

Unaccompanied child immigrants essay



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The documentary talks about the increased amounts of children migrating alone to the United States. Under the program, Unaccompanied Child Immigrants, border patrol apprehends about 100,000 children trying to enter the US each year and many of those children, sadly, are found dead. Children found either around or on the US-Mexican border, are either taken by American or Mexican patrol officers. Those apprehended are then sent to either an American shelter or a Mexican shelter to await deportation.

The documentary focuses on two particular children, Kevin a 10 year old and Fit a 13 year old. Both are migrating from Honduras which is where the majority of unaccompanied children come from. These children have to travel 1,450 miles, alone, just to get to the Guatemala border. Once in Mexico, these children have to travel for months, even a year to reach the American-Mexican border.

Watching Kevin and Fit travel so many miles alone as they shared their family hardship and their reasons for migrating, it displayed an example of Migration Pathways. Under the migration pathways we studied the many reasons why people decide to migrate and under what conditions they do so. Living in poverty, Kevin and Fit both wanted to migrate to obtain better economic and labor opportunities, an example of push and pull factors. Their goal was to reach the United States to find jobs to help support their families in Honduras. Their other reason for wanting to migrate was due to individual motivation and social network. Kevin had family members who migrated to America and he wanted to do the same.

We also see that Kevin and Pity were making their way as undocumented immigrants, which is a type of way to enter other countries. They did this as they crossed Guatemala, Mexico, and eventually the United States. The boys also told of and displayed the many psychological troubles they were facing in their journey. Their future was uncertain, both in their native country, as well as in their journey to a better future. A future that was not guaranteed they'd live to see. These boys were exposed to the reality of how life threatening migrating can be. They saw people being raped and others being mugged by Mexican police.

They even saw many people die as they rode on “ la bestial”, the train that lead to the American-Mexican border. As I listened to the many emotional hardships these children had at such a young age, another theme that comes to mind is the psychosocial experience of immigrants. These children were going on a journey that has emotionally lasting effects both for them and their families. Both Kevin and Fit were alone and just like many other migrating children, are leaving their families behind and unsure if they will see their families again. These long and painful separations could lead to stressful and traumatic responses. Usually the children's response to such emotional experience would dictate how well they would adapt to the new environment. For the boys in the movie, they themselves are unclear of where they belong, to even adapt to a “ new environment”. Their home conditions were not that great, Fit was abandoned by his mother and Kevin was pushed away by his step-father that didn't care for him.

At one point in the movie, Kevin made it to the American border but changed his mind about continuing. He stopped when he saw border patrols and

turned himself in, he said: “ Even the Immigration people didn’t want me. The combination of neglect and abandonment are here to create uncertainty in these children resulting in future difficulties. In the case of Kevin and Fit, their first attempt to enter America was not successful and a few months after returning to Honduras, they decided to give it another try. This can be seen as a way of acting out against their neglectful families.

There were many negative and sad situations presented in the film but one thing I felt was a good cause, is the funding of groups that help these children even when their families don’t. Along the way to the American border there are groups such as the BETA, from Mexico, that provide food, water, medical attention, and information to children and adult immigrants. It is difficult to prevent migration from occurring. The best thing to do is to provide immigrants with the raw reality of how life threatening migrating can be. This should be done in hopes that children and adult immigrants might change their minds or at least be prepared on their journey to the “ American Dream”.