Several scholars have argued that U.S. foreign policy and its immigration policies have had unintended consequences for undocumented migration from Latin America. U.S intervention in Central American civil wars during the 1980s amidst a cycle of violence had formidable social and economic repercussions in the United States, which became a primary destination for emigration from the region (Coutin 2011, Menjivar 1994,2006). Furthermore, by curtailing the legal avenues through which Latin Americans could enter the country, admission policies largely shifted legal flows to illegal migration (Massey and Pren 2012). A fairly substantial literature has focused on the large and growing volume of unauthorized migration, but comparatively few studies have empirically examined how admission policies have reshaped the size and composition of legal immigration from the region, and in particular, how the evolution and maturation of migration streams result from US foreign policy responses to geo-political events.

We argue that inconsistent application of extant immigration laws to Central and South American migrants coupled with limited legal pathways to US residence are responsible for the surge of US-bound migration from the Americas. To make our case, we identify the major historical, economic and political events that triggered new flows from Central and South America that were subsequently multiplied via legal channels. Using administrative data on new legal permanent residents, we examine the pathways to US residence pursued by Latin American immigrant groups and empirically estimate how family reunification policies fueled the growth of Latin American immigration via legal channels.

Background: Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic have been the major source countries for LPR admissions from Latin America since 1960. Massey and collaborators on the Mexican Migration Project have amply documented and explained the prominence of Mexicans among US immigrants (Durand and Massey 2004; Massey and Durand 2003). The Cuban flow is unique in that prospective migrants benefit from the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA) and the wet-foot/dry-foot agreement that designates as refugees all Cubans who arrive on US soil and puts them on a fast track to citizenship (Wasem 2009). The continued embargo precludes Cubans from sponsoring relatives using the family reunification entitlements, unlike other immigrants from the Americas.

The Dominican Republic provides a stark example of the unintended consequences of US foreign policy. Emigration from the Dominican Republic was prohibited during Trujillo's dictatorship (1931-1960); however, following his ouster, the U.S. embassy unwittingly triggered a huge future flow by issuing visas in order to pacify political unrest (Grassmuck and Pessar 1991; Hernandez 2002). Between 1961 and 1980 a quarter of a million Dominicans were granted legal permanent residence status; during the same period about 1.1 million Mexicans over half a million Cubans migrated legally to the United States. These figures contrast with less than 150 thousand Central Americans – from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua combined- who were granted LPR status during the 1960s and 1970s—before the civil wars in the region (Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1984).

Armed struggles in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua figured prominently among the factors driving Central Americans to the United States during the last quarter of the 20th century. During the late 1980s and 1990s, Nicaraguans fleeing a leftist regime were offered a generous path to legal residence (Lundquist and Massey 1995). Furthermore, through the settlement of the *American Baptist Church v. Thornburgh* (ABC) Guatemalans and Salvadorians who had been granted temporary legal status and subsequently denied status adjustment were allowed to reapply for an asylum interview. Subsequently the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997 (NACARA) allowed ABC class members to apply for legal permanent admission. Hondurans are the newest Central American group seeking refuge in the United States. Poverty, unemployment, and natural disasters have been credited for the surge in emigration. According to the 2012 ACS, about 148 thousand foreign-born from this nation came to the U.S. to live between 1990 and 1999, but most arrived via illegal channels (Hoeffer et al. 2011). Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are the major source countries of legal admissions

from South America. By contrast to Central America, most South American emigration has been associated with economic downturns. This is likely to change as the number of Venezuelans seeking refuge from the political upheavals in the wake of Chavez's death.

Data & Methods:

Our analyses link family unification entitlements to the size and composition of legal immigrants from Latin America. This requires information on immigrant characteristics and visa types for multiple years. The best data source to explore our queries is the Immigrants *Admitted to the United States* micro-data (U.S. Department of Justice 2007). We use the typology developed by Yu (2008) and improved by Carr and Tienda (2013) to differentiate between initiating and family unification migrants. *Initiating immigrants* are the first in their families to move to the United States, and they must be either sponsored by nonfamily entities (e.g., employers or the US government in the case of refugees or legalized immigrants) or marry a US-born citizen. We define four categories of initiating immigrants denoted by the subscript "0", and letters E, G, and S designate employer, government and spouse sponsors:

$_0E$ Employer-sponsored initiating employee immigrants (excluding dependents)
$_0G$ Government-sponsored initiating immigrants
$_0S$ Initiating spouse immigrants (sponsored by native-born citizen spouses)

Using these admission criteria, we estimate a series of family migration multipliers, which measure the intensity of family chain migration relative to the number of initiating immigrants per cohort admitted. Only initiating immigrants can start new migration chains, which are activated when spouses and children accompany initiating immigrants or when initiating immigrants sponsor spouses, dependent children or unmarried adult offspring (who are subject to numerical caps). After naturalization, family immigrants also are entitled to sponsor family members, thus activating the multiplicative properties of chained migration (Yu 2008). Accordingly, we define family unification immigrants as legal permanent residents (LPRs) sponsored by family members who themselves are immigrants (both naturalized citizens and legal resident aliens) or who are an initiating immigrant's accompanying family members. Specifically we distinguish among four types of family immigrants; antecedent subscripts 1 through 4 indicate migration phase, i.e., the sequence in the migration chain.

- Accompanying family dependents:
  - $_1D$ Spouses and minor children who accompany initiating immigrants on admission to LPR status
- Numerically-limited, later following family dependents of initiating immigrants *(Sponsored by LPRs under numerically-limited family 2nd family preference categories)*
  - $_2D$ Spouses, minor children, unmarried adult offspring) of previously admitted initiating immigrants
- Numerically-unlimited immediate Relatives of US citizens *(Sponsored by citizens under numerically-exempt family preference categories):*
  - $_3S$ Spouses of foreign-born U.S. citizens
  - $_3C$ Children of US citizens
  - $_3P$ Parents of U. citizens
- Numerically-limited preference relatives of US citizens *(Sponsored by citizens under 1st, 3rd and 4th family preferences)*
  - $_4F$ Adult sons, daughters, and siblings, with associated dependents, of adult US citizens

Expressed in formulaic terms, the age-, origin-, and cohort-specific family unification migration multiplier is given by:

$$FMM_{jk} = \frac{\Sigma \; _1D_{jt} + \; _2D_{jt} + \; _3S_{jt'} + _3C_{jt'} + _3P_{jt'} + _4F_{jt'}}{\Sigma \; _0E_{jt} + _0G_{jt} + _0S_{jt}}$$

In this formulation the terms in the numerator represent counts of specific types of sponsored family migrants, and the denominator terms represent the counts of each type of initiating immigrant based on the categories defined above.

The core notation of each term consists of an upper case letter and a leading subscript that combined represents an aggregated class of admission. Specifically, $_0E$, $_0G$, and $_0S$ denominator terms represent employer-sponsored, government-sponsored and spouse initiating immigrants, respectively. The numerator includes initiating immigrants' accompanying and later following family dependents ($_1D$ and $_2D$); US citizens' numerically exempt spouses, children and parents ($_3S$, $_3C$ and $_3P$, respectively); and US citizens' adult offspring, siblings and their respective dependents ($_4F$). Subscript j denotes the country of origin, and subscripts t and t' reflect five-year admission cohorts corresponding, respectively, to early and later stages of the migration chain. For initiating immigrants and their accompanying and later-following dependents ($_1D$ and $_2D$ unification immigrants), admission cohort t cohort t consists of one of the following cohorts: 1981-1985, 1986-1990, 1991-1995, or 1996-2000. Subscript t' is applied to numerically-exempt immediate relatives ($_3S$, $_3C$ and $_3P$,) and citizens family preference relatives ($_4F$) in order to approximate the timing of naturalization and eligibility for citizen-based sponsorship among initiating immigrants from cohort t'=t+9. This lag reflects the eight-year duration of LPR status plus and additional year for visa processing delays.

Results: Table 1 summarizes the data corresponding to the initiating immigrant categories according to country of origin. Table 1 shows pathways to US residence pursued by Latin American immigrant groups. Reflected in the high percentage of government-sponsored initiating immigrants, Table 1 illustrates Cuban's privileged path to U.S. permanent residence. With the exception of the 1991-1995 cohorts, most initiating immigrants from Dominican Republic obtained their LPR through marriage to a U.S. citizen. Interestingly, some Central Americans have been able to achieve LPR through employment-sponsorship. Most of these immigrants are granted LPR through the third-employment preference, which includes unskilled workers. Table 1 also shows how Nicaraguans have been more successful in obtaining LPR through government sponsorship than Salvadorans and Guatemalans. For instance, while 95% of initiating immigrants from Nicaragua were government-sponsored admissions, that figure was 52% for Salvadorans and 48% for Guatemalans.

Given their longer history in the US, Mexicans have benefited from family chain migration. Preliminary results (not shown here), however, have shown that it is Dominicans who have taken fully advantage of chain migration. While Central Americans have also benefited from family unification provisions, their total number of family immigrants lags behind that of Dominicans. This will be explored in further detail prior to the PAA meeting.

Future research: As we move forward with this project, we plan to augment our analysis by requesting the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) with two sets of tabulations: 1) LPR admissions for the period 2001-2012; and 2) IRCA legalizations for the period 1989-2000 in order to resolve the limitations in the *Immigrant Admitted* files. These customized tabulations would allow us to consider IRCA cohorts, whose main beneficiaries are Mexicans and Central Americans in the estimates of chain migration. This legalization program not only inflated the size of initiating cohorts, but also created a prolonged echo via sponsorship of family members, particularly those exempt from numerical limitations. In addition, the augmented data would permit us to apply the 9-year lag and to obtain data on immigrants legalized through NACARA.

Table 1: Initiating Immigrants ($_0E$, $_0G$, and $_0S$) admitted from 1981-2000 by country of origin, aggregated class of admission, and 5-year LPR cohort (row percentages)

5-Year new immigrant cohorts	Class of admission			
	Employer-Sponsored $_0E$	Government-Sponsored $_0G$	Spouses of native-born citizens $_0S$	Total, Initiating Immigrants
Mexico				
1981-1985	3.2	49.0	47.7	**110,151**
1986-1990	4.7	58.4	36.9	**93,959**
1991-1995	4.2	83.7	12.1	**98,823**
1996-2000	3.7	66.9	29.4	**207,938**
Cuba				
1981-1985	0.4	96.8	2.8	**33,052**
1986-1990	0.2	99.5	0.3	**85,536**
1991-1995	0.1	99.2	0.7	**41,343**
1996-2000	0.1	99.0	0.9	**93,412**
Dominican Republic				
1981-1985	4.8	16.5	78.7	**7,851**
1986-1990	5.9	10.4	83.6	**4,940**
1991-1995	2.2	84.5	13.3	**22,345**
1996-2000	4.8	15.4	79.8	**10,675**
El Salvador				
1981-1985	39.1	19.9	41.0	**6,999**
1986-1990	58.9	17.0	24.0	**9,546**
1991-1995	26.3	69.6	4.1	**22,053**
1996-2000	26.6	51.6	21.8	**20,944**
Guatemala				
1981-1985	29.5	22.0	48.5	**3,427**
1986-1990	45.6	26.9	27.5	**4,026**
1991-1995	21.4	73.0	5.6	**10,389**
1996-2000	23.2	47.8	29.0	**8,591**
Nicaragua				
1981-1985	17.9	38.8	43.4	**2,159**
1986-1990	11.1	69.6	19.4	**3,317**
1991-1995	3.4	92.7	3.9	**14,478**
1996-2000	1.4	94.7	3.9	**37,680**
Honduras				
1981-1985	11.9	7.5	80.6	**2,104**
1986-1990	20.1	17.7	62.2	**1,794**
1991-1995	14.5	66.8	18.7	**3,597**
1996-2000	16.7	31.9	51.4	**4,836**
South America[a]				
1981-1985	25.7	10.4	63.9	**23,336**
1986-1990	33.2	25.6	41.2	**19,342**
1991-1995	38.5	46.2	15.3	**22,607**
1996-2000	31.1	20.7	48.2	**32,157**

Source: Authors' tabulations from Immigrants Admitted Data to the United States data file (USDOJ, Immigrants Admitted Data to the United States 1981-2000)

Notes: [a]South America inludes Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay,Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela