty Push—Violence
5	6/5/14	*Atlanta Journal Constitution*	Young Immigrants Surge into U.S. Alone: Federal Agencies Cope with the Influx While Debate on Policy Rages	Redmon, Jeremy	News	Main themes: hazards of the children's journey to the US; increase framed as a humanitarian crisis for the U.S. government; violence and poverty as push factors; family reunification as a pull factor; Secondary themes:	Journey Hazards Crisis—Humanitarian Pull—Family Push—Poverty Push—Violence
6	6/5/14	*NY Times*	Children on the Run	Editorial Board	Opinion	Main themes: the increase in unaccompanied children overwhelmed government agencies and is a crisis for the U.S. government; the increase is framed as a border issue and an example of bad immigration policy by congressional Republicans; the increase makes comprehensive immigration reform more complicated Secondary themes: the children are refugees fleeing violence; it	Crisis—Gov Resources Policy Problem CIR Child Refugee Push—Violence Crisis—

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						is a humanitarian crisis	Humanitarian
7	6/12/14	*Washington Post*	Immigrant Parents Urge U.S. Officials to Help Their Children Flee Central American Violence	Constable, Pamela	News	Main themes: Central American parents in the U.S. see an opportunity to bring their children in Central America to the U.S. (rumor that children who reached the U.S. border would be allowed to stay); gang violence is a push factor and family reunification is a pull factor for the migration; Secondary themes: hazards of the journey; difficulty of reuniting after a long separation	Family sending for child Pull—Family Pull—Permiso Push—Violence Journey Hazards Reunification Difficulties
8	6/13/14	*LA Times*	U.S. Seeks to Repatriate Children; A Surge in Minors Crossing the Border Alone Prompts Talks with Officials in Central America	Carcamo, Cindy Bratek, Rebecca	News	Main themes: DHS Secretary Johnson's public announcement the U.S. will make recently arrived unaccompanied children a deportation priority; negative state government response to migrants; increase framed as a humanitarian crisis and in terms of federal and state government response Secondary themes:	Deportation—Increase Local Response—Negative Crisis—Humanitarian
9	6/20/14	*Washington Post*	Young Migrants Stuck in Limbo on Mexican Border	Partlow, Joshua Miroff, Nick	News	Main themes: hazards of the journey to the US; family reunification as a pull factor for migration;	Journey Hazards Pull—Family

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						Secondary themes: the increase is a humanitarian crisis; the increase has overwhelmed the U.S. government's ability to respond; conditions in Mexican migration shelters	Crisis—Humanitarian Crisis—Gov Resources Mexican Detention Facilities
10	6/21/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Border Must Be Secured	Lamar, Michael	Opinion	Main themes: the border has to be secured to prevent illegal migration, which drains U.S. resources and leads to fewer jobs for Americans Secondary themes: the current increase in migration is being used by criminals, cartel members and potential terrorists	Border security Resource Competition Local Response—Negative Threat
11	6/21/14	*Washington Post*	Obama Administration Bolsters Its Border Policies	Nakamura, David	News	Main themes: the Obama administration's policy responses to the increase in unaccompanied children—increasing enforcement and processing efforts; the increase is a complication for the administration's desire for comprehensive immigration reform	Deportation—Increase CIR Push—Poverty Push—Violence Republican

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						Secondary themes: violence and poverty as push factors in the migration; Congressional Republican response to the increase—blame Obama administration's policies	Opposition
12	6/25/14	*Washington Post*	Rep. Luis Gutierrez: Immigration Reform in the House 'Is Over'	Nakamura, David	News	Main themes: Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D, Chicago) said comprehensive immigration reform in the house will not proceed due to Republican opposition; increased deportations under Obama administration; need for executive action on immigration reform Secondary themes: unaccompanied children mentioned by Republicans as an example of failed administration immigration policies	CIR Republican Opposition Deportation—Increase EIR
13	6/30/14	*Chicago Tribune*	Solving the Youth Immigrant Crisis	Chicago Tribune	Opinion	Main themes: hazards of the children's journey to the US; backlogged immigration courts; family reunification as a pull factor; need to speed up deportations to dissuade parents from sending for children Secondary themes:	Journey Hazards Immigration Court Backlog Pull—Family Deportation—

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
							Increase
14	7/1/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Aid Immigrant Children	Kelly, Jackie	Opinion	Main themes: parents in the U.S. want their children in Central America with them in the US; Dallas, TX should support the children Secondary themes:	Family sending for child Local Response—Positive
15	7/1/14	*NY Times*	Obama Says He'll Order Action to Aid Immigrants	Hirschfeld Davis, Julie Preston, Julia	News	Main themes: President Obama's intention of using executive authority to make immigration reforms; end of a comprehensive immigration reform bill passed by the Senate in 2013, which was pending in the Republican-controlled House Secondary themes: Republican blame of administration's immigration policies as a draw for unaccompanied children; president's request for emergency funding to respond to the increase in unaccompanied children	EIR CIR Republican Opposition Emergency Funding
16	7/2/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Perry Urges Obama to Visit Border but It's Not on 2-day Texas Itinerary, Aide Says	Gillman, Todd J.	News	Main themes: Gov Rick Perry (TX) calling on President Obama to visit the border to witness the crisis of unaccompanied children; the House Homeland Security	Local Response—Negative Crisis—Humanitarian

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						Committee's upcoming field hearing on the crisis

Secondary themes: comprehensive immigration reform bill as a solution to the problem and as the object of political opposition | CIR

Policy Problem |
| 17 | 7/2/14 | *Dallas Morning News* | Dallas Visitors Moved by Plight of Migrant Children Detained in Mcallen | Tomaso, Bruce | News | Main themes: young, vulnerable children in inadequate detention facilities; the need to house and care for them;

Secondary themes: federal funding for shelters; violence as a push factor in migration | Vulnerability—children

Local Response—Positive |
| 18 | 7/4/14 | *NY Times* | Amid Influx of Migrants, Obama to Skip Border Visit on Texas Trip | Hirschfeld Davis, Julie

Preston, Julia | News | Main themes: President Obama's trip to TX highlights the immigration crisis his administration is facing – an influx of unaccompanied children challenging government response and the way the increase complicates his administration's desire for immigration reform

Secondary themes: proposed changes in immigration policy to speed up deportation of recent arrivals from Central America; | Crisis—Gov Resources

CIR

Deportation-Increase |

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
19	7/11/14	*Chicago Tribune*	Kirk Seeks Records on Kids Crossing U.S. Border	Skiba, Katherine	News	Main themes: Sen Mark Kirk (R-IL) wants to know if unaccompanied children in immigration detention in Chicago have criminal records Secondary themes: children framed as potential criminals and threat to public safety	Child—Criminal Threat Local Response—Negative
20	7/15/14	*LA Times*	The Border Crossers	Letters to the Editor	Opinion	Main themes: migrants are costing the U.S. money it should be spending on Americans; elected officials aren't doing their jobs; recommendations to request reimbursement from migrants or sending countries; Texas was more welcoming than California to refugees Secondary themes:	Resource Competition Local Response—Negative
21	7/18/14	*Washington Post*	Governors Respond to Humanitarian Crisis	Chokshi, Niraj	News	Main themes: governors are responding to the increase in unaccompanied children with the desire to be compassionate and concerns about cost and local resistance Secondary themes: need for comprehensive immigration reform;	Local Response—Positive Local Response—Negative CIR

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
22	7/23/14	*Chicago Tribune*	Experts Warned of Migrant Kids	Nakamura, David Markon, Jerry Roig-Franzia, Manuel	News	Main themes: A number of entities, including a university, federal agencies and the first ladies of some Central American countries, predicted the surge of unaccompanied children before it was declared a humanitarian disaster; Secondary themes: warnings weren't heeded as the administration attempted to get comprehensive immigration reform passed;	Policy Problem Crisis—Humanitarian Crisis—Gov Resources CIR
23	7/29/14	*Chicago Tribune*	Fast-Tracking of Migrant Kids' Cases Draws Critics	Linthicum, Kath	News	Main themes: EOIR moved recently arrived unaccompanied children to the front of the line for immigration hearings; increase is framed as an added complexity/burden to an already backlogged immigration court system Secondary themes: attorneys believe speeding up deportation hearings may deny due process	Deportation—Increase Deportation—Decrease Immigration Court Backlog Legal Representation for Children
24	8/2/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Border Crisis: This is the Beginning of a Lawless Society	Glennon, Greg	Opinion	Main themes: Americans are punished for abandoning their children, Central Americans are rewarded with amnesty and family reunification; increase	Central American Parents Irresponsible Local Response—

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						framed as Central American parents evading laws and being rewarded Secondary themes:	Negative
25	8/2/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Be an Informed Voter	Wynne, Bob	Opinion	Main themes: Accuses President Obama of wanting to legalize unaccompanied children so that they will eventually become "uninformed Democratic voters"; frames increase as an opportunity to influence future voters Secondary themes:	Democratic Conspiracy Local Response—Negative
26	8/2/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Work to Pay for College	Worthy, Troy	Opinion	Main themes: quit giving handouts to people in the country illegally; Secondary themes:	Resource Competition Local Response—Negative
27	8/2/14	*Houston Chronicle*	National Guard - Perry Taps $38 Million for Border Deployment	Rauf, David Saleh	News	Main themes: Gov Rick Perry (R-TX) deploying National Guard troops to the border to assist with the crisis; difficulty of funding the deployment; increase framed as a crush, crisis, something in need of military response before funding for the response is secured;	National Guard Crisis—Government Resources Threat

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						Secondary themes:	
28	8/7/14	*Chicago Tribune*	For Some, Legal Status Not Worth Risk	Hennessy-Fiske, Molly	News	Main themes: unaccompanied children's fear of immigration court and deportation; most children's lack of legal representation in deportation hearings Secondary themes: gang violence as a push factor in migration	Vulnerability— Children Legal Representation for Children Push—Violence
29	8/8/14	*USA Today*	Welcome to Dayton (No Border Kids)	Campbell, Don	Opinion	Main themes: Dayton, OH, which welcomed immigrants who helped its economy, appears to be less welcoming of Central American children; Republican "blindness" to alienating Hispanic voters; increase framed in terms of U.S. politics and economy; President Obama's plans for immigration reform Secondary themes:	Local Response— Negative Republican Opposition EIR
30	8/13/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Some Guidance Given to Texas Schools on Unaccompanied Immigrant Children	Ayala, Eva-Marie	News	Main themes: Texas public schools' preparations for an influx of unaccompanied children; increase framed as in influx and a challenge to local schools (resources)	Resource Competition Local Response— Negative

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						Secondary themes:	
31	8/14/14	*USA Today*	Schoolhouse Shake-up	Beckel, Bob Thomas, Cal	Opinion	Main themes: schools will be worse off if they have to accept unaccompanied children (strain on resources); illegal immigration is a threat to U.S. culture and economy; schools can successfully absorb new students; diversity is the norm Secondary themes: Republican opposition to illegal immigration	Resource Competition Threat Immigration Positive Republican Opposition
32	8/14/14	*Wall Street Journal*	U.S. News: Migrant Wave Tests Schools—Cost, Integration Challenges Emerge Amid Surge of Central American Children	Campo-Flores, Arian Jordan, Miriam	News	Main themes: unaccompanied children pose serious challenges to local schools—integration, paying for services (tutoring, English language classes, psychological counseling, subsidized meals); possible psychological trauma of children Secondary themes:	Resource Competition Local Response—Negative Vulnerability Children
33	8/22/14	*New York Times*	With Waves of Migrants, a Sea of Legal Problems	Aguilar, Julian	News	Main themes: Challenges of attorneys who want to represent children in removal proceedings—access to the children, highly specialized area of immigration law, children's mobility	Legal Representation for Children

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						Secondary themes:	
34	9/2/14	*Atlanta Journal Constitution*	DeKalb Top Spot in Ga. for Border Children, Teens; During First 7 Months of This Year, 347 Placed in Care of Sponsors	Redmon, Jeremy	News	Main themes: numbers of children being placed in GA; increase framed as a humanitarian crisis being driven by gang violence and poverty; role of children in local political race for governor—Republican candidate's opposition, Democratic candidate's support of some immigration policies Secondary themes:	Local Response—Negative Crisis—Humanitarian Push—Violence Push—Poverty Republican Opposition Democratic Support
35	9/7/14	*LA Times*	Immigration Delay Decried; President Obama's Postponement of Changes Promised This Summer Draws Flak from All Sides, Leaves Many up in the Air.	Parson, Christi Hennessey, Kathleen Mascaro, Lisa	News	Main themes: President Obama announced he will delay executive action on immigration; president mentioned the increase in unaccompanied children and media coverage of it complicated efforts for immigration reform Secondary themes:	EIR CIR
36	9/9/14	*Wall Street*	Migrant Death	Campoy, Ana	News	Main themes: Fewer people are	Journey—

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
		Journal	Toll Declines—Fewer Perish Trying to Cross Border; Rise in Arrests, Better Surveillance Cited			dying on the migration route through southern TX; decrease attributed to enhanced immigration enforcement efforts; increase in children framed as a crisis for government resources/response Secondary themes:	Hazards Crisis—Gov Resources
37	9/11/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Mexico Condemns Perry for "Political" Border Deployment of Troops	Gillman, Todd J	News	Main themes: Mexican government condemns Governor Perry for deploying National Guard to the border; Gov Perry and allies defend the deployment, saying it's necessary for border security and to stop gangs, cartels and trafficking Secondary themes:	National Guard Threat Republican Opposition
38	9/12/14	*Atlanta Journal Constitution*	Ga. Family Takes in Teen Who Crossed Border: Young Immigrant Surge, Impact on State Spark Anger in Others.	Redmon, Jeremy	News	Main themes: Positive local response to an individual migrant child; overwhelmed immigration courts; Secondary themes: negative local responses to the increase	Local Response—Positive Immigration Court Backlog Local Response—Negative
39	9/15/14	*LA Times*	USC Dornsife/ Times Poll: State Voters	Mehta, Seema	News	Main themes: a majority of Californians, in a published poll, support a path to	Deportation—Increase

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
			Back Path for Legalizing Migrants; Three in 4 Favor Immigration Law Overhaul			citizenship for people in the U.S. illegally, however a majority also want recently arrived Central American children to be deported quickly, so they won't serve as a magnet for further illegal migration; increase in children framed as a crisis for the government and also as competition for local resources; about half of respondents also wanted people in the country illegally to be treated well and given a path to legalization Secondary themes:	Crisis—Gov Resources Resource Competition Local Response—Negative Local Response—Positive
40	9/20/14	*Wall Street Journal*	U.S. News: Migrants Flock to New Orleans	Jordan, Miriam	News	Main themes: violence as a push factor in migration; positive local response to migrants; negative state response to migration Secondary themes:	Push—Violence Local Response—Positive Local Response—Negative
41	9/28/14	*Houston Chronicle*	Sunday Conversation—Immigrant Kids Take Risks to Flee Violence	Kriel, Lomi	Opinion	Main themes: family reunification as a pull factor in migration; gang and cartel violence as a push factor in the migration; increase framed in terms of reasons for the migration	Pull—Family Push—Violence

	Date	Publication	Article Title	Author	Type	Themes	Codes
						Secondary themes:	
42	9/29/14	*Washington Post*	California Will Give Undocumented Immigrant Children $3 Million in Free Legal Services	Chokshi, Niraj	News	Main themes: CA will give $3 million in free legal services to children who crossed the border; increase framed as a humanitarian crisis Secondary themes:	Legal Representation for Children Crisis—Humanitarian Local Response—Positive
43	9/30/14	*Dallas Morning News*	Nonpartisan Poll: Immigration, Border Security Top State Worry	Garrett, Robert T	News	Main themes: A poll shows Texans' top worries are immigration and border security; about half of respondents want children deported more quickly, about half wanted children cared for and deportation slowed down or stopped Secondary themes:	Border Security Deportation—Increase Deportation—Decrease

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APPENDIX C. CODES AND CODING

Table 8. Codes and Coding

Code	Original Theme	Original Theme Meaning
BORDER SECURITY	Border Security	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a border security issue.
CENT AM PARENTS IRRES	Parents Irresponsible	Central American parents in the U.S. are framed as irresponsible for leaving children in Central America.
CHILD CRIMINAL	Child—Criminal	Unaccompanied children are framed as potential criminals.
CHILD REFUGEE	Child Refugee	Unaccompanied children are framed as refugees.
CIR	Comprehensive Immigration Reform	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to attempts to comprehensively reform U.S. immigration law.
CRISIS—GOV RESOURCES	Crisis—Government Resources	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a crisis for the U.S. government, which is described as overwhelmed and lacking adequate resources to respond to the increase.
CRISIS—HUMANITARIAN	Crisis—Humanitarian	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a humanitarian crisis.
DEM CONSPIRACY	Democratic Conspiracy	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a Democratic conspiracy to bring illegal aliens to the U.S., grant them amnesty and then secure their support for future elections.
DEM SUPP	Democratic Support of the President's Immigration Policies	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to Democratic support of the president's immigration policies.

Code	Original Theme	Original Theme Meaning
DEPORTATION - DECREASE	Deportation—Decrease	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to deportation policies. Halting or slowing deportations of unaccompanied children is recommended.
DEPORTATION—INCREASE	Deportation—Increase	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to deportation policies. Increasing or speeding up deportations of unaccompanied children is recommended.
EIR	Executive Action on Immigration Reform	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to executive actions taken by the president to reform immigration policy.
EMERGENCY FUNDING	Emergency Funding	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the president's request for emergency funding to respond to the increase.
FAMILY SENDING FOR CHILD	Family Sending for Children	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as the result of families in the U.S. sending for their children in Central America.
IM COURT BACKLOG	Immigration Court Backlog	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to immigration court backlogs, which may have helped to fuel the perception that children who reached the U.S. would be allowed to stay.
IMM - POSITIVE	Immigration—Positive	Immigration to the U.S. is framed as a positive experience for the country.
JOURNEY HAZARDS	Journey Hazards	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the hazards of the journey from Central America to the U.S..
LEGAL REP FOR CHILDREN	Legal Representation for Children	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the children's experience in immigration court, with some groups advocating for government-provided legal representation for the children.

Code	Original Theme	Original Theme Meaning
LOCAL RESPONSE—NEGATIVE	Local Response—Negative	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in terms of U.S. communities', cities' and states' response to welcoming or housing the children. The local response is described as negative.
LOCAL RESPONSE—POSITIVE	Local Response—Positive	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in terms of U.S. communities', cities' and states', response to welcoming or housing the children. The local response is described as positive.
MX DETENTION	Mexican Detention Centers	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to conditions of Mexican immigration detention centers.
NATIONAL GUARD	National Guard	The increase is framed as in need of deployment of the Texas National Guard to the border.
PERMISO	Pull—Permiso	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the rumor of a 'permiso' (permit) that reportedly would allow children or parents with children to stay in the U.S. The rumor is described as a pull factor in migration.
POLICY PROBLEM	Policy Problem	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed primarily as a policy problem for U.S. lawmakers.
PULL—FAMILY	Pull—Family	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to family reunification as a pull factor in migration.
PUSH—POVERTY	Push—Poverty	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to poverty in the children's home country, which is described as a push factor in migration.
PUSH—VIOLENCE	Push—Violence	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to violence, including gang violence, in the children's home countries, which is described as a push

Code	Original Theme	Original Theme Meaning
		factor in the increased migration.
REP OPP	Republican Opposition to President's Immigration Policies	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to Republican opposition to President Obama's immigration policies.
RESOURCE COMPETITION	Resource Competition	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a competition between U.S. citizens and the children for resources, including social services, public education and health services.
REUNIF DIFF	Reunification Difficulties	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the difficulty of families that have long been separated reuniting in the U.S..
THREAT	Threat	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a threat to American culture, society and wellbeing.
VULNERABILITY—CHILDREN	Vulnerability—children	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the children's youth and vulnerability.

APPENDIX D.   THEMES

Table 9.   Themes

Meta theme	Original Theme	Description	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
Children's Experience	Journey Hazards	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the hazards of the journey from Central America to the U.S..	1	4	0	0	1	6
Children's Experience	Vulnerability—Children	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the children's youth and vulnerability.	2	0	1	2	0	5
Children's Experience	Legal Representation for Children	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the children's experience in immigration court, with some groups advocating for government-provided legal representation for the children.	0	0	1	2	1	4
Children's Experience	Mexican Detention Centers	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to conditions of Mexican immigration detention centers.	0	1	0	0	0	1
Children's Experience	Reunification Difficulties	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the difficulty of families that have long been separated reuniting in the U.S..	0	1	0	0	0	1

Meta theme	Original Theme	Description	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
		"Children's Experience" Totals by Month	1	6	1	2	2	17
Crisis	Crisis— Government Resources	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a crisis for the U.S. government, which is described as overwhelmed and lacking adequate resources to respond to the increase.	1	2	2	1	2	8
Crisis	Crisis— Humanitarian	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a humanitarian crisis.	0	4	2	0	2	8
		"Crisis" Totals by Month	1	6	4	1	4	16
Push and Pull Factors	Push—Violence	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to violence, including gang violence, in the children's home countries, which is described as a push factor in the increased migration.	1	5	0	1	3	10
Push and Pull Factors	Immigration Court Backlog	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to immigration court backlogs, which may have helped to fuel the perception that children who reached the U.S. would be allowed to stay.	0	1	1	0	1	3

Meta theme	Original Theme	Description	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
Push and Pull Factors	Pull—Family	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to family reunification as a pull factor in migration.	2	5	0	0	1	8
Push and Pull Factors	Pull—Permiso	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the rumor of a "permiso" (permit) that reportedly would allow children or parents with children to stay in the U.S. The rumor is described as a pull factor in migration.	0	2	0	0	0	2
Push and Pull Factors	Family Sending for Children	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as the result of families in the U.S. sending for their children in Central America.	0	1	1	0	0	2
Push and Pull Factors	Push—Poverty	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to poverty in the children's home country, which is described as a push factor in migration.	0	3	0	0	1	4
		"Push and Pull Factors" Totals by Month	3	17	2	1	6	29

Meta theme	Original Theme	Description	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
State/Local Response	Local Response—Negative	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in terms of U.S. communities', cities' and states', response to welcoming or housing the children. The local response is described as negative.	0	2	4	6	4	16
State/Local Response	Local Response—Positive	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in terms of U.S. communities', cities' and states', response to welcoming or housing the children. The local response is described as positive.	1	0	3	0	4	8
State/Local Response	Resource Competition	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a competition between U.S. citizens and the children for resources, including social services, public education and health services.	0	1	1	4	1	7
State/Local Response	National Guard	The increase is framed as in need of deployment of the Texas National Guard to the border.	0	0	0	1	1	2
State/Local Response	Threat	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a threat to American culture, society and wellbeing.	0	1	1	2	1	5
State/Local Response	Child—Criminal	Unaccompanied children are framed as potential criminals.	0	0	1	0	0	1

Meta theme	Original Theme	Description	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
State/Local Response	Democratic Conspiracy	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a Democratic conspiracy to bring illegal aliens to the U.S., grant them amnesty and then secure their support for future elections.	0	0	0	1	0	1
State/Local Response	Immigration— Positive	Immigration to the U.S. is framed as a positive experience for the country.	0	0	0	1	0	1
State/Local Response	Parents Irresponsible	Central American parents in the U.S. are framed as irresponsible for leaving children in Central America.	0	0	0	1	0	1
		"State/Local Response" Totals by Month	1	4	10	16	11	42
U.S. Immigration Policies	Comprehensive Immigration Reform	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to attempts to comprehensively reform U.S. immigration law.	1	3	5	0	1	10
U.S. Immigration Policies	Deportation— Increase	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to deportation policies. Increasing or speeding up deportations of unaccompanied children is recommended.	0	4	2	0	2	8

Meta theme	Original Theme	Description	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
U.S. Immigration Policies	Republican Opposition to President's Immigration Policies	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to Republican opposition to President Obama's immigration policies.	0	2	1	2	2	7
U.S. Immigration Policies	Deportation— Decrease	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to deportation policies. Halting or slowing deportations of unaccompanied children is recommended.	0	0	1	0	1	2
U.S. Immigration Policies	Executive Action on Immigration Reform	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to executive actions taken by the president to reform immigration policy.	0	1	1	1	1	4
U.S. Immigration Policies	Policy Problem	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed primarily as a policy problem for U.S. lawmakers.	0	1	2	0	0	3
U.S. Immigration Policies	Border Security	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed as a border security issue.	0	1	1	0	1	3
U.S. Immigration Policies	Democratic Support of the President's Immigration Policies	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to Democratic support of the president's immigration policies.	0	0	0	0	1	1

Meta theme	Original Theme	Description	May	June	July	August	September	Totals
U.S. Immigration Policies	Emergency Funding	The increase in unaccompanied children is framed in relation to the president's request for emergency funding to respond to the increase.	0	0	1	0	0	1
U.S. Immigration Policies	Child Refugee	Unaccompanied children are framed as refugees.	0	1	0	0	0	1
		"U.S. Immigration Policies" Totals by Month	1	13	14	3	9	40

Table 10.   Meta Themes, Descriptions, Original Themes and Frequency

Meta Theme	Meta Theme Description	Original Theme	Original Theme Frequency	Meta Theme Frequency
Children's Experience	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to the children's migration experiences, both on the journey to and after arrival in the U.S.	Journey Hazards	6	17
		Vulnerability—Children	5	
		Legal Representation for Children	4	
		Mexican Detention Centers	1	
		Reunification Difficulties	1	
Crisis	The increase in unaccompanied children is described as a crisis.	Crisis—Government Resources	8	16
		Crisis—Humanitarian	8	
Push and Pull Factors	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to push and pull factors (issues that are driving the migration).	Push—Violence	10	29
		Immigration Court Backlog	3	
		Pull—Family	8	
		Pull—Permiso	2	
		Family Sending for Children	2	
		Push—Poverty	4	
State/Local Response	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to state and local response to the increase.	Local Response—Negative	16	42
		Local Response—Positive	8	
		Resource Competition	7	
		National Guard	2	
		Threat	5	
		Child—Criminal	1	
		Democratic	1	

Meta Theme	Meta Theme Description	Original Theme	Original Theme Frequency	Meta Theme Frequency
		Conspiracy		
		Immigration—Positive	1	
		Parents Irresponsible	1	
U.S. Immigration Policies	The increase in unaccompanied children is described in relation to U.S. immigration policies.	Comprehensive Immigration Reform	10	40
		Deportation—Increase	8	
		Republican Opposition to President's Immigration Policies	7	
		Deportation—Decrease	2	
		Executive Action on Immigration Reform	4	
		Policy Problem	3	
		Border Security	3	
		Democratic Support of the President's Immigration Policies	1	
		Emergency Funding	1	
		Child Refugee	1	

Figure 10.   Original Themes within Meta Theme, "Children's Experience,"
Frequency by Month
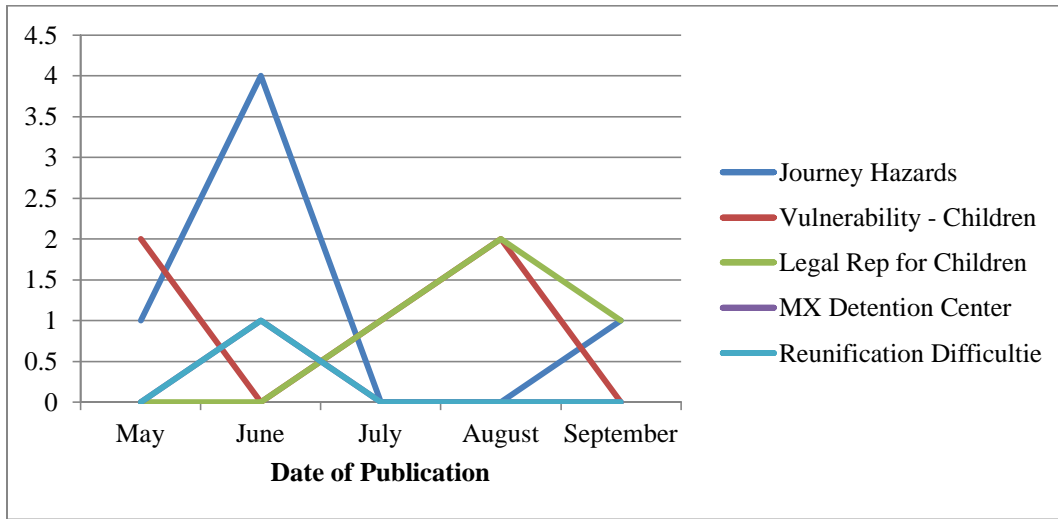
Figure 11.   Original Themes within Meta Theme, "Crisis" Frequency by Month
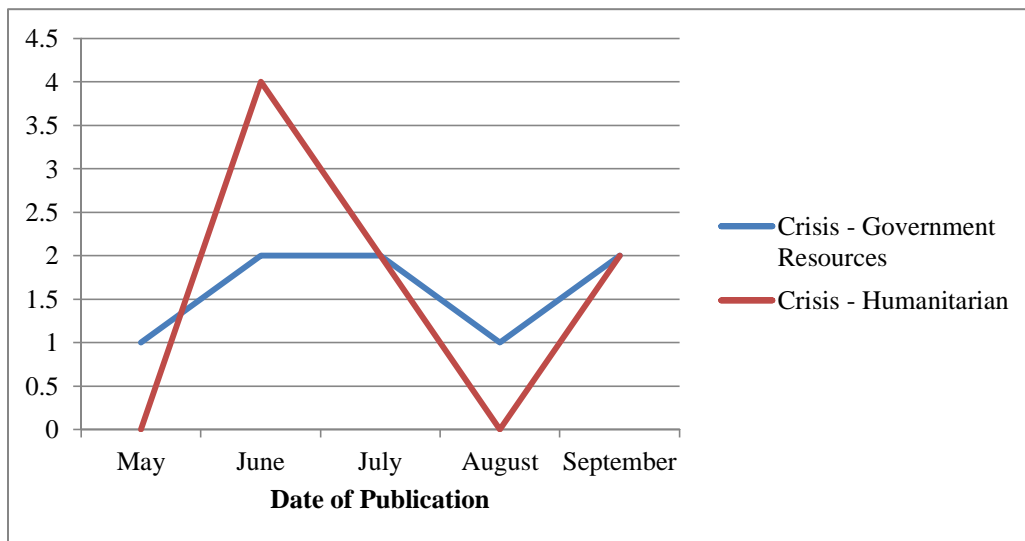
Figure 12.   Original Themes Within Meta Theme, "Push and Pull Factors,"
Frequency by Month
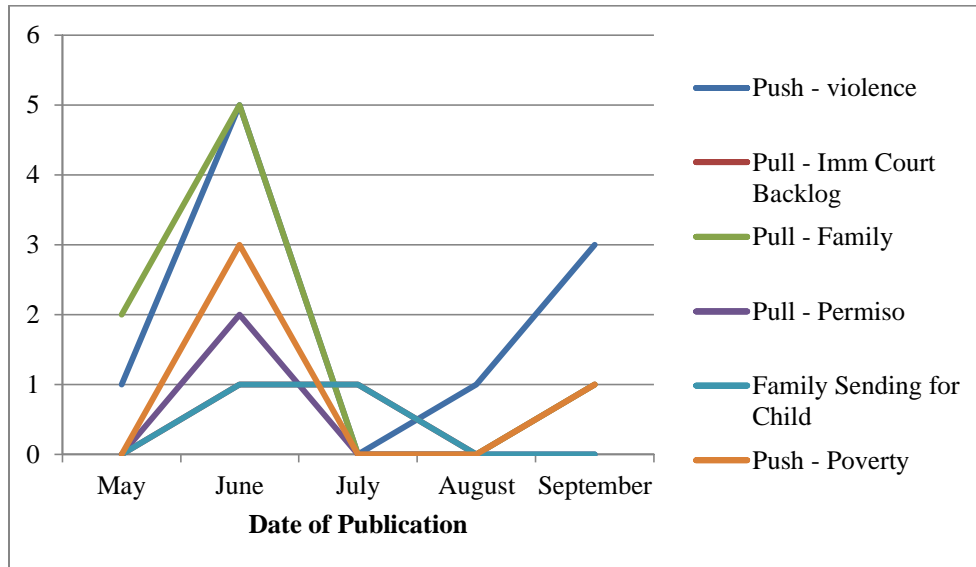
Figure 13.   Five Most Frequently Occurring Original Themes within Meta Theme,
"State/Local Response," Frequency by Month
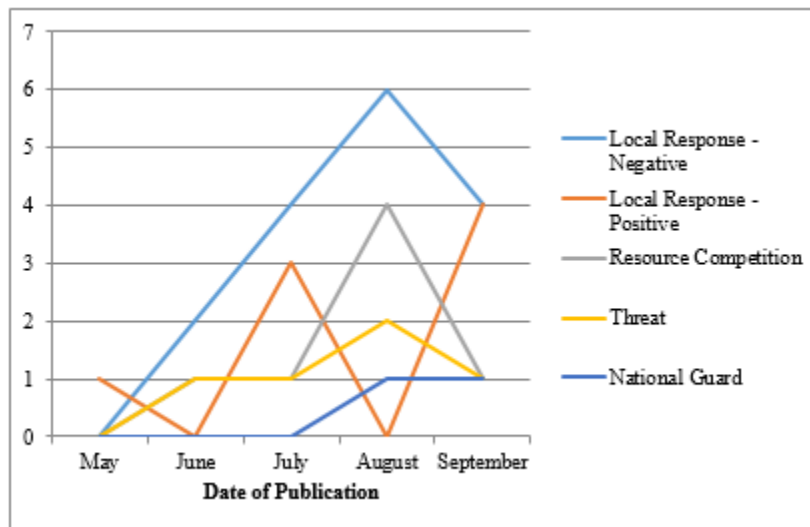
Figure 14.   Five Most Frequently Occurring Original Themes within Meta
Theme "U.S. Immigration Policies," Frequency by Month
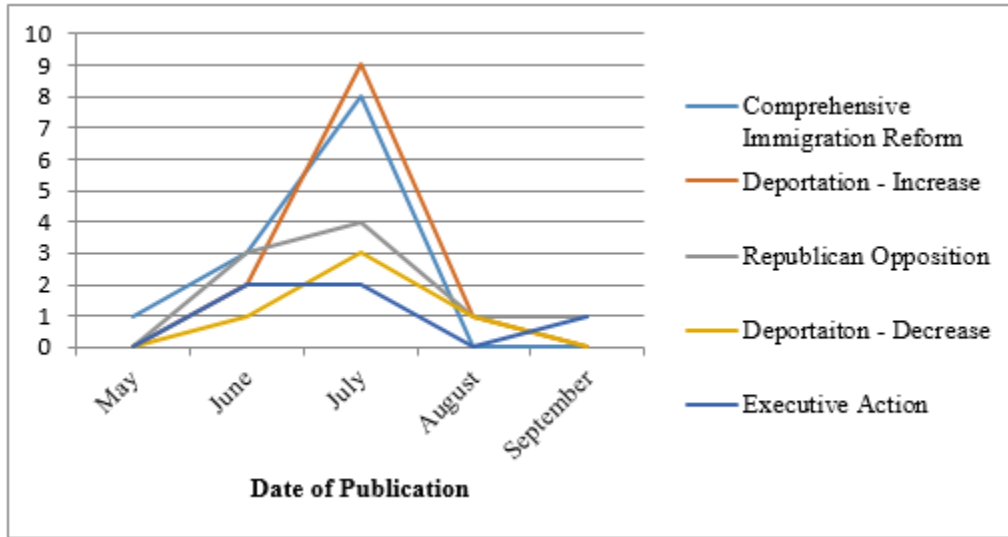
Figure 15.   Most Frequently Occurring Original Themes, Frequency by Month
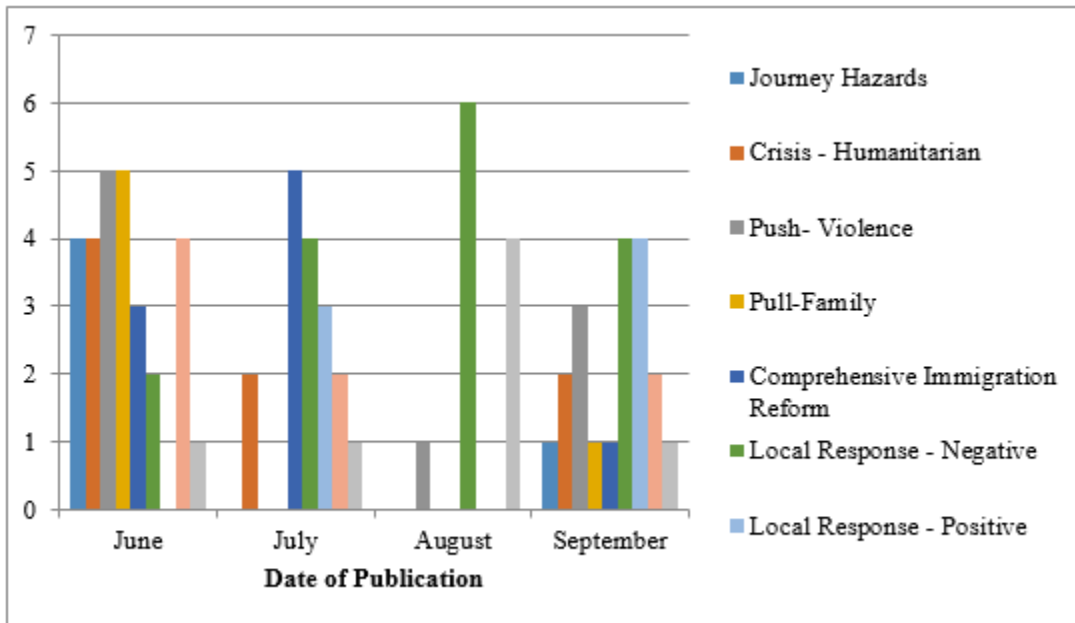
APPENDIX E.   FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ACTIONS OR POLICIES RELATED TO UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN, 2013–2014

Table 11.   Federal Immigration Actions/Policies Related to UAC 2013–2014

Date	Federal Immigration Action	Type of Action
6/27/13	S.744—Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act (comprehensive immigration reform bill) passed in the Senate https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/744 This bill passed the Senate before the height of the increase in unaccompanied children and became an important part of the public discourse at the height of the increase.	Congressional Bill
6/2/14	DHS announces surge of resources to the southwest border to respond to increase in UAC and family groups https://www.dhs.gov/news/2014/06/02/statement-secretary-johnson-increased-influx-unaccompanied-immigrant-children-border	Executive Policy
6/6/14	DOJ announces grant for attorneys for UAC https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-and-cncs-announce-new-partnership-enhance-immigration-courts-and-provide	Executive Policy
6/20/14	Administration announces $9.6 million repatriation aid to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/20/fact-sheet-unaccompanied-children-central-america	Executive Policy
6/24/14	U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security, *Dangerous Passage: The Growing Problem of Unaccompanied Children Crossing the Border* http://homeland.house.gov/hearing/dangerous-passage-growing-problem-unaccompanied-children-crossing-border	Congressional Hearing
6/25/14	US House Committee on the Judiciary, "An Administration Made Disaster: The South Texas Border Surge of Unaccompanied Alien Minors" http://judiciary.house.gov/index.cfm/hearings?ID=8B6D7AE6-1B16-4A12-BA74-35952F0FCB97	Congressional Hearing

Date	Federal Immigration Action	Type of Action
6/30/14	President Obama speaks on immigration reform and UAC, announces intention of executive immigration action https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/06/30/president-obama-speaks-immigration-reform	Presidential Policy Remarks
7/3/14	U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security, *Crisis on the Texas Border: Surge of Unaccompanied Minors* http://homeland.house.gov/hearing/field-hearing-crisis-texas-border-surge-unaccompanied-minors	Congressional Hearing
7/8/14	Administration request for $3.7 billion for border security, UAC response https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/budget_amendments/emergency-supplemental-request-to-congress-07082014.pdf	Executive request for Congressional funding
7/10/14	U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, *Review of the Presidents' Emergency Supplemental Request* http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings-and-testimony/full-committee-review-presidents-supplemental-request	Congressional Hearing
7/14/14	Bill to revise TVPRA introduced by Texas Senator Cornyn and Representative Cuellar https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2611 http://cuellar.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=387707	Congressional Bill
7/16/14	Senator John McCain and Senator Jeff Flake introduced the Children Returning on an Expedited and Safe Timeline Act to allow for faster removal of Central American children http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=d39076b7-a35e-4a9c-a8e5-c866b135c2c8	Congressional Bill
9/7/14	President announces postponement of executive immigration actions http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meet-press-transcript-september-7-2014-n197866	Executive policy
11/14/14	Department of State publishes in-country refugee processing fact sheet http://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/factsheets/2014/234067.htm	Executive Policy

APPENDIX F.   GLOSSARY

admission

An alien's lawful entry into the United States after inspection and authorization by an immigration officer.[95]

alien

Any person who is not a citizen or national of the United States.[96]

discourse

The interchange, via language, of ideas about a topic between groups of people.[97]

discourse analysis

The examination of language to determine how it constructs ideas or reality.[98]

immigrant

A non-U.S. citizen who intends to reside permanently in the United States[99]

immigration encounter

These terms are not found in the INA. As used in this thesis, the

or action

terms describe an interaction between a non-U.S. citizen (alien) and an immigration agency or agent/officer. It includes legal admissions, parole, apprehension, detention, and removal (deportation).

lawful permanent resident

An immigrant who is permanently, legally residing in the United States. An LPR is issued a "green card" as evidence of his or her LPR status.[100]

meta themes

Overarching themes the researcher developed from the original themes in the dataset.

migrant

This term is not found in the INA. It is used in this thesis to describe people who are moving from one geographic location to another.

non-immigrant

A non-U.S. citizen who intends to visit the United States for a limited period of time for a specific purpose and intends to depart the U.S.[101]

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[95] Immigration and Nationality Act [INA], § 101 (a) (3) (1952).

[96] INA 101 (a) (13).

[97] This definition is adapted by the author from Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*.

[98] Ibid.

[99] INA 101 (a) (15).

[100] *USCIS Glossary*, s.v., "lawful permanent resident," accessed October 15, 2016, https://www.uscis.gov/tools/glossary/, last accessed June 4, 2016.

[101] INA 101(a) (15).

original themes	Themes in the dataset that were identified by the researcher in the first round of analysis.
parole	The legal entry, but not admission, for a temporary period, of an alien who is otherwise inadmissible to the United States.[102]
port of entry	"A location in the United States or its territories that is a designated point of entry into the country."[103]
refugee	A non-U.S. citizen who is fleeing persecution based on membership in a protected class, who is outside the United States.[104]
removal	The act of the U.S. government repatriating a non-U.S. citizen to his or her home country. Also called deportation.[105]
removal proceedings	Administrative legal proceedings conducted by the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) to determine if an alien should be removed from the U.S. and repatriated to his home country. Also called "deportation proceedings."[106]
theme	prominent, recurring idea
unaccompanied alien child	Any non-U.S. citizen child under the age of 18 who, when encountered by U.S. immigration authorities, is not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.[107]

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[102] INA 212 (d) (5) (A).

[103] Ibid.

[104] INA 101(a) (42).

[105] INA 240.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Homeland Security Act of 2002, §462 (2002).

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