**Data: Who gets caught on the U.S./Mexico border?**

For much of recent history, undocumented immigrant traffic across the U.S. southern border has followed a surprisingly stable pattern. Year after year, crossings spike in January and drop slowly throughout the spring before getting a bump again in August according to Border Patrol apprehension data.

STABLE GRAPHIC

However, in 2014, the pattern fell apart completely. Since then, the only consistency in southern border migration has been its lack of consistency:

UNSTABLE GRAPHIC

Here’s all the data from 2000 to 2017 together:

ALL GRAPHIC

There are likely a number of factors that led to the disruption of this pattern. The most obvious, however, is the decrease in the number of Mexican seasonal labor migrants coupled with the increase of Central American immigrants. These two factors bisect in 2014:

MEXICAN VS NON GRAPHIC

The San Antonio Express-News has written at length about the forces motivating these trends, including Jason Buch’s 2016 feature on San Salvador gang violence and its role in El Salvadorian northward migration:  
  
JASON’S STORY

And, in turn, the surge in undocumented Central American families crossing the border and claiming asylum:

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Despite this surge, northbound crossings of the U.S./Mexico border have been on a steady decline for over a decade:

1960 BY SECTOR GRAPHIC

Locally, however, border apprehensions in the Rio Grande Valley have been on the rise since 2011. Today, it seems, the vast majority of undocumented immigrants, from Mexico or elsewhere, are entering the country right below San Antonio.

2000 BY SECTOR GRAPHIC