

Salvadoran-American Sociologist Stephanie L. Canizales Sheds Light on the Plight of Unaccompanied Migrants

Canizales offers an unprecedented look into the lives of unaccompanied migrant youth and calls for urgent policy reforms to support them.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Over a decade has passed since the humanitarian crisis of unaccompanied child migration gained attention in 2014, when 70,000 children from Central America and Mexico were apprehended at the U.S. Southern border. Today, the crisis persists, with rates of apprehension having doubled.

The urgent need for solutions spurred professor [Stephanie L. Canizales](#), the daughter of Salvadoran immigrants to the United States, to seek to understand how these children come of age in the U.S. and what success looks like for them in a country built on systemic inequality. The Faculty Director of the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative at the University of California, Berkeley, Canizales explores these issues in her forthcoming book, "Sin Padres, Ni Papeles: Unaccompanied Migrant Youth Coming of Age in the United States," which presents stories and insights drawn from meticulous research and 75 in-depth interviews with migrant youth in Los Angeles.

“ ‘Sin Padres, Ni Papeles’ will soon become a staple in the field of undocumented migration. ”

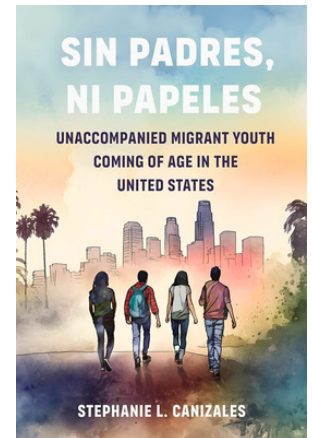
– Laura E. Enriquez, author of "Of Love and Papers"

Scheduled for release on August 6, 2024, by the [University of California Press](#), the book explores the harsh realities faced by unaccompanied immigrant youth as they navigate life without legal guardians or documentation. From their departure from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico to their arrival in Los Angeles, Canizales provides a vivid portrait of how these youths set goals for their migration and what it takes to achieve them. These young people confront challenges such as exploitative labor conditions, emotional and financial hardships, and the daunting task of forging a path to success in an unfamiliar land without parental support or protection.

Their stories reveal not only their resilience but also potential solutions to the child migration and apprehension crisis. By examining their experiences, Canizales suggests new frameworks for immigrant integration, emphasizing the importance of listening to and learning from the migrants themselves as they explain how they find jobs, secure places to live, and keep promises to the families they left behind. For them, success is not measured by diplomas or wealth, but by their ability to take care of themselves, support their families back home, and assist others in their situation.

The significance of "[Sin Padres, Ni Papeles](#)" has been recognized by leading scholars in the field. Carola Suárez-Orozco of the Harvard Graduate School of Education praised Canizales for her "meticulous research" and her ability to "offer a compelling call to reexamine our policies and attitudes toward these most vulnerable members of our society." Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, the co-author of "South Central Dreams: Finding Home and Community in South L.A.," highlighted the book's "passion and precision," noting "it as a must-read for students and scholars, as well as policymakers and legislators." Shannon Gleeson of Cornell University described Canizales's work as "a crucial contribution to understanding the systemic issues that contribute to the exploitation of migrant youth."

A leading expert in international migration and immigrant integration, Canizales's work has been featured in prominent publications such as The New York Times, The Atlantic, and The Los Angeles Times. Beyond academia, she has contributed her expertise to policy development as a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Resident Scholar and UNICEF USA Research Consultant. With "Sin Padres, Ni Papeles," she offers a vital perspective on the experiences and challenges faced by unaccompanied migrant youth and recommendations for urgent policy reforms to support these vulnerable individuals.



About the Author

Stephanie L. Canizales, PhD, is a researcher, author, and professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, where she is Faculty Director of the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative. She earned her PhD in Sociology from the University of Southern California (2018).

About the Book

Published on August 6, 2024, by the University of California Press, "Sin Padres, Ni Papeles: Unaccompanied Migrant Youth Coming of Age in the United States" illuminates how unaccompanied teens who grow up as undocumented low-wage workers navigate unthinkable material and emotional hardship, find the agency and hope that is required to survive and discover what it means to be successful during the transition to adulthood in the United States.