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Social Boundaries and Cultural Identity in Costa Rica: Implications for the Well-being of Nicaraguan Immigrants

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Social Boundaries and Cultural Identity in Costa Rica: Implications for the
Well-being of Nicaraguan Immigrants

Marisa Lynn Prosser, PhD

University of Connecticut, 2014

This research explores immigrant adaptation and well-being in Costa Rica where the growing number of Nicaraguan immigrants has been challenging concepts of national and personal identity among immigrants and the host population. Divergent histories and centuries of dispute between these neighboring nations has led to the formation of strong oppositional national identities and nationality has become the most frequently invoked basis for the differences in character and culture that many Costa Ricans perceive to exist between Nicaraguan immigrants and themselves.

This research builds upon existing scholarship suggesting that a strong sense of identification with one's country of origin can protect against a variety of stressors faced by immigrants, particularly when it forms part of a bicultural identity that fuses aspects of both home and host cultures. This research also explores how social relations between groups influence identity formation and moderate the protective effects of identity on psychological well-being.

The results of this project are based upon 12 months of ethnographic research in and around San José Costa Rica, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to reveal shared cultural models of identity among samples of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. This research introduces a method for operationalizing the construct of cultural

identity by using individuals' levels of cultural consonance with shared cultural models as a measure of their identification with home and host cultures.

The results of this research supported the association between biculturalism and well-being, finding a statistically significant relationship between high levels of cultural consonance with both models of identity and low levels of perceived stress. However, surprisingly the lowest levels of perceived stress were found among individuals having low consonance with both models of identity. Tentative support was found for a relationship between immigrants' perceptions of strong social boundaries and consonance with the Costa Rican identity model though the results were not statistically significant. This dissertation ends by calling for more research that furthers an understanding of how immigrants forge their identities in various social & cultural conditions and how they can adapt to host societies while preserving their well-being and unique cultural heritages.

Social Boundaries and Cultural Identity in Costa Rica: Implications for the
Well-being of Nicaraguan Immigrants

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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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at the
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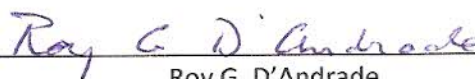
APPROVAL PAGE

Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

Social Boundaries and Cultural Identity in Costa Rica:
Implications for the Well-being of Nicaraguan Immigrants

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Dedicated to my mother, Sheryl Kenner, and in loving memory of my mother-in-law, Dr. Valerie French, for all they have done along the way to make this possible

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 1 |
| Migrant Identities and Well-being | 3 |
| Research Design..... | 7 |
| A World of Immigrants and Identities in Flux..... | 9 |
| Well-being in Costa Rica: The Happiest Place on Earth? | 13 |
| Organization of the Chapters | 15 |
| Chapter 2: Identity, Boundaries, and the “Cultural Stuff” Within | 18 |
| Some Persistent Problems in the Study of Identity: The Whats, Whys and Hows?..... | 19 |
| So Why Study Identity at All? | 22 |
| Anthropology of Identity | 23 |
| Nationalism and National Identities: Territorialization of Identity and Notions of Home | 28 |
| Costa Rica and Nicaragua: National Identities as Cultural Identities | 31 |
| Ticos and Nicas: Oppositional Identities | 35 |
| Xenophobia and Racialized Identities in Costa Rica..... | 39 |
| Chapter 3: A Tale of Two National Identities: Historical Influences on Immigration and Emigration in Nicaragua and Costa Rica..... | 44 |
| The Construction and Dichotomization of National Identities | 44 |
| Early Colonial Experience: International Interference and Geographic Isolation | 48 |
| The Original Banana Republics: Underdevelopment and Development | 55 |
| Government and Rule of Law: Dictatorship and Democracy | 61 |
| Conflict and its Resolution: War and Peace | 67 |
| Crossing Borders and Boundaries: Emigration and Immigration | 70 |
| Chapter 4: Ethnographic Fieldwork in Costa Rica | 74 |
| About the Field Site: Nicaraguans in Costa Rica..... | 81 |
| Ethnographic Methods for Data Collection | 90 |
| Chapter 5: Cultural Models of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity | 102 |
| Results from Informal and Unstructured Interviews | 105 |
| Results of Semi-structured Interviews | 113 |
| Results of Structured Interviews | 143 |
| Chapter 6: How Does Cultural Identity Affect Well-being? Methods and Results..... | 162 |
| Migration Outcomes and Psychological Well-being | 163 |
| Identity and Adaptation..... | 167 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Social Boundaries and Identity | 170 |
| Phase 2: Methods for Assessing the Relationship between Cultural Identity and Well-being | 172 |
| Phase 2: Results from the Questionnaire | 180 |
| Chapter 7: Discussion and Future Directions | 207 |
| Discussion of Findings..... | 211 |
| Study Limitations and Biases..... | 221 |
| Implications and Future Directions..... | 228 |
| APPENDIX A: Semi-structured Interview Guides (Phase 1)..... | 231 |
| APPENDIX B: Information Sheet Given to Study Participants | 232 |
| APPENDIX D: Phase 2 Questionnaire Instrument (Spanish)..... | 243 |
| APPENDIX D (cont.): Phase 2 Questionnaire Instrument (English) | 250 |
| Works Cited..... | 257 |

List of Figures and Tables

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 1: Educational Level of all Respondents by Nationality | 144 |
| Figure 2: Employment Category of all Respondents by Nationality | 145 |
| Figure 3: A Scree Plot of Cultural Consensus Analysis of All Structured Interview Participants' Cultural Identity Ratings | 148 |
| Figure 4: A Scatterplot Showing All Participants' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Cultural Identity Items | 148 |
| Figure 5: A Scatterplot Showing Costa Rican Participants' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Cultural Identity Items | 151 |
| Figure 6: A Scatterplot Showing Nicaraguan Respondents' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Cultural Identity Items | 153 |
| Figure 7: A Scatterplot Showing All Respondents' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Social Value Items | 157 |
| Figure 8: Reasons for Immigrating by Frequency of Responses | 182 |
| Figure 9: Percentage of Respondents Planning to Stay in Costa Rica | 183 |
| Figure 10: Percentages of Respondents with Legal Documentation | 183 |
| Figure 11: Comparison of Well-being Variables between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Respondents | 193 |
| Figure 12: Significant Main Effects of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity on Acculturation | 200 |
| Figure 13: Trending Main Effect of Costa Rican Identity on Societal Boundaries | 201 |
| Figure 14: Significant Interaction Main Effect of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Identity on Internal Stress | 202 |
| Figure 15: Significant Correlates of Psychological Well-being | 204 |
| Figure 16: Significant Correlates of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity | 205 |
| | |
| Table A: Descriptive Statistics for Cultural Identity Item Ratings All Participants (N=47) | 147 |
| Table B: Items with Significant Differences in Cultural Identity Ratings between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Respondents | 149 |
| Table C: Significant Differences in Cultural Identity Ratings between Upper and Lower Clusters of Costa Rican Respondents (High Loadings vs. Low Loadings on Factor 2 of CCA) | 152 |
| Table D: Significant Differences in Cultural Identity Ratings between Upper and Lower Clusters of Nicaraguan Respondents (High Loadings vs. Low Loadings on Factor 2 of CCA) | 154 |
| Table E: Descriptive Statistics for Social Value Item Ratings All Respondents (N=47) | 156 |
| Table F: Significant Differences in Social Value Ratings between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Respondents (N=47) | 158 |
| Table G: Models of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Cultural Identities by Nicaraguan Respondents and Costa Rican Respondents (Analyzed Separately) Items Listed with Average Sample Means | 161 |
| Table H: Demographic Characteristics of the Nicaraguan Sample Compared to Costa Rican Control Sample (listed in percentages) | 179 |
| Table I: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Costa Rican Identity Items | 185 |
| Table J: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Nicaraguan Identity Items | 186 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Table K: Component Matrix for Satisfaction with Life Items..... | 187 |
| Table L: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Perceived Stress Items..... | 187 |
| Table M: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Depression Items | 188 |
| Table N: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Anxiety Items..... | 189 |
| Table O: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Social Boundaries Items | 190 |
| Table P: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Social Support Items..... | 191 |
| Table Q: Component Matrix for Perceived Discrimination Items..... | 192 |
| Table R: Component Matrix for Acculturation Items..... | 192 |
| Table S: Descriptive Statistics, F and p Values for Nicaraguans Compared to Costa Ricans.... | 194 |
| Table T: Univariate F Values for Cultural Identity and Other Variables | 197 |
| Table U: Pearson's Correlations between Immigration Characteristics and Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Identities | 206 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Don’t bring your camera, or your purse. Don’t wear any jewelry or make-up, and if you can, dress very plain, cover your arms and legs”. As I got out of the bus and took my first glance around the small *precario*, I recalled these instructions given by Carla*, the Costa Rican volunteer guide who had addressed our group the day before. I remembered her warnings about the physical hazards in the neighborhood, which were now quite apparent to me as I tried to decide how to cross the small stream which had eroded the land out from underneath several of the *casitas* in my line of sight ahead. Ultimately I was thankful to discover that the house I had been assigned to required only a small balancing act to cross a rickety 8-foot long piece of plywood on the way to the front door, while those a few doors down could only be accessed via a nearly vertical 12-foot ladder.

It was July of 2006, and I had signed up for a two-day volunteer trip to help build beds for children in some of the poor neighborhoods around the suburbs of San José. As I entered through the heavy dark curtains which served as the front door to the family’s residence, I was greeted by a woman holding an infant of about 7 months old. Maria*, as she introduced herself had only recently arrived in Costa Rica, coming by foot during her second trimester of pregnancy, and her younger daughter, the baby she now held, had been born here. As I glanced around the small two-room dwelling, I marveled at the accuracy of Carla’s description of the houses in the *precario* from the day before, “the conditions they live in are just terrible, the floors are dirt, and sometimes there is only one bed for the whole family to sleep in”, she had said with traces of real tears welling up in the corners of her eyes.

An hour later as we snapped the final board of the simple wooden-framed bunk beds into place and topped them with new mattresses, Maria’s two-year old daughter twirled around the room for us, seemingly pleased with her new gift, and also about having an audience. As she gave her thanks to us and to God, Maria handed each of us a copy of her husband’s ‘business card’—a small rectangular piece of paper with the words *Mago* and *Adivino* at the top in bold blue print, with a small picture of a magician’s top hat lying on its side with red stars spilling from it, and a local phone number printed below. She assured us, that should we call, our fortunes would be accurate, and given at a good price.

Later that evening, as I dined with the rest of the group, I pulled out the business card Maria had given me to show the other volunteers. “Magic?” scoffed Carla as she looked over my shoulder, “you see, what kind of job is that, how does anyone expect to make a decent life for themselves doing this kind of thing? This immigration, it has become a big problem now”. I glanced up to signal her to continue “Well, the Nicaraguans, they come from a very poor country, it’s better for them here, and we take care of them, of course, the *pobrecitos*... but it is a lot for us because we’re a small country. It hurts me to see us do so much for them, and then they just waste their time with things like this”.

The reason for the emotion behind Carla’s tirade against Nicaraguans was not clear to me immediately, and I was left unsure of whether what I witnessed was just the standard volunteer burn-out so common among those who work in charity doling out care days on end, or if it was something more. Though clearly many Costa Ricans I had met showed compassion toward these Nicaraguan immigrants, I also detected a great deal of pity, and at times even contempt. As I left the *soda*¹ that evening, I thought of the optimism of the young Nicaraguan family I had met earlier and wondered what the future would hold for them. Their journey in Costa Rica was just starting, would they have any luck finding what it was they had come for? How would they endure the challenges that lay ahead? In their case, I thought, a little magic probably wouldn’t hurt.

* All personal names and some biographical details about persons mentioned in this document have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

¹ soda is a local word for the small casual restaurants serving typical Costa Rican foods.

Decades of research on immigration in the social sciences has failed to fully illuminate the reasons for why some immigrants thrive in their new homelands while others suffer physically and psychologically. Typically characterized as vulnerable populations, immigrants are frequently portrayed as being afflicted by the stress of separation from their homeland and culture and at risk for a number of health problems (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2006; Mahalingam 2006; McGuire & Georges 2003). For migrants, the act of moving from one country to another can be one of opportunity or hardship; the ease or difficulty of this transition is influenced by characteristics of the host society, the migrant population, and the individual migrants themselves.

In Costa Rica, the recent wave of Nicaraguan immigration is challenging concepts of national and personal identity among migrants and the host population (Fonseca Vindas 2005; Rocha Gomez 2006; Sandoval Garcia 2004). The suddenness and magnitude of the migration—nearly a half million since 1980—and the social and cultural changes associated with it have instigated fears of instability and insecurity among many Costa Ricans as the number of migrants continues to make up an increasingly large percentage of the population of this small Central American nation of less than five million people (Funkhouser, Perez & Sojo 2003).

Present social and economic conditions, divergent histories and past disputes have led to the development of strong oppositional national identities among the citizens of Costa Rica and Nicaragua (Sandoval Garcia 2004). Consequently, many Costa Ricans perceive the Nicaraguan newcomers to their country to be very different in character and in culture from themselves and thereby incompatible with Costa Rican society (Funkhouser et al. 2003; Sandoval Garcia 2004).

The global and local political and economic forces driving this migration of Nicaraguan workers into Costa Rica have stirred up xenophobic sentiments among Costa Rican citizens,

many of whom feel threatened by the increased presence of Nicaraguans in their country. The ‘Nica’, it seems has taken on an elevated importance in Costa Rican social life; feared, while at the same time highly stigmatized, Nicaraguans have become the most convenient scapegoat for a multitude of social ills in the minds of many Costa Ricans (Sandoval Garcia 2004).

The current conditions in Costa Rica have set the stage for a modern day immigration ‘identity crisis’, a situation that is fast becoming a pattern across many corners of the globe. Immigration is a topic that is both controversial and consequential because it juxtaposes issues of national identity and sovereignty with those of human rights and dignity. Research exploring these complex intersections of migration and identity in the global era has important implications for the well-being of Nicaraguan immigrants as well as those of immigrants around the world.

Migrant Identities and Well-being

A large body of research has suggested that an individual’s cultural identity—a strong identification with and attachment to a group—may act as a moderator against the stressors that lower psychological well-being among immigrants (Harker 2001; Mossakowski 2003; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder 2001; Portes 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). However, researchers have approached this topic from diverse angles, and presently this body of work suffers from a lack of consistent and reliable measures to assess cultural identity, making it difficult to know if any two studies on identity are actually looking at the same thing (Phinney 1990; Sökefeld 1999).

Most of the existing research on identity and well-being has taken place in the disciplines of social and cross-cultural psychology, where researchers have developed a variety of scales to measure the relationships between various conceptions of well-being and identity, including the

degree of acculturation to the host society, and individuals' degrees of attachment to their national and/or ethnic identities (Mossakowski 2003; Phinney et al. 2001).

Many of these studies have demonstrated strong links between cultural or ethnic identity and well-being; however, as most of the research has been conducted in large developed multiethnic societies, the measures of identity have been necessarily generalized for use among diverse populations where the presence of multiple identities must be assessed. For this reason, most published scales measuring identity do not ask about the specific elements that are salient to any particular cultural identity, leaving questions about what it is specifically that is behind this powerful effect. Further, although research has documented the protective or destructive effects of identity on well-being, there has been less attention to understanding the processes by which immigrants adopt particular identities, a clear priority in order to offer protection to their well-being (Mahalingham 2006).

Outside of psychology, a different approach to understanding immigrant identities and well-being outcomes has been undertaken. In clinical social work, psychiatry, and other applied fields researchers have collected rich narrative descriptions via interviews with immigrants about the experiences they undergo before, during, and after their migration to a new place, and have used these results to inform their practice (Ahktar 1999; Baptise 1993). Though this body of research is brief, their use of qualitative research methods to illuminate the immigrant experience has provided a small window into the complexities surrounding the issue of identity, and has attempted to reveal what identity means to immigrants themselves and how it has shaped their lives.

In anthropology, many researchers have explored the concept of identity among immigrants and refugees (Brettell 2003; Chavez 1991; Glick Schiller 2009; Magat 1999; Malkki

1992; Olwig 1999; Ong 1996; Striffler 2007) however few of these works have specifically addressed psychological well-being outcomes as an objective of their studies. The methods of anthropologists, specifically participant-observation and in-depth interviewing have been extremely valuable for providing insight into the processes of cultural transformation from old identities into new ones (Chavez 1991) and the structural constraints on immigrants' and refugees' identity options in host societies (Malkki 1992; Ong 1996), as well as revealing some of the elements of cultural life that immigrants use to constitute their personal identities (Magat 1999; Olwig 1999).

Though the experiences of immigrants in different countries share many similarities, the rich ethnographic details that anthropologists have revealed in their studies of so many diverse settings demonstrate that any relationship between identity and well-being must be explored within the unique cultural contexts in which groups and individuals find themselves situated. However, paying tribute to the anthropological tradition of cross-cultural comparison, is there any way that research on migration and identity can be used to shed light on universal human experiences? Is there any value in drawing from the strengths of multiple approaches to the problem—those within anthropology and outside of it— to assess well-being among immigrants in a systematic way that can be replicated in other cultural settings? Such a method could capitalize on the strengths of classical ethnography, preserving all of its depth, while maintaining the utility of replicable methods and measures of identity.

In anthropology, theory and research has emphasized the negotiability of identity (Barth 1969) and the capacity of multicultural individuals to switch back and forth between different identities depending upon the situations in which they find themselves (Glick Schiller 2009; Olwig 1999; Ong 1996). Less attention has been paid to the social constraints that limit the

willingness or ability of an individual to take on any one identity, such as the social position of immigrants relative to citizens in host countries (Eriksen 1993; Mahalingham 2006) or the powerful emotional ties that some groups of immigrants have with the identity and culture of their homelands (Magat 1999; Striffler 2007). A related issue involves the lack of work addressing how the social values of different identities affect immigrants; in cases where identities are imbued with negative characteristics, immigrants may resist adopting a stigmatized identity, or may suffer psychologically when they do (Goffman 1986; Mahalingham 2006).

Another area where anthropological research on identity has been short-sighted is on the nature of the “cultural stuff” (Barth 1969: 15) that makes up the identities people become attached to. Anthropologists have devoted their energies to characterizing the boundaries that groups construct to distinguish their members from those of other groups, at the expense of a thorough examination of the content within those boundaries (Eriksen 1993). This is a somewhat interesting development in a field like anthropology that has its origins in delineating and describing cultural variation. This oversight is possibly an acknowledgment of the fluidity and contested nature of identity (Barth 1969; Hall 1996), but perhaps it is also a response to the fear of being responsible for reifying any one representation of an identity. Ironically, it is this very sensitivity and concern about the repercussions of identities on informants that makes anthropologists the most appropriate of all to reveal their content.

It is difficult to blame researchers for avoiding the more sensitive aspects of a construct like identity, especially when it’s very definition or existence is being fervently debated amongst the ranks of scholars in several academic disciplines (Hall 1996; Sökefeld 1999). Though identity is certainly not ‘real’ in any crystallized sense, the *perceptions* of particular identities are, and these have very real effects upon peoples’ lives. This recognition should be enough to

motivate anthropologists to find out what these effects are and how identity can promote or prevent high levels of well-being among immigrants around the world. This line of inquiry should be of particular interest to applied anthropologists, and others who are involved in planning, designing and evaluating programs to enhance the well-being of immigrants or other underrepresented groups.

Research Design

This research project employs qualitative and quantitative ethnographic methods to contribute to the body of work exploring the link between migrant identities and psychological well-being. Specifically, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork among Nicaraguan immigrants and Costa Rican citizens during a year of residence in Costa Rica beginning in September of 2007, and ending in October of 2008. Throughout the research process, I have tried to remain faithful to the ethnographic approach in order to reveal the highly nuanced and contextual elements making up Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultural identities, while at the same time keeping my eyes and ears open to the more highly shared and universal themes of the immigrant and citizen experiences in Costa Rica.

To construct variables of identity that are meaningful to Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, I have used the concept of cultural models (D'Andrade 1985) which are cognitive schema about a particular domain of cultural knowledge—in this case, identity—that are highly shared among members of a culture. The degree to which Costa Ricans share ideas about what makes up “Costa Rican identity”, and Nicaraguans share ideas about what “Nicaraguan identity” is can be determined using cultural consensus analysis (Romney, Weller & Batchelder 1986), a form of factor analysis that assesses the level of agreement among informants rather than variables.

Where highly shared models of identity are present, an individual's degree of internalization of a particular cultural identity can be measured by their level of cultural consonance with the shared models of identity. This technique has been used previously in anthropological studies of other domains of cultural life including food choices (Dressler 2005), ideas about success (Dressler & Bindon 2000), and parenting practices (Worthman, De Caro & Brown 2002), among others. Using an individual's level of cultural consonance as a measure of their personal identification with a shared cultural model allows individuals to be categorized on the basis of similarity of thought and/or action, rather than by the imposition of essentialized identities by researchers (Handwerker 2001).

My goal for this project was to test the hypothesis that a strong identification with the culture of origin can be protective to the well-being of migrants, particularly when it forms part of a bicultural identity—one that fuses aspects of both the home and host cultures (Berry 1997; Portes 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). The cultural models of identity in this project were developed through a year-long period of ethnographic research with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguan immigrants living in Costa Rica, and these models were used to systematically assess the relationship between an individual's cultural identifications and a broad measure of subjective well-being (Diener 2000).

I also sought to expand upon the current literature on this topic by testing a related hypothesis: that an individual's likelihood to adopt a bicultural identity will be related to their perception of the social boundaries between the immigrant and host populations, with impermeable boundaries making it more unlikely that an immigrant would identify with the identity of the host population. To accomplish these goals, my research focused on the following three objectives:

O1: Develop cultural models of cultural identity: This objective revealed key cultural characteristics that Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans considered salient to their cultural identities, and assessed the degree to which these models of cultural identity were shared among groups of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica.

O2: Determine the effect of cultural identity on well-being: This objective tested the independent effect of individuals' cultural identities on subjective measures of psychological well-being, including life satisfaction, perceived stress, depression and anxiety.

O3: Reveal factors that constrain cultural identity options: This objective paid particular attention to the social location of immigrants, as indicated by immigrants' perceptions of the permeability of boundaries between the immigrant and host populations, and tested the relationship between individual's perceptions of social boundaries and the identities they adopted.

A World of Immigrants and Identities in Flux

Each day, the hundreds of Nicaraguan immigrants entering Costa Rica find that their arduous journey is not over; their new lives in this new place put them front and center as players on a global stage. They are citizens of one nation whose work and lives take place largely in another. The immigration situation in Costa Rica is by no means unusual; the act of crossing borders, both geographic and cultural is taking place at a rapid pace today across all corners of the globe, thereby creating new and dynamic social spaces that unite immigrants with citizens of host countries in everyday social life (Alvarez 1995; Brettell 2000; Glick Schiller 2009).

Upon arrival at their destinations, immigrants find that the ways of life back home that they have known for so long will inevitably have to change; the actions, words and beliefs that made sense to them before will be challenged. Host citizens, in turn, find their shared identity as a nation in flux, questioning whether it is for the better or for the worse.

Immigration is not a new issue; it has been studied extensively in the disciplines of sociology, psychology, economics, law, public health and anthropology, among others. However, most of our insight about immigration comes from studies of ‘third world’ immigrants in what have been, up until recently, the typical receiving countries—the United States, the European Union and the former British Commonwealth nations of Canada and Australia. Though Central America has been featured in the research as an important piece of the immigration puzzle, it has been primarily as a *source of* emigrants, rather than a *destination for* immigrants. Indeed, a large immigrant population from Central America currently resides in the United States, including relatively small numbers of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans (Caamaño Morúa 2007).

However global trends in migration have been changing rapidly in the last several decades, and studies of ‘third world’ immigrants in the traditional ‘first world’ receiving nations do not tell the whole story of contemporary migrations. In recent years, immigration researchers have begun to realize that the world has changed; as the economies of developing countries have industrialized and new labor markets have opened up, the supply and demand for labor has increasingly crossed national boundaries. This new form of ‘south-south’ migration, with immigrants leaving one developing nation for another, has become a rule rather than an exception among the present streams of migrants (Gindling 2009; Hugo & Piper 2007; Margolis 2006).

For the majority of Nicaraguan emigrants, Costa Rica is the destination of choice; its steady growth in agriculture, industry and the tourism sector has created labor gaps that growing ranks of Nicaraguans have been eager to fill. In terms of geographic proximity, it makes sense that Nicaraguans would be attracted to Costa Rica; for the impoverished population of Nicaragua, the lure of opportunities closer to home, and the promise of a journey that is shorter, cheaper and perhaps less permanent than the long trek to the United States, has been hard to resist (Funkhouser et al. 2003; Rocha Gomez 2006). Most importantly, Nicaragua's southern neighbor has an important resource that it lacks—jobs. Though jobs in agriculture, construction, security and domestic services are by far the strongest pull, the long history of labor migration between the two neighboring countries also means that many Nicaraguans have relatives already living in Costa Rica. The occasional success stories that make their way back home serve as a draw for many who are struggling to find work in the bleak Nicaraguan economy.

On the surface, Costa Rica seems to offer something else that other destinations do not: a familiar cultural and linguistic heritage. Cultural similarities between the two nations echo in the rhythms of their folklore, traditional dances and marimba music. The shared Central American indigenous history and later experience as Spanish colonies have left the people of Costa Rica and Nicaragua with a common language and lifestyle. This shared history deceptively suggests that integration into Costa Rican society should be seamless for Nicaraguans. However, digging a bit deeper, the long history of tensions between the neighboring nations in the form of territorial disputes and domestic and foreign policy disagreements reveals itself as a substantial barrier between these two peoples. Costa Ricans commonly attribute the perceived failings of the Nicaraguan nation to its people, whom they fear will bring corruption, poverty, and violence with them as they cross the border (Sandoval Garcia 2004).

Many Nicaraguans I spoke with confided to me that the promises they thought awaited them in Costa Rica began to fade quickly after they arrived. The Costa Rican economy, like those of many nations today faces periodic downturns, and at the time of this research (2006-2008) the job market for Nicaraguan labor was not as good as many had heard it would be. As the rate of Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica has increased steadily throughout the last decade, new immigrants find the good job opportunities already taken by those who came before. An additional challenge immigrants face is the ambivalent attitude toward outsiders that is common among Costa Ricans who appear welcoming at first, while remaining quite insular in their close-knit communities (Biesanz, Biesanz & Biesanz 1999; Hayden 2003).

However, the current immigration situation in Costa Rica goes a bit beyond ambivalence, as many Costa Ricans see Nicaraguan immigrants as a threat to their national sovereignty. In turn, Nicaraguans serve as convenient scapegoats for the endless social problems thought to plague Costa Rican society (Sandoval Garcia 2004). Many immigrants face almost daily acts of discrimination and are frequent targets for ethnic slurs and cruel jokes (Ramírez Caro 2007). In this context of an immigration ‘crisis’, the regional and historical commonalities between the two nations and their peoples fade; the ‘foreignness’ of the newcomers is emphasized as Costa Ricans define themselves and their culture in opposition to Nicaraguans. Instead of the opportunity they had hoped for, many immigrants find not only more poverty, but a bevy of assaults on their physical and psychological well-being (Rocha Gomez 2006).

These challenges that Nicaraguans face in Costa Rica should be familiar to immigration scholars, as at times it seems this script could be written anywhere. This case study is but one of countless global arenas where international tensions are growing on the issue of immigration. Each time we turn on the news to see another boat full of Africans stranded on a Mediterranean

island awaiting entry into mainland Europe, or read a report about Ecuadorean laborers in Peru, Vietnamese migrants in China or Southeast Asian workers in the Gulf states of the Middle East, we realize that there is hardly a region in the world today that is unaffected by migration. The pace of human mobility in the current era has increased the need for comparative research on borders and the powerful effects that the interplay of personal, cultural and national identities have on human lives (Alvarez 1995).

Well-being in Costa Rica: The Happiest Place on Earth?

On my first visit to Costa Rica, I encountered a brilliant and welcoming country, filled with friendly and helpful people. On display were its diverse landscapes; the sprawling green valleys, active volcanoes, lush rainforests and post-card perfect beaches caught my attention, as did the national parks and preserves, with their abundant and exotic flora and fauna that draw in flocks of tourists from abroad each year. After taking in these sights, it was easy for me to see how Costa Rica has come to top several indicators of world happiness in recent years, including global studies of subjective well-being and happy life years (Veenhoven 2013), and sustainable well-being (Abdallah, Michaelson, Shah, Stoll & Marks 2012).

As I traveled around the countryside and took in the natural beauty, it was tempting for me to think—just like the author of a recent New York Times editorial—that this must be why Costa Ricans are so happy (Kristof 2010). However, while the natural beauty does make tourists quite joyous, it may not be the most important explanation for Costa Rican happiness; two-thirds of the total population who live in the cities and towns of the Central Valley do not get to experience the splendor of these natural surroundings on a regular basis, and the rapid pace of

tourism development in the coastal regions threatens to stretch the average Costa Rican's budget further and further from this possibility each year.

Though nature is what colors Costa Rica's international reputation, the heart and soul of Costa Rican culture lies with its people, in the towns and cities scattered throughout its diverse landscapes. Though the various regions of Costa Rica exhibit vast cultural diversity—from the cowboy culture of the West, to the Afro-Caribbean vibe on the Atlantic coast—the true 'Tico'² nature is often said to be exemplified by the *centrovalleanos*—those living in the Central Valley region of the country (Biesanz et al. 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007).

As the location of Costa Rica's first permanent settlement during the colonial period and the primary growing region for coffee—Costa Rica's most important export crop throughout its history—the Central Valley has always been relatively high in population density. Coffee production is still an important activity in this region, and given its high regard as the *grano de oro*—the basis for Costa Rican exceptionalism—coffee has come to symbolize the economic prosperity and democratic tradition that has set Costa Rica apart from the other nations of Central America. Thus, the Central Valley is where the true Tico nature is thought to have emerged, with its shared traditions of humility, egalitarianism, and a strong distaste for confrontation (Biesanz et al. 1999).

As an anthropologist, I enjoyed the generous hospitality of the locals, and Costa Rica became a place that I wanted to return to, again and again; and I did just that, on and off between 2005 and 2009. But my reasons for returning were not simply a response to the natural and cultural beauty I encountered; from my very first trip to Costa Rica I also saw something else that drew my interest and attention back to this place. Bubbling just beneath the welcoming

² Tico is a common nickname for Costa Ricans, originating from a linguistic tendency toward diminutive forms of adjectives. For example instead of saying something is *poquito*—very small, a Costa Rican will say it is *poquitísimo*—very, itty-bitty, teeny-tiny small.

exteriors of so many Costa Ricans, I also recognized a cautious kind of fear, the type that comes from being caught up in the ebbs and flows of cultural change. Though they have been enjoying the prosperity that has come with modern globalization—the access to Italian pizzerias, sushi joints and fast food restaurants—Costa Ricans have yet to come to terms with the newcomers it brings along. In addition to Nicaraguans, Costa Rica is now the adopted homeland of many Colombians, Salvadorans, Panamanians, Hondurans and Guatemalans, as well as a substantial number of European and North American pensioners (Sandoval Garcia 2007).

Costa Ricans seem to have a conflicted relationship with outsiders; on the one hand, Costa Rica has an international reputation as a refuge, and it has famously opened up its many vaulted social programs, like health care and education, to anyone residing within the national borders, whether they are citizens or not. While welcoming the citizens of the world to enjoy its nature, Costa Rica has been less giving of its culture by making it very difficult to be accepted into this close-knit society. Outsiders are a source of change, some of which Costa Ricans have embraced whole-heartedly; however, since many purport to know what kinds of changes Nicaraguans will bring, they reject them much more than others.

Organization of the Chapters

The origins, research methods and results of this ethnographic project are presented in the remaining six chapters of this dissertation. In Chapter 2, I introduce and discuss the concept of identity, with a particular focus on how it has been defined and operationalized for use in research across multiple disciplines. I also detail the history of research on ethnicity and identity in anthropology, as well as some of the challenges inherent in its conceptualization. Because identity is often a contested element of social and personal lives, I have tried to offer suggestions

for getting around these challenges in order that research on identity, with its practical implications for peoples' lives can be effectively implemented. I end the chapter with some issues related to personal, cultural and national identities in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

In Chapter 3, I provide a brief historical synopsis of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, including the history of conflict and dispute that has defined the relationship between these neighboring nations. My purpose for looking into these histories is to reveal how their divergent experiences have shaped the national identities of each nation in opposition to one another, but also to look at the historical and cultural forces that have led to the development of a strong sense of collective national identity among the citizens of each nation. As nationality is an important element of personal identity formation in Costa Rica, representations of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan national identity greatly influence the perceptions that Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans have of themselves and of the imagined other.

In Chapter 4, I begin with a brief discussion of the current immigration situation in Costa Rica, including recent fluctuations in immigration policy, and the current characteristics of the Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica, including demographics and details about their employment and living situations. Later in the chapter, I outline the methods I used to conduct fieldwork in Costa Rica, and describe the specific field sites and strategies used to collect and analyze data for phase 1 of the project regarding the local perceptions of cultural identity. In the chapter, I also discuss some of the relationships I forged with individuals and organizations involved in supporting and advocating for Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica.

In Chapter 5, I present the results of the first phase of the research project, my efforts to reveal the cultural models of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican identity. The chapter includes qualitative results from unstructured and semi-structured interviews, as well as quantitative data

from structured interviews with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. Several collective themes regarding Nicaraguan and Costa Rican cultural identities are presented, each highlighted by excerpts from individual interviews. The chapter concludes with the results of the cultural consensus analysis of structured interviews that were informed by the earlier series of semi-structured interviews, using the results of this analysis to outline the models of cultural identity and their contents.

In Chapter 6, I begin by discussing what is currently known about the link between cultural identity and well-being, and present the methods used to collect and analyze data in order to assess this relationship among Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. Finally, I conclude the chapter with the results of statistical tests for two hypotheses among a sample of Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica: Hypothesis 1-Does a bicultural identity that fuses elements of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultural identity protect the well-being of Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica?, and Hypothesis 2- Does the perception of boundaries between groups affect an individual's likelihood to adopt a bicultural identity?

Finally, in Chapter 7, I end with a discussion of the findings in phase 1 and phase 2 of the project, highlighting their place in the current literature, and identifying directions for future research on migration, identities and well-being. I discuss some limitations of the applicability of the findings, as well as potential sources of bias that must be taken into consideration along with the results of this study. I conclude with my comments on the broader implications of this research and its importance in this current global era.

Chapter 2: Identity, Boundaries, and the “Cultural Stuff” Within

As I packed my suitcases that afternoon in late August 2008 after a year of living in San José, I thought about how nice it would be to go home, in fact, for the last few weeks of my field research, I couldn't wait to go home. It's not that I didn't like Costa Rica, or that I wouldn't miss all of the people I'd come to know, it's just that I missed my other life, the one back in the U.S. that I maintained, if just barely, through Skype calls and occasional visits. Exhausted and water-logged, I had just returned from a field trip downtown, and was relieved to have collected the final set of questionnaires I needed for my research. Even though the next morning's flight from rainy San José to sunny Washington, DC was just a few hours away, I knew the relief I felt was temporary as I unloaded the latest set of questionnaires from my bag and glanced at the growing pile of data that I would eventually have to deal with.

As I began to remove the papers from the sealed envelopes that contained them, to my surprise, and somewhat to my amusement, on the back of one of the filled-out questionnaires I found a note meant for me; the handwritten thoughts of a seemingly annoyed Costa Rican woman, age 24, who had completed the anonymous questionnaire on “culture and identity in Costa Rica” that I had labored over a few months prior. In addition to circling her responses to the scale items measuring various sociocultural constructs and demographic attributes, she had provided a boon of additional comments, so many that they covered all the margins and went on to the backs of the pages.

To phrase it kindly, she did not like my questions, in fact she found them to be “repetitivo and esteriotípica”, saying, “Our culture is so much more than gallo pinto, agua dulce and fútbol”. It was clear that she did not find my questions to be all that relevant to an examination of the complexities involved in deciphering what it means to be a Costa Rican or a Nicaraguan living in Costa Rica. She found them to be exactly what one would expect from a North American woman's superficial attempt to describe her culture. She asked the same questions I had asked myself on numerous occasions over the past year: What was I doing here, and who was I to comment on issues so unfamiliar to me as those of immigration and identity in Costa Rica? Especially questionable was my attempt to do this with a foreigner's shaky grasp of the language. To her, and at times, to me too, this seemed like a fool's task, one that's successful completion was impossible, or at least improbable.

I smiled to myself, not in mocking, but out of appreciation for her comments. I was almost sure I had uttered some of the same words she had written more than once in the months preceding. As a layperson, she had touched upon a major theoretical challenge in cultural anthropology, how to define and describe cultures. However, unbeknownst to this young woman, there was a method to my seeming madness. I had set out to uncover and reveal how Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans define their respective cultures and that of the other. Ironically, these very questions she so despised had come to be through a lengthy process of ethnographic observation and extensive consultation with Costa Ricans, Nicaraguans and other foreigners from many different walks of life, in the months prior. Those items she was offended by on my “cultural identity” scale, were those very things that others had told me did matter—they were widely shared perceptions of “Costa Ricanness” and “Nicaraguanness”. But, of course, my models could not envelop everyone's vision of country and culture, and it was apparent to me then, that they had not resonated with her.

Some Persistent Problems in the Study of Identity: The Whats, Whys and Hows?

To define a concept like ‘identity’ or ‘culture’ is problematic, even for scholars in the field of anthropology where there is little consensus of what these words mean. The history of anthropology is dotted with debates over various definitions of culture and their respective utilities. Because culture is an elusive and dynamic concept, it is not an easy task (and possibly a futile one) to describe the content of a particular one—that is, to determine what specific beliefs, behaviors and ideas make it what it is. But that has been the task of ethnography since the origins of anthropology, to provide a brief window into a particular way of life, as it is happening at a particular time.

As outsiders to the culture under study, anthropologists face many challenges as they attempt to describe and make sense of their observations regarding the beliefs and behaviors of the people of a particular culture. To begin, their findings are usually subject to significant biases due to personal qualities and characteristics about themselves, as well as the limitations of their research methods. They can also expect to find significant intra-cultural variation, as culture is often contested by those who claim membership in a cultural group; there will always be some members who reject the findings of ethnographic research outright as inaccurate. Finally, anthropologists also have to pay attention to how their research findings are interpreted because these could have political impacts and consequences for those under study. These are just some of the issues that cultural anthropologists have faced and sought resolution to since the origins of the discipline.

In recent years, similar challenges have arisen for anthropologists who have shifted their focus to describing and characterizing ‘identities’—a concept related to culture, but different in the sense that it exists at multiple levels encompassing the personal, social, cultural, national, and

the global. Identity can be invoked to refer to the collective perception of a group of individuals, based on some quality such as ethnicity, gender, or national belonging (among others), but identity is also a construct that can be used to define how an individual person sees him or herself, and/or how that person is perceived by others. Identities can be self-ascribed or other-ascribed and they can be characterized from multiple perspectives, both by in-group or by out-group. These multidimensional qualities of identity may pose an even greater challenge than culture for anthropologists attempting to integrate this concept into their research.

Individuals participate in a variety of social and cultural groups, and they can therefore have multiple identities (for example, a person can be Welsh, American, female, a mother, etc.), each derived from membership in a shared community. The various social and cultural communities that an individual participates in become a toolkit from which they pick and choose elements in the effort to forge their own, unique personal identities. Some aspects of a person's identity become important at some times and in some contexts while other aspects of identity may be minimized in an individual's everyday life. For example, a person may find that their own "Welshness" means little more to them than surname origins and family trivia, whereas another person may find their "Italianness" as more central to their sense of self, and may perform and reproduce this identity regularly through participation in community events, or in Sunday afternoon gatherings of family around a table of good homemade Italian food.

To complicate matters further, group identities can be bestowed upon individuals based upon their perceived "shared sameness" with other members of a group (Sökefeld 1999). One can end up being labeled with an identity that they do not recognize and/or embrace. This happens in the United States to people originating from many different, culturally distinct Latin American countries, who are identified collectively as "Latinos" by most Americans, or to

immigrants from East Africa who may find themselves lumped together in an identity group with people from places and cultures as distant as the Caribbean or the southern United States.

Given the broad scope of identity, researchers have operationalized the concept in various ways to suit the goals of their studies, with definitions ranging from the concrete—“a feeling of belonging to a group and/or place” (Phinney 1990: 503) to the abstract—“a process of self-discovery rooted in the collective identities of class, race, gender and nation” (Hall 1989). As anthropologists, we are primarily interested in what some humans share with other humans; for this reason, it is probably no accident that we have prioritized the study of collective social and cultural concepts of identity over personal ones in our work (Eriksen 1993).

Personal identities exist *within* individuals, and most anthropologists are not interested in the detailed examination of the things that make an individual person unique. Though undoubtedly fascinating, revealing the individual idiosyncrasies and detailing the lives of each person is simply not feasible for most anthropologists, nor is it the main goal of ethnographic research. Nevertheless, it is impossible to study the collective without reference to the individual because individual and group identities continuously reshape one another in reciprocal fashion. It is individuals that self-consciously create the group identities that they attribute to themselves or to others (Cohen 1994).

The results of research on identity are always controversial, and with good reason. Even though identity is a dynamic construct, some cultural elements of an identity, relevant only at a particular time, and only to some members of a socially-defined group can become ‘stuck’ in the popular discourse regarding that group. Scholarly research on identity must be careful to avoid perpetuating stereotypes, which become ever more powerful when coated with the gloss of scientific validity. The American Anthropological Association’s (AAA) ethical mandate to

consider the potential impacts of research findings on the people under study could not be more important than when one is dealing with sensitive issues like cultural identity.

So Why Study Identity at All?

These amorphous qualities and inherent theoretical complexities, along with the controversies may lead some researchers to avoid or sidestep explorations of and discussions pertaining to identity. There has been some talk in the social sciences of abandoning the concept altogether (Brubaker & Cooper 2000; Hall 1996). At times, the concept of identity appears to be a theoretical brick wall; how can so much work on a particular topic have produced so little consensus among researchers? The accusations that concepts like identity invoke essentialism, and neglect individual agency have scared many away from this area of investigation at all, or have reduced the scope of identity studies to descriptive accounts of how some individuals or groups ‘negotiate’ their identities. Only a small academic literature exists where identity has been operationalized as a variable for study, mostly in the field of psychology (Phinney et al. 2001), with only minimal contributions from anthropology.

While important questions and concerns remain, they should not preclude us from a careful investigation of identity, and the implications it has for peoples’ lives. Despite its capacity to divide and perplex the academic community, identity remains an important topic because of the recognition that without it, “certain key questions (such as those which are the focus of this research) cannot be thought at all” (Hall 1996: 2). It may be argued that because identities are not ‘real’ in any objective sense, that their potential relationship to other variables of interest is only fleeting, and therefore an unworthy avenue of investigation (Brubaker & Cooper 2000).

However, for such a fuzzy concept, identity does have real and measurable effects on people. Despite our capacity for individualism, humans do share commonly held beliefs, behaviors, values, and worldviews with others, and the degree of sharing can be qualitatively and quantitatively assessed (Romney, Weller & Batchelder 1986). To take systematic studies of identity off of the table due to political correctness does a great disservice to both the scientific community, and to the groups under study.

Culture and identity are fascinating subjects, and humans everywhere seem to come with a built-in curiosity about other humans which propels them to characterize and categorize others. ‘Cultural models’ describing the identities of groups of people will continue to exist, regardless of whether they are revealed by anthropologists or by untrained laypersons. We are far better off if our understandings about identities are derived from research that applies theory and the careful use of ethnographic methods. If anthropologists choose not to study identity, others who are less careful about how their cultural models of identity are interpreted will.

Anthropology of Identity

The origins of the anthropological discipline lie in the curiosity inspired by difference. Most early anthropologists studied outside of their home societies, encountering peoples living in tribes, supposedly isolated from the influence of large societies. The main task of anthropology was to describe the beliefs and lifestyles making up the social and cultural worlds of these peoples. Foreign ‘cultures’ were portrayed as discrete social units comprised of like-minded natives, acting in predictable ways. Under this objective, the concept of ‘identity’ was largely a non-issue in cultural anthropology. Certainly, themes of difference arose in fieldwork, for example, when the natives discussed who was an insider or outsider, or when they proclaimed

differences in beliefs and behaviors between themselves and those of rival tribes; and of course, anthropologists recognized the vast cultural differences between themselves and those they studied. Nevertheless, in the early years, identity was rarely the main topic of an ethnographic study (Eriksen 1993).

Identity became an interesting subject of study for anthropologists when they noticed that the former anthropological subjects, or ‘tribal peoples’ were migrating from isolated rural areas into cities where they became enmeshed in ‘multi-ethnic’ societies. The discipline of urban anthropology emerged during the 1960s in response to the decolonization of large parts of Africa (Eriksen 1993). Research questions turned from those attempting to describe and explain the functioning of individual ‘cultures’, to those exploring what happens when separate groups of people with very different ways of thinking and acting come together in one place. Thus, the concept of identity emerged, as a collective representation of the qualities and characteristics of members making up a group, in the context of how groups of people define who is a member of a group and how groups define their collective identity in opposition to other groups. An identity is not just another word for a group of people who share a ‘culture’, but rather, it requires interactions between groups to exist at all (Barth 1969; Eriksen 1993).

In anthropology, interest in identity has focused on the concept of ethnicity which has been particularly useful in the quest to understand group relations, ethnic conflicts, nationalism and social movements. Two main frameworks for understanding ethnic identity predominate in anthropology—the primordialist and the situational. Both perspectives attempt to explain why and how people categorize themselves and others into ethnic groups, and the consequences of ethnicity for social interactions between groups. The two perspectives differ in their views on how identities are formed, and how negotiable they think identities are.

In the *primordialist* framework, ethnic identities represent deeply held, cultural differences between groups; they are based on close kinship ties and shared language among their members. In this view, people are not born with an ethnic identity, but are born into one, which is cemented early in life through socialization (Kakar 1990). Ethnicity is thought to have roots in kinship and shared ancestry. Members of rival groups are thought to possess an opposite culture, and all bad qualities that a group rejects in itself are projected onto these others. Because this view characterizes ethnic identities as essential qualities, it explains the persistent tensions seen between some long-standing rival ethnic groups that re-emerge, even after long periods of peaceful interaction. The primordial approach explains emotional attachments among group members as analogous to the attachments people feel toward family and kin members. In sociobiological theory, primordialism is also present, as genetics are purported to play a substantial role in group formation and permanence (Wilson 1978; Chagnon 1996).

Another view of ethnic identity emerged and took hold in anthropology with the position advocated by Frederick Barth in his classic work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). While Barth was interested mainly in ethnicity, his *situational perspective* has since been used to understand identities at all levels, from the individual to the transnational. In this view, ‘ethnic groups’ are not static, natural features, but are formed on the basis of socially constructed differences between groups. An ethnic identity does not and cannot exist without the presence of ‘others’—individuals that exist outside of the group; it is the awareness of the distinctiveness of others that makes an identity important. Groups defend their uniqueness by delineating boundaries marked by the shared characteristics and qualities among their members that distinguish them from those of other groups; differences between groups are emphasized while similarities are denied. In this view of identity, significant cultural differences may exist between

groups, but they are generally the *product* of group interaction rather than the manifestation of any true objective differences (Barth 1969).

The cultural qualities and characteristics shared by members of particular ethnic groups are continuously shifting and changing in response to forces in the larger social world. For this reason, most research on ethnic identity in anthropology has focused on the qualities of the boundaries between groups rather than the “cultural stuff” they contain (Barth 1969: 15). In this way, ethnic identities represent how the members of a group wish to envision their group, in conjunction with how they perceive other groups. Though the separate identities of two groups are usually clearly signaled by ethnic boundary markers—language, dress, religion, etc.—in reality the boundaries can be quite porous, allowing ideas, customs, things, and even people, to pass across (Barth 1969). Ethnic identities can actually become more defined at the same time that their members become more culturally similar to the members of other groups. Globalization and transnational migration have not produced the global ‘melting-pot’ that was once thought inevitable. In fact, specific identities usually become *more* important to their members when the boundaries appear under attack from structural changes in social, political, and economic conditions (Eriksen 1993).

Despite their ephemeral qualities, situational identities exert a powerful influence over their members. Crises, natural or man-made can serve as catalysts to propel socially insignificant cultural differences into the spotlight as political propaganda in order to inspire ethnic conflicts. Manipulation of ethnic identities by individuals with political interests—such as when bloody conflict erupted in Yugoslavia or Rwanda in the 1990s—highlighted cultural differences between groups that had been largely ignored, but that suddenly reemerged, pitting neighbor against neighbor, and shifting peoples’ loyalties from other forms of social relationships toward

ethnic ones (Oberschall 2000). Additionally, social movements have successfully used identity to achieve other purposes, such as when indigenous populations have revitalized past identities and cultures no longer practiced, in order to claim rights to territories or other resources that were lost to them during the colonial period.

In many ways, the recognition of the relational and negotiable nature of identities changed the social sciences in lasting and significant ways. Identity, when conceptualized as a dynamic construct, proved instrumental in the de-essentialization of ethnicity and ethnic groups. Recognition that groups are active creators of their ethnicity turned attention from simple descriptions of their unique cultures toward efforts to explain group formation under various social, economic and political conditions, using ethnic boundaries as an analytical tool (Eriksen 1993). This perspective still enjoys a prominent theoretical position among modern anthropologists, and in many ways has been one of the most useful theoretical contributions to anthropological research on group relations.

However, in their efforts to combat essentialism, anthropologists may have overemphasized the fluidity of social boundaries and the extent to which individuals can and do consciously manipulate and negotiate their identities (Eriksen 1993). People are often highly invested in their unique cultural identities, particularly when the boundaries between groups become threatened, as is frequently the case with immigration. Situational theories of identity minimize the importance of both the aspects of an individual's self that they regard as non-negotiable and of culture—the unique traits people share with other members of a bounded social category that are very real and important to them (Cohen 2000).

It is clear that individuals and groups negotiate many aspects of their identity to suit particular contexts, but our capacity and/or willingness to manipulate our identities may have

been overestimated. In some cases, some identities, such as those based on physical characteristics cannot be so easily switched on and off. There may also be certain aspects of our identities with which we have a powerful emotional connection that we are unwilling to part with, regardless of the circumstances. A purely situational view of identity implies an ever-changeable nature that has not proven to be a reality for many. Perhaps the primordialist concept of identity is not completely dead in the water, and perhaps we can find out if, and what kinds of ‘stuff’ makes up the more permanent aspects of our identities.

Nationalism and National Identities: Territorialization of Identity and Notions of Home

Immigrants are people who leave their country of birth to spend time in another one for various purposes. By definition immigrants are individuals who have crossed a geopolitical boundary between nation-states, one that also creates boundaries between spaces, peoples and cultures (Alvarez 1995). In this era of increasing globalization and transnational travel, with so many of us spending time outside of our national territories, it is ironic that our identities as citizens of particular nations make up such an important aspect of who we are and how we are perceived by others. It is for this reason that identity is so useful a concept in studies of immigration.

The homeland or country of origin has a special significance for immigrants, regardless of whether or not they embrace that aspect of their identities. Their nationality makes them outsiders and members of a minority group in the nations they immigrate to. Though migration on its own can be transformative to one’s identity (Chavez 1991), immigrant newcomers are also cast into a new identity partially formed by the host country citizens’ perceptions of them and the

nation they come from. Their nationality becomes an important basis for their new identity in the host country.

The boundaries which separate lands into distinct nation-states are a relatively modern phenomenon, originating in the 1800s, possibly as a result of increasing global industrialization (Gellner 2006). The ideology of nationalism—the idea that political and cultural identities should occupy the same physical space—arose during the late 18th century during a period marked by revolutions in the United States and France (Eriksen 1993). Efforts to understand nationalism have made use of this perspective to explain how large populations of people, often quite culturally different from one another, unite as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983). According to Benedict Anderson, the phenomena of nationalism arose with the origins of widespread printed languages, which spread knowledge and ideologies that created a feeling of commonality between peoples. Nationalism binds people together in a common cause, directing loyalties from family, religion and local community to the larger cause of the nation (Eriksen 1993; Smith 1991).

Much attention in the social sciences has been paid to the role of governments in promoting nationalist sentiment in order to manipulate citizens’ actions to suit the purposes and interests of the states. But some theorists with a more primordial orientation to identity feel that there may be something more to it; they question the ability of this manipulation of identity to evoke such strong emotions as patriotism, that motivate people to defend and care for the land. Anthony Smith (1991) sees modern nations as having ethnic roots; in his view national cultures are formed out of “ethnies”, kinship-based groups with pre-existing histories and cultures. Though accounts of a group’s history or culture may be flawed, exaggerated, or purposefully

fabricated, they are widely shared and form the basis for the intense solidarity that individuals have toward the nation and its citizens.

In addition to a belief in a shared origin, national identities can also imply a primordial association with a particular territory. This concept of national identity implies deep, historical roots, and stability through space and time. In this view, the homeland is an imprinted part of an individual's identity that connects them with other individuals who originate in the same location (Magat 1999). Nationalist discourse is often infused with nature-inspired metaphors that invoke the rootedness of national identity, and the naturalness of being in one's homeland. Each nation is portrayed to represent a "grand genealogical tree" (Malkki 1992: 28), which implies the connection of kinship to nation. In this view, immigrants or refugees are thus people who are "uprooted" from their place, anomalies in the supposed order of the world, and a problem that needs to be resolved (Malkki 1992). This view carries with it moral implications that feed into ethno-nationalist sentiment in immigrant-receiving nations.

The 'home' as a source of identity may be an actual physical location or a metaphorical one, as in the case of diasporic populations who maintain a strong connection to a place they may have never seen and to people they may or may not know. A strong connection with the homeland can invoke romanticized ideas of return for immigrants that can impede their lives in the host society. In one study, Israeli immigrants had trouble committing themselves to their new lives in Canadian society because their identities were territorialized to a different place, whereas Japanese immigrants in the same country were committed to their decision to migrate instead, and were more able to create "a home away from home" (Magat 1999).

Nationalism and national identities can be important sources of pride for the citizens of a nation. They can direct efforts, loyalties and affections to all those living within the borders, but

they can also be damaging, particularly to those who are seen as outsiders to the nation, those perceived to be very different in character and culture. Nationalist sentiment has inspired various forms of ethnocide throughout history, from state-sponsored genocide to civil wars, and the relocation and forced assimilation of indigenous peoples worldwide. Today, in many places, nationalism is still an important contributor to the suffering of immigrants facing xenophobia in their new lands. In order to integrate themselves successfully into their new nations, immigrants must be able to be “imagined” as part of the nation by the host citizens (Chavez 1991).

Costa Rica and Nicaragua: National Identities as Cultural Identities

Costa Rica and Nicaragua have both been described as nations with strong national identities (Molina & Palmer 2007; Walker 2003). In some ways there are important parallels in the stories of how these two national identities were constructed; both have been portrayed as having ethnically homogenous, mestizo-majority populations. This characterization contrasts both Nicaragua and Costa Rica sharply with many of the neighboring nations, like Guatemala or Peru, where substantial and diverse indigenous groups make up a large share of the national population. Though the homogenous quality of either nation is not technically accurate, the national identities of both nations have been shaped by important geographical conditions that have allowed one ethnic group to dominate the nation, economically, politically and ideologically. Discourses regarding national cultures and national identities in both nations have been constructed and reproduced by those groups that have been in control throughout their histories.

In Nicaragua, a “myth of the *mestizo* identity” has taken hold in the popular imagination (Field 1998). This view was promoted both by the military dictatorship of the Somoza regime

during the first three-quarters of the 20th century, but also reinforced by the revolutionary Sandinista government which took control of Nicaragua in 1979. The western part of the nation has always dominated political and economic activity in Nicaragua since its inception. This was the part of the country permanently settled by the Spanish in the 16th century, where they were said to have mixed over the centuries with local indigenous populations and African slaves.

Geographically, this mestizo population was separated from the large indigenous groups, like the Mosquito and the Rama, on the Atlantic coast for centuries due to a lack of transportation infrastructure and what was perceived to be an inhospitable climate by western Nicaraguans. As a result, the Atlantic coast populations have remained somewhat politically and economically autonomous throughout the history of the nation. At times, their loyalties to Nicaragua have been questioned, as they occasionally allied themselves with foreign powers like the British and the United States against the rest of Nicaragua at various points in history. Atlantic coast peoples even made up a significant portion of contras siding against the Sandinista government during the 1980s (Walker 2003)

However, even on the western side of Nicaragua, the mestizo majority has been somewhat of an exaggeration. Like other Latin American territories with large Spanish settlements, socially constructed racial hierarchies may have minimized the degree of actual mixing, genetically and culturally, of the various ethnic groups. The reality is that even western Nicaragua is probably more ethnically and culturally diverse than it has been characterized to be. The centuries-old denial of the existence of unique local identities proved so effective that the indigenous traditions of western Nicaragua are only recently being discovered by the outside world, and by many Nicaraguans themselves (Field 1998). Ironically, many indigenous communities in Nicaragua refused indigenous labels offered to them by Sandinista policies,

while maintaining an ‘underground’ collectively held indigenous identity among community members. Recently, some of these groups participating in the global artisans market are realizing the value that an indigenous label can bring to their crafts and are therefore “rediscovering” these past identities (Field 1998).

Nevertheless, the international spotlight on Nicaragua in the recent past has helped to solidify an image of a culturally and politically united Nicaraguan nation, one where people of various walks of life came together to fight against oppression. Images broadcast internationally during the 1979 revolution and later contra wars have characterized Nicaraguans as a humble people with a rebellious and fighting spirit (Walker 2003). Despite the hardships of recent years, many Nicaraguans maintain an enormous sense of pride in their culture, if not in their government, with which many have lost faith.

The Costa Rican national identity is also one that has its origins in their supposed homogeneity, both cultural and ethnic. While Costa Rica has been described by numerous authors as having a homogenous national identity (Basok 1993; Biesanz et al. 1999; Hayden 2003; Molina & Palmer 2007), the population itself is more ethnically and culturally diverse than is usually acknowledged. The commonly-asserted idea of a Costa Rica founded by ‘white’ middle-class mestizo farmers does not account for the diversity of the nation, which includes several small indigenous populations, an Afro-Caribbean population on the Atlantic coast, and small groups of descendants of immigrants from China, India, Europe, North America, and other parts of the world.

Nevertheless, the celebrated national identity of Costa Rica is one dominated by the history and culture of the mestizo population rooted in the Central Valley—the descendants of the original Spanish settlers, local indigenous groups and African slaves. Geographically, the

Central Valley is the heart of the country which includes the capital city of San José and surrounding suburbs where the majority of middle class Costa Ricans live, and where 2/3 of the national population resides. It's location in the geographical center of the country allows the Central Valley to function as an economic and political core, and as a transportation hub from whence and to where everything must pass. As the majority of *centrovalleanos* live in urban centers or suburbs, it is the values, ideas, and attitudes of the cosmopolitan populace that dominate narratives of Costa Rican national identity (Biesanz et al. 1999).

Some cultural elements from other regions of the nation are incorporated into nationalist celebrations, for example, much of the folklore and artisan crafts that are important symbols of Costa Rican identity originate in Guanacaste, a western region that belonged to Nicaragua until the year 1825, when the residents decided to secede and become part of Costa Rica (Molina & Palmer 2007). The rural *campesino* identity is also sometimes invoked as an example of Costa Rican egalitarianism, simplicity, and connection with nature. In recent years, tourism has been a powerful factor in expanding the Costa Rican conception of the nation; foreign tourists do not spend much time in the central valley, preferring the beaches on both coasts and the rainforests and volcanic lands of Guanacaste. Ignored for centuries in the national discourse, and geographically isolated, even the Atlantic coast, home to an Afro-Caribbean population of Jamaican descent and to several small indigenous groups, like the Bríbrí and Cabecars has begun to be celebrated for its unique cultural attractions.

In the context of present-day Costa Rica, the distinct national identities of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans have important consequences for Nicaraguan immigrants. To outsiders, the people of these two nations seem to be more culturally similar than they are different. In the United States, a person from either nation would be identified as a 'Latino', or 'Hispanic'.

Those who have never been to the region might wonder who is discriminating against whom, and why. Spanish is the national language of both countries, and both states are dominated by Catholicism as a state religion. Both are mestizo-majority nations, with small indigenous and other minority populations. It is hard to imagine what cultural differences exist between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguan immigrants that contribute to so much conflict between the groups.

The current immigration situation has been described as a “crisis” by the Costa Rican media, threatening its national identity (Fonseca Vindas 2005). In this type of crisis framework, what would otherwise be minor differences between groups become highlighted and significant. Fearful of change, and unhappy about what they perceive as increasing insecurity and decaying social service infrastructure, many Costa Ricans require a scapegoat, which has taken the form of the Nicaraguan immigrant, or ‘Nica’ (Sandoval Garcia 2004). At once all-powerful and threatening, but at the same time backwards and primitive, in recent years the Nica has become the most visible and stigmatized identity in Costa Rica.

Ticos and Nicas: Oppositional Identities

To understand the Nica identity attributed to so many Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica, it is useful to discuss the concept of “personal nationalism”—the tendency for characteristics associated with a nation, and with the people of a nation, to become aligned (Cohen 2000). In personal nationalism, the traits associated with a nation are transferred onto the people who have originated there. Conflict with Nicaragua has been frequent throughout Costa Rican history. The two nations have held long-standing disputes and rivalries at various points in their histories which have helped to fashion oppositional national identities (Sandoval Garcia 2004).

Identifying itself as a pacifist nation, Costa Rica contrasts itself with what it sees as a war-ravaged and bellicose Nicaragua. Consequently, Nicaraguans themselves are viewed as violent and aggressive. The poverty of the Nicaraguan nation, with its lack of good schools, hospitals, and infrastructure is also transferred onto Nicas, who are thus seen as ignorant, diseased, and dirty. In the Costa Rican imagination, the political turmoil and bad governments throughout Nicaraguan history have become so embedded in the Nica soul that they too, like their leaders, steal, kill and lie to get their way. All of these negatives associations that Costa Ricans hold with Nicaragua and with Nicas are then contrasted with the image Costa Ricans hold of themselves and their countrymen, the ‘Ticos’, who are peaceful and passive, healthy and well-educated.

Ticos are said to be naturally fair and just; they look forward to the future, instead of back at the past (Biesanz et al. 1999). Historical and recent events are used to demonstrate the reasonableness and progressiveness of Costa Ricans. Costa Rica’s national hero, Juan Santamaría symbolizes the Tico’s self-sacrificing nature; in this legend a young, poor mulatto dies to protect his countrymen and women along with his nation’s sovereignty. President Óscar Arias’ Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the end of the contra war in Nicaragua is held up as an example of the superior Tico-style of non-violent conflict resolution. As evidence of their charitable nature, Ticos promote the idea that their large public social programs for health and education are open to all who cross into Costa Rica, and that they should be models for the rest of the world to emulate.

Any evidence that supports these representations—for example, a violent crime committed by a Nicaraguan, is highlighted extensively in the news, and is repeated in public discourse in the form of rumors and jokes (Ramírez Caro 2007). Meanwhile crimes committed

by Costa Ricans are quickly forgotten in the public imagination; often the nationality of an offender is not even noted unless that person is Nicaraguan (or a member of some other small minorities like Colombians, Panamanians, or Hondurans). Symbols of Nicaraguan poverty and depravity, like the precario of La Carpio, a squatter settlement located near a public landfill, have come to represent the entire Nicaraguan community. Though the majority of residents of La Carpio spend their days as everyone else does, working and raising families, the Costa Rican media shows only the bad parts—the crime, poverty, and violence—without any attention to the structural factors that link poverty and criminality (Fonseca Vindas 2005).

The categories of Nica and Tico are *cultural* identities, even though they are based upon national origins. Representations of Ticos and Nicas in Costa Rica emphasize cultural and behavioral differences between the groups. Accounts of these purported differences are strongly “dichotomized”, thereby creating two oppositional identities, each characterized by opposite qualities from those of the other. This is not an inevitable outcome of interethnic conflict, but is one of several variations that can occur (Eriksen 1993).

The word Nica is used to describe a person of Nicaraguan descent in Costa Rica. It is important to distinguish this identity from the identity of a Nicaraguan in Nicaragua. Even though the Nicaraguan diaspora shares many elements of their culture and identity with those still living in the home country, immigrants also have a set of unique experiences garnered during their periods of transit and residence in their new host countries. The Nicaraguan immigrant culture in Costa Rica also differs from that of Nicaraguans living in other countries, like the United States, Spain or Russia, due to both characteristics of the host country, and characteristics of the migrant populations themselves. Immigrant identities are at times more nationalized than those at home (Mahalingham 2006), with people from diverse regions of

Nicaragua coming together in an idealized ‘pan-Nicaraguan’ identity during national celebrations where the customs, traditions and foods from various regions of Nicaragua are performed and celebrated together.

Nica can be a pejorative term, however is also used on occasion by Nicaraguans to describe themselves and their co-nationals. The context and manner in which the word is used is important; for example, “Nica”, when hissed under the breath as a person passes by is a common form of harassment directed at many Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. The stereotype of the ‘Nica’ conveys a particular type of Nicaraguan immigrant in Costa Rica, usually one who is poor and uneducated. Nicas are always considered out-of-place, even when they are born in Costa Rica. The Nica identity is an essentialized one that is thought to “run through the blood”, thus making it one that a person cannot get rid of, even upon naturalization of citizenship in Costa Rica (Sandoval Garcia 2004). This identity has been formed and imagined in the Costa Rican nation and solidified through media representations which are reproduced in everyday language and interactions between people (Ramírez Caro 2007).

The last ten years have seen a proliferation of stereotypes about Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. In addition to the sensationalist reporting on Nicaraguans in the media (Fonseca Vindas 2005), the repository of jokes about Nicas has reached encyclopedic proportions. This particular form of passive denigration has become popular in Costa Rica because it allows racial discourse to permeate everyday life, even amongst a supposedly conflict-averse people like Ticos (Ramírez Caro 2007). The use of humor can cloud the ideological implications in a statement about difference. For example, partaking in ethnically-charged humor allows one to deny their own racism, because their words are “only a joke”. In this manner, someone listening to, or repeating

a joke can distance him or herself from the true racists—those who openly speak badly about immigrants or minorities (Ramírez Caro 2007).

Xenophobia and Racialized Identities in Costa Rica

Xenophobia and discrimination are an everyday part of the lives of many Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. Though subtle and less overt forms of racism³ predominate on the streets of San José, racially-motivated assaults and violence are not unheard of. Nicaraguans are currently the most visible and stigmatized minority in Costa Rica. They make up the largest immigrant group, accounting for about 78% of all immigrants, and somewhere in between 6% and 15% of the total national population⁴ (Castro Valverde 2007). Costa Rican sociologist Carlos Sandoval Garcia (2004) has argued that the Nicaraguan identity has become ‘racialized’ in the current context of Costa Rican society. Racial identities differ from ethnic ones in that ‘race’ is a construct that lumps physical/genetic features together with behavioral and cultural ones, making the supposedly problematic behaviors and beliefs of a group of people inborn, and therefore incapable of being corrected (Smedley 1998).

Racial categorizations essentialize the differences between groups; in this way of thinking, a violent Nicaraguan cannot be taught to be less violent, and a pacifist Costa Rican, by their very nature should not be forced to put up with violent Nicaraguans. Racialized conceptions of difference between groups imply an inevitability of conflict, and a futility of peaceful

³ The most commonly reported discriminatory action directed toward the participants in this project was to be stared at and addressed as “Nica”. Some were frequently told “Nica, go back to your country”, or mocked by their manner of speech by a person exaggeratedly pretending not to understand what they have said. A few did report acts of physical aggression, but this was far less common.

⁴ The population numbers are highly disputed, and much uncertainty exists because of the large undocumented population. Also, surveys differ in whether or not children born in Costa Rica to Nicaraguan parents are counted as Nicaraguans or Costa Ricans. The 6% figure is from the National Census which does not include children born in Costa Rica to Nicaraguan parents.

coexistence. This manner of thinking can be used by groups that consider themselves superior in order to justify their domination over the inferior groups; this is best exemplified by the divisions between whites and blacks during the African slave trade of the colonial era (Smedley 1998).

Though it is not always possible to physically distinguish a Costa Rican from a Nicaraguan, the Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica is often identified by their more ‘indigenous’ physical features—darker skin, curlier hair, broader nose, and rounder face. This characterization by no means describes all of the Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica—who are actually quite diverse in skin color and physical features—but it does represent the ‘type’ of Nica who is found at the center of this form of racialized thinking.

One explanation for the perceived racial differences between Nicaraguan immigrants and Costa Ricans is that many of the immigrants who come to work in Costa Rica come from rural areas of Nicaragua, where stronger indigenous features are more typically found (Sandoval Garcia 2004). Historically the larger cities of Nicaragua, like Granada and León were centers of commerce and homes to the elite, who were often direct descendants of Spanish or *criollos*—persons of mixed Spanish heritage. In reality, a wide range of skin colors and tones exists in both nations, despite the popular perception that Ticos are “white” or “light” and Nicas are “dark” or “indio” (Biesanz et al. 1999). In Costa Rica, Nicas are also identified by other important boundary markers including linguistic traits⁵, and their more casual manner of dress, which is probably related to social class and occupation.

Costa Rica has had a conflicted association with race since its inception. Race is an aspect commonly invoked as an example of the Costa Rican exceptionalism that separates them from other Central American countries; their purported ‘whiteness’, or lighter skin color, is

⁵ In addition to the inclusion of many indigenous words, many Nicaraguan speakers pronounce “z” and “c” as “s”, and the “s” after a vowel is often aspirated. It is sometimes characterized as being more melodious or poetic than Costa Rican Spanish (personal communication)

thought to be a result of their more ‘pure’ European heritage. Despite the reality that the majority of ‘white’ *centrovalleanos* are actually mestizo⁶, this myth of Costa Rica as a white nation has long been held as a rationale for Costa Rica to associate itself more with the cultures and peoples of Europe than with its neighbors in Central America (Biesanz et al. 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007).

Another element of Costa Rican exceptionalism is the supposedly classless and egalitarian society that is professed to have always been that way. While it is true, that the extreme exploitation of the hacienda system was not as pronounced in Costa Rica as in other places (Molina & Palmer 2007) and that the flourishing coffee trade helped create a large middle class of small farmers in the 1800s, class divisions have always existed in Costa Rica (Biesanz et al. 1999). However, unlike in some of its neighboring countries ‘racial’ distinctions never emerged as important social categories among the Tico population residing in the Central Valley because the mestizo population formed quickly in Costa Rica, with the descendants of most Africans and Indigenous peoples completely assimilated culturally and genetically by the end of the colonial period (Booth and Walker 1999; Biesanz et al. 1999).

Some individuals who have retained a small of degree of physical and cultural traits from their African and/or Indigenous ancestors are referred to as ‘mulattos’, many of whom reside in the cattle-ranching regions of Guanacaste. Most mulattos in Costa Rica are descendants of freed black slaves and indigenous peoples. However, not much attention is paid to these cultural or physical differences in Costa Rica. Mulattos are generally embraced as Ticos, and Costa Rican national folklore borrows heavily from the ‘cowboy’ culture of this region (Biesanz et al. 1999).

⁶ A 1995 study by University of Costa Rica geneticists Morera and Barrantes found that almost all Costa Ricans are mestizos, with different combinations of European, Indigenous, and African genes (Cited in Biesanz 1999:98)

In the late 19th century, as Costa Rica was deep in the process of constructing a distinct national identity, the idea of race began to figure more prominently. From the second half of the nineteenth to the early 20th century, Costa Rican society, inspired by themes of social Darwinism, sought to supplement its scarce population with immigration from Europe. Political leaders were preoccupied with ideas of progress, and felt that population supplementation was necessary to achieve this goal. However, in their efforts to increase their population, the Costa Rican government distinguished between ‘desirable’ immigrants, such as those from Europe, and those they considered to be a “*mal necesario*”, such as Jamaicans, Chinese, and other Central Americans, including Nicaraguans (Alvarenga Venútoló 2007: 3).

In their efforts to build a nation of white Latin Americans, the central government offered contracts to private companies which agreed to bring European immigrants into Costa Rica to settle on the unoccupied lands of the opening frontier. At times, generous incentive packages were offered to European immigrants, providing for their transportation, lands, and housing. These efforts were not very successful as the small numbers of Spanish and Italians they were able to attract typically chose to settle in the cities of the Central Valley, where they worked as artisans and in small businesses, rather than in agricultural zones. Despite the extraordinary measures taken by the Costa Rican government to attract them, European immigrants were never a large percentage of the Costa Rican population, and immigration from Europe has largely declined in the 20th century (Alvarenga Venútoló 2007).

These early Costa Rican conceptions of the nation greatly influenced attitudes and policies towards immigrants in subsequent centuries. Costa Rica has always had a high demand for labor, particularly in its agricultural zones. International migration from neighboring countries and from the Caribbean have always made up a large part of this labor force, despite a

series of government policies arising at various times throughout Costa Rica's history to limit or prevent the entrance of undesired peoples (Alvarenga Venútoló 2007).

Even today, ethnic diversity is minimal among the national population residing in Costa Rica's Central Valley. Minorities, including scattered indigenous tribes and the Afro-Caribbean population have been isolated in the Atlantic coastal region, and immigration from the Caribbean has come to a halt; since the 1940s most of the Afro-Caribbeans in Costa Rica have been born there (Alvarenga Venútoló 2007). Costa Ricans of Nicaraguan descent are largely found in the Western provinces of Guanacaste and Puntarenas. Small populations also exist of Chinese, Jewish, Middle Eastern, and Europeans descended from earlier waves of immigrants. Today, most immigrants entering Costa Rica come from other Latin American nations and from North America (Calderón Steck & Bonilla Carrión 2007). However, Nicaraguans represent the overwhelming majority of foreign-born peoples living in Costa Rica today (Funkhouser et al. 2003).

Chapter 3: A Tale of Two National Identities: Historical Influences on Immigration and Emigration in Nicaragua and Costa Rica

As I got off the plane to return to Costa Rica in early June of 2008 after a brief trip back to the United States, I noticed that a new welcome display for visitors had been installed in the immigration and customs waiting area. I glanced up to see a video with nature footage playing on a series of flat panel screens hung from the ceiling. As a flock of colorful tropical birds flew by, the smooth-voiced narrator introduced them as “our air force”, the swimming sea turtles as “our navy”, and the long trail of leaf cutter ants as “our army”. I thought to myself how well this display highlighted and summed up various conceptions of national identity with the international reputation of Costa Rica. Its use of eye-catching images of the local wildlife and vast biodiversity to echo themes of demilitarization and ecological consciousness effectively conveyed the exceptionalism that so many Costa Ricans feel toward their nation. It was a welcome message for why people should come to Costa Rica: to see its nature, and because it is beautiful, idyllic and safe, in theory.

This display naturally led me to reflect on the sights I had seen earlier during a trip to Granada, Nicaragua. There, an organized tour of the city had me walking past colorful cathedrals and exquisitely preserved colonial-style homes. The tour highlighted some historic forts, erected in the 16th and 17th centuries to ward off pirate attacks, and later recycled for use in the revolutionary and contra war battles throughout the late 1970s and the 1980s. Along the way, the tour guide made sure to point out bullet holes from the revolutionary era in the sides of the buildings. A few blocks down from my hotel on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, another tour offered a boat ride through the *isletas*, a collection of small islands formed by the eruption of the Mombacho volcano 20,000 years ago. Set among the natural beauty of the scenery, I couldn't help but notice the numerous “FOR SALE” signs I saw, written in English; a telling sign that the most beautiful places in the country were still out of reach for most Nicaraguans, and a stark reminder of the long-held American fascination with owning a piece of Nicaragua.

The Construction and Dichotomization of National Identities

The stereotypes about the peace-loving eco-paradise of Costa Rica and violence-prone former warzone of Nicaragua are not found just on the streets of San José, but variations on these themes have occupied popular international perceptions in the last several decades. Pick up any guidebook on Central America and you will see the differences between these nations highlighted in not-so-subtle ways. Costa Rica has been a popular tourist destination for at least 20 years, best known early on for offering an ‘authentic’ and ‘ecologically-conscious’ alternative to the family vacation packages commonly found in more developed tourism locales. However, this has changed in recent years as development of the coasts and countryside has continued at an

unprecedented pace, and the familiar internationally owned all-inclusive resorts have popped up almost everywhere that foreigners travel to.

Tourism to Nicaragua, though increasing slightly in recent years, is far less common. Not surprisingly, talk of my solo trip to Costa Rica barely raised a pulse among my acquaintances, whose reactions ranged somewhere between envy and boredom (among the more adventurous of my acquaintances). When discussing my plans to spend *Semana Santa* in Granada, Nicaragua, some family and friends back in the United States openly expressed their concerns about my safety and my sanity as they questioned my motives for this seemingly ‘risky’ trip.

Much of the Nicaraguan tourism in recent years has been marketed along the ‘adventure’ or ‘danger’ niches, presented as an opportunity to go ‘off the beaten path’. Nicaragua has gained a reputation in certain circles (mostly grungy international youth lugging heavy backpacks) as a more ‘authentic’ Central American experience than Costa Rica. For these youth, crossing Nicaragua and living to tell about it earns one bragging rights and the chance to show off their passport stamps as symbolic ‘badges of courage’. This group of foreigners seemed to be ever in pursuit of the \$5/night hostel rather than the luxury oceanfront suite. Nicaragua has also begun to market travel to ‘politically-oriented’ tourists drawing intellectuals interested in the history of the region, middle-aged Sandinista sympathizers and Cold War enthusiasts, to take in its sights (Babb 2004).

An analysis of tourism narratives can be an interesting place to orient the search for national identities. Tourism packages provide a limited context within which outsiders can familiarize themselves with a nation and its people; these experiences must be able to be ‘digested’ easily within a week or two, and as an attraction to be sold, they must be compelling

and unique. While a week-long, or even a month-long visit to either country as a tourist does not reveal the complexities and the stories of these two places and their people, nevertheless, these popular narratives do tell us something about how a nation sees itself; which historical events they choose to highlight and what elements of daily life they emphasize to demonstrate their nation's distinctiveness and show how it contrasts with others.

Whatever the route cause, we can be assured that something has shaped two distinct national identities. Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans will be the first to tell you, as they did me, that these two countries and their people differ in significant ways. These dichotomized national identities that are at the forefront of the present day immigration crisis are the result of a long history of contact and conflict between the governments and people of these two nations.

Most Costa Ricans have a strong sense of pride in their culture and heritage. Popular Costa Rican narratives about the homeland paint an image of a peaceful and prosperous, healthy, democratic, progressive, 'white' nation has "more teachers than soldiers" (Biesanz et al. 1999: 1; Molina & Palmer 2007). This version of the Costa Rican national identity is a great source of national pride that has been cemented in the minds of the populace through decades of state-sponsored education.

Costa Rican historians, writers and ordinary citizens have long asserted the exceptionalism of their nation—complete with its unspoiled natural beauty and social and economic stability—as a safe haven in an otherwise turbulent region (Biesanz et al. 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007). Costa Rican narratives of national identity paint a sharp contrast with neighboring countries, whose proximities are presented as threats to its peaceful and democratic tradition (Basok 1993; Hayden 2003; Sandoval Garcia 2004). Costa Rica also paints itself as a place of refuge, taking in anyone who wishes to be there, and generously offering its expansive

health and social programs for anyone living there. Ironically, one of the chief complaints about Nicaraguans in Costa Rica is their purported overuse of these services (Castro Valverde 2007).

Though Nicaragua should be known for its celebrated writers and poets, its magnificent colonial architecture, and its seismically active, yet stunning landscape of lakes and volcanos, it is instead more infamously associated with militarism and violence. Set in the context of the Cold War, a national struggle to overthrow a corrupt dictator became magnified into a worldwide case study for combatting the red scare of communism (Walker 2003). Media images of a bloody popular revolution and counterrevolution that lasted a decade and killed tens of thousands of Nicaraguans are seared into the global imagination.

Militarism and revolution are common themes for many Latin American countries that have come under the control of corrupt caudillos; what makes the situation unique in Nicaragua is the intense international attention and interference in domestic affairs, particularly by the United States. Today, the poverty and dependence that sends so many Nicaraguans searching for livelihood outside of the borders of their home country can be partially attributed to this peculiar mix of failed internal and external political endeavors (Booth & Walker 1999).

Any account of transnational migration is also at heart a story of two national identities. Visions of “home” and “host” nations play heavily into immigration discourse, and even into the character of immigrants themselves (Cohen 2000). The images that nations construct about their histories and national identities unite their citizens as a community, a group of people with shared interests and shared futures (Anderson 1983). In the case of transnational migration, national identities present immigrants as outsiders, belonging to some other nation different from one’s own, which has shaped its citizens’ characters. The “personal nationalism” invoked by host citizens recalls back to the national character studies that were so popular among anthropologists

in the early 20th century, though largely discredited today (Cohen 2000). However, it is still important to consider the nation as a construction that is reproduced through the behaviors of its people.

Over the years, historians and other scholars have pondered why Costa Rica and Nicaragua have become such different places, citing some combination of history, politics, external and internal economic forces, and culture as the root causes (Booth & Walker 1999; Harrison 1985). Histories shape people and places in various ways, and it is important to learn from the histories of these two countries in order to understand how the backgrounds and experiences of their people have shaped their respective cultures and instigated the origins of the current migratory flow from Nicaragua into Costa Rica.

Early Colonial Experience: International Interference and Geographic Isolation

The discovery and conquest of Central America began in 1522 when the Spanish *conquistadors* encountered a land occupied by scattered indigenous tribes of various size, some linked by trade to the larger Aztec and Incan empires to the north and south. Costa Rica and Nicaragua have both experienced the shared fate of Spanish conquest and colonization, though a variety of regional differences in geography, natural resources, and demographic characteristics of the indigenous populations greatly influenced the process and its outcomes in each country.

Though Nicaragua and Costa Rica have both been described by various authors as forgotten “backwaters” of the Spanish empire in the New World (for this description of Nicaragua see Walker 2003: 15; for Costa Rica see Harrison 1985: 49) due to their distance from colonial centers in Northern Central America, there are important differences in their colonial experiences that have had lasting consequences for these nations today. While the colonization

of Nicaragua followed a pattern more typical of other Central American countries, it has been argued that Costa Rica's early colonial experiences put them on a path of development toward economic prosperity and political stability⁷.

Due to their remote locations, neither Costa Rica nor Nicaragua received much attention from Spain. Economic and military aid to this region was scarce, leaving the local governments susceptible to corruption and the land vulnerable to plunder from outsiders. Of the two countries, Nicaragua suffered the greater burden from these threats and by the end of the 18th century, it had devolved into "a political, intellectual and moral wasteland" (Harrison 1985: 39). Nicaragua, it seems, has never been able to shake off the effects of the "cultural infection" introduced during its brutal conquest by an ailing Spanish empire (Harrison 1985: 45). Costa Rica, on the other hand, was left largely alone to chart its own course and has experienced steady development throughout its history (Booth and Walker 1999).

Even prior to contact with Spanish conquistadors, Costa Rica and Nicaragua were very different places. On the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, the Spanish encountered relatively large, socially stratified indigenous settlements; this preexisting hierarchy facilitated the colonists' insertion at the top of the local social structure, where they were able to extract tribute in the form of desired goods and resources from the people (Booth and Walker 1999; Walker 2003). With an indigenous population originally numbering around one million, the people of Nicaragua themselves became one of its most important resources.

The colonists manipulated existing rivalries between the large tribes for access to slaves who were rounded up and sold for profit as a valuable new commodity in a market where labor

⁷ Lawrence Harrison (1985) argues that the early colonial experience of Costa Rica had more in common with that of North America than with its neighbors in Central America. As evidence, he presents similarities in the small settler populations, large availabilities of land, and lack of indigenous labor forces in both Costa Rica and North America, as well as some speculations regarding differences in the cultural and religious characteristics of the conquistadors who settled Costa Rica when compared with those in other parts of Latin America.

was in short supply and high demand. Within the first two decades of Spanish rule, almost 50% of Nicaragua's indigenous peoples were shipped to colonies in Panama and Peru, while many others died from disease or direct violence. By the 1540s, only about 40,000 remained. Inevitably, this had lasting impacts on the ethnic composition of modern Nicaragua which today identifies as primarily mestizo, and lacks large, intact indigenous cultures like those found elsewhere in Latin America (Walker 2003).

Throughout Central America, lands were mined for resources, the majority of which were sent to increase the wealth and power of the Spanish empire. The typical pattern of conquest had *conquistadors* use their technological superiority and military strength to force local *caciques* to grant them access to lands where they quickly put the natives to work as tenant farmers of cash crops, alongside the African slaves they brought with them. Eventually, this feudal-style *encomienda* system was in full force generating great profits for the Spanish empire. In Nicaragua, wealthy landowners settled in the colonial center of Granada where they engaged in frequent trade with Spain, and a new social hierarchy emerged, with the Spanish presiding over the *crillos* (Nicaraguan-born whites), mestizos, indigenous, mulattos, and Africans, in respective ranking order. Remnants of this early racial hierarchy are still reflected today in the composition of Nicaraguan social classes (Lancaster 1991).

In Costa Rica, this standard course of action was not as successful for the Spanish, for a variety of reasons. While colonies formed almost immediately after the conquistadors set foot in Nicaragua, it would take almost fifty years of aborted efforts before a stable settlement emerged in Costa Rica. In the meantime, it is likely that infectious diseases introduced from early explorers and other parts of the colonies ravaged the indigenous population. While some national histories have popularized the idea that Costa Rica always had very few indigenous

people, it is more likely that the sizable pre-contact population (~400,000) was drastically reduced in the years immediately following the Spanish ‘discovery’ of Central America (Molina & Palmer 2007). By 1569, when the first permanent Spanish settlement formed in the Central Valley, the indigenous population had been reduced to around 120,000, and it continued to decline exponentially into the early 17th century when fewer than 10,000 remained.

With so few natives to serve as a labor force, the colonists’ attempts to start an *encomienda* system in Costa Rica were largely unsuccessful. The local indigenous population was fragmented, made up of survivors from culturally and linguistically distinct groups that easily resisted control by militarily weak colonists. Many simply fled into the dense jungle, while others were absorbed into the Spanish colonial population through assimilation and intermarriage in the early decades.

At the turn of the 17th century, the Costa Rican people found themselves geographically isolated in the center of the land, separated from ports on both coasts by unconquerable terrain and “*indios bravos*” [hostile Indians] (Molina & Palmer 2007: 35). Plagued by poverty, and with a persistent labor shortage, early Costa Ricans found out that they had to pursue an alternative route to production; one where individual landowners had to pay fair wages to workers and depend upon one another to survive (Biesanz et al. 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007).

In terms of natural resource endowment alone, it has been said that Nicaragua should have been more prosperous than Costa Rica (Booth & Walker 1999; Harrison 1985). The seismically active land possesses great wealth in mineral deposits and precious metals, along with extensive potential for hydroelectric and geothermal power. Nicaragua is also home to a large freshwater lake and a unique system of waterways allowing for easy transport of goods from both coasts throughout the country. It also has relatively low population density compared

to neighboring countries (Walker 2003). Up until now, however, Nicaragua's geographic fortunes have brought it few blessings; those very qualities making it so attractive have also left it vulnerable to exploitation by outside interests from a very early point in its history.

One root of both Nicaragua's troubles and its promise lies in the Río San Juan, a river that runs along its southern border with Costa Rica, opening into the Atlantic Ocean. Competition over access to the river has been a source of great historical tensions between the two nations for centuries. The 1858 Cañas-Jerez treaty officially declared the river as Nicaraguan territory, while granting Costa Rica navigational rights. Tensions still heat up periodically, with the most recent outbreak occurring in October 2010 when Costa Rica openly criticized Nicaraguan dredging activities in the river as an infringement of their national sovereignty. A standoff in the region between fifty Nicaraguan soldiers and seventy Costa Rican police officers required outside resolution by the International Court of Justice⁸ (Boeglin 2012).

One reason the Río San Juan is so highly coveted is that it connects the Atlantic ocean with Lake Nicaragua; then, from the western shores of the lake there is only a narrow span of seventeen miles separating it from the Pacific. This unique local geography makes the region a natural place to cross through the Western hemisphere. Long utilized by global traders, this route placed the colonial city of Granada in a strategically prosperous location for commerce, resulting in the emergence of a class of wealthy local elites. However, its location on the river also left Granada vulnerable to looting and plunder from British-sponsored pirate attacks (Harrison 1985). From the early years of the colonial era until today, powerful nations of the world have kept a keen eye on this region because of its enormous trade and profit potential. British interest in Nicaragua continued into the following centuries, and was later accompanied by American

⁸ In addition to claims of sovereignty violations, Costa Rican also claimed that the dredging activities were causing environmental damage. The Court (ICJ) ruling in March 2011 allowed dredging activities to continue, but also allowed environmental scientists into the wetland areas.

imperial interests that would go on to profoundly impact the course of Nicaragua's history (Walker 2003).

By the 18th century, the British had established colonies at strategic points along the Atlantic coast to extract timber and monitor movement and trade along the San Juan River. They engaged in trade, and formed alliances with the Atlantic coast indigenous populations, to whom they taught the English language and British customs. These groups eventually became important strategic allies of the British and later, the United States as these foreign powers fought to gain a foothold in the region. Frequent international conflict over possession of this trade route has plagued Nicaragua throughout its history, only subsiding in the early 20th century when foreign powers lost interest after the construction of the Panama Canal. However, very recent negotiations between the Nicaraguan government and China seem to suggest that the canal dreams may finally be realized, with unknown outcomes for the Nicaraguan people⁹ (Rogers 2013).

While Nicaragua's geographical destiny was one of intense international intervention, the Costa Rican story is one of geographical isolation. Over the years, Costa Rica's varied and often inhospitable terrain has been somewhat protective to the nation, allowing for a greater degree of autonomy and control over national sovereignty early on. Even further from the center of Spanish colonial rule in Guatemala, and seemingly devoid of riches, Costa Rica was of little concern for Spain, which saw it as an unprofitable challenge. Ironically, this inferior status of the Costa Rican colony may have buffered it from some of the more damaging ravages of colonial and imperial interests, and helped to encourage its later prosperity.

⁹ Chinese businessman, Wang Jing, is currently in negotiations to secure an agreement with Nicaragua to commence plans for an interoceanic canal through Nicaragua as an alternative to the Panama canal, offering transport for larger ships. The Nicaraguan government hopes this will be a source of economic relief to the nation

From its inception as a nation until today, Costa Rican national identity has always been situated in the Central Valley, a climatically moderate region of rich fertile soils located in the geographic center of the country. Within this region are found the modern capital of San José, and the historic capital and first settlement of Cartago. These highly populated cities are surrounded by an outer ring of commuter suburbs and coffee plantations (Biesanz et al. 1999).

The Central Valley and the other important populated regions of Guanacaste in the Western plains and the Caribbean coast in the East did not actually operate as a single nation until coffee production picked up in the 19th century. Coffee was grown primarily in the Central Valley during the early years of the boom, but as global demand grew, the need for faster and easier transport of coffee to the ports on both coasts spurred the development of bridges and roads, and the eventual expansion of planting into lands further and further from the Central Valley (Molina & Palmer 2007).

As transport and communications technology improved in the early 20th century, the development of the national railroad finally connected the Central Valley with the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Some important industries developed in other regions—most notably fruit on the Atlantic coast and coffee production which had shifted to the Pacific lowlands, and these areas became integral to the continuing economic prosperity of the nation. However, these regions remained culturally peripheral even years later given their distance from the center of national life. Today these regions still suffer from inferior access to social services, employment, and educational opportunities when compared to the Central Valley (Biesanz et al. 1999).

Central America became independent from Spain in 1823 and the five nations of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica (joined briefly as a single Central American state which dissolved in 1838) began the task of creating independent sovereign

nations. Early patterns of production had significant effects upon the future development of these nations. Initially, independence did little to change the daily life in the former colonies. In Nicaragua, the entrenched labor patterns of the colonial period, and their resulting socioeconomic and racial divisions carried over into the new nation as local elites assumed the positions vacated by the Spanish (Booth & Walker 1999). The Roman Catholic Church remained a powerful institution and generally served the interests of the elites.

In Costa Rica, where small landowners were able to effectively compete with larger plantations, and where laborers could demand fair wages from their employers, the introduction of coffee provided a reliable path to middle-class prosperity (Biesanz et al. 1999). In turn, this empowered populace, looking out for its own interests, spurred popular participation in national affairs early on, and with it perhaps, early democratization. Some strokes of good luck, and a series of relatively good governments through the years introduced lasting reforms in education, health and other social services, which still surpass those of neighboring nations (Molina & Palmer 2007).

The Original Banana Republics: Underdevelopment and Development

From their origins, Costa Rica and Nicaragua were on different courses of development. Costa Rica's story has generally been one of steady economic growth, with periodic dips that they were able to overcome without lasting damage. Throughout Nicaraguan history, profits from industry and agriculture tended to benefit only the elites, while the majority of the population lived in poverty (Walker 2003). With its nations originally integrated into the global trade network as the original 'banana republics', the economies of all Central American countries

have relied largely upon agricultural exports since their national origins in 1838 (Booth & Walker 1999).

For generations, the Nicaraguan underclass worked the land owned by the wealthy, with little to no ability to gain wealth or move up in the social hierarchies established during the colonial period. Capitalist forces intensified in the 19th century as production of coffee and other cash crops spurred demand for new lands and cheap labor (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991). The typical Central American pattern, exemplified by events in El Salvador, Guatemala, and to some extent Nicaragua, further concentrated the wealth among the elite classes. As production spread into peripheral zones, local peasant farmers and indigenous peoples had two choices: to be pushed from their lands into even more marginal zones or to work their former lands as wage labor for export companies. Wages were low and many peasants had to supplement their incomes through subsistence farming as squatters on unused lands, or migrate to marginal lands in different regions of the country (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991).

In Costa Rica, the agricultural goods produced by the colonial pattern of small-scale farming were increasingly supplemented by production from large plantations forming on the expanding frontier. The main stimulus for this expansion of economic development was the global demand for coffee, of which Costa Rica had been an early producer and exporter (Molina & Palmer 2007). Coffee grew well in Costa Rica due to its rich volcanic soil and the expansion of production was possible due to abundant vacant lands available for planting. In fact, Costa Rica owes much of its early prosperity to coffee, which is locally known as ‘*grano de oro*¹⁰’, and remains a strong symbol of national identity and cultural pride (Biesanz et al. 1999).

Unlike the *encomienda* system in Nicaragua, participation in coffee production was a route to social mobility for many Costa Ricans. Without a large indigenous population to

¹⁰ Which translates as “grain of gold”.

exploit, and with the cost of African slaves too prohibitive, persistent labor shortages stemmed the development of large agricultural estates and instead favored a system of equal land distribution where individual families farmed their own small plots of land. Though some landowners did get rich, small-scale production on family farms remained competitive with larger estates because labor was scarce and expensive and large coffee estates had to pay decent wages to remain competitive (Molina & Palmer 2007).

While it is true in general that agricultural workers were not exploited or repressed as badly as elsewhere in Central America, the image of the egalitarian society so embraced in the national identity of Costa Rica is a bit of an exaggeration (Biesanz et al. 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007). In Costa Rica's early days, personal wealth was, and still is, a common route to political power. During the peak years of the coffee industry in the late 19th century, a great deal of wealth did become concentrated among an elite coffee oligarchy whose descendants continued to maintain important positions in Costa Rican politics well into the mid-20th century (Biesanz et al. 1999; Booth & Walker 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007). Nevertheless, the degree of wealth stratification in Costa Rica never reached the levels seen in Nicaragua and other Central American countries, and the educated and politically engaged populace, with its strong distaste for corruption had enough alternate opportunities for agricultural production and subsistence that prevented their exploitation.

Agricultural production intensified in both countries with the introduction of new export crops including cotton and fruit in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991). Changing labor demands accompanied the spread of agricultural export activity into peripheral regions of both countries. In Nicaragua, a pattern of internal cyclical migration from subsistence areas toward production centers emerged in response to the demand for labor during

harvests (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991). As more and more peasants were uprooted from their lands and unable to produce their own food, seasonal labor migration became a strategy necessary for survival.

In Costa Rica, early agricultural production was concentrated in the geographical center of the country and slowly spread out toward both coasts as new lands were cleared on the opening frontier. Previously unsettled lands required an import of labor, and Costa Rica attracted an international work force, particularly during seasonal harvests. Workers came from neighboring Central American and Caribbean countries as well as from Europe and China.

While some migrated seasonally in response to the demands of the harvest, others came to settle permanently. A large Jamaican population was brought in as labor for the construction of a railroad linking the Central Valley to the coasts. After its completion, many of these workers settled on the Caribbean coast as a permanent labor force for the banana plantations of the U.S.-owned United Fruit Company that began production in the early 20th century (Molina & Palmer 2007; Alvarenga Venútoló 2007).

The small agricultural economies in Central America were especially vulnerable to fluctuations in world market prices. Drops in the external demands for its products and cyclical recessions and depressions in the international economy hit Central America hard. Overall, the process of industrialization was slow, and the practice of using former subsistence lands to grow cash crops made both Nicaragua and Costa Rica increasingly dependent upon imported food and manufactured items (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991). Growing dependency was amplified by political crises and conflicts in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala which were struggling to accommodate to the changes brought about by capitalism. In comparison, Costa Rica was buffered to some extent by its relative political stability (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991).

Today, Costa Rica can be characterized as a “postmodern, neoliberal tropical republic” (Molina & Palmer 2007; x). Aside from a small recession in the early 1980s, the Costa Rican economy has remained stable and enjoyed steady growth. Costa Rica’s largest economic vulnerability is its reliance on foreign aid and the subsequent debt accrued. U.S. economic aid was of vital importance in the 1984 economic crisis, during which the debt reached as high as \$220 million (Biesanz et al. 1999). This heavy reliance on U.S. financial support has restrained Costa Rica’s independence a bit in political matters, particularly in regards to their involvement in the Central American conflicts throughout the 1980s. Many Costa Ricans feel that their ‘neutral’ government’s actions were a bit too strongly aligned with American interests (Booth & Walker 1999).

Steady growth in the tourism sector and improved prices of export goods have brought back some economic stability in the past two decades, but the longevity of the improvements is uncertain (Molina & Palmer 2007). There has been a rise in high-tech industries, as large international corporations like Hewlett-Packard and Intel have opened manufacturing plants in the suburbs of the Central Valley, providing professional and technical jobs for an educated population. Growing privatization in social services and public utilities has created some economic insecurities about the future. In addition, new social and economic uncertainties of future dependency have arisen among Costa Ricans in response to the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which was recently passed with the vote of only a slight majority (51%) of the population (La Nación, October 12, 2007).

Unfortunately for Nicaragua, early patterns of labor exploitation and wealth concentration subjected the people to a life of dependency on ineffective and/or corrupt governments that have made the majority of the population extremely poor. Political infighting

between rival parties throughout the early years of the nation created political and social instability, and nurtured a strong distrust of government among the people (Walker 2003). Wealth stratification amplified during the forty years of rule by the Somoza dictators who appointed 'cronies' to important government posts, passed legislation favoring policies to enrich themselves, and even skimmed off foreign aid provided during national emergencies. Just like Costa Rica, Nicaragua's economy suffered from declines in the prices of export products, however events in the country inhibited their ability to bounce back. U.S. opposition to the revolutionary Sandinista government during the 1980s resulted in attempts to cut off aid to Nicaragua and a U.S. trade embargo (Walker 2003).

The seismically active terrain of the region and its susceptibility to tropical storms from the Caribbean has left the nations of Central America highly susceptible to natural disasters. In Nicaragua amongst an already struggling population, a 1972 earthquake nearly destroyed the capital city of Managua. In addition to the devastation wrought by natural causes, the hardship for the Nicaraguan people was amplified by its corrupt government which squandered a large percentage of the foreign aid donated in response to the earthquake and left the streets of the city in a state of disrepair for years following the crisis (Walker 2003).

Nicaraguan poverty and underdevelopment were only made worse by the impacts of three major hurricanes within the last three decades: Joan in October 1988, Mitch in October 1998, and Felix in September 2007. Each of these storms resulted in immediate deaths and the destruction of property and infrastructure in several regions of Nicaragua. Joan and Felix devastated indigenous settlements along the Atlantic Coast, killing hundreds of people and thousands of farm animals. However, it was Hurricane Mitch that exacted the largest toll, killing over 2,000 people and leaving key bridges and roads in ruins. Flash-flooding and mudslides left

around 10,000 people homeless and desperate, many of whom, receiving no aid from their own government, would later emigrate to Costa Rica (Rocha Gomez 2006).

Government and Rule of Law: Dictatorship and Democracy

In all Central American nations other than Costa Rica, civil political institutions were slow to develop, if at all, and many people remained under the influence of militarism. Costa Rica has elected leaders by popular vote since 1889, and has reliably held openly free and fair elections since 1948 (Molina & Palmer 2007). This long-standing tradition of democracy is rare in this region that has been plagued by the effects of *caudillismo*—a Latin American brand of civilian or military dictatorships. Many scholars have suggested that the roots of Costa Rican democracy lie in its origins as a middle-class, egalitarian community of rural farmers (Biesanz et al. 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007).

Nicaragua's political history in the colonial era is characterized by the strong rivalry between two cities, Granada and León, which competed to be the seat of power. For decades this long and bitter ideological division between groups of elites would negatively impact the lives of the Nicaraguan people. Disagreement between Liberals and Conservatives arose early on in Nicaragua's history. Conservatives, based in Granada, were traditional rural landowners who headed up the large export monopolies and supported the status quo. The Liberals, a more bourgeois class based in León, promoted the ideas of modernization and 'laissez-faire economics', including the introduction of new export products (coffee and bananas), and the development of new government institutions and infrastructure including roads, rails and ports to facilitate growth in the export economy (Booth and Walker 1999; Harrison 1985).

These original competing interests created and sustained rivalries between the two factions, which eventually came to resemble “nearly identical, clannish political parties” by the late 19th century (Harrison 1985: 40). Tensions between the two parties persisted into the 20th century, and often erupted into violent conflicts, culminating with the liberal alliance with American mercenary William Walker in 1855, who was invited to Nicaragua by the Liberals, in order to help them defeat the Conservatives (Booth & Walker 1999).

The mid-19th century alliance of the Liberals with William Walker marks one of the most infamous chapters in Nicaraguan history. Walker’s coup was briefly successful in ousting the Conservatives from power, but rather than handing it over to the Liberals who hired him, he seized power for himself and attempted to make Nicaragua into a colony of the United States. His governance, however, was short-lived, and this incident succeeded only in discrediting the Liberal party in the minds of Nicaraguans for decades to come (Walker 2003). Neighboring countries, including Costa Rica, sent troops to oust Walker and reinstate the Conservative party, which ruled unchallenged until 1893 (Booth & Walker 1999).

The Walker incident highlights how political infighting opened Nicaragua up to the often-deleterious effects of intervention by foreign powers. Foreign interest in Nicaragua has been strong since its inception, and throughout its history foreign powers with imperial interests have played off the internal rivalry in order to serve their own economic and political interests. U.S. intervention in Nicaragua has been particularly strong-handed, and at times has shown blatant disrespect for Nicaraguan sovereignty (Walker 2003). For many years, it seems that the United States had a blind spot regarding the Nicaraguan reality that led to misunderstandings and inappropriate responses to what was happening on the ground.

The U.S. goal, though in part selfish, was never to destroy Nicaragua but rather to encourage stability and possibly bring democracy to its shores. A modernized, thriving Nicaragua would have benefitted the U.S. by serving as an example of capitalist success in the region. U.S. relations with Nicaragua through the era of the contra war were always oriented toward this goal, though sadly have had the opposite effect. Above all, The U.S. was largely responsible for bringing the scourge of the Somoza family dictatorship to Nicaragua, which would go on to devastate the Nicaraguan economy and people for over forty years, inspire the Sandinista War of Liberation in 1979, and along with it the U.S.-sponsored counterrevolutionary effort.

Among Nicaragua's caudillos, Anastasio Somoza García stands out as one of the worst. Raised in an elite Liberal family in León and schooled in the United States, he was hand-picked by the U.S. administration to lead the new National Guard created in the early 1930s in response to violent conflicts between Liberals and Conservatives vying for political power and the rebel uprisings of Augusto César Sandino which had inflicted serious casualties against U.S. military forces in the region (Walker 2003).

Somoza's western mannerisms and English language skills allowed him to charm representatives from the U.S. administration. He in turn used his position as the head of the National Guard to consolidate his leadership over Nicaragua, become president, and begin the era of the Somoza family dictatorship which ruled Nicaragua from 1936-1979 (Booth & Walker 1999). Under this succession of Somoza dictators, corruption and criminal activity prevailed. Anastasio Somoza's persistent oppression of peasants and appropriation of national funds toward his personal enrichment would continue somewhat in the later administrations of his sons Luis and Anastasio Somoza Debayle. The latter Anastasio's administration would amplify the

corruption and create a near terror-state through the massacre of peasants and indigenous peoples who rose up to revolt against his crimes in the 1970s (Walker 2003).

Despite their flagrant human rights abuses, the Somoza administrations enjoyed good relations with the United States, which contributed millions of dollars in aid, most of which was co-opted by the leaders for their personal benefit. In return, the Somozas always supported U.S. foreign policy (anti-Axis, anti-Communist) unequivocally and opened Nicaragua's soil for U.S. military operations against both Guatemala in 1954 and Cuba in 1961 (Harrison 1985).

Poverty and dependency in Nicaragua worsened under Somoza rule; wealth became more concentrated and the situation for many peasants was dire. Eventually, the Sandinista National Liberation Front—which began as a popular revolt inspired by Augusto Sandino's rebellions in the 1930s—was successful in overthrowing the Somoza dynasty in 1979. The Sandinistas instituted a revolutionary government that attempted to install widespread social and economic reforms benefiting the poor and to lay a foundation for democracy (Booth & Walker 1999). However, in the context of a perceived growing threat from communism in the region, the revolutionary policies of the Sandinista government were opposed by the U.S. and other nations in the region and a counterrevolutionary effort was quickly initiated. Combined, the revolutionary war and the contra war would claim as many as 50,000 Nicaraguan lives (Walker 2003).

U.S. opposition to the Sandinista government was rooted in the Cold War dynamic that was dominating global politics at the time, in part due to fears of Nicaragua becoming another Cuba. Though the Sandinista government won reelection in 1985, a calculated U.S. effort to sabotage Nicaragua's first democratically elected government was crippling, making it difficult

today to objectively assess the true effectiveness of the brief period of Sandinista rule (Walker 2003).

In addition to the tens of thousands of Nicaraguans who were killed, the wars of the 1970s and 1980s destroyed much of the nation's infrastructure and diverted funds from social programs toward military purposes. In 1990, the weak and unpopular Sandinista government was removed from power in a national election. Since then, democratic elections have been held every five years, with candidates favorable to the U.S. winning the presidency up until the election of 2006, when Daniel Ortega, the former president and perennial Sandinista candidate, was reelected by popular vote and remains in office today after winning a second term in 2011. Though democracy has finally been instituted in Nicaraguan politics¹¹, the social and economic situation of its people continues to suffer from the effects of prior generations. Centuries of bad governments and outside interference have left many Nicaraguans with a fatalistic view of politics and have left them unoptimistic about the prospects for true democracy. Participation in national elections has declined significantly in recent years (Walker 2003).

In Costa Rica, popular participation in politics has a long tradition. Early precursors to democracy were visible in Costa Rica during the second half of the nineteenth century. Beginning with the dictatorship of Tomás Guardia in the 1870s, Costa Rican leaders have instituted social and economic reforms and have taken responsibility for educating the public. Guardia promoted a national system of free, mandatory, secular education for people of all classes, ironically as an attempt to 'civilize' the peasants. This educational system has remained a strong social institution since this time, and has resulted in high rates of political engagement

¹¹ Opposition to Ortega's government remains strong in Nicaragua, and many doubts have been raised regarding the true democratic nature of his rule. He has recently been accused of attempting to consolidate power in the courts, thereby allowing him to forgo constitutional term limits in order to run in future elections.

among the Costa Rican populace that have largely prevented political corruption from taking hold as it has in much of Latin America at one time or another (Molina & Palmer 2007).

Certainly, Costa Rica has had its share of dictators and caudillos, but any quests for absolute power have been stemmed through a strong tradition of united popular revolt. By 1889, political leaders were elected by popular vote, and since 1949, honest elections have been held at regular intervals, dominated by two political parties, the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN), founded in 1951 and the Partido Unidad Social Cristiana (PUSC) founded in 1984 from a coalescence of opposition groups to the PLN (Biesanz et al. 1999; Molina & Palmer 2007). In the past several decades, the balance of power has tended to alternate quite regularly during election cycles between the two major parties. Currently, Costa Rica is under the leadership of their first female president, Laura Chinchilla of the PLN party who was elected in 2010.

While most of their neighbors spent a good part of the 20th century under the rule of military dictatorships and political instability, Costa Ricans have enjoyed universal suffrage for over sixty years, with the Afro-Caribbean population and women the last groups to gain the right to vote in the new Constitution of 1949 (Molina & Palmer 2007). Additional widespread social reforms, including a social security system, labor code, and a minimum wage also emerged in response to the Great Depression (Molina & Palmer 2007). Throughout the 20th century, successive governments have continued to invest in the education of the Costa Rican people; in fact, today the national population enjoys literacy rates of close to 97%, a figure surpassing those of many large industrialized countries (Biesanz et al. 1999; Gatica López 2007).

Conflict and its Resolution: War and Peace

Costa Rican pacifism is an important component of the ‘exceptionalism’ that makes up their national identity. Nicknamed the ‘Switzerland of Central America’ because of its proclamation to remain neutral in international disputes¹², the source of this reputation may lie in the history surrounding Costa Rica’s brief civil war in the mid-20th century, which lasted only five weeks and resulted in minimal loss of life, but had the important consequence of promoting the abolishment of the national standing army in 1948. Signed into act by President Jose Figueres Ferrer, this act was one of great symbolic importance, as it effectively prevented the possibility of future military coups that could threaten the young democracy (Molina & Palmer 2007).

The abolishment of the army attracted several Quaker families from North America, dissatisfied with the militarism of World War Two, to settle in Costa Rica. The descendants of these original settlers, along with later waves of Quakers, have continued to promote ideologies of pacifism and non-violent conflict resolution which have been woven into Costa Rican narratives of national identity (Biesanz et al. 1999). Certainly the proximity of the Nicaraguan conflict and others to their north furthered Costa Ricans’ distaste for war. Since 1983, likely as a response to the events of the contra war, Costa Rica has declared neutrality in all international conflicts. It was former Costa Rican President Óscar Arias who led efforts to mediate a truce between the Sandinistas and the contras, earning him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1987 and making him a celebrated symbol of national pride (Molina & Palmer 2007).

¹² Though constantly cited, this reputation is somewhat of a myth. In reality, Costa Rica has taken sides in most major conflicts, siding with the Allies in WW1, and initially allowing the U.S. to train contra fighters on the Costa Rican border, to fight against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Costa Rica's demilitarization has made it one of only a handful of nations without standing armies, a status that has in turn brought it great international attention and acclaim. While this reputation for peace has been a boon for the tourism industry, it has also made Costa Rica a logical place to situate the headquarters of global organizations such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the United Nations' University for Peace, which attract a large congregation of international intellectuals and academics interested in the pursuit of non-violent conflict resolution (Molina & Palmer 2007).

Nicaragua's reputation for militarism is rooted in its history of internal political problems and foreign interference. The international media coverage of the revolutionary and contra wars presented images of ordinary Nicaraguans, including women and children, dressed in fatigues and armed with military rifles to the global community. In some ways, the legacy of the Sandinista-led revolution bears the taint of failed state socialism and the stigma of its association with the former communist bloc of nations, including the Soviet Union. However, as one of the few examples worldwide of a successful popular revolution, the Nicaraguan story has also been romanticized and the peoples' struggle painted as a model for those who fight against oppression and resist imperialism (Walker 2003).

It is important to note that, for the most part, Nicaraguan militarism has been largely defensive. Fighting to defend their national sovereignty has been a prominent feature throughout Nicaraguan history, first against the conquistadors, then against British pirates, later against U.S. Marines and ultimately against the foreign-backed Somoza Dictators. In this, the Nicaraguan people have had little choice but to fight to defend themselves against external and internal offenders. Foreign governments' continual efforts to control Nicaragua's waterways have

brought along with them the presence of foreign military troops and external meddling in internal affairs (Harrison 1985).

Nicaragua's intense political divisions made it an easy target for foreign exploitation. Local political factions desperate for economic and military support repeatedly aligned themselves with foreign governments who demanded favors in return. After the construction of the Panama Canal, the U.S. guarded its monopoly by aligning itself with the conservative opposition to the liberal dictator José Santos Zelaya, who had previously rebuffed U.S. pleas to secure the rights to build a canal in Nicaragua. After Zelaya's defeat, the U.S. was successful in securing these rights in the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty of 1916, despite the fact that they never intended to build there (Booth & Walker 1999). These foreign powers did not have the best interest of the Nicaraguan people at heart, and conservative leaders usually catered to the whims of the United States, who in turn sent military aid to quell peasant uprisings (Walker 2003).

The U.S. sent in Marines to quell liberal rebellions and protect U.S. investments in Nicaragua. The growing resistance among Nicaraguans to the U.S. occupation inspired a guerilla uprising in 1927, led by national hero Augusto Sandino, which successfully led to a U.S. withdrawal in 1933. Today, Sandino remains a popular national hero and an important symbol of resistance to *Yanqui* imperialism. The illegitimate son of a wealthy landowner and his servant, Sandino witnessed as a teen U.S. Marines parading the body of liberal general Benjamin Zeledón through the streets of his hometown. Later, he became a rebel leader of peasants who fought against the armies of conservative president Adolfo Díaz. In July of 1927, Sandino declared war on the U.S., waging a guerilla campaign which ended with his execution in February 1934, ordered by Anastasio Somoza, the newly appointed head of the National Guard, who shortly afterward assumed political control of Nicaragua (Walker 2003).

Crossing Borders and Boundaries: Emigration and Immigration

Nicaraguans have always had a presence in Costa Rica. From colonial times up until now, Nicaraguans have made up a large proportion of the migratory flow of laborers to Costa Rica (Alvarenga Venútoló 2007). In Guanacaste, the Northwestern province of Costa Rica, many people are of Nicaraguan descent and share strong cultural traditions with contemporary Nicaraguans. Guanacaste, once a province of Nicaragua, was annexed by Costa Rica in 1824 thereby redrawing the border between the two nations. To this day, cultural and family ties stretch across the border in this region, which is coincidentally known as the center of Costa Rican folklore (Biesanz et al. 1999). Throughout history, these sociocultural links have continued to supply a flow of seasonal and permanent international migration.

As in other Central American countries, the opening up and development of new lands for agriculture required the migration of workers from other parts the country toward the new centers of production. Seasonal workers migrated to supplement the permanent wage labor forces in these areas during the harvests (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991). However, as the Costa Rican agricultural frontier expanded beyond the Central Valley, new lands opened up and national labor shortages ensued, which were increasingly fulfilled with foreign labor. During the early days of the colonial era, labor migration to Latin America was primarily African in origin, imported from the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. In the 19th century, Jamaican and Chinese immigrants came to Costa Rica in large numbers to work on the construction of railroads connecting the Atlantic coast to the Central Valley. Many of these workers stayed in the area, taking jobs on the plantations of the United Fruit Company (Alvarenga Venútoló 2007).

Though labor shortages have benefitted Costa Ricans in some ways, by allowing for the early growth of a middle class of farmers in the Central Valley, Costa Rica has always faced the

challenge of supplementing its national labor force in order to increase the economic productivity of the nation (Molina & Palmer 2007). Though national efforts were made to promote desirable immigrants from Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century, the majority of the foreign labor force in Costa Rica has come from neighboring Central American countries (Hamilton & Chinchilla 1991).

On the other hand, in the case of Nicaragua, the more important story is one of emigration, which has had a much larger impact on its people and culture. Nicaragua currently has one of the highest emigration rates in the Western hemisphere, with a net migration rate of - 3.3 migrants/1,000 population (CIA World Fact Book 2013). Aside from the initial occupation by the Spanish conquistadors, as a nation Nicaragua has never experienced a notable immigration of people from other countries. Before 1995, the total number of immigrants to Nicaragua, both originating from other Latin American countries and all other countries has never surpassed 1% of its total population (Walker 2003).

That is not to say that Nicaragua's regional populations have remained unchanged through the centuries, as internal migration occurred, including rural to urban migration beginning in the mid-20th century and cyclical migration for harvests. During the Sandinista Revolution and contra war, thousands of Nicaraguans left the country, with some returning after the 1990 election of Violeta Chamorro, but others remaining abroad. In the department of Bluefields, entire populations of villagers were relocated by the Sandinista administration in the 1980s.

In the 19th century Nicaragua experienced a small wave of immigration, primarily from Europe. In particular, families from Germany, Italy, Spain, France and Belgium generally moved to Nicaragua to set up businesses with money they brought from Europe. They established many

agricultural businesses such as coffee and sugar cane plantations, and also newspapers, hotels and banks. Like Costa Rica, Nicaragua also has a small Middle Eastern population, including Jewish Nicaraguans and an Asian minority, primarily Chinese, with small numbers of Japanese and Taiwanese.

Nicaragua's emigration is a recent process, and is largely the response to debilitating poverty and stagnant economic growth. Nicaragua's emigration rate grew substantially during the 1990s, with 71.5% of emigrants leaving Nicaragua between 1994 and 2001. According to Nicaragua's most recent national census (INEC 2005), 53% of all Nicaraguan emigrants choose Costa Rica as their destination, while 34.6% go to the United States, which is considered a more desirable destination for many, but with greater costs and risks¹³ (Rocha Gomez 2006).

Today, the Nicaraguan Gross Domestic Product is the lowest in all of Central America and remains far below its own mid-20th century figures (Booth & Walker 1999). Remittances sent by Nicaraguans living abroad represent about 15% of the Gross Domestic product and amount to nearly a billion dollars. The average amount of remittances sent back to Nicaragua by those living in Costa Rica is about \$63/month, about 1/3 of Nicaragua's average monthly wage (Castro Valverde 2007). Though emigration currently contributes significant financial aid to Nicaragua's economy, in reality high emigration rates hurt Nicaragua more than they help because emigration results in a substantial loss of human capital. Surveys have shown that Nicaraguan emigrants on average have more schooling than those who stay in Nicaragua (Rocha Gomez 2006).

Overall, Nicaragua has been slow to react to the consequences presented by emigration, and the Nicaraguan government has done little to help its citizens with the challenges of living

¹³ Coyote fees run about \$5000 to get to the U.S., compared with about \$50 necessary to cross the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan border (Rocha Gomez 2006).

abroad. Nicaragua has been relatively slow to ratify international agreements affecting migrants when compared with other Central American nations; out of forty-three existing agreements, Nicaragua has yet to sign nineteen of them (Rocha Gomez 2006). The Nicaraguan government has also done little in response to the passing of Costa Rica's draconian 2005 immigration law which largely emphasized the criminal aspects of migration and the threat that migrants pose to Costa Rican national security (Fouratt 2010). Unlike some other Central America countries with large numbers of emigrants, Nicaragua has not formulated a 'welcome home' policy to encourage return migration of those currently living abroad (Rocha Gomez 2006).

Aside from the occasional amnesties granted by receiving nations in response to wars and natural disasters, Nicaraguan emigrants find themselves navigating their own way through the challenges migration brings; on their way many fall prey to criminals and to abuses by authorities and citizens in the nations where they reside. Until and unless significant changes to the political and economic stability in Nicaragua occur, those who have emigrated have little incentive to repatriate and continue to endure the challenges of living as immigrants in foreign lands.

Chapter 4: Ethnographic Fieldwork in Costa Rica

I was a little nervous as I waited at the fruit market at the corner of my block. I was looking for a red car driven by Jorge Martinez*. Earlier that week, I had read an advertisement in *El Centroamericano* (the local Nicaraguan community newspaper) offering inexpensive English language classes, taught by a couple who resided in my neighborhood. When I called the number later that day, explaining who I was and what I was doing in Costa Rica, Jorge had told me to come on over, he had much to tell me about Nicaraguans in Costa Rica.

Given the late hour, and the downpour outside my window, I politely declined, but offered to meet him and his wife, Daisy* on Saturday, to go downtown to the school and meet the students. That morning, as I waited, I saw a dilapidated red car—a Hyundai or Honda—I couldn't tell, approach the curb. The door popped open, and as I jumped inside, Jorge said “hurry, hurry” in a forceful tone. As I climbed into the back seat, Daisy turned around to greet me. She explained the urgency of his tone, “you see, we have a red car, and if the police were to see you get in, we would be in a lot of trouble”. It made sense, Costa Rican taxis are red, and most, which are marked with a special symbol, are licensed by the government to standardize prices and prevent price inflation, however, there are also many *piratas*, or pirate taxis, on the streets as non-licensed drivers attempt to make some money on the side. Tourists who are often unaware of the real costs of things, make easy targets for *piratistas*.

Daisy explained: “The police will stop this car when they see you, because you are a *norteamericana*, get in, but especially because we are Nicaraguans”. She didn't have to say more, I understood that she was referring to the type of racial profiling commonly exercised by Costa Rican police officers seeking to extract bribes from foreigners. I wasn't sure at the time who among us would be in the most trouble had we been spotted, me or them. I had been victim of the so-called ‘tourist tax’ a few months prior when I was fined 20,000 colones for driving 2 km *below* the speed limit. My ‘crime’ it seems was driving in a rental car.

As I climbed into the back seat, I glanced to the front and saw two plastic objects mounted onto the dashboard by suction cups. Jorge saw me look and asked “Do you know what that it?” Yes, I replied, it's a *tamale*, like the ones I see in grocery store, right?” No, he laughed. This you see, is nothing like what you know here, this is a *nacatamal*.” At this, Daisy, who was driving the car, went on to explain, in great detail, the differences between this *nacatamal* and a Costa Rican *tamale*. The other object, a plastic baseball, led Jorge to explain that these were important symbols for Nicaraguans. “All Nicas love baseball”, just like you, right?” He went on to tell me that it is because of my people, *Estadounidenses*, that Nicaraguans play baseball, and not *fútbol*, like other Latin Americans. “They brought it over to us, the Marines, when they were in Bluefields, and now it is our national sport, our pastime”. Daisy spoke up to tell me that Jorge played every Sunday, with his league in the park. “They are all Nicaraguans”, she said. “You should go down sometime to watch”.

This very animated pair, both of whom appeared to be in their mid-forties or early fifties, proceeded to use this transit time on the way to San Jose to fill me in on their ‘school’, explaining what they do there, who the students are, and what I would need to set up my classroom. “My classroom?” I said. I then learned quickly their plans for me; that I would be teaching English that day. Jorge and Daisy emphasized the importance for Nicaraguans in Costa Rica to learn English in order to *mejorarse*, to get ahead by learning skills that could set them apart on the job market. “Because...”, Jorge said, “there are so many here who have to work so hard. The jobs they do are not ones that allow them to make a life for themselves in Costa Rica”.

I gladly accepted this role as impromptu English instructor: it was the least I could do to contribute to this effort. Daisy explained, “we have a hard time finding people like you, fluent English speakers, and when we do, they always leave so soon to go back home”. Knowing I would be in Costa Rica for 7 more months, I realized this arrangement could be mutually beneficial for us all.

When we got out of the car and entered the building where the classes were held—the gallery of a Nicaraguan artist during the week—I looked up to see a large, colorful oil painting of Rubén Darío—a celebrated Nicaraguan poet from the late 19th century. On the other walls were paintings with the faces of Nicaraguan people, set among glowing landscapes of red, orange and green. As the students lined up in the hallway, and Daisy handed me a nametag, decorated with the blue and white of the Nicaraguan flag, I knew I had found the right place.

Upon arriving in Costa Rica to begin this research project, I spent many months learning about the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica, and about the various organizations that existed to help immigrants out in one way or another. Through Internet searches and by browsing the community newspapers and bulletin boards on the campus of the University of Costa Rica, I was able to find out about a small network of non-governmental organizations working on issues related to immigration. I spoke with the heads of several of these organizations, either by phone or in person. A few of them invited me into their offices to tell me about their programs and to show me around; some even helped me to arrange interviews with Nicaraguan immigrants. Overall, I found a motivated, yet somewhat disjointed and poorly-funded network of people passionate about the cause.

The small organization headed by Jorge and Daisy Martinez was a personal ‘labor of love’ into which they poured almost all of their free time and resources. Every Saturday for several years, they had brought people together to work toward enhancing the lives and well-being of Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. This organization, PAJ*, could be called a ‘grass roots’ effort, as it was funded only by the personal resources of this couple, the charity of the foreigners who volunteer, and the miniscule tuition paid by students to enroll in the English language and computer skills courses they offered. Jorge explained the purpose of PAJ was to help immigrants find their way in Costa Rica, to know their rights, but also to never forget their homeland and *paisas*, their fellow countrymen and women.

PAJ was a place for immigrants to adapt to Costa Rican society, but also a place to remember—or in the case of children—to get to know the good things of Nicaragua and to instill pride in its history and culture in order to counteract all the bad things they have heard here in Costa Rica. This effort began out of Jorge and Daisy’s own experiences as Nicaraguans in Costa Rica, thirty years prior, when they arrived during the era of the contra war. Jorge recounted to me the moment when he first conceived of his vision for this “ministry”; as a young adolescent, he remembers looking out the window of the bus as it pulled away from the chaos and violence of his hometown in Nicaragua, en route to Costa Rica. He knew then, that upon his safe arrival, he would be called to a greater purpose.

Jorge had met Daisy, who was also Nicaraguan, in Costa Rica 20 years earlier. She too had come to Costa Rica during the early 1980s, along with her parents and siblings. She was able to continue her education in Costa Rica and went on to earn her master’s degree in linguistics. In her “real job”, Monday through Friday, she taught English classes to Spanish speakers, and Spanish classes to English speakers (usually foreign tourists). This job provided them with an income sufficient to get by, and to save a little extra to pursue their true passion, the work they did for immigrants at PAJ.

I had met Daisy and Jorge five months into my fieldwork in Costa Rica, and their acquaintance proved to be instrumental in the completion of this project. Through my participation with this organization, I spent my time immersed in the culture, folklore and the musical and artistic expressions of Nicaragua and its people. During the week, Daisy and I exchanged one-on-one tutoring sessions to work on her English and my Spanish, since we were at an equivalent level of mastery in each other’s native tongue. I taught classes at their school each Saturday, and they offered me access to their extensive personal library of books, papers,

music and films about Nicaragua. Over time, I got to know the students, Nicaraguan immigrants of various ages and socioeconomic statuses, some who had been in Costa Rica for years, and others who had just arrived.

Each Saturday at PAJ, the language and computer classes were followed up by Nicaraguan cultural events. Jorge and Daisy invited dancers, musicians, poets, ministers, and speakers on a variety of topics to address the congregation of Nicaraguan immigrants. Some of the guests came all the way from Nicaragua while others were local. Sometimes the events featured practical information and advice for immigrants, with legal experts who informed the immigrants about their rights in Costa Rica. At other times, the events were celebrations of Nicaraguan culture, with folkloric dances, traditional foods, and the singing of the Nicaraguan national anthem, *Salve a ti, Nicaragua*. The opportunity to participate in these cultural events for several months allowed me to feel at home in the Nicaraguan community, and to form personal connections and friendships in which I could share meaningful conversations and discussions.

Through my association with PAJ, I also had the opportunity to make connections with a few other small, independent community organizations that like PAJ, formed out of the initiative of one or a few motivated individuals, working not-for-profit, but for the good of others. During the year I spent in Costa Rica, I spent some time working with five separate non-governmental organizations. Most of these groups were not connected to any domestic or international funding sources, and I was sometimes asked to help find funding opportunities. Bayardo Garcia*, the community leader of a small precario outside of San Pedro explained to me that any funds available to aid immigrants usually go to the same few larger established organizations, like the well-known precario, La Carpio, or to groups with government or church connections.

Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Costa Rica are headed by foreigners who have an easier time securing outside funding sources from Europe or North America. Two of the groups that I spent some time with were headed by American women who had migrated to Costa Rica years earlier, after falling in love with the country (or one of its locals). One of these women had been fortunate to receive some grant money from Sweden several years ago to start up an after-school program for Nicaraguan youth, in order to provide “alternatives to delinquency”. Another group was headed by a former Peace Corp volunteer who had set up a community-based charitable organization in one of the precarios that was reliant on the free labor provided by “voluntourists”--foreigners who spent a week or two performing various activities to help poor communities.

Another NGO that I worked with was a branch office of a larger charitable organization with ties to the Catholic Church. They had offices throughout Latin America that were dedicated to aiding immigrants and refugees in those countries. This group, headed by a Costa Rican lawyer, was focused on aiding immigrants with legal issues, recording civil and human rights abuses, and mediating disputes between immigrants and state institutions. This organization also helped immigrants navigate the confusing and tedious processes necessary to obtain residency and/or legalize their working status. They also managed and distributed charitable donations, including the procurement of school supplies and uniforms that were necessary for poor immigrant children to attend the ‘free’ and compulsory public schools in Costa Rica.

I heard that some charitable organizations do receive funds from the Costa Rican government, but my understanding was that the funds were difficult to come by, and that even when funds were secured once, they were sporadic and unsustainable. It seemed to me that in order to survive, immigrant support and advocacy organizations had to be self-perpetuating to an

extent or they risked falling apart when the government retracted its funds. Most of the Costa Rican state's attention to the issue of immigration was focused on controlling it through policy, rather than aiding immigrants once they were in Costa Rica (Fouratt 2010; Gatica López 2007).

I found it interesting that the two organizations I worked with that were headed by Nicaraguans, PAJ and Bayardo Garcia's neighborhood organization, were both oriented toward providing a Nicaraguan cultural experience for immigrants. During my stay, I noticed that not much about Nicaragua is celebrated in Costa Rica. Aside from the sensationalist coverage of immigration and the rampant stereotypes of crime and violence, the Costa Rican media provides little if any information about the nation of Nicaragua, its history, or its culture. In schools, I was told, the children do not learn much Nicaraguan history, aside from some talk of the wars during the 1970s and 80s, and of course, of former Costa Rican President Óscar Arias' role in ending them. These two small organizations had stepped up to fill in the gaps of knowledge for people of Nicaraguan heritage living in Costa Rica. As they focused on creating a sense of community for Nicaraguan immigrants, they also worked toward changing the negative image of Nicaragua and Nicaraguans that was so pervasive in Costa Rica.

Jorge Martinez explained to me, "there is so much more to Nicaragua than just stories of war. These people here, *las paisas*, especially the younger ones, they don't know that Nicaragua is a nation of poets, of writers, of artists. It has been said that even our language is poetry". At PAJ, where I spent every Saturday for the last seven months of my fieldwork, I was impressed by the selfless dedication with which Jorge and Daisy ran their school. They not only had a tremendous sense of pride in their culture of origin, but having lived in Costa Rica for thirty-some years, they were also familiar enough with Costa Rican society to know the challenges that

lay ahead for Nicaraguans and the injustices they would have to face. Jorge and Daisy believed that culture could be a source of strength and resilience against those negative forces.

In the small organization headed by Bayardo Garcia, the children in the community were the focus. He also believed in the power of culture to foster pride, self-esteem and personal growth. In his community, groups of children, boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 17 got together regularly to learn and practice traditional folkloric songs and dances. The children practiced in groups a few nights a week after school, and performed occasionally for the community, in their elaborate costumes, so generously sewn and donated by local women.

Bayardo told me that it was his own daughter, Sofia*, who inspired him to create the dance groups. He spoke of memories of his mother and aunts back in Nicaragua, dancing in the town plaza in their beautiful dresses. He recounted the good warm feelings that came over him whenever he heard the music of the marimba and saw the dancers. In the face of so much suffering here, he said, this was something fun for the kids, to keep them busy. Watching the children dance was also enjoyable for the adults, who were reminded of home. Bayardo also hoped to inspire curiosity in the children about their culture of origin. He wanted them to be proud of where they came from, so they could fight back against the ugly words and sentiments they were bound to come across.

Overall, my encounters with so many people working to improve the lives of immigrants demonstrated to me the strong tradition of charity that is so prevalent in both Nicaraguan and Costa Rican cultures. During the year I spent there, I observed the dedicated efforts of people from many nationalities working to improve the lives of Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica despite minimal support or contributions from the Costa Rican government.

Recently, the loosely organized web of support organizations has had some success in bringing national attention to the plight of Nicaraguan immigrants. In recent years both celebrated former president Óscar Arias, as well as current president Laura Chinchilla¹⁴, have offered vocal defenses of Nicaraguan immigrants and acknowledgements of their contributions to Costa Rican society (Fouratt 2010). Thanks to the hard work and strong voices of those working in support organizations, the previously restrictive and punitive national immigration law of 2005 was recently modified and signed into law in 2010 offering more protections for Nicaraguan immigrants against human and civil rights abuses (Fouratt 2010).

About the Field Site: Nicaraguans in Costa Rica

Costa Rica, located just below Nicaragua's southern border has received a large number of Nicaraguan immigrants, with the rate of migration growing rapidly over the past quarter century (Castro Valverde 2007). Though some Nicaraguans have always been present in Costa Rica due to the geographic proximity of the two nations and their historical social and economic ties, in recent years the Nicaraguan population has become a significant and visible minority population in Costa Rica, making up somewhere between 7-12% percent of the total population of this nation¹⁵ (Castro Valverde 2007; Funkhouser et al. 2003). Nicaraguans are the largest minority group, and make up 74.8% of the foreign-born population in Costa Rica (INEC 2005). Additionally, the higher numbers of Nicaraguans in the Central Valley—where they make up

¹⁴ Chinchilla's comments about the contributions of Nicaraguans to Costa Rica were stated in a series of speeches given during her tour of California in 2011. One speech was at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. <http://www.gsb.stanford.edu/news/headlines/chinchillaspeech.html>

¹⁵ The number of Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica is highly disputed, and difficult to measure. Official numbers likely undercount them, however figures as high as 20% have been reported, but these are likely exaggerations which fuel xenophobic fears (Cortes Ramos 2006).

11.4% of the total population—than in other parts of Costa Rica may contribute to the sense among Costa Ricans that there are many more than is the case.

Expansion in the number of Nicaraguan immigrants began in the 1990s, and Nicaraguans accounted for 5.7% of the total Costa Rican population in 2005, the last year for which statistics are available from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC 2005). However, these official figures could be underestimated by as much as one-third, due to undercounting of seasonal and cyclical migrants, as well as temporary workers (Marquette 2006). Surveys also differ in their definitions regarding who is included as a Nicaraguan; for example, some include children born in Costa Rica to Nicaraguan parents (who are officially Costa Rican citizens) or the Costa Rican spouses of Nicaraguans. Official figures of the number of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica jumps to 8.8% when all people who live in joint Nicaraguan-Costa Rican households are included (Castro Valverde 2007). This is probably a better estimate of those in Costa Rica who culturally identify as Nicaraguan.

In the early years of this quarter-century, migration from Nicaragua consisted primarily of men who came to Costa Rica to work in order to send remittances back to their families in Nicaragua. After the year 1995, official statistics show that the gender ratio of the Nicaraguan immigrant population began to even out; this feminization of the migration was probably related to an increasing number of women migrating to Costa Rica on their own for work, as well as a growing number of families migrating together to seek permanent residency. Demographics indicate that the Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica is a young one, made up mostly of men and women of working age, with nearly 60% between the ages of 20 and 40 (Castro Valverde 2007).

The majority of Nicaraguans who come to Costa Rica are characterized as labor migrants, some of them sojourners, while others are more permanent transplants in Costa Rica. The majority of adult Nicaraguan immigrants have come to Costa Rica seeking jobs, which are in short supply in Nicaragua, the second poorest country in the Western hemisphere. In the Costa Rican economy, these workers can earn more money for fewer hours of work than is possible in Nicaragua¹⁶. Other Nicaraguans in Costa Rica include political refugees who arrived in the 1970s-80s during the Sandinista revolution and contra wars, as well as refugees fleeing natural disasters, especially Hurricane Mitch, which struck in 1990, leaving over 10,000 Nicaraguans homeless. Some Nicaraguans are temporary residents, living transnational lives while crossing back and forth at the border. Others who came initially as temporary workers later made lives for themselves in Costa Rica, either by bringing their families over to join them, or by creating families in Costa Rica with other Nicaraguan immigrants or with Costa Ricans.

In many ways globalization has promoted this migration of Nicaraguans into Costa Rica. The timing of peak migration corresponds to a period of increasing structural adjustment policies in Costa Rica, marked by a growth in export goods and a need for labor to produce them (Gatica Lopez 2007). Increasing production in agricultural zones attracted many immigrants to work in the harvesting and packaging of export goods. Nicaraguans perform 75% of Costa Rica's agricultural labor (Rocha Gomez 2006). The growth in the Costa Rican tourism industry in the past 20 years has also led to a demand for immigrant labor in construction, security and service jobs. Nicaraguan women are most often employed as domestics, but sometimes they work as clerks and in janitorial positions. It is likely that some immigrants also work in informal sectors

¹⁶ The estimated Costa Rican per capita Gross Domestic Product in 2012 was \$12,800 U.S. dollars, more than double that of Nicaragua coming in at \$4,500 U.S. (CIA World Fact book).

as street vendors, or even as prostitutes (a legal occupation in Costa Rica), but it is difficult to know the true percentages of their participation in these markets.

There is some indication that the Nicaraguan labor force is complementary and not competitive with the national labor force (Gatica Lopez 2007; Gindling 2009). Nicaraguan men typically work in dangerous occupations that Costa Ricans prefer not to fill. The demand for Nicaraguan domestic labor may be the result of Costa Rican women increasingly entering the professional workforce (Castro Valverde 2007). The seasonal agricultural labor that Nicaraguans perform is almost certainly supplemental, as Costa Rica has always lacked a sufficient workforce to meet the demands required during the harvests of its agricultural export goods (Booth & Walker 1999).

Financial incentive is a powerful pull factor bringing Nicaraguan workers into Costa Rica as they earn more than they would earn for the equivalent type and hours of work in Nicaragua (Rocha Gomez 2006). However, on average, Nicaraguan workers in Costa Rica earn less than Costa Rican workers (Gindling 2009). The average monthly income of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica is \$253, about 17% higher than the average of \$204 in Nicaragua, but 30% below the average Costa Rican monthly income (Castro Valverde 2007). One common explanation for this discrepancy in income, employer discrimination against immigrants, has not been supported by recent research (Gindling 2009). It is more likely that labor segmentation is largely responsible for the lower incomes of Nicaraguans when compared to Costa Ricans; the lower average educational levels of immigrants when compared with Costa Rican citizens, causes them to become concentrated in the unskilled positions within an industry.

As education is necessary for social mobility in Costa Rica, this places Nicaraguans at a disadvantage in the local economy. Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica have an average of five

years of schooling, indicating that most have a primary school education or less (Gindling 2009). This makes them far less educated on average than Costa Ricans, but more educated overall than Nicaraguans in Nicaragua (Gatica Lopez 2007). One reason for this is that Costa Rica invests far more per capita in public education than Nicaragua, which has a very large school drop-out rate for adolescents between thirteen and fifteen years of age (Gatica Lopez 2007). The most commonly given reasons for leaving school in Nicaragua were an inability to pay for it and a need to leave school to work. This contrasts with the most common reason for leaving school in Costa Rica, which was “lack of interest” (CEPAL 2003 cited in Gatica Lopez 2007).

While overt employer discrimination against Nicaraguan workers has been difficult to prove objectively, much has been written regarding the treatment of Nicaraguan workers by some employers. Particularly in the case of undocumented workers, their migration status leaves them vulnerable to mistreatment and offers them few, if any recourses against it. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some employers take advantage of immigrant workers, for whom they are not obligated to obey labor laws (Fonseca Vindas, personal communication). Many employers find loopholes to avoid granting these workers the legal minimum of sick days or vacation time, for example they promise a worker benefits after he has been with the company for a specified time, then fire him as the date of eligibility approaches. Some occupations offer a limited quota of work permits for immigrant labor, which offers a degree of protection for those working legally, and many grass roots efforts have opened up in recent years to advocate for workers’ rights.

Domestic workers in particular are highly vulnerable, and often subjected to abuses by employers, ranging from unpaid overtime, refusal of days off, or even sexual harassment. Age discrimination is also common in this occupation, as employers prefer younger women over

older ones (Rocha Gomez 2006). Domestic employees receive on average the equivalent of about \$280 U.S. per month for full-time, live-in or out work (Mejía 2012). The non-governmental organization ASTRADOMES advocates for improving the work conditions of domestic workers. At the time of this writing a new law offering protections for domestic workers is awaiting passage (Mejía 2012).

Studies suggest that the Nicaraguan population in the Central Valley is not geographically segregated in any significant way from the Costa Rican population (Funkhouser et al. 2003), however there is some concentration of Nicaraguan immigrants in low-income precarios—urban and suburban slums where hastily-constructed tin-roofed shacks are arranged haphazardly in rows on unused public lands. In these communities, it is common for an entire family to live in one or two rooms with only dirt floors and no locking doors. The conditions of the precarios and the housing within them vary somewhat with some communities having access to paved roads, running water, and electricity while others do not. Most residents of urban precarios do not have title to the land their homes are built upon and are therefore vulnerable to losing it due to prolonged absence or government whim (Funkhouser et al. 2003).

La Carpio is probably the most well-known precario with a high concentration of Nicaraguans.¹⁷ Located to the Northwest of downtown San José, La Carpio began in the 1980s as a squatter settlement on public lands that had been set aside for use as a landfill. Today it is sprawling community with some paved roads, a school, a health clinic, and other services that serve the community. Through the donations and work of charitable organizations, things have slowly been improving for residents of La Carpio in recent years, but they still face the challenges that come from poverty and stigmatization as well as the physical hazards of the

¹⁷ Official figures put the percentage of Nicaraguans living in La Carpio at around 50%, however, this does not include the children of Nicaraguan immigrants who were born in Costa Rica and therefore have Costa Rican citizenship (Funkhouser et al. 2003).

environment, which leave them vulnerable injury and crime. The residents of this community face judgment and discrimination from Costa Ricans, many of whom still see La Carpio as a symbolic ‘garbage dump’ where Nicaraguans are to be kept away from the mainstream society (Fonseca Vindas 2005; Sandoval Garcia 2004).

Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica include naturalized citizens, legal residents, permitted temporary and seasonal workers, and those who are undocumented. The ability to obtain legal status is a main factor influencing an individual migrant’s success in Costa Rica (Rocha Gomez 2006). While the Costa Rican constitution states that anyone living within the borders of the nation, including foreigners, have the same rights and responsibilities as Costa Rican citizens, this does not hold true in practice. Anecdotal evidence suggests that undocumented immigrants have a difficult time accessing necessary services, like health care and education for their children.¹⁸ In addition, it is likely that increased fear about the new immigration law has kept many immigrants from trying to access services.

The strict immigration law was likely a response to growing xenophobia in Costa Rica regarding Nicaraguan immigrants. Perhaps inspired by the ‘national security’ rhetoric in the United States following the events of September 11, 2001, the new Costa Rican law emphasized border security and the removal of ‘threatening’ individuals by detention and/or deportation. This law gave police officers more power to curb illegal immigration by granting them permission to stop anyone on the streets to ask for documentation (Fouratt 2010). Shortly after its passage, a few highly publicized raids were conducted by officers going into immigrant neighborhoods unprovoked to arrest and detain people (Fonseca Vindas 2005). Focused solely

¹⁸ Though services are available, stipulations in the laws make it difficult for undocumented persons to take advantage of them. For example, undocumented workers do not receive insurance for health care, though emergency services are available. Undocumented children may attend public schools, but must provide for their own required uniforms and supplies, and many are not awarded degrees that are necessary to move onto the next level of education, despite completing the requirements for them (Rocha Gomez 2006).

on border control, the legislation said little about what should or could be done for immigrants once they arrive in Costa Rica (Rocha Gomez 2006).

The 2005 immigration law became a political hot point during the 2006 presidential elections; however steps to initiate reforms began shortly after Óscar Arias won victory. Since then, a revised law was passed in September 2009, which emphasized the integration of immigrants rather than their criminalization (Fouratt 2010). Punishments in the form of large fines were redirected toward employers who hire undocumented immigrants and language offering protection of the human and civil rights of immigrants was included, though some immigrant advocates are skeptical about the extent to which these reforms will actually be implemented.

Undocumented Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica have little recourse available to legalize their status. Aside from attaining a hard-to-come-by work permit, the most reliable way to obtain residency is through familial links with a Costa Rican citizen; first-degree links, to either a spouse or a child are prioritized. Children who are born in Costa Rica are automatically granted citizenship regardless of their parentage (Goldade 2007). This native soil policy has contributed to fears of an ‘anchor baby’ phenomenon in Costa Rica, where immigrant women become pregnant in order to gain legal status in Costa Rica. Some studies of immigrant fertility have shown a three-fold increase in births to Nicaraguans from the early to the late 1990s (Morales & Castro 1999 cited in Goldade 2007). Though the actual number of births to Nicaraguan women in Costa Rica is disputed, the fertility rates of Nicaraguan immigrants are higher than those of Costa Ricans and 13.9% of all births on record in Costa Rica are to Nicaraguan mothers (Castro Valverde 2007).

In 1999, following the devastation of Hurricane Mitch, Costa Rica granted amnesty to 160,000 Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica, thereby allowing them to legalize their residence. Many believe that this policy also led to an increase in illegal immigration, as many migrants made the decision to come to Costa Rica following the amnesty announcement, only to be denied residency after they could not prove they had been in Costa Rica prior to 1998 (Rocha Gomez 2006). Many of these people have stayed on, living and working in Costa Rica as undocumented persons with all of the hardship and challenges this status brings. Like other nations, Costa Rica has a long history of regulating who crosses into the national territory. Long accused of turning its back on its Central American neighbors, Costa Rica's exclusionary immigration policies help nations keep 'undesirable' migrants, like impoverished Nicaraguans, out, while still encouraging desirable ones, like wealthy North Americans and European developers who are seen as investments into the country's future (Alvarenga Venútoló 2007; Rocha Gomez 2006).

The countless myths about Nicaraguans that circulate throughout Costa Rican society seem at times to be part of a universal narrative about immigrants—that they take jobs away from citizens, that they increase crime rates, overburden social services, and don't pay taxes. The Costa Rican media has played an influential role in perpetuating stereotypes and inaccuracies about Nicaraguans, particularly regarding their supposed capacity for violence and crime (Fonseca Vindas & Sandoval Garcia 2006). Academic studies have failed to find evidence of the veracity of most of these claims that dominate public discourse. Statistics on crimes committed by those of various nationalities shows numbers consistent with population percentages (Sandoval Garcia 2004) and the overwhelmingly young and healthy immigrant population's rate of health service usage is about the same as the national average (Gatica Lopez 2007). Still, sensationalism reigns in Costa Rica, making the everyday lives of Nicaraguans

living in Costa Rica a struggle for survival and dignity. This is the context in which I conducted my research project.

Ethnographic Methods for Data Collection

For the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the ethnographic process I used to collect information for the first phase of this research project which had the goal of revealing shared cultural models of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican identity as well as determining from consensus, what the ‘cultural stuff’ is that makes up these two identities (the results of this phase of the research are presented in the next chapter). The information gathered from the analysis of this first phase of the research was later used to construct variables for analysis in the second phase of the project (phase two of the project is discussed in Chapter 6), where several hypotheses were evaluated in order to assess the relationship between an individual’s consonance with the derived cultural models of identity and their psychological well-being. The results of the phase two hypothesis testing were used to examine the larger research question of whether identification with a particular cultural identity is protective of well-being for Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica.

The main period of data collection for the research described in this chapter took place during a one-year period beginning in September 2007 and continuing through August 2008. However, data collected during this year of fieldwork in San Jose, Costa Rica was also supplemented with ethnographic data collected from various locations in Costa Rica and Nicaragua during the summer months (June & July) of 2005 and 2006. The qualitative data from the semi-structured and structured interviews described below, as well as the questionnaire data for phase two of the project were all collected in 2007 and 2008 from Costa Ricans and

Nicaraguans living within the Central Valley region of the country, which includes the capital city of San José, and the surrounding suburban regions, including the northern suburbs of Heredia and Alajuela, and the eastern suburbs of San Pedro Montes de Oca and Curridabat.

Phase 1 Data Collection: Revealing Cultural Models of Identity

For the purposes of this project, models of cultural identity consist of a collection of traits, including values, behavior, attitudes, symbols, and traditions, that are perceived to be highly shared across a group of individuals, and that these individuals feel are particularly salient and relevant to their identity as a group. However, in addition to self-ascribed models of cultural identity, individuals are also subjected to membership in other-ascribed models of cultural identity which are constructed by outsiders based upon their perceptions of the cultural traits they feel are representative to the identity of another group of people. The cultural elements making up self and other-ascribed models of cultural identity may overlap to some extent, but may also diverge in significant ways, as groups often construct their own identities in ways that contrast their groups with particular ‘others’ (Barth 1969; Eriksen 1993).

Prior ethnographic research during my visits to Costa Rica in 2005 and 2006 revealed that nationality was an important boundary marker in Costa Rica between the host population and the largest ‘minority’ population, Nicaraguan immigrants. Nicaraguan nationality was the basis for Costa Ricans’ perceptions of great cultural differences between these immigrants and themselves. During this phase of the research, I engaged in participant-observation, embedding myself into Costa Rican society to the extent possible, getting to know Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, and inviting some of these people to talk to me, in various formats, including unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews.

Informal and Unstructured Interviews

My ethnographic research in Costa Rica began as I immersed myself in the culture early upon my arrival. After settling into a small apartment in San Pedro, an eastern suburb of San José and home to the University of Costa Rica campus, I began to seek out field sites and local people I could talk to about immigration. During my first month, as I coped with the frustrations of getting by in a foreign country with only my intermediate Spanish skills, I also faced the challenge of trying to learn about a topic that not many people wanted to talk about, at least not with me¹⁹.

Some of my first interviews were casual conversations with Costa Ricans I had met through friends or through the language schools I had visited during my prior summer trips to Costa Rica. I asked each person I spoke with to introduce me to other people they knew, and I continued to conduct interviews with anyone who would give me the time. This ‘haphazard’ sampling strategy gave me access to a wide variety of perspectives from Costa Ricans of various ages, occupations, and educational levels. My early interviews with neighbors in the middle-class neighborhood where I lived, and with students and faculty from a few of the universities in the San Pedro area provided me with some insight into the perspectives of Costa Ricans regarding their culture, and the topic of Nicaraguan immigration. I also sought out contacts at organizations focused on immigration, but I was frequently disappointed early on, as I encountered broken leads at a number of defunct organizations. Along with the largest national newspaper, *La Nación*, I also read the local Nicaraguan community newspaper, *El*

¹⁹ I suspect this had something to do with my status as an outsider with unclear motives. Many of my attempts to start a conversation with middle class Costa Ricans on the subject of Nicaraguan immigration were rebuffed, and others were highly unproductive.

Centroamericano, which was distributed monthly in the *pulperías*²⁰ of neighborhoods with a high concentration of Nicaraguans.

I was also fortunate to have formed a strong network with other Americans and with Europeans living in Costa Rica through my Spanish classes and in the temporary housing complex where I initially stayed upon arriving in Costa Rica. Their perceptions of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, as well as their thoughts on the immigration situation were interesting to me as an ‘outsider perspective’, and their contacts with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans helped me to expand my social network. Tom*, a Tico associate of one of my American friends, worked as a computer programmer at a U.S.-owned technology company, and helped me gain access to the employee break room, where I was able to interview a number of white collar professionals, most of them Costa Ricans, but a few Nicaraguans and Colombians as well. Because the first step in my research process was collecting cultural data from informal and unstructured interviews, this somewhat haphazard sampling strategy was appropriate, and it allowed me to get perspectives from a wide sector of Costa Rican society.

Initially, finding Nicaraguans to participate in the project was a bit more challenging. To my untrained eyes and ears, it was very difficult to distinguish Nicaraguans from Costa Ricans, and it was simply inappropriate to just walk up to a person and ask if they were Nicaraguan. Though I had met a few Nicaraguan security guards and shop clerks at the hotels I visited on my prior two trips to Costa Rica, I wasn’t able to collect as much data from Nicaraguans as I was from Costa Ricans early on. A few months into my fieldwork, as I began to make contacts at some non-governmental organizations working with Nicaraguan immigrants, and as I found businesses and recreation centers with large Nicaraguan clienteles, I was able to better direct my

²⁰ A Costa Rican word for the small “convenience” grocery stores found frequently in many neighborhoods throughout urban, suburban and rural parts of the country.

efforts toward finding Nicaraguan study participants. I also attended a few Nicaraguan cultural events in downtown San José or in Nicaraguan neighborhoods, where I was able to ask Nicaraguans about their experiences in Nicaragua and in Costa Rica, and their perceptions of the people and cultures of both nations.

I recorded any significant observations and interactions or conversations with Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans in a notebook, where each entry was marked to indicate the date and place of data collection. I referred back to this data often during subsequent stages of the research. These field note entries were helpful in the construction of scales and instruments, as well as in the interpretation of data collected in later stages of the research.

Semi-structured Interviews

After several months of collecting data through observation and unstructured interviews, I used the knowledge I had gathered to create a series of questions to be asked in semi-structured interviews with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. In order to find shared models of cultural identity, I needed a somewhat standard set of questions from which I could look for agreement across the responses of the participants. Because identity can be both self and other-ascribed, I sought out a total of four cultural models: a Costa Rican model (according to Costa Rican informants), a Costa Rican model (according to Nicaraguan informants), a Nicaraguan model (according to Nicaraguan informants), and a Nicaraguan model (according to Costa Rican informants). These models were revealed through a two-step process, beginning with semi-structured interviews, and followed up by a structured interview questionnaire with items based upon the content revealed in the semi-structured interviews.

During a two-month period between January and March of 2008, I conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of 18 Costa Ricans and 21 Nicaraguans. These participants were recruited through a combined haphazard and purposive sampling strategy: Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans over the age of eighteen were invited to participate in the study through an announcement posted on bulletin boards at local universities and grocery stores in the San Pedro area, and on a flyer distributed in several parks in downtown San Jose, including Parque Central, Parque Sabana and Parque La Merced. Parque La Merced in particular, is a popular spot for Nicaraguan families on the weekends, and recruiting from this park enabled me to balance the number of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans for this phase of the project. Participants were also recruited from a variety of organizations, including several NGOs and places of business, catering to either a Nicaraguan clientele or a mixed one.

Potential participants were asked to call in order to schedule a time for an interview, and then were invited to an office space at one of the NGOs. Each interview followed a standard interview guide of six questions (Appendix A) with prompts, though participants were also invited to share other thoughts and experiences regarding immigration and/or their lives in Costa Rica. Prior to the interview, each participant was given a fact sheet with some details about the project and asked to check a box indicating their informed consent to participate in the project (Appendix B).

Participants were informed ahead of time that the interviews would be around a half-hour long, and would-be tape recorded. The actual interviews ranged between twenty-eight and ninety minutes each. Participants were given a sum of \$3,000 colones (about \$6 U.S.) at the end of the interview to compensate for their time and transportation costs. No names or

identifying characteristics, aside from age, gender and occupation, were collected on paper or in the recorded interviews.

The goal of these interviews was to look for common themes regarding relations between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans and perceptions of cultural differences between citizens of the host country and immigrants. With Nicaraguan participants, I also asked about their experiences during migration to Costa Rica and while living in Costa Rica. Costa Rican participants were asked about any relationships and/or day-to-day interactions they had with anyone of Nicaraguan origin. All interviews were conducted entirely in Spanish.

Recorded interviews were transcribed by a Costa Rican and a Nicaraguan research assistant (both were local college students recruited through my contacts in the area). Interview transcripts were then analyzed for content to be included as scale items in future research instruments. Content analysis was focused on looking for shared themes, experiences, and perceptions among the responses of research participants. One area of focus was on looking for behaviors, attitudes and situations attributed to persons from each group that could be incorporated into a structured interview for the next stage of the research project.

Cultural identity boundary markers mentioned by participants, including customs, traditions, manners of dress and speech, traditional foods, folklore, music and dance, were collected from interview transcripts and also incorporated as items on the structured interview instruments.

Structured Interviews: Making the Cultural Characteristics and Scenarios Instrument

The results of the semi-structured interviews were used to construct a series of items that were incorporated into a structured interview instrument that was distributed to Nicaraguans and

Costa Ricans in order to look for shared cultural models of identity. Cultural models are made up of a set of cultural knowledge and behaviors that are widely agreed upon by a group of informants (D'Andrade 1985). By asking participants to respond to the same series of items, their responses can be analyzed to determine the degree of agreement across the group. A high degree of consensus in responses indicates that the participants think and feel similarly about the items on the interview instrument. In the case of this research, a high level consensus would indicate that participants largely agree upon what characteristics and behaviors are associated with Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identities. The strength of this type of analysis is that it allows a researcher to demonstrate the existence of a shared model of identity rather than assuming it exists (Handwerker 2001).

The structured interview instrument used in this stage of the research was constructed from a selection of forty cultural characteristics and scenarios derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted previously. During a series of meetings with one Nicaraguan and two Costa Rican research assistants, I presented the results of the text analysis of the semi-structured interviews and we then selected items to be incorporated into a short structured interview survey. Items for the instrument were chosen according to a set of criteria that took into consideration their frequency of mention and their saliency and relevance to the research topic. Prior to initiating data collection, the three research assistants were trained on how to conduct the structured interviews. Each assistant then tested the instrument among their personal acquaintances (Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans), who offered their feedback and critiques of the instrument. As a result of this test period, some items were eliminated and others re-worded for clarity.

Following this period of testing, the revised version of the structured interview instrument (Appendix C) was distributed by members of the research team to Nicaraguan and Costa Rican participants during a three-week period beginning in March 2008. Individuals over the age of eighteen were recruited from two parks in downtown San Jose, Parque La Sabana and Parque La Merced, which were chosen for their high concentrations of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, respectively. Potential respondents were approached by a member of the research team who asked them if they would like to participate in a research project about “culture and identity in Costa Rica”. Some people who were approached chose not to participate at all and others declined after viewing the instrument. Some of the reasons given for declining to participate included a dislike or discomfort with the topic of the research, a strong disagreement with some of the items, or because they could not read or understand the instrument.

Those who agreed to participate were given a copy of the interview instrument, and asked to rate the forty items on the questionnaire according to their “Nicaraguanness” or “Costa Ricanness”. Each item could be rated as “Costa Rican” or “Nicaraguan” or “Very Costa Rican” or “Very Nicaraguan” to indicate which nationality of people the trait or behavioral scenario was more typical of. The second page of the interview instrument listed the same forty items, but this time, the participants were asked to evaluate the items according to their “value”, where each item could be rated as “Good”, “Very Good”, “Bad”, or “Very Bad”.

At the end of the instrument, a page was attached where participants were asked to offer their comments and to “free list” anything else they associated with Nicaraguan and Costa Rican culture, society or people that was not previously mentioned on the instrument. Some brief demographic information was also collected on each completed instrument, including age, gender, occupation, years of schooling, and country of birth of the respondent and his or her

parents. When they finished the interview, participants were given a small gift, a package of cookies or pencils, and encouraged to ask any questions they may have had to the member of the research team who conducted the interview. At the end of the three-week period, a total of fifty-seven structured interviews were completed, including thirty-two with Costa Ricans and twenty-five with Nicaraguans.

Analysis of the Structured Interviews

The completed interview instruments were prepared for analysis immediately following the data collection period. Descriptive statistics on the demographic data (age, gender, occupation) were produced by calculating means, percentages, and modes, respectively. Cultural consensus analysis was performed on the respondents' responses to the instrument items by using the factor analysis tool in SPSS on a variable-by-informant matrix. Means, medians and modes for all items, among the total sample, Costa Ricans only, and Nicaraguans only were also collected to determine the degree of saliency of each item to the four cultural models of identity.

Cultural consensus analysis is a type of factor analysis that compares participants' responses to interview items in order to assess the degree to which respondents' think similarly about the concept or idea being measured by the items, in this case, Nicaraguan and Costa Rican cultural identity, or social value of the items on the instrument. In cultural consensus analysis, the presence of a shared cultural model is indicated by the presence of a first factor where the eigenvalue is three times greater than that of the second (Romney, Weller & Batchelder 1986).

To examine the patterns in the data, I first looked for shared models of identity by analyzing the data from all respondents together. Then, respondents were grouped according to

nationality²¹, and each group of respondents, Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, was analyzed separately to look for differences in the perceptions between the two groups. Measures of central tendency were used to assess the ‘culturally correct’ answers for each item, with items below 2 being agreed upon by the group to be Costa Rican characteristics, and items above 3 agreed upon as Nicaraguan characteristics. Items scoring on either end of the scale (1 and 4) were considered to be very salient characteristics of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identities, respectively.

Independent-pairs t-tests were also conducted in SPSS to assess for differences in perceptions of the items between Nicaraguan respondents and Costa Rican respondents. Items which showed significant differences at the $p < .05$ level were noted, and set aside from inclusion in the cultural models of identity. The most salient items to either identity, as assessed by low or high means were set aside to be considered for inclusion in the ‘cultural identity’ scale for the phase 2 questionnaire.

The same set of cultural consensus analyses, and item descriptive statistics as described above for cultural identity were also performed on the ‘social value’ data for each item. These analyses were also run three times—once for all respondents, once with only Costa Rican respondents, and once again with only Nicaraguan respondents—in order to look for variation across the four models. For this set of analyses, items with means below 2 were perceived by the respondents to be positive characteristics (with ones being very viewed very positively), while items with average scores above 3 were considered negative (with fours being viewed very negatively).

²¹ For analysis purposes, a participant was classified as Costa Rican or Nicaraguan according to the birth place of his or her parents. Respondents with at least one Nicaraguan parent were classified as Nicaraguan, regardless of their own country of birth. Costa Rican individuals were classified as Costa Ricans if they had at least one Costa Rican parent, and the other parent was of non-Nicaraguan origin (i.e. American, Swiss, Colombian, etc.)

The social value ratings were included in the instrument in order to provide an assessment of how negative or positive each item was perceived to be by Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. The results of this set of data analyses were used to provide an overall assessment of how positive or negative the cultural models of identity were, based upon which items were considered very salient to them. This set of analyses was included in this project because prior research on identity has shown that identification with a negative model of identity may lead to differential well-being outcomes than identification with a positive model of identity (Mahalingham 2006; Goffman 1986). The results of the social value analyses of items were also considered during the construction of the 'cultural identity' scale for phase two of the project, to ensure that both the Costa Rican and the Nicaraguan identity scales contained an appropriate ratio of positive, negative and neutral items.

The results of the phase 1 research, including results from unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews are presented in the next chapter, Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Cultural Models of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity

“So, nothing? You don’t want to say anything?” I asked again, my voice cracking as it struggled to rise above the volume of the reggaeton music beating in the background of the club. I had just asked Jaime*, a tall, good-looking Tico in his mid-to-late twenties about his thoughts on Nicaraguan immigrants. His demeanor shifted suddenly from his earlier flirtatious banter, as he hung his head and looked at the ground. While I continued to prod him on a subject he clearly had no interest in discussing, his head glanced over my left shoulder to check out the table where the rest of my American friends were sitting. It was clear to me that I had quickly become a lot less interesting in his eyes due to my line of questioning. “Come on, man”, his friend Gustavo* said, as he slapped Jaime’s back, “answer the lady’s question”. Jaime said nothing and just shook his head back and forth, with a slight smirk on his face.

Stepping in to save his friend, Gustavo told me “it’s just that they’re different, they’re uneducated that’s all. They work in the farms and places like that, you know, in the countryside”. This was his explanation for why they never hung out with Nicaraguans. “They’re here, but they lead a whole other kind of lifestyle”, he remarked. “What if I told you I was Nicaraguan”, I said to them both in an attempt to lighten the mood, “would you still talk to me then?” I knew it had worked, because a smile broke across Jaime’s face as he lifted his head back up to face me. “That’s ridiculous”, he said, “there are no *machas* [blond women] in Nicaragua”. “Why are you so interested in Nicaraguans anyway?” he asked. As I filled the two men in on the topic of my research and my purpose for being in Costa Rica, I saw Jaime make a strange gesture. “Could you do that again, what you just did?”, I asked. I watched again as he lifted up his right arm and drew it across his neck in a slicing motion. This got a slight chuckle out of Gustavo as he shook his head and turned away from us. Sensing my intrigue, Jaime said “you want to know why, that’s why. I don’t like them because they get drunk, they get mad, and they’ll slice your head off with their machetes”.

Later that evening, as I walked through the dining room toward the dormitory in the guest house I was staying in, I noticed the *dueña* of the house, Marjorie*, crouched over the screen of her laptop, the table around her buried in paperwork. “It’s past eleven, and you’re still up”, I said to her. A bilingual Costa Rican woman in her late forties, Marjorie was married to an American, and together they ran a small guest house that offered short-term lodging, mostly to foreigners passing through San José. I had spent my first three weeks in Costa Rica there. “Good, I was just looking for a break from all this”, she said to me as she motioned to the clutter in front of her, “come here, sit, have some tea and tell me about your evening”. As I bit into the *alfajores*—delicious shortbread sandwich cookies filled with dulce de leche—in front of me, I filled her in on my earlier encounter with Jaime and Gustavo at the bar. She sighed as she looked at me, “You see, it is a problem...they [Nicaraguans] come here because they are desperate, because there are no jobs there, there is no food for their children...*pobrecitos*, they have no other way”, she said. “It is too bad, for them and for us, because they come here and they do all these crimes, but they can’t help it because they grew up there [in Nicaragua], where all they saw was killing. They learned how to use guns at an early age”. After listening to Marjorie for several minutes, I glanced up at the clock and told her I needed to get some sleep and that she should too. She smiled as she said good night, and one last thing to me, in her heavily-accented English, “I think you should change your project. You do not realize it yet, but it is not safe for you to do this”.

Before embarking on this research project, I knew that questioning people on a topic as controversial as immigration in Costa Rica was sure to stir up strong emotions and reactions. I had noticed the heightened sensitivity surrounding this issue during my prior trips to Costa Rica,

and this was one of the reasons for my interest in pursuing research on this topic. Because Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica, at its present scale, is a fairly new phenomenon in Costa Rica, the Costa Rican people have been trying to make sense of the changes in their society over the past several years that have coincided with, though have not necessarily been caused by, this migration.

While stereotypes and negative representations about Nicaraguans did come up frequently in my conversations about immigration with Costa Ricans, I also detected among many of them a great degree of sympathy and compassion for the plight of Nicaraguan immigrants. While some comments pointed to a belief that there were fundamental differences between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, other people, like Marjorie, saw the problems related to immigration being rooted in societal and structural forces rather than in the nature of Nicaraguan people themselves.

Nicaraguan immigrants I spoke with found themselves navigating their way in a foreign country with a new identity, shaped in part by Costa Ricans' perceptions of their own changed society, and the perceived contrasts between Nicaraguan culture and their own cherished national identity. Initially attracted to Costa Rica for economic opportunities and the hope of improving their situation in life, many Nicaraguans found themselves unprepared for the challenges that awaited them here. Poor living conditions, a lack of civil rights and occasional hostilities from the host population made many immigrants unsure of whether Costa Rica was really the promised land of opportunity they had heard about, or whether they had been led into a trap, where the future held little more than a never-ending struggle for dignity.

The results of this research project highlight some of the important perceptions of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans regarding the current situation of immigration in Costa Rica, the present

state of Costa Rican society and culture, and the resulting implications of these for the well-being of Nicaraguan immigrants. In phase one of this project, ethnographic data collected from my observations, conversations and interviews was used to reveal shared models of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican cultural identity. The results of this phase of the research project are presented below in this chapter.

Presenting the Cultural Models of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity

The models of cultural identity presented in this chapter include collections of traits, including values, behavior, attitudes, symbols, and traditions, that Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans perceived to be highly shared among individuals of their own nationality, and other cultural traits that they perceived to be highly shared among individuals of the other nationality. In Costa Rica, nationality is a basis on which perceptions of cultural difference are formed; the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan participants in this study revealed which cultural elements they felt were particularly salient to their own cultural identity, as well as their perceptions about what constitutes the cultural identity of individuals of the other nationality.

This chapter presents the results of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican self-ascribed models of cultural identity, as well as the other-ascribed models. Ethnographic research with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica revealed that some cultural elements of self-ascribed models of cultural identity overlapped with those of the other-ascribed models for each group, however there were some important differences in the insider and outsider perceptions about the specific elements making up the groups' cultural identities.

The results of this phase of the research confirmed that nationality was an important boundary marker in Costa Rica between the host population and the largest 'minority'

population, Nicaraguan immigrants, who were perceived by many Costa Ricans to be very different in character and culture from themselves. The following section of this chapter presents the results of my observations and the information gathered from unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews with Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans living in the Central Valley region of Costa Rica.

Results from Informal and Unstructured Interviews

In this initial, exploratory stage of the research, the unstructured and informal interviews I conducted with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans revealed some important findings regarding their perceptions of Costa Rican society, the issue of Nicaraguan immigration, and cultural differences between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans.

My early interviews with people in the middle-class neighborhood where I lived, and with students and faculty from a few of the universities in the San Pedro area provided me with some insight into the perspectives of Costa Ricans regarding their culture, and the topic of Nicaraguan immigration. The sentiments of these Costa Ricans corresponded in many ways with what I had read and learned on my earlier visits to Costa Rica: Nicaraguan immigration was a sensitive topic, one that people generally held strong opinions about, whether they wanted to share them or not. In these casual conversations with Costa Ricans, I unsurprisingly encountered a fair share of stereotypical depictions of Nicaraguans as violent criminals, and heard the latest ‘Nica jokes’ that were going around²².

²² Jokes about Nicaraguans are a very common form of public discourse in Costa Rica, possibly because jokes are considered to be less offensive than direct derogatory comments about immigrants, and they allow the person delivering the joke, and the listeners to distance themselves from the racist implications contained in the jokes (see Ramírez Caro 2007 for an excellent analysis of recent jokes about Nicaraguans).

The association of Nicaraguans with violence and crime was a common theme encountered in conversations with Costa Ricans. The *machete* was a symbol that came up frequently in these characterizations, probably due to the tendency of some Nicaraguan men to wear machetes hanging from their belts. As one Costa Rican woman in her early thirties put it, “I know that the reports of violence are exaggerated, but who doesn’t hold their breath a bit when they get off a bus in Granadilla and see fifteen to twenty men with machetes walking the streets?” Even those who did not agree with the characterization of Nicaraguans as violence-prone were aware of it; “everyone here is afraid of Nicas”, a Costa Rican female graduate student told me, “there are so many stereotypes”.

Violence and crime seemed to go hand-in-hand in many peoples’ imaginations, where both were highly associated with Nicaraguan immigration. Nicaraguans were commonly assumed to be involved in gangs and drug trafficking, prostitution, and other scourges on Costa Rican society. As put by one of my neighbors, a Costa Rican man in his fifties or sixties, “they are everywhere now—delinquents, with their drugs—even in nice neighborhoods like this one”. Another frequent theme was the threat that Nicaraguans posed to the security of Costa Rica. A Costa Rican father of two, in his mid-forties, explained to me how things have changed in recent years, “We all used to sit on our porches in the evenings during *verano* [the dry season]...we waved to our neighbors and passed the time just talking and getting to know each other, we were connected in the community...the doors are all locked now, and everyone is inside by five o’clock”.

The perception of the number of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica also came through in conversations, as some Costa Ricans expressed a feeling of being “taken over” by Nicaraguans. “There are just too, too many of them”, expressed a Costa Rican man who worked in the

pulpería down the street from my apartment. “This country takes in everyone, more than it can handle, and then it is everyone else who loses”, he explained as he told me how his brother, a skilled carpenter, had recently lost his job with a client, because “they could hire three Nicas for less”. Other conversations revolved around the decline in social services including medical care, public transportation and schools, which were commonly described as being overrun with Nicaraguans and therefore, were not available to or were providing inadequate service to Costa Ricans. One woman in her late forties, whose daughter was married to a Mexican lawyer, and was currently living in Mexico City, compared the situation with Nicaraguans to “the Mexicans in your country...it is the same, it is the poor and the sick ones who come over and they need so much, and there is only so much to go around”.

It is important to note, that though these themes were frequent, there was a significant variety in attitudes toward Nicaraguan immigrants among the Costa Ricans I spoke with. Having friendships or other types of acquaintances with Nicaraguans seemed to negate many stereotypes. One Costa Rican woman in her forties told me of her friendship with a Nicaraguan woman that began in an aerobics class at the local gym; through her friendship with this woman she learned “they are just like us, there is no difference, we are all just people”. Another woman, a neighbor of mine spoke to me about her live-in nanny, a pretty young Nicaraguan woman I had met previously; “she is honest, one of the good ones...she must be if I trust her with all the things that are important to me, like my kids and my house, even my husband”.

Some Costa Rican intellectuals and college students that I spoke with also tended to refute stereotypes about Nicaraguans. One Costa Rican man, an academic researcher in his mid-thirties, told me “they always say it is about the Nicas, they do this, they are the cause of that...but the source of our problems is our society itself. We have grown lazy and entitled, we

expect the government to take care of us, but the Nicaraguans, they take care of themselves, and us...they pick our coffee, our melons, build and guard our houses, but what are we doing for them?" A Costa Rican college student in her early twenties suggested that it was the government that villainizes Nicaraguans to cover up for their own crimes; "they are corrupt, they take the money for themselves, sell our land to foreigners and big corporations, and then they tell us that we have to pay more taxes because of the Nicaraguans...it is all a big lie".

Some highlights from my informal conversations with Nicaraguans shed light on their experiences in Costa Rica and their treatment by the locals, including reports of discrimination, mistreatment by employers, and long difficult working conditions. Nicaraguans also discussed with me their reasons for migrating to Costa Rica, and the challenges of living in poverty, with inadequate housing and the inability to secure stable employment and/or earn enough to provide for their families. Nicaraguans shared with me their disappointments about life in Costa Rica, as well as their optimism for the future, particularly in the form of opportunities for their children. Though they praised many aspects of Costa Rican society, including the generous social services and the charity of many of the people, they also expressed a feeling of being trapped in their situations by overly strict immigration policies which made it difficult to travel back and forth between Nicaragua and Costa Rica or to obtain legal residency, something they felt was necessary in order to live decent lives in Costa Rica.

The Nicaraguans I spoke with were primarily economic migrants, and most had come to Costa Rica fairly recently, within the ten years prior, to find work. With good jobs difficult to come by in Nicaragua, many had heard about opportunities in Costa Rica from friends and family members who had worked there. These stories of better pay and working conditions filtered through communities, inspiring more to make the trip to Costa Rica. Some of those

working in Costa Rica sent for their families after a year or two, while others created new families and lives for themselves in Costa Rica.

A few other Nicaraguans I spoke with came to Costa Rica much earlier, as refugees of the revolutionary and contra wars in Nicaragua. These individuals had established their lives and careers in Costa Rica and many had legal residency or were naturalized Costa Rican citizens. I also met a few Nicaraguan college students who came to Costa Rica to study in one of the universities here; these students were generally from middle class or wealthier families in Nicaragua than most Nicaraguan immigrants, but they were nevertheless interested in learning about and discussing the situation of Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica.

One common theme of these discussions was about the opportunity here in Costa Rica that was not available in Nicaragua. Parents especially spoke of the opportunities available for their children, as the educational system here was seen to be far superior to what was available in Nicaragua. One woman in her mid-thirties, with a fifth-grade education from Nicaragua told me, “I think all the time about going back [to Nicaragua], but then I think, what would be there for them? My kids would not be able to study at the same level they do here, what they learn here opens up the whole world to them”. Another mother of three young girls between four and eight years old told me that growing up in Costa Rica made it possible for her girls to “be something in life, to not have to clean other peoples’ houses for a living”.

A Nicaraguan man in his early thirties, currently working as a security guard told me about all of the things he had been able to learn since being in Costa Rica for the past eight years, “now I know how to hang drywall, how to dig a foundation, even how to do masonry...if you show up to work with the right attitude, and be receptive to doing anything, they [Costa Rican employers] will teach you, because there is so much to be done here...not like in Nicaragua,

where the only jobs are on the farms”. Charity was another characteristic that Nicaraguans appreciated in Costa Rica. A mother of an infant, in her mid-twenties, who had come to Costa Rica with her parents when she was just nine years old told me, “here there are good people who will take care of you, you won’t starve, and you won’t die because you can’t get the medicine you need...my parents tell me it is not like that in Nicaragua, there you are on your own, and if you die, you die”.

Nicaraguans also talked to me about the disappointment they felt when the reality of life in Costa Rica did not match their expectations. They talked of the difficult decisions and the painful processes of leaving their families behind in search of opportunity, just to find that things were only slightly better in Costa Rica. Many found jobs where they earned a small increase in salary over what they earned in Nicaragua, but at the cost of long hours and great personal sacrifice. Wondering if it was worth it, a live-in domestic worker in her early thirties who kept house and cared for two Costa Rican children told me, “I love the *chiquitos*, and my boss is a nice lady, better than most...but the pay is no good, and I am in this house all day and most nights while my little ones [her children, aged 6 and 9] are back in Nicaragua... sometimes when I go to sleep at night, I think about if it is worth the costs”.

Another disappointment for many was the poor living conditions available to Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. Life in the urban precarios, where the untitled lands were susceptible to government takeovers, had taken its toll on many people I spoke with. As one woman in her thirties, with four small children, told me, “I would like more than anything to be able to buy my own little house, because there is no privacy in the precarios. We have to shut ourselves in at night, draw the curtains and block off the entryway...they [her children] cry because they don’t want to be closed in, but I tell them it is because there are bad people out there on the streets”.

Another Nicaraguan woman in her mid-thirties, a ‘white collar’ professional working for an immigrant advocacy organization, described her own challenges in dealing with the Costa Rican government over the years in order to gain title to the lands in her community, “they [government officials] told us we could buy the land, but later when they learned we were Nicaraguans, they didn’t want to let us, they tried to stop the sale because they didn’t want it [her neighborhood] to become another precario”.

Discrimination was another unexpected fact of life that many Nicaraguans learned about upon their arrival in Costa Rica. As told to me by a woman in her late twenties from a small rural part of the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, “I never knew there was such a thing as this racism, we don’t have this where I am from in Nicaragua...I have never felt ashamed of myself before I came here”. A man in his mid-thirties described a common form of subtle taunting, that he claimed happened to him almost once a week, “As I get on the bus, I hear them say ‘Nica’, they whisper it and stare at you as you walk by them, and sometimes they also say ‘go back to your own country, there are too many of you here. We have no room for you”.

However, other Nicaraguans I spoke with seemed to be adjusting well to life in Costa Rica, and had not experienced mistreatment or discrimination to a great extent from Costa Ricans. One man in his mid-thirties, who had been in Costa Rica ten years told me that he has never had any problems getting along with the people here, “I am Nicaraguan, and I tell people that, but I still have many Costa Rican friends...the friendships just started from conversations, like you and I are having now...I show them pictures of the lakes and volcanos, and of my uncle’s house in the country, and they tell me they want to go there with me...that they want to buy land and start a business there, with my help”. A nineteen year-old Nicaraguan woman who was brought to Costa Rica as a young child by her parents complained to me about how her

parents tried to get her interested in her heritage, “ my mother is always saying, come here, look at these pictures of Nicaragua, taste this food, it is Nicaraguan...I don’t care for any of it... here, people don’t just think about Costa Rica all the time, but about the whole world...I am learning English, and I have friends from many places, like the U.S. and Switzerland...I would prefer to move to Europe rather than stay here or go back to Nicaragua”.

A final theme that revealed itself in my informal conversations with Nicaraguans was the feeling of being trapped in Costa Rica, of trying to exist in an in-between state—living and working in Costa Rica while feeling nostalgic and living for the people and things back in Nicaragua. A woman in her thirties explained to me the challenges of raising a transnational family, “I would go back, I miss so many things and people, but my son, he was born here. I have three [children] over there, with my mother, but he is here, he is Costa Rican...I want to be in my country over there, but I can’t take him away from his country either”. Feelings of homesickness were met with pessimism about Nicaragua’s future. A woman in her mid-to-late forties told me “I have to accept the fact that I will probably be here forever, so I am getting used to the way they do things...there are some nice things here, but still, there is nothing like being in one’s own country, on your soil, with your relatives and your own customs”.

The results from these informal and unstructured interviews with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans allowed me to identify areas and themes for further investigation in later stages of the research project. One particular use of the data was in the selection of questions for the interview guides that would further explore issues related to cultural identity in a series of semi-structured interviews with Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans.

Results of Semi-structured Interviews

In this section of this chapter I present the results from the series of semi-structured interviews conducted with purposive samples of Costa Ricans (n=18) and Nicaraguan immigrants (n=21) in Costa Rica. Interview questions targeted specific areas for discussion, including the participants' thoughts and perceptions of Costa Rican society, Costa Rican and Nicaraguan people, and Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultures. Both sets of participants were asked to comment on the best and worst aspects of Costa Rican society, Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultural differences, and differences in the character and behavior of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. Both sets of participants were also asked about their participation in Nicaraguan and Costa Rican cultural events and customs, as well as their acquaintances and relationships with persons from the other group.

In addition to this core set of questions addressed to both sets of participants, Nicaraguan participants were also asked to discuss their reasons for migrating to Costa Rica, and their experiences during migration and shortly after arrival in Costa Rica. They were also asked to talk about the things they missed most in Nicaragua. Costa Ricans were asked about their feelings regarding Nicaraguan immigration, their knowledge about and interest in Nicaraguan culture, and their perceptions of how Nicaraguans have affected and/or contributed to Costa Rican society.

The Costa Rican and Nicaraguan samples were roughly matched in terms of gender ratios and age²³ however the Costa Rican sample had more years of education on average, and a higher

²³ The Costa Rican sample consisted of ten women and eight men, between the ages of 18 and 56, with an average age of 32.4. The Nicaraguan sample included eleven women and ten men, 19 to 52, with an average age of 34.6.

percentage of professional occupations than the Nicaraguan sample²⁴. The interviews ranged from twenty-eight minutes to one-and-a-half hours in length, with an average length of around forty minutes each. Common themes revealed in content analysis of the data are presented in the next section.

The Costa Rican Identity Model: Perceptions of Costa Rican People and Culture

An analysis of interview data pertaining to the characteristics and behavior of Costa Ricans revealed seven predominant themes. Results from interviews with both sets of participants, Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans are presented together because there was a great degree of overlap in the perceptions across both groups. Variations by group are discussed within the sections for each theme.

Pura Vida and the Tendency toward Pacifism

The phrase *pura vida*, which translates as “pure life”, is the quintessential Costa Rican saying used in many contexts including greetings, and as a response to the question “how are you?” To say that one is *pura vida* is to imply that the person has a cool and relaxed way of being; it is sometimes used synonymously with the adjective *tranquilo*—which translates as tranquil or calm—but *pura vida* means more than this. To say something is *pura vida* is a statement that all is good, that you are satisfied and in a good place. Its usage is also a symbol of identity; for example, in the words of a twenty-nine year old male Costa Rican laboratory

²⁴ ‘Professional’ jobs included office work at corporations, governmental and non-governmental agencies, educational and health institutions. Non-professional jobs in the sample included labor and trade occupations such as construction, agricultural work, and domestic workers. A few persons from each sample were unemployed at the time of the interviews, or were students or housewives.

technician, “I just say it, reflexively, when I meet another Costa Rican...I think it is our way of recognizing that we are similar, that we are part of the same tribe”. A twenty-one year old female college student sums up the concept by saying, “pura vida includes all of what is good about us [Ticos]...our enthusiasm for life, sports and music, our outgoingness, how we are so nice...did you know that Ticos are the nicest people in Central America?”

The concept of pura vida, an important element of Costa Rican identity overlaps and reflects on some elements of other themes, for example, the Costa Rican tendency toward pacifism, and the strength of Costa Rican national pride. A twenty-five year old Costa Rican woman pointed out how these characteristics distinguish Costa Ricans from Nicaraguans and everyone else “We don’t have an army, and this should make us an example for all of the world to follow”. A thirty-four year old male tour guide explained the concept further, “pura vida comes from the desire to live in clean air, in the forests that we have here...it [pura vida] means even when you are not there [in the forest], you can feel like you are...this is why we protect these things...it is about preserving life”.

Some Nicaraguans agreed that the Costa Rican attitude of pura vida was a positive quality; according to a thirty-one year old Nicaraguan man, “I like it, that phrase [pura vida]. There is something nice about it, and it is a good way of opening a conversation with them [Ticos]”. On the other hand, some Nicaraguans used the phrase to point out what they considered to be hypocrisy or conflict avoidance among Costa Ricans; a thirty-four year old domestic worker told me, “They’re always saying that, pura vida, pura vida, all the time...I think it is their way of dismissing you, they just wave their hand and say pura vida, but nothing else, no real words that mean anything”. On the other hand, A twenty-six year old Nicaraguan man, who worked at a high-end boutique at one of the malls, praised Costa Ricans for their sociability with

people from all walks of life, “I like how Ticos talk, they are very friendly people...last week this guy came in here, and my co-worker was asking ‘Do you know who that is?...I guess he was someone really important, a big business guy, but you would never know it from the way he was with us...that’s pura vida”.

Modern and Cosmopolitan

Costa Rica and Costa Ricans were often described as “modern”, and participants stressed Costa Rica’s more developed and technologically advanced infrastructure and culture when compared with Nicaragua. The theme was evident in discussions of social and human capital. Costa Ricans thought of their country as forward looking, while Nicaragua was seen as being stuck in the past. According to a thirty year-old Costa Rican woman who worked at a tourism agency, and who had visited some cities in Nicaragua recently, “I remember it was so beautiful, all the old architecture, but I prefer to live here, things just work better over here...transportation, technology, and other things are really basic over there”.

Several Costa Ricans also emphasized the rationality and reasonableness of their co-nationals, as the result of living in a modern society. In the words of a thirty-three year old male Spanish teacher, “people here are very connected with international affairs...because we are a very educated people, we [Ticos] participate in and contribute to important discussions about environmentalism, human rights, and other issues”.

High levels of tourism from North American and Europe seemed to validate the belief that Costa Rica was more sophisticated and advanced than other Central American destinations; a fifty-two year old daycare owner, whose son was married to an American woman, explained to me, “all of you [North Americans] come here because it is easier for you to get around, you can

use your computers and get everything you need, just like in the United States...this is why there are some many friendships and relationships [romantic] between Ticos and Gringos today, because we are similar”.

Nicaraguans also seemed to appreciate many aspects of Costa Rica’s developed social services and infrastructure. According to a thirty-five year old Nicaraguan woman who had migrated 12 years earlier to attend college, “the first thing I noticed when I arrived was all of the lights. When we left the airport, I remember comparing it to Nicaragua, where everything is so dark...I like that they [the lights] make you feel safer, you can go out and do more things at night and not be afraid”. The availability of medical services and technologies was also appreciated by many Nicaraguans. In a particularly emotional interview, a twenty-eight year old woman who was HIV positive, discussed her dilemma about staying in Costa Rica or returning to Nicaragua, “Here there are medicines for me that help me stay alive, they don’t have them in Nicaragua, so I tell my children [in Nicaragua] that I can be here and live or go back to them and die”.

Patriotism and Exclusion

Many Costa Ricans admitted to being patriotic and proud to be Costa Rican, though others willingly discussed some of the downsides that came along with that strong sense of nationalism and distinctiveness. One twenty-seven year old schoolteacher shared her feelings of homesickness during her trip to London a few years ago, “When we visited the embassy, there was a party, and I remember when they played *La Patriotica Costarricense*, I cried...it was the part about the beauty of our forests...that is how you know someone is a Tico, because they cry if they are away too long”. Ideas of Costa Rican exceptionalism came up in many interviews, especially in comparison with Nicaragua. A thirty-two year old man who worked as a tech

support assistant discussed his sense of national pride, “of course it is something to admire, that we have managed to keep ourselves together as a country, that we elect good governments, and have a decent economy and we aren’t so poor and begging for work all around the world”.

The uglier side of Costa Rican nationalism came up during interviews as well. Several Costa Ricans discussed the exclusiveness of their society and admitted that it sometimes manifested as racism. One twenty-eight year old woman, a massage therapist, admitted, “Ticos are really rude to foreigners, we can be very prejudiced and territorial, especially with Nicaraguans”. At times, xenophobic viewpoints of some interviewees became apparent during the interviews, for example, when a fifty-five year old retired cashier admitted to me that “I just don’t like them [Nicaraguans]...they’re just not like us and you can’t trust them. It is the same with the *negros*²⁵. I don’t associate with them either”.

Nicaraguan participants also commented frequently on their own experiences as the targets of Costa Rican prejudice and racism. A thirty-four year old security guard told me, “I can’t say they are all racists, because they’re not, but there are some who try to make you uncomfortable here, so you will leave. When you speak, they pretend they don’t understand you, and then they say, ‘oh, you are not from here, you don’t belong here’. Other Nicaraguans pointed out the hypocrisy in the image of Costa Rica as a refuge, a country claiming to welcome all, without actually doing so. A thirty-five year old female college graduate who worked in administration at a local high school explained, “on the surface it all looks good, but when you scratch at it [the surface] a little, you see it is not...the kids go to school, but they can’t graduate, you can work, but there is no security. There are so many promises, but without a *cedula* [residence card], they are not available to you”.

²⁵ A term commonly used by Costa Ricans to refer to Costa Ricans of Afro-Caribbean descent, most of whom live on the Atlantic coast.

Quedar Bien & Hypocrisy

The tendency to *quedar bien* is a Costa Rican habit that is usually noticed fairly quickly by foreigners, but is not always apparent to Costa Ricans themselves. *Quedar bien* loosely translates as “keeping things well”, and was described to me by some participants as a type of maintenance strategy used in social relationships when one does not want to commit to something. As explained to me by a twenty-nine year old Costa Rican man studying law, “sometimes we [Ticos] don’t want to upset anyone, so we say yes even when we don’t really want to do what they are asking...it’s like a little lie we tell the person and ourselves...we might actually be considering [going] when we say so, but deep down we know we probably won’t”. A thirty-three year old Costa Rican woman who worked as a bartender at a night club described this habit as a way of sidestepping an uncomfortable situation “when someone is too persistent about something, like when they are trying to make a date with you, it is easier to say ‘OK’, so you can move on from there to do something else”.

While generally the tendency to *quedar bien* is not acknowledged as a problem by Costa Rican participants, a few did discuss complications that this habit presented when dealing with foreigners. A thirty-nine year old Costa Rican businessman admitted that “tico time”, the habit of showing up late to a meeting, or not at all, made Costa Ricans look bad, “I see this in my colleagues and I feel really embarrassed... when I try to talk to them about it, they just joke around, but it is not good, it doesn’t look good”. A twenty-two year old Costa Rican man expressed his frustrations with dating Costa Rican women, “that is why I prefer to go out with foreigners...with a Tica, you wait all day long, and you don’t know if it is because she is still doing her make-up or if she isn’t going to show up at all”.

A few Nicaraguan participants also commented on the tendency of Costa Ricans to make false promises. One forty-one year old woman confided in me, “I was relieved to see that you are a foreigner...I tried to do an interview once before, but she [a Costa Rican] kept calling to reschedule so many times that I gave up...she should have just been honest if she couldn’t do it.” Other Nicaraguans discussed with me the tendency of some Costa Ricans to be hypocrites or “fakes”. According to a thirty-four year old domestic worker, “they are nice when they talk to you, but then you hear them say bad things about you to someone else...they are *falsos*”. Another woman, a twenty-eight year old janitor discussed a broken promise from her former employer, “he kept telling me that I did such a nice job...and he felt bad about our situation [economic], and he told us he was going to help me get a better job over in the office...I kept seeing him a lot, and he said it every time...that was three years ago.”

Egalitarianism and Social Leveling

Costa Ricans often commented on the egalitarian nature and modesty of their co-nationals. This was frequently attributed to the large middle class. In Costa Rica, it is expected that friendly casual conversation will occur in public between people of all classes. In the words of one twenty-nine year old Costa Rican man, a mechanic, “We don’t get caught up in social classes here, everyone is the same, the president would speak with a janitor if they were both in line next to each other at the bank”. A twenty-five year old female saleswoman discussed the lack of ostentatious or showy displays of status, “One nice thing about Costa Ricans is that we don’t show off our wealth, and we don’t try to act like we are better than others...people are a bit reserved here and we don’t talk about money very often with other people”.

However, other Costa Rican participants pointed to the down side of this cultural attribute by describing social leveling tendencies that tend to hinder innovation or promote conformity. According to a thirty-two year old male tech support assistant, “They *cerruchan pisos* (cut you down), nobody likes it if you do things that are too different from what they normally do...they will tell you it’s stupid, or act like they don’t care when you do something really well.” A twenty-eight year old woman discussed *choteo*, a popular form of mean-spirited joking that is meant to be funny, but can be hurtful to those who are the object of the joke, “I have some friends who one minute they will compliment you with so much sincerity, and then someone else shows up, and they tease, ‘look at her, she thinks she’s so smart’...they make you feel bad because they are envious...this happened when I started dating my boyfriend who is from France...they[her Costa Rican friends] were all nice in front of him, but when it was just me with them, they talked in a fake accent, and just made fun of some of his mannerisms, things like that”.

This theme was not common in interviews with Nicaraguan participants; however some Nicaraguan participants made comparisons between wealth inequality in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. In the words of a thirty-eight year old Nicaraguan housewife, “in Costa Rica there is opportunity, there is enough for everyone to have something...in Nicaragua, only the very rich can go to school, go to a doctor, or travel to other parts of the country. Another woman, a thirty-four year old domestic worker who had worked previously for a Canadian family, pointed out what she saw as the irony of Costa Rican egalitarianism by comparing her current Costa Rican employers with her former ones, “they [Canadian family] would invite me to sit down for coffee, and to talk with them. The lady would ask me advice about what to feed the children...they treated me as an equal, they valued my opinion. Now, in this house [with Costa Rican family] I

feel guilty if I sit down more than a minute to rest my feet after twelve hours...she [female head of house] looks down at me, once she locked her closet in front of me, she did this while looking at me like I would steal something. I was very ashamed.”

Materialism and the Need to Aparentar (Keep up Appearances)

An interesting contrast with the previous theme of social leveling is the consensus among many participants that Costa Ricans are materialistic, that everyone is trying to get a better house or car to appear better off than they actually are. During an interview with a 31-year old Costa Rican woman, I wondered aloud how Costa Ricans could afford to live on the average salary of around \$600 U.S. per month, and her reply was, “they can’t...everyone here is in debt. When they want something, they go to the bank and get another loan...they do it because they want people to think they have a lot of money”. Costa Ricans in the Central Valley are often well-dressed and meticulously groomed. I was amazed by their ability to stay dry and clean while walking the streets of San Jose during the rainy season. According to a thirty-three year old male Costa Rican professional, “Sometimes I change my clothes three or four times a day because you always want to look your best, and you want to look appropriate for the occasion...you wear different things for different purposes...for example, you don’t wear the same thing to work and then to a party later on.”

A twenty-eight year old woman described the Costa Rican need to appear *culto* (cultured); “many of us try to show we are educated, so we go to museums, plays and art shows, but in reality, I don’t know many Ticos who are really that interested in our culture”. A forty-one year old woman offered an explanation for why Costa Ricans were so concerned with appearances, “It is because people here are so *vina* (nosy)...they are always trying to figure out

everyone else's business so they can gossip...this country, it is like a small town, everyone knows everything about everyone else."

Some Nicaraguan participants pointed out that Costa Ricans looked down upon rural people, or *campesinos*, and that they took measures to separate themselves through symbols of modernity and wealth. One thirty-eight year old woman told me that Costa Ricans dress "formal", or that they "don't wear these [pointing to her sandals], like we do". According to one thirty-four year old man, "they see us as campesinos, farmworkers...they like to act like we don't know anything of living in the city, like we are little children just learning to walk". A forty-one year old woman told me, "I think Ticos are very materialistic. They buy so many things they don't need...who needs forty pairs of shoes anyway?"

Charity and Environmentalism

This theme includes reflections from participants on the Costa Rican tradition of taking care of living things, including people, animals, and the natural environment. Environmentalism was a commonly touted value among Costa Ricans, who often referred to the national parks and biological reserves as evidence of this. Costa Rican conservation was sometimes contrasted with environmental practices in Nicaragua; according to a thirty-four year old Costa Rican man, "if you look around Costa Rica, you can see that we have done things right...if you go to Monteverde [cloud forest] you will see that they have nothing like it in Nicaragua, the forests there are gone". A twenty-seven year old female schoolteacher described the role of the Quakers in spreading conservationist and pacifist values, "We learned from the them [Quakers] before it was too late, we were able to save many of the forests and animals so that they are still here

today...I think it was a natural pairing, we [Ticos] have always had the caring spirit, and together [with Quakers] we have learned how to take care of many things.

While many participants agreed that environmentalism was a popular ideal in Costa Rica, some thought it was more myth than reality; a twenty-nine year old Costa Rican man told me, “Ticos say they care about the environment, but a man will cut down the last tree on the block if it will make him a little money”. Other Costa Rican participants pointed to the litter on the streets of San Jose, or the contamination of the national water supply as evidence that Ticos really don’t take care of things; a twenty-four year old female college student told me, “it is repulsive to walk down the streets, the buses and all the cars, they produce so much contamination in the air and the water...and the plastics, you should look at how much everyone throws away and it just goes into the streams and out into the ocean”. In an interesting contrast, a few Nicaraguan participants noted that Costa Rican streets were cleaner than in Nicaragua; a nineteen year old Nicaraguan man who had only been in Costa Rica for a year told me how he was so used to just throwing trash on the ground in Nicaragua, that it was hard for him to remember not to do it here, but it was important because “they’ll [Costa Rican police officers] give you citation”.

Nicaraguan participants often cited the availability of social services and charitable organizations as evidence of Costa Rican empathy. One woman, a forty-two year old housewife with diabetes spoke to me about her experiences with a church charity she said, “they gave a little food, a little bit of money for my medicine, and we [her and her 3 children] even stayed one night there, at the church when we were evicted from our rental house...the lady there was so generous, she didn’t have to do anything for us, but she did...thanks to her and to God we found a way”. Several other Nicaraguan participants commented on the availability of medical care that

would take care of anyone hurt or sick, if they needed it, even if they couldn't pay for it; this was very different from back home in Nicaragua, where quality care was only for those who could pay for it; according to an eighteen year old woman who had recently received some assistance purchasing corrective lenses for a visual disability from a charitable organization headed by a Costa Rican woman, "they are good people, Ticos...they will help you when they can...I needed all of these examinations, and it was very expensive, but she [Costa Rican woman] said not to worry, that they would find a way to get me these [glasses], and I was very surprised when they did."

Overreaction and Dissatisfaction

This theme draws together some related comments and observations regarding participants' perceptions of the Costa Rican tendency to overreact in some situations, and to complain about things often. To *hacer escándalo*, or make scandals is the way this was described to me by participants; sometimes participants presented this tendency as part of an enthusiasm for life, but at other times they portrayed it as overly emotional or theatrical behavior. A twenty-one year old female Costa Rican photographer told me about how "Ticos are always making small scandals, everything is made more important than it is", as an example she described an incident where her sister's boyfriend didn't answer his phone for two hours, "she [the sister] called probably ten people to say she was breaking up with him...it was the big news of the day, until she found out he lost his cell phone...everything was forgiven, but ten people had their time wasted on this". A twenty-nine year old Costa Rican man talked about how Costa Ricans worry about everything, especially their health, "whenever my ex-girlfriend got sick, even just a little cough, she would run to the pharmacy, then come home and tell me she was

dying...she would make me call the doctor for her, even when I told her that I had the same thing last week and I'm fine".

A somewhat related, but separate subtheme involves the Costa Rican tendency to be dissatisfied, and complain frequently. Speaking of his co-workers at a technology company, a thirty-two year old man remarked, "they whine all day about this thing or that thing... 'I don't make enough money', my job is boring, the soccer game was rigged'...whatever it is, I say, well fix it, do something to change it...but I think they would rather not, because then they will have nothing left to complain about". Some Nicaraguan participants agreed with this characterization; A thirty-one year old construction worker said he used it to his advantage on his last job where "the boss noticed that I always did my job, I never complained. I think that is why I got promoted...there was this Tico I worked with, he was lazy, always telling me how good he was, that he was too good for this job and that he should have a better one...he was angry when I got promoted instead of him."

A few Nicaraguan participants sought to explain the Costa Rican tendency to whine or complain as the result of being spoiled as children. According to one Nicaraguan mother of three small children, who had worked previously as a domestic, Costa Rican youth lack respect for their elders and authority figures; she said "they are spoiled when they are little, and so they don't have respect for anyone...they yell back at their own parents and act like delinquents". The lack of effective discipline, along with the tendency to indulge children's desires, according to one forty-five year old Nicaraguan journalist, was the explanation for most of Costa Rica's social problems, "the children grow up as the center of their parents' universe...a woman [Costa Rican] once told me that she would never spank her children, and that she would call the

Patronato [state child services] is she ever saw anyone else spank a child...well of course, her son turned out to be a delinquent...that is the problem”.

The Nicaraguan Cultural Identity Model: Perceptions of Nicaraguan People and Culture

An analysis of interview data pertaining to the characteristics and behavior of Nicaraguans revealed seven predominant themes: Hard workers, Family & Fertility, Machismo & Masculinity, Humble campesinos, Strong-willed & Impulsive, Adaptable & Flexible, Religion/Spirituality. Because some of the themes were present in interviews with both sets of participants, the results of Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans are presented together and variations by group are discussed within the sections for each theme.

Trabajadoras (Hard-working)

One theme that showed much agreement across both groups of participants was the belief that Nicaraguans are *muy trabajadora* [hard-working]. Several Nicaraguans compared the work ethic of their co-nationals favorably against that of Costa Ricans. According to one thirty-five year old construction worker, “Ticos don’t like to work that much, and when they do, they only want to do one thing, they are very selective about the type of work they want to do...we [Nicaraguans] don’t really care so much about what it is we do, as long as we have work”. An interview with a thirty-three year old Costa Rican man who had worked on construction sites with Nicaraguans in the past seemed to support this characterization, “You see, the problem with Ticos is that many of them are lazy, many think they should have a better job, but they don’t

know that they have to work for it...Nicaraguans are usually thankful just for the opportunity to work.”

Sometimes, among Costa Ricans, this attribute was invoked to suggest that Nicaraguans were more suited for physical labor than Costa Ricans. As stated by a fifty-two year old Costa Rican woman who had hired a Nicaraguan landscaper last year, “He was finished in just one day...I thought it would take a week, but that’s only if Ticos do it, because they are not suited for this type of work, they don’t have the character for it”. According to a twenty-eight year old Nicaraguan woman who had worked as a janitor at an office building, “Once, when I was caught sitting down at work, after thirteen hours of scrubbing floors and walls, my boss said that I better get up, or he would find someone else, but I don’t think he has ever worked thirteen hours straight in his life...so he wouldn’t know the exhaustion I felt then...he would have fallen down after three [hours]”.

According to several Nicaraguan participants, the tendency of Nicaraguans to be hard-working was out of necessity, because of the competition they felt with Costa Ricans and other Nicaraguans over the available jobs. According to one thirty-six year old woman whose husband had worked a variety of jobs in agriculture and construction, “this is because they have to [work hard], if not they [employers] find someone else, another Nicaraguan...there is always someone else they can find to do it, so you have to do a good job always, or lose your job.” This perception of the seemingly endless number of Nicaraguans seeking work also was apparent in interviews with Costa Ricans. One thirty year old Costa Rican man complained about the number of Nicaraguans in agricultural jobs, “Ticos used to pick all the coffee, that is a part of our history, but now when you look in the fields here in Heredia, it is all Nicas”, but later in the interview, he admitted that he didn’t know any Costa Ricans who would want the job, “It’s hard

work, dirty work, and you don't earn enough to even feed yourself, and certainly not feed a family...why would we do that?"

Job insecurity related to the perception of the number of Nicaraguans was a concern in interviews with both sets of participants. Many Costa Ricans complained about the immigrant labor force, while also admitting that "Nicaraguans did jobs Ticos don't want to". Nicaraguans with legal residency, and those who had been in the country a few years often remarked that the steady supply of new immigrants made it harder for them to find and keep jobs. They pointed out how employers knew this too, and exploited workers because they knew that they could always replace them. One Nicaraguan carpenter who had lived in Costa Rica for twelve years told me, "one used to feel appreciated...you could work hard and they [employers] would recognize this...you could work at a place for years. But now, there are just too, too many [Nicaraguans]...it is cheaper to hire the young ones because they will work for anything".

Family and Fertility

This theme includes participants' comments and reflections on Nicaraguans' family orientation and values when compared with Costa Ricans. Among participants there was some disagreement regarding whether Nicaraguans were more or less family-orientated than other peoples. Some Nicaraguan participants emphasized the importance of family in discussing their reasons for migrating to Costa Rica; in the words of a thirty-four year old Nicaraguan security guard, "for us [Nicaraguans], it is important to take care of our families...I couldn't do this in Nicaragua, and so I came here...after a few years, when I realized it was possible to live a better life here, I sent for them [his wife and two daughters]." However, the common pattern of Nicaraguan transnational families like this, left some Costa Ricans doubting the strength of

Nicaraguan family values; according to a fifty-two year old Costa Rican daycare owner, “they [Nicaraguans] leave their kids behind, sometimes they don’t see them for years...what kind of mother could do this? It’s not natural”.

Another subtheme related to family involved differences in the number of children in Costa Rican families when compared to Nicaraguan ones. A common sentiment in interviews with Costa Ricans was that Nicaraguan fertility rates were too high, leading to fears about an ‘anchor baby’ phenomenon; according to a twenty-one year old Costa Rican female college student, “they [Nicaraguans] have so many kids, and they can’t take of them...then the burden falls on us because the kids are unsupervised, they grow up without the proper moral guidance.” Another Costa Rican woman discussed a situation where a Nicaraguan woman who worked as a domestic in her neighborhood had left her children unsupervised, “one day she didn’t come to work and it was because someone found out that she had left three little ones at home, alone, all day, so they reported her to the Patronato”.

Among Nicaraguan participants, Nicaraguan family values were generally compared favorably to Costa Rican ones. A twenty-nine year old Nicaraguan former domestic worker commented on the Costa Rican family she used to work for, “they [Costa Ricans] don’t spend time together with family. Even on the weekends, the husband would work outside all day with his cars, the wife went shopping by herself, and the kids were out with their friends all the time...we [Nicaraguans] aren’t like that, it is important for us to be close with our families, sharing our lives with each other whenever we can”. Her sentiments about modern Costa Rican family life were echoed by the observation of a fifty-two year old Costa Rican woman, “things have changed, every weekend there used to be parties, birthdays, or just [extended] families getting together for dinner, but now, the kids don’t want to spend time with their families...the

teenagers and young people especially, they go out and drink, and the girls dance half-naked in the streets”.

Machismo and Masculinity

Machismo among Nicaraguan men was a frequent topic of conversation in interviews with participants from both groups. Nicaraguan men were frequently described as treating women poorly, with accounts of domestic violence and infidelity provided as examples. Some Costa Ricans described Nicaraguan men as womanizers who left their wives behind with children in Nicaragua, while they came to Costa Rica. One Costa Rican hotel manager described the Nicaraguan security guards at the hotel, “most of them find someone new here, and even better for them, if they find a Tica, she gets pregnant, and they stay here, then they leave the other woman back in Nicaragua on her own with all the babies”. Nicaraguan men were also characterized to be sexually aggressive in pursuing women, one nineteen-year-old Costa Rican woman described her encounter with a Nicaraguan man at a local nightclub, “he asked me to dance, and I said ‘no’, but he wouldn’t stop bothering me all night, I was afraid because I was not used to men being so aggressive, but I think that is just how they [Nicaraguans] are.”

Machismo was also mentioned frequently by Nicaraguan participants. According to a thirty-two year old Nicaraguan woman, “my father was a terrible man, he abused me, and then I was abused by my son’s father...they’re machistas [Nicaraguan men]...it is the big problem of our culture”. Even some Nicaraguan men admitted to the presence of machismo in the culture, according to a thirty-seven year old teacher, “yes, it is true, there is a lot of machismo in our culture, but isn’t this true of all Latin Americans?...there are some Nicaraguan men like this [who mistreat women], but there are many Ticos who also do, even some, Americans, right?” A great

number of participants, male and female, Nicaraguan and Costa Rican, who discussed machismo, agreed that it was something that needed to be changed, “it will take time”, said a thirty-five year old Nicaraguan woman who worked at an immigrant advocacy organization, “but, I have already seen some changes here, mostly because of the women...when they work too, they realize they don’t need to put up with the mistreatment...some find they do much better, even if it means they have to be on their own”.

A related subtheme of ‘masculinity’ emerged in some interviews, and was discussed in reference to Nicaraguan male sexuality and supposed capacity for violence. One twenty-four year old Costa Rican woman who had dated a Nicaraguan in the past noticed that “Nicaraguan men, I think, have to feel like they are in control...he [her ex-boyfriend] wanted to make all the decisions and it was a little too intense for me...he was jealous and always wanted to appear stronger than other men...I broke up with him because of this, and I worried a lot afterwards that he would still be jealous and would try to bother me when I started dating again”. A twenty-six year old Nicaraguan man who worked at a clothing store at the mall compared Nicaraguan masculinity to Costa Ricans by saying, “Ticos can be ‘sissies’ [*afeminados*] sometimes...they are afraid their hair will get messed up, or that they might get dirty...they come on strong sometimes, but they usually give up easily when you confront them.” Nicaraguan men were sometime sexualized in conversations where participants commented on their virility in regards to the number of children and mistresses they have; according to one forty-two year old Costa Rican man, “they are always going around getting someone pregnant...I know this one [Nicaraguan], he has at least three girlfriends and nine or ten kids...they should learn to be more in control of themselves around women”.

Humble Campesinos

This theme as it was revealed by participants from both groups had both positive and negative connotations depending upon the context in which it was indicated. The adjective, *sencillo* [simple] was used by some participants to refer to the elegant simplicity of Nicaraguans, to imply that they were ‘down to earth’, and not lofty or snobby. Nicaraguans were noted for not being obsessed with material things, or fascinated with the newest technologies. According to a twenty-eight year old Costa Rican woman, “...they are simple people, they just go to work every day, and they don’t ask for much, they don’t seem to need much in order to be happy”.

The use of the word simple, however, also had negative connotations at times, such as when it was used to imply a lack of intelligence or naiveté. In the words of one twenty-five year old Costa Rican man, “I don’t have an opinion about Nicaraguans...the ones I meet they are nice enough, I suppose, but they are simple, uneducated, so I don’t have much in common with them...I say hello to the guard on my street, but I never sit down to have a real conversation about anything [with him].” Nicaraguans participants who characterized themselves and their co-nationals as sencillos, used this term to express their desire for a modest life, to live within ones means and be happy about it; this was an interesting contrast to the Costa Rican tendency toward materialism. “We are *humildes* [humble people]”, said a thirty-six year old Nicaraguan man when I asked him if it bothered him to live in a precario, “many of us [Nicaraguans] could live in better homes here, but it is more important to send money back to Nicaragua, to take care of our families than it is to buy a big house, we don’t need those things, this [the precario] is fine enough”.

Many characteristics associated with rural peasants were used to describe and characterize Nicaraguans. To many Costa Ricans, the average ‘Nica’ was someone from the

rural areas of Nicaragua; typically, these areas of Nicaragua are poorer and do serve as a source of many immigrants in Costa Rica, though certainly not all. Sometimes this characterization implied a romanticized notion of the *campesino*; according to a forty-two year old Costa Rican man, “most of them [Nicaraguans] are people from the country, so they are used to working outside, with their hands...it is how we [Costa Ricans] used to be, years ago, before we got so dependent on technology”. One thirty-four year old Nicaraguan woman, a seasonal agricultural worker acknowledged that characteristics typical to people from rural areas set Nicaraguans apart from Costa Ricans, “well this [pointing to her skirt and sandals] is different...they [Costa Ricans] do not wear the clothes like us, these are typical of people from the country, they [Costa Ricans] are not *campesinos*...and the manner of speech, we talk differently, they [Costa Ricans] say we don’t talk as good as they do, because we are from the country”.

Strong-willed and Impulsive

This theme was revealed in interviews with both sets of participants. Several Costa Ricans spoke of the tendency for Nicaraguans to be assertive to a fault. Sometimes Nicaraguans, particularly the men, were described as *impetuosos* [hot-headed]; according to one thirty-five year old Costa Rican business owner who employed Nicaraguans, “I know all the stereotypes, and I don’t want to contribute to them, but I have to admit that I have seen them [Nicaraguans] to be a bit more impetuoso [than Costa Ricans]...some of them have a short fuse, and you have to be careful in the words you use with them because they get angry easily”. This trait was especially likely to be associated with drinking alcohol; one twenty-four year old Costa Rican woman described an incident she witnessed outside of a bar, while walking home one evening, “there was a fight, everyone seemed really drunk...one minute they were laughing and singing

really obnoxious things, which made me uncomfortable, but then in a matter of seconds, one Nica got upset at something and he punched the other guy, then it got really scary, and I got out of there fast.”

Sometimes, the strong-willed Nicaraguan temperament was invoked in a comparison with Costa Ricans, who were perceived to be passive by some participants. In the words of a thirty-three year old Nicaraguan woman describing the differences between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, “we are just loud, we do things with passion. For example, when I do chores on a Saturday, I turn the music up loud, and I dance and sing along, loudly...in the community where I live, this is normal, sometimes my neighbors join in on it...but they [Costa Ricans] would never do this...many of them are afraid to show people who they really are”. A twenty-four year old male Nicaraguan student suggested that what was perceived by many Costa Ricans to be aggressive behavior on the part of Nicaraguans, was actually just a misinterpretation of the Nicaraguan sense of humor, “you have to choose your words carefully with them [Costa Ricans]...we [Nicaraguans] are sometimes a little rough in the way we say and do things, but with people from your own country, they understand that you don’t mean anything bad, you are just being direct”.

In an interesting contradiction, a few participants characterized Nicaraguans in an opposite manner, characterizing them as submissive. A thirty-five year old professional Nicaraguan woman told me the reason for her success when compared with her co-nationals was because “I have always been a fighter, and you have to be here...but many [Nicaraguans] are too submissive, they just put up with all of the mistreatment. I want to tell them to fight, to stand up for themselves because they have rights here too, and no one else is going to fight for them”.

Religion and Spirituality

This theme covers the association of Nicaraguans with religiosity, spirituality, and a greater connection with their ‘traditional’ culture, than was perceived to be true of Costa Ricans. Sometimes Nicaraguans were described as creyenseros (believers), in witchcraft, medicinal herbs, and other mystical beliefs and practices; as remarked by one twenty-one year old Costa Rican male college student, “they believe in witches, I am sure of this...and in curing they use certain plants you can buy in the market”. A fifty-five year old evangelical Costa Rican woman admired Nicaraguan’s religious faith, “many of them are very religious...there are many Evangelicals, and even some Seventh Day Adventists...I think this is a good thing, to have more religion in our society.”

An interesting subtheme in some interviews was the belief that Nicaraguans were more connected with their ‘traditional culture’ than Costa Ricans. According to a thirty-eight year old Costa Rican woman, “It is so nice, the celebrations they have at Christmas time...the festivals of the saints where they all get together and sing, it is all very festive...we [Costa Ricans] do some of this here too, but our traditions are different, more subdued, I think”. A thirty-six year old Nicaraguan woman seemed to support this notion when she described being homesick, particularly at Christmas time, “In Nicaragua, there are so many celebrations, everyone gets together with their family, you go down to the center of town, and during La Purísima, you scream, so loud that you can’t talk the next day...I do miss that a lot, and also the activities we do during Semana Santa (Easter week).”

Sometimes this characterization of Nicaraguans also took on a romanticized tone in conversations with Costa Ricans, such as in the words of a thirty-two year old Costa Rican woman, “I think it would be nice sometimes, to be more connected to the culture as they

[Nicaraguans] are...here we have lost so much of our culture, now we just surf the internet and go to the movies for fun...we have become too Americanized, right?.”

Adaptable and Flexible

This theme overlaps to some degree with some of the prior themes, but references to Nicaraguan flexibility were mentioned frequently enough in interviews to warrant a separate category. Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans alike seemed to agree that Nicaraguans were less rigid or tied down to things than Costa Ricans; although this characteristic was commonly invoked to discuss employment preferences, it also came up in conversations about living conditions, and family. For example, a forty-five year old Nicaraguan man claimed that “the Nicaraguan people have been hardened by many things...we have lived through hurricanes and poverty, war...but Ticos have never experienced these things, so they are soft, they could never adapt to the way we live”. A twenty-nine year old Nicaraguan woman suggested that flexibility was also a feature of Nicaraguan family life, “You have to look out for yourself, and not depend on a man...I learned at a young age to take care of myself, so if things are good with your partner, you stay, but when it doesn’t work for you anymore, you have to be flexible and move on, that way you won’t be disappointed and spend your life crying over someone else”.

A few participants acknowledged that flexibility may be a characteristic of immigrants, but not necessarily of all Nicaraguan people. In the words of a thirty-nine year old Costa Rican business owner, “I am not sure this is true of all Nicaraguans, but those who come here have already shown that they are willing to try something new, to come to live and work in another country, that demonstrates a degree of flexibility...this helps them on the job market, because they will work many different jobs compared to Ticos who are trained in school to just do one

thing.” This observation was supported by the acknowledgement of a nineteen year old Nicaraguan man that “I am not tied to any place, I just go where there is work and where the pay is good. I have worked in Panama, in Honduras...If you told me there was work in the U.S., I would go there tomorrow...I like the challenge of finding out about a new place”

Other Elements of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity: Past times, Folklore, Celebrations and Foods

Other important elements of the cultural models of identity mentioned by study participants include the groups’ unique patterns of everyday life, along with their traditional customs and particular ways of celebrating national and religious holidays. Cultural culinary traditions were a common focal point in interviews where Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans were asked to discuss differences between their two cultures.

When discussing the Costa Rican national dish of *gallo pinto*²⁶—a seasoned blend of black beans and rice, a Nicaraguan woman told me, “it is so bland here, and they put too much condiment [Salsa Lizano] in it”. Other Nicaraguans complained about the lack of variety in the types of foods available in Costa Rica. According to one woman, “I get frustrated sometimes, because I cannot find certain things we use in Nicaragua here in the stores, and when I ask someone if they have it, they don’t know because we call things by different names in Nicaragua...but in general, the food is okay, but there is not much flavor or variety in the types of food they eat here, for example, in Nicaragua, we use a lot of pork, but they don’t...and we have many more foods made with corn”.

²⁶ Interestingly, *gallo pinto* [translated as spotted rooster], is a dish claimed by both Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. The main difference is that Costa Ricans prepare the dish with black beans and rice, while Nicaraguans use red beans. Costa Ricans also season their pinto with a mild brown sauce they call *Salsa Inglesa*, or *Salsa Lizano* (after the most popular brand name of this condiment), which many Nicaraguans did not care for.

Typical Costa Rican foods are fairly mild, and meals center around beans, rice, chicken, fish, some red meat, and a nearly endless variety of fruits and vegetables. In addition to gallo pinto—typically served for breakfast with cheese, *natilla*²⁷, and sautéed ripe plantains, other meals that Costa Ricans eat frequently include *casados*—lunch plates that vary in contents, but are typically made up of some combination of meat, poultry or fish, served with rice, beans, and salad. Other traditional foods include *picadillos*—a diced vegetable dish sautéed with onions, peppers and stock. Beverages called *frescos* are made by blending various fruits with water or milk, and these usually accompany meals at any time of day. A traditional beverage popular during holiday celebrations, *agua dulce* is served warm and made of water boiled with sugarcane. However, more than any other, coffee is the beverage of choice for many Costa Ricans, and it is typically taken with generous amounts of milk and sugar.

The typical foods of Nicaragua include *nacatamales*²⁸, a corn flour, pork and vegetable mixture sealed in a banana leaf and boiled or steamed (usually served during holiday seasons). Pork is a common ingredient in Nicaraguan cuisine and is part of many popular dishes, including *chanchito con yuca* or *vigarones*, two dishes made with yuca, pork or fried pork rinds, and topped with shredded cabbage. *Indio viejo* is another typical dish that participants mentioned frequently; it is made with shredded meat, corn tortillas and vegetables, served on a banana leaf.

Nicaragua is also known for its great variety of traditional beverages, many made with corn and/or cacao, along with other ingredients; these are typically sold everywhere in the markets and plazas in Nicaragua. Many Nicaraguan participants remarked on the absence of the

²⁷ A type of sour cream, but of a thinner consistency than is typical in many places. Natilla is packaged in plastic tubes which are squeezed over foods as a condiment. Several Nicaraguans commented that it is very different from what they are used to in Nicaragua.

²⁸ A type of tamale is also traditional in Costa Rica, however, most of the Nicaraguans who commented on this type of food insisted that nacatamales are very different from what is served in Costa Rica. They are larger in size, and according to Nicaraguan participants, the process of making them is more intricate, leading to a better flavor.

variety of beverages in Costa Rica. Two popular beverages are *chica*—a drink made with ground corn, water and sugar, and *pinol* a somewhat gritty textured beverage made of corn flour and cacao mixed with milk. Nicaraguan participants also commented on the absence in Costa Rica of the great variety of candies and sweets that are a common part of traditional cultural celebrations in Nicaragua including, *rosaquillas* (savory or sweet cookies made with corn flour and sometimes, cheese), and *cajetas* made with milk or coconut milk and sugar.

Study participants also commented on the variation in past times, entertainment, and popular national and historical figures, including writers, artists, celebrities and politicians. A notable difference between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan participants was their preferred sport. While Costa Ricans resemble the general pattern in Latin America with their fervent enthusiasm for *fútbol* (soccer), Nicaraguans typically prefer to watch or play baseball.²⁹ People of both nations are great lovers of poetry and literature, though the internationally-celebrated Nicaraguan poet of the late 1800s, Rubén Darío, is a particularly important source of cultural pride for many Nicaraguans. The folkloric play *El Güegüense*, an early 17th century comedic satire on the mestizo's place in colonial Nicaragua has also become a national symbol defining the character and culture of the Nicaraguan people.

Music and dance traditions vary between the two nations, but also regionally within both nations. The Costa Rican traditional dances of *El Caballito Nicoyano* and *Punto Guanacasteco* are important pieces of folklore with origins in the cattle-ranching western region of Guanacaste. Performances of these dances take place nationwide during the celebration of the annexation of

²⁹ This is probably the result of British and American influence upon Nicaragua throughout its history. Either introduced on the Atlantic coast by foreign soldiers, or brought back to Nicaragua by Nicaragua elites who had studied in the U.S. (Walker 2003).

Guanacaste³⁰ on July 25th. *Palo de Mayo*, a sensual form of traditional dance originating on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua has enjoyed a newfound popularity in night clubs around Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Many dancing clubs in Costa Rica maintain a traditionally Latin flavor of music and dance including salsa, cumbia, and swing, though reggaeton music has also become popular in recent years.

Other important symbols of identity for Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans include historical national heroes. In Costa Rica, the largest airport is named after Juan Santamaría, a poor, young mulatto soldier who died in battle in 1856, sacrificing himself to burn down a wooden fort hiding the forces of William Walker, an imperialist American who had taken over Nicaragua, and sought to do the same in Costa Rica. Part fact and part legend, the story of Santamaría was likely embellished as a way of consolidating national identity in a nation without a history of significant military battles, but he is nonetheless an important figure, well-known by most Costa Ricans. In Nicaragua, perhaps the most popular national hero is Augusto César Sandino who led a series of peasants' revolts against U.S. imperial interests and oppressive government forces in the 1920s-30s, before being executed in 1934 by the National Guard leader who would later become the dictator, Anastasio Somoza García. Sandino's story has defined the rebellious spirit of the Nicaraguan people, even serving as the inspiration for the revolutionary movement in the 1970s that led to the overthrow of the first Somoza's son, Anastasio Debayle Somoza, and the subsequent rise to power of the Sandinista Frente de Liberación.

In terms of religion, Costa Rica and Nicaragua are both Catholic majority nations, so many of the holiday celebrations, including those of Christmas and Easter, revolve around important figures in Catholicism, though they are generally also celebrated by those of other

³⁰ An important holiday in Costa Rica which celebrates the annexation of the Guanacaste province—formerly part of Nicaragua. In 1826, the people of this region chose to leave Nicaragua (which was bitterly divided in civil war) to become part of Costa Rica. Interestingly, this region is the cradle of Costa Rican national folklore.

religions. Perhaps the most festive national celebration in Nicaragua is *La Purísima* in honor of the Virgin Mary, which is celebrated in regionally distinctive ways throughout the country. In Nicaragua, this celebration which takes place in late November is often called *La Gritería*, to describe the loud screaming and singing that people do in honor of the Virgin Mary as they travel from home to home to visit alters made to the Virgin, and where they receive traditional packages of sweets called *gorras*. At each alter they visit, the people traditionally scream out loudly, “Who is the cause of so much happiness”, to which everyone then yells, “The conception of Mary”. In some towns, including the indigenous village of Masaya, a procession behind an image of the Virgin also occurs. Processions are also common in many villages throughout the country during Semana Santa (Easter Week), and during *las fiestas patronales*, which take place on different dates in different regions of the country in honor of local patron saints.

Celebrations during La Purísima, Semana Santa, and in honor of regional patron saints also take place in Costa Rica, however there are differences in the manner of celebration. The screaming tradition of La Gritería is distinctly Nicaraguan, and many Nicaraguan participants who had been to celebrations in Costa Rica told me that they were less festive, or a bit more somber than in Nicaragua, where a large majority of people partake in the festivities, and where street performers, including the traditional *gigantonas*—dancers who wear paper maché costumes to appear as very tall women—entertain young and old alike.

In Costa Rica, during early August, a local variation on Catholic traditions called *La Romería* involves a pilgrimage that believers make in honor of *la Negrita*, the patron saint of Costa Rica who is believed to perform miracles of healing. Each year over a million Costa Ricans walk about fourteen miles from San José, or from farther places, to Cartago, where the Basilica Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles was constructed around the site where the Black Virgin

first appeared in 1630. Upon arriving at the Basilica, the most faithful believers walk on their knees up to the altar to pay thanks to the Virgin. Religious in origin, this tradition has also become an important symbol of national identity that is participated in by up to forty percent of the Costa Rican population in a given year.

Mentioned in interviews with several Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans, the foods, past times, legends and celebrations described above constitute important elements of national and cultural identity distinguishing Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. In general, participants from each group were more familiar with their own traditions and customs than those of the other group, however a few participants from each group demonstrated some knowledge of the cultural traditions of the other. Nicaraguan immigrants who had lived in Costa Rica longer were more familiar with Costa Rican culture and traditions than those who had arrived more recently. Costa Ricans who had visited Nicaragua, or who had friends or family from Nicaragua were more familiar with Nicaraguan culture and traditions than those who were not acquainted with many Nicaraguans.

Results of Structured Interviews

Forty items derived from themes of cultural identity that were revealed in semi-structured interviews were incorporated into a structured interview questionnaire which was distributed to samples of 25 Nicaraguans and 25 Costa Ricans to gather their perceptions of which cultural identity (Costa Rican or Nicaraguan) each item was more closely associated with, and the perceived social value (degree of goodness or badness) of each item. The overall sample was 62% male and 38% female, with both subsamples showing a similar distribution according to gender (Costa Rican sample was 15 men and 9 women and the Nicaraguan sample was 14 men

and 9 women). Of the 50 questionnaires collected, 3 were discarded from the sample due to large quantities of missing data (1 Costa Rican man and 1 Nicaraguan woman), or because the respondent did not qualify as either nationality by the criteria set for the study.

The samples of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans differed greatly overall in educational level, with higher numbers of Costa Ricans having attended or completed college and advanced degrees, while a high number of Nicaraguans had completed just 8 years of school or less, the equivalent of primary school (Figure 1). Occupations also varied between respondents of both nationalities, with more Costa Ricans working in skilled (i.e. administration, technology) and professional occupations (i.e. lawyer, veterinarian, teacher, nurse) when compared with Nicaraguans, who worked largely in unskilled labor (i.e. construction, security, domestic work). The Costa Rican sample also had a higher percentage of college students (n=5) when compared with the Nicaraguan sample (n=2). (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Educational Level of all Respondents by Nationality

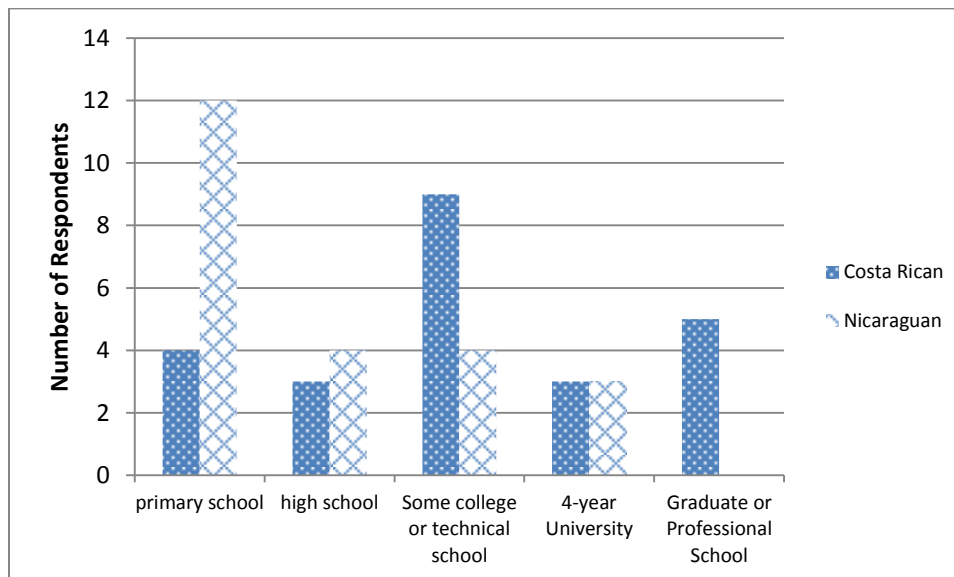
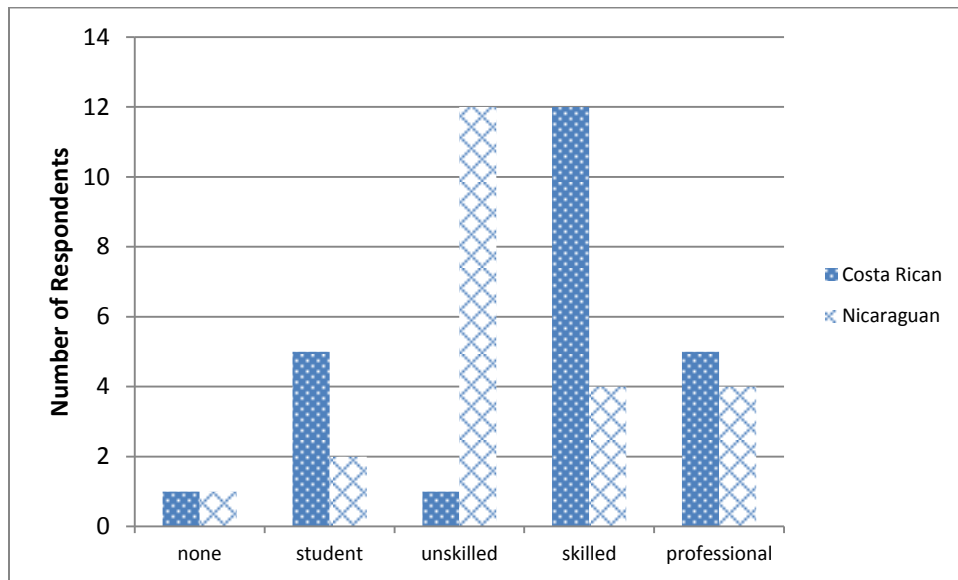


Figure 2: Employment Category of all Respondents by Nationality



Cultural Consensus analysis of the cultural identity item ratings was performed three times on different samples of respondents. First, the total sample of all respondents, Costa Rican and Nicaraguan, was analyzed together ($n=47$), and later, each subsample of Costa Rican ($n=24$) or Nicaraguan ($n=23$) respondents was analyzed separately. Cultural consensus analysis of the social value ratings was then performed on the same three samples.

Cultural Identity Rating Scales

Analysis of the overall sample

Descriptive statistics (means, medians, modes and standard deviations) of each item showed the average perceptions of the overall sample regarding the “Costa Ricanness” or “Nicaraguanness” of each item. Table A lists the interview items in ascending order of mean value, with items rated as more Costa Rican listed first, and items rated as Nicaraguan toward the

end of the table. Means, medians and modes were used as criteria for whether an item was more Costa Rican or more Nicaraguan, with most items qualifying for one of the cultural identity categories on this basis.

There were a few exceptions where the cultural identity for the item was more ambiguous. These included: believing strongly in God ($M=2.56$, $SD=1.014$), helping anyone in need ($M=2.57$, $SD=.927$), drinking a lot of alcohol ($M=2.64$, $SD=1.051$), and believing in equality for all ($M=2.67$, $SD=.853$). The large standard deviations for these four items indicate that there was some disagreement among participants as to with which cultural identity these characteristics were more strongly associated. Interview items with means below 1.5 and medians and modes equal to 1 were considered to be highly regarded as Costa Rican by the respondents. Items with means above 3.5, and medians and modes equal to 4 were considered to be regarded as highly Nicaraguan.

Cultural consensus analysis of the cultural identity ratings of all participants analyzed together did not show evidence of a single culture regarding the items included on the structured interview instruments [first eigenvalue=19.3 and second=7.4; ratio=2.6]. Factor one explained 41% of the variance among these individuals; a scree plot (Figure 3) shows the presence of an important second factor, which explains 15% of the variance [Factors 1 and 2 together account for 56.8% of the variance in the sample].

When the factor loadings (Pearson's coefficients) for factor 1 and factor 2 are compared in a scatterplot (Figure 4) it appears that the perceptions of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan participants, while generally showing agreement on the first factor, differ in a meaningful way from each other on the qualities that make up factor 2. In addition, a small cluster of Nicaraguan

participants in the lower left-hand side of the plot also may indicate a sub-culture of participants whose perceptions differ from the overall sample.

Table A: Descriptive Statistics for Cultural Identity Item Ratings All Participants (N=47)

| Interview Item | N | Mean | | Med. | Mode | Std. Dev. |
|---|----|-------|------------|------|------|-----------|
| | | Stat. | Std. Error | | | |
| Attend or participate in La Romería | 47 | 1.21 | .060 | 1 | 1 | .414 |
| Watch a performance of El Caballito Nicoyano | 47 | 1.30 | .080 | 1 | 1 | .548 |
| Eat gallo pinto, casados, or picadillos | 47 | 1.36 | .093 | 1 | 1 | .640 |
| Discuss the legend of Juan Santamaria | 47 | 1.36 | .077 | 1 | 1 | .529 |
| Play or watch a soccer match | 47 | 1.36 | .071 | 1 | 1 | .486 |
| Use the phrase “pura vida” | 47 | 1.49 | .100 | 1 | 1 | .688 |
| Embrace new technologies | 47 | 1.51 | .074 | 2 | 2 | .505 |
| Drink or serve agua dulce | 47 | 1.55 | .090 | 1 | 1 | .619 |
| Have laws for everything | 47 | 1.66 | .076 | 2 | 2 | .522 |
| Believe than one race is better than others | 45 | 1.76 | .120 | 2 | 1 | .802 |
| Respect and protect the environment | 46 | 1.85 | .103 | 2 | 2 | .698 |
| Dance cumbia or swing | 47 | 1.85 | .086 | 2 | 2 | .589 |
| Be false, say one thing but mean another | 43 | 1.86 | .131 | 2 | 1 | .861 |
| Worry about your appearance, try to look good | 46 | 1.87 | .101 | 2 | 2 | .687 |
| Believe money brings happiness | 46 | 1.96 | .116 | 2 | 2 | .788 |
| Embrace Pacifism | 47 | 1.96 | .118 | 2 | 2 | .806 |
| Prefer to be with friends over family | 45 | 1.98 | .125 | 2 | 2 | .839 |
| Attain a high level of education | 47 | 2.02 | .138 | 2 | 2 | .944 |
| Believe your country is the best | 46 | 2.02 | .151 | 2 | 2 | 1.022 |
| Be weak-willed or passive | 45 | 2.07 | .112 | 2 | 2 | .751 |
| Believe strongly in God | 47 | 2.56 | .148 | 2 | 2 | 1.014 |
| Help anyone who is in need | 47 | 2.57 | .135 | 2 | 2 | .927 |
| Drink a lot of alcohol | 47 | 2.64 | .153 | 3 | 3 | 1.051 |
| Believe in equality for all | 45 | 2.67 | .127 | 3 | 2 | .853 |
| Be hot-headed or impulsive | 45 | 2.73 | .129 | 3 | 3 | .863 |
| Act in a loud and animated way | 46 | 2.76 | .136 | 3 | 3 | .923 |
| Display machismo | 46 | 2.85 | .149 | 3 | 4 | 1.010 |
| Be simple, don’t require much for happiness | 46 | 2.96 | .124 | 3 | 3 | .842 |
| Prefer to live in the country, not the city | 46 | 2.96 | .112 | 3 | 3 | .759 |
| Attend or participate in La Purísima | 46 | 2.98 | .130 | 3 | 4 | .882 |
| Use physical violence to resolve disputes | 47 | 3.11 | .133 | 3 | 4 | .914 |
| Dance Palo de Mayo | 47 | 3.23 | .106 | 3 | 3 | .729 |
| Use the phrase “va pues” | 47 | 3.28 | .079 | 3 | 3 | .540 |
| Be hard-working, do the best job possible | 47 | 3.30 | .117 | 3 | 4 | .805 |
| Be flexible or adaptable | 47 | 3.32 | .106 | 3 | 4 | .726 |
| Have or desire a large family | 46 | 3.35 | .089 | 3 | 3 | .604 |
| Play or watch a baseball game | 46 | 3.63 | .084 | 4 | 4 | .572 |
| Watch a performance of El Gueguense | 47 | 3.66 | .076 | 4 | 4 | .522 |
| Discuss the story of Augusto Sandino | 47 | 3.68 | .069 | 4 | 4 | .471 |
| Eat nacatamales, indio viejo or vigarones | 47 | 3.83 | .055 | 4 | 4 | .380 |
| Drink or serve pinol | 47 | 3.87 | .049 | 4 | 4 | .337 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 37 | | | | | |

Items shaded in orange were rated “Costa Rican” while those shaded yellow were indeterminate and those shaded in blue were rated “Nicaraguan”

Figure 3: A Scree Plot of Cultural Consensus Analysis of All Structured Interview Participants' Cultural Identity Ratings

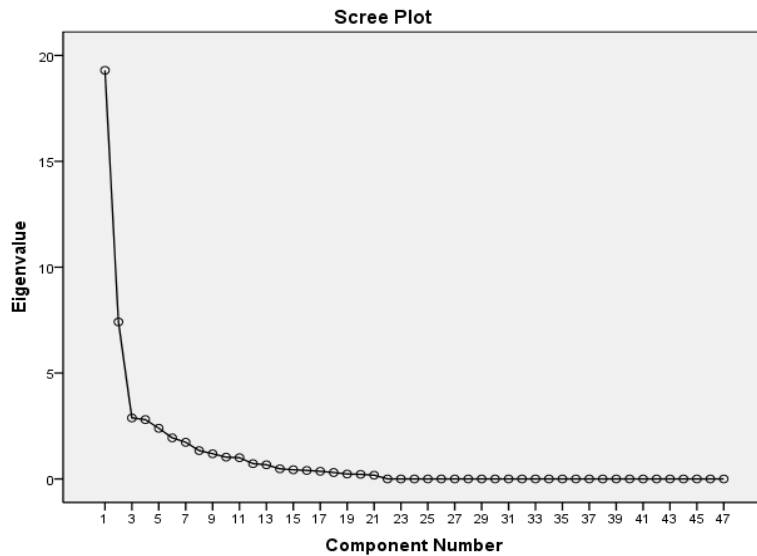
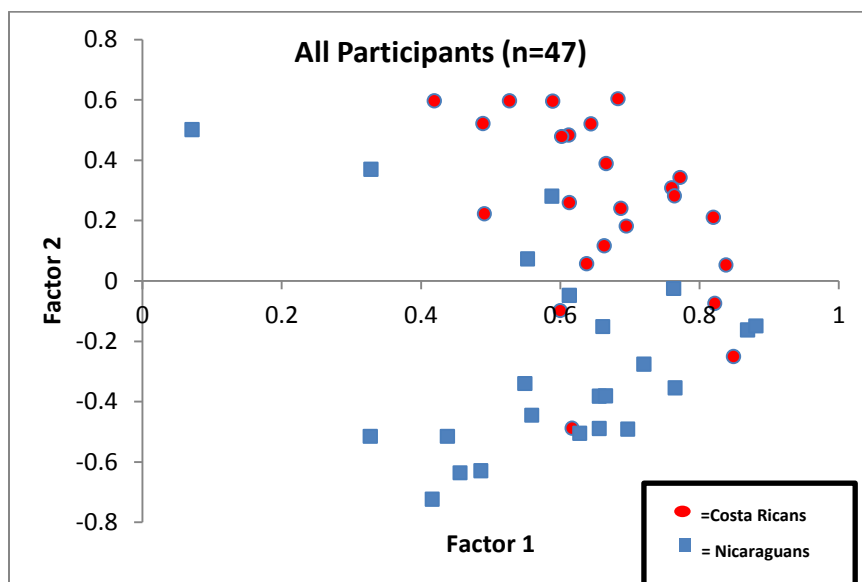


Figure 4: A Scatterplot Showing All Participants' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Cultural Identity Items



An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the cultural identity ratings for Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. Items which showed significant differences in ratings between the two groups are listed below in Table B. Items with means below 2.5 were considered to be more closely associated with Costa Rica cultural identity, and items with means above 2.5 were considered to be more closely associated with Nicaraguan cultural identity in this sample of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. The magnitude in the differences in the means (eta squared) of most items in the table was large

Table B: Items with Significant Differences in Cultural Identity Ratings between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Respondents

| Interview Item | | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error Mean | Mean diff. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Effect size (eta squared) |
|--|----|------|-----------|-----------------|------------|--------|----|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Believe strongly in God | CR | 2.04 | .751 | .153 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 3.11 | .977 | .204 | -1.067 | -4.211 | 45 | .000 | .28 |
| Attain a high level of education | CR | 1.50 | .511 | .104 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 2.57 | .992 | .207 | -1.065 | -4.657 | 45 | .000 | .32 |
| Help anyone who is in need | CR | 2.13 | .612 | .125 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 3.04 | .976 | .204 | -.918 | -3.882 | 45 | .000 | .25 |
| Use physical violence to resolve disputes | CR | 3.54 | .588 | .120 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 2.65 | .982 | .205 | .889 | 3.786 | 45 | .001 | .24 |
| Behave in a loud or animated way | CR | 2.39 | .891 | .186 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 3.13 | .503 | .107 | -.739 | -2.935 | 44 | .005 | .16 |
| Say one thing and do another [ser falso] | CR | 2.18 | .907 | .193 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 1.52 | .680 | .148 | .658 | 2.682 | 41 | .010 | .15 |
| Be hard-working, do best job possible | CR | 3.00 | .834 | .170 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 3.61 | .656 | .137 | -.609 | -2.772 | 45 | .008 | .15 |
| Embrace pacifism | CR | 1.67 | .482 | .098 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 2.26 | .964 | .201 | -.594 | -2.691 | 45 | .012 | .24 |
| Be hot-headed or strong-willed [impetuoso] | CR | 2.48 | .846 | .176 | | | | | Moderate |
| | N | 3.00 | .816 | .174 | -.522 | -2.104 | 43 | .041 | .09 |

The results of the t-tests indicate that Nicaraguan respondents claim that traits like being loud and animated, hot-headed or impulsive [*impetuoso*], religious, and charitable are more characteristic of Nicaraguan identity than Costa Rican identity. They also felt that “saying one thing and meaning another” [*ser falso*] was more characteristic of Costa Rican identity. Costa Rican respondents on the other hand believed that being religious, embracing pacifism and attaining a high level of education were more characteristics of Costa Rican identity than Nicaraguan identity. Costa Ricans associated the use of physical violence strongly with Nicaraguan identity, whereas Nicaraguans did not show a strong association of this item with either identity, though the mean puts it closer to Nicaraguan identity than Costa Rican identity. Though Costa Ricans agreed that Nicaraguans were hard-working, and that Costa Ricans were more likely to say one thing and do another [*ser falso*], the average ratings for these two items among Costa Ricans were less strongly associated with the identities than were the ratings of Nicaraguans.

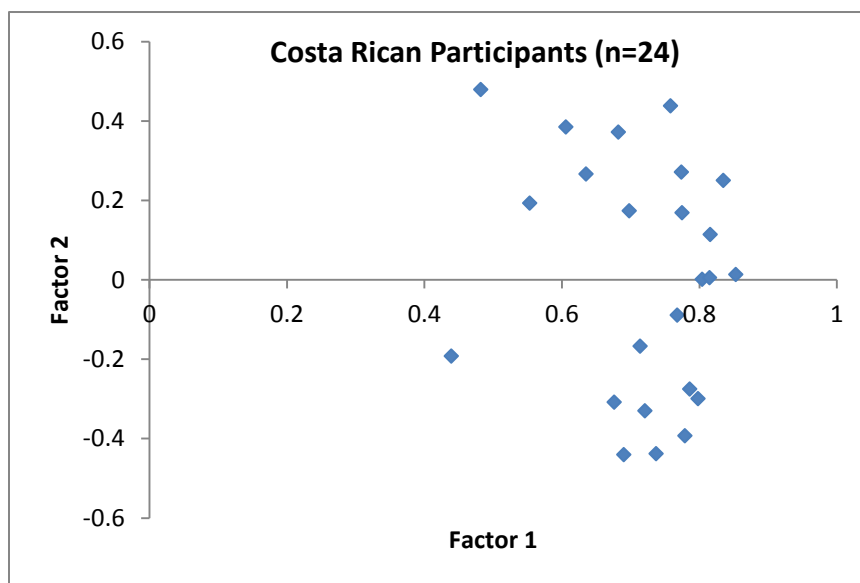
The patterns of difference between Costa Rican respondents and Nicaraguan respondents seems to indicate that factor 2 in the overall sample may be related to the likelihood of respondents from either nationality to emphasize “good” qualities, like being charitable, religious, hard-working, educated, or pacifistic, among their own group and downplay “bad” qualities like using physical violence or being false [saying one thing when you mean another].

Analysis of Costa Rican Participants

Each group of participants, the group of Nicaraguan respondents and the group of Costa Rican respondents, were also analyzed for consensus separately, indicating some interesting patterns in perceptions across the samples. The analysis of Costa Rican participants produced a

similar pattern to that seen in the analysis of all participants; strong agreement on factor 1 with important variation around factor 2 (Figure 5). The results of this analysis indicate that the sample is likely a single culture, with the first factor accounting for 52.45% of the variance and a large ratio between the first and second eigenvalues [initial eigenvalue=12.6, second eigenvalue=2, ratio=6.3].

Figure 5: A Scatterplot Showing Costa Rican Participants' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Cultural Identity Items



A further analysis was performed, comparing the responses of participants in the upper cluster (high loadings on factor 2) with participants in the lower cluster (low loadings on factor 2), which indicated some interesting differences in perception between the two groups. Independent pairs t-tests were conducted to compare the item ratings between respondents in the two clusters. There were significant differences in ratings for several items, which are listed in Table C below. The magnitudes of differences in the means were large for all significant items. Means less than 2.5 indicate that the respondents felt the item to be more characteristic of Costa

Ricans and means greater than 2.5 indicate that respondents felt the item to be more characteristic of Nicaraguans.

Table C: Significant Differences in Cultural Identity Ratings between Upper and Lower Clusters of Costa Rican Respondents (High Loadings vs. Low Loadings on Factor 2 of CCA)

| Interview Item | | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error Mean | Mean diff. | t | df | Sig (2-tailed) | Effect size (eta squared) |
|---|------|------|-----------|-----------------|------------|--------|----|----------------|---------------------------|
| Drink a lot of alcohol | Low | 3.50 | .527 | .167 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 1.73 | .467 | .141 | 1.773 | 8.173 | 19 | .000 | .78 |
| Be false [say one thing and mean another] | Low | 2.78 | .833 | .278 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 1.60 | .699 | .221 | 1.178 | 3.350 | 17 | .004 | .40 |
| Believe strongly in God | Low | 1.50 | .527 | .167 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 2.55 | .688 | .207 | -1.045 | -3.880 | 19 | .001 | .44 |
| Display machismo | Low | 3.50 | .972 | .307 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 2.50 | .972 | .307 | 1.000 | 2.301 | 18 | .034 | .23 |
| Be hardworking | Low | 2.50 | .972 | .307 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 3.36 | .505 | .152 | -.864 | -2.592 | 19 | .025 | .25 |
| Give help to anyone who needs it | Low | 1.80 | .422 | .135 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 2.45 | .688 | .207 | -.655 | -2.596 | 19 | .018 | .26 |

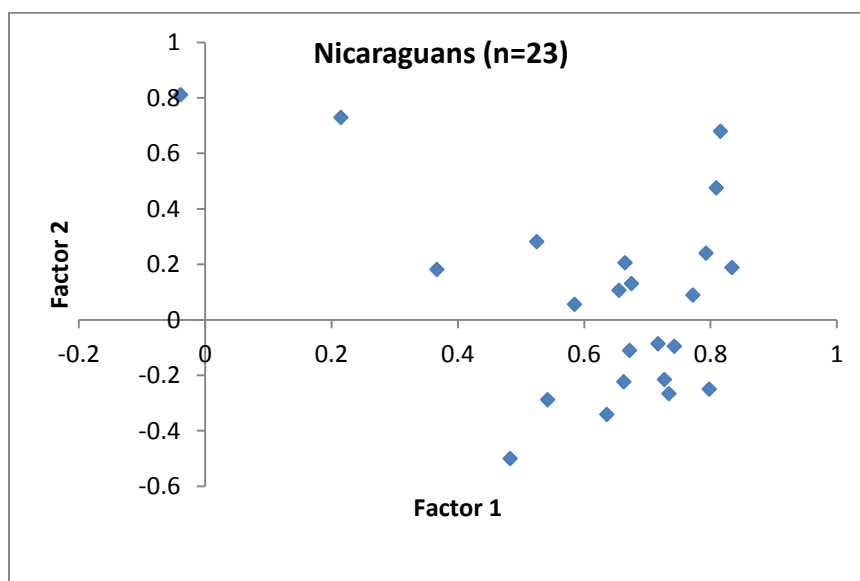
Looking at these items closer provides an indication that factor 2 may be related to differences in the level of empathy among the Costa Ricans in the sample toward Nicaraguans and their level of criticism toward Costa Ricans. The participants in the upper cluster overall seem to have a more sympathetic attitude toward Nicaraguans, associating the traits of being hard-working with Nicaraguan identity and the traits of saying one thing but meaning another [*ser falso*], and drinking lots of alcohol with Costa Rican identity. Upper cluster respondents also believed traits such as machismo, religiosity, and being charitable were not more strongly associated with one identity over the other.

In contrast, lower cluster respondents associated machismo and drinking lots of alcohol with Nicaraguan identity, while they associated religiosity and charity with Costa Rican identity. Lower cluster respondents believed that neither being hard-working nor saying one thing but meaning another [*ser falso*] were more strongly associated with one cultural identity over the other.

Analysis of Nicaraguan Respondents

A consensus analysis of Nicaraguan respondents analyzed separately from Costa Ricans included some variation around both factor 1 and factor 2. The first factor in this sample accounts for 43.3% of the variance [first eigenvalue=9.96, second eigenvalue=2.41, ratio=4.1]. Factor 2 accounts for 10.5% of the variance, with factors 1 and 2 accounting for 53.8% of the variance. The pattern seen in the scatterplot in Figure 6 seems to indicate the presence of two cultures with a few outliers.

Figure 6: A Scatterplot Showing Nicaraguan Respondents' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Cultural Identity Items



A further analysis was performed, comparing the responses of participants in the top cluster (high loadings on factor 2) with participants in the bottom cluster (low loadings on factor 2). Independent pairs t-tests were conducted to compare the item ratings between respondents in the upper cluster (high factor 2 loadings) and lower cluster (low factor 2 loadings). There were significant differences in ratings for several items, which are listed in Table D below. The magnitude of differences in the means was large for all significant items. Means less than 2.5 indicate that the respondents felt the item to be more characteristic of Costa Ricans, and means greater than 2.5 indicate that respondents felt the item to be more characteristic of Nicaraguans.

Table D: Significant Differences in Cultural Identity Ratings between Upper and Lower Clusters of Nicaraguan Participants (High Loadings vs. Low Loadings on Factor 2 of CCA)

| Interview Item | | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error Mean | Mean diff. | t | df | Sig (2-tailed) | Effect size (eta squared) |
|-------------------------|------|------|-----------|-----------------|------------|--------|----|----------------|---------------------------|
| Believe strongly in God | Low | 3.80 | .422 | .133 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 2.58 | .954 | .265 | 1.2231 | 3.765 | 21 | .001 | .45 |
| Drink a lot of alcohol | Low | 2.10 | 1.10 | .348 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 3.31 | .855 | .237 | -1.208 | -2.967 | 21 | .018 | .30 |
| Embrace Pacifism | Low | 2.90 | .994 | .314 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 1.77 | .599 | .166 | 1.131 | 3.390 | 21 | .003 | .35 |
| Help anyone in need | Low | 3.60 | .699 | .221 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 2.62 | .961 | .266 | .985 | 2.727 | 21 | .013 | .26 |
| Display machismo | Low | 2.20 | 1.03 | .327 | | | | | Large |
| | High | 3.00 | .816 | .226 | -.800 | -2.078 | 21 | .05 | .17 |

Looking at these items more closely provides an indication that factor 2 may be related to differences between participants who are more empathetic toward Costa Ricans or towards Nicaraguans. The participants in the lower cluster seem to have a more critical attitude towards Costa Ricans, associating the traits of machismo and drinking a lot of alcohol more closely with

Costa Rican identity than with Nicaraguan identity; they also associated being religious and charitable more strongly with Nicaraguan identity.

In contrast, the upper cluster respondents were more critical of Nicaraguans than the lower cluster, associating machismo and drinking a lot of alcohol with Nicaraguan identity and associating pacifism with Costa Rican identity. Upper cluster individuals did not associate the traits of religiosity and charity more closely with one identity over the other.

Social Value Item Ratings

Descriptive statistics including means, medians, modes, and standard deviations were calculated to assess the perceived social value of each item among the overall sample. Table E lists the interview items in ascending order of mean value, with the “good” items listed first (shaded in green), and the “bad” items at the end of the table (shaded in purple)

Participants rated several items as “very good” including: respect for the environment, charity, hard work, pacifism, education, religiosity and egalitarianism (as indicated by mean < 2 and median and mode=1). The two largest religious celebrations in each country (La Purísima in Nicaragua and La Romería in Costa Rica) were also rated “very good” as was the Costa Rican phrase “pura vida”. The participants viewed four items as “very bad” including: racism, the use of physical violence, being false, and machismo (as indicated by mean > 3 and median and modes=4).

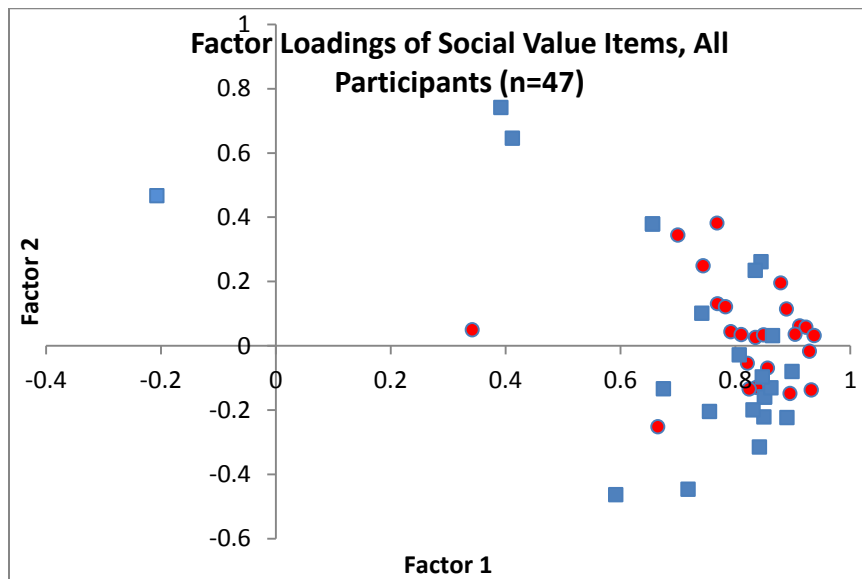
Cultural consensus analysis of the social value of each item as perceived by all participants indicated strong agreement on the positive or negative evaluation of each item included on the interview instrument, with the first factor accounting for 62.7% of the variance [first eigenvalue=29.5; second eigenvalue=2.9; ratio=10.2] (Figure 7).

Table E: Descriptive Statistics for Social Value Item Ratings All Participants (N=47)

| Interview Item | N | Mean | | Median | Mode | Std. Dev. |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|--------|------|-----------|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | | | Statistic |
| Respect and protect the environment | 47 | 1.09 | .041 | 1 | 1 | .282 |
| Attend or participate in La Romería | 46 | 1.13 | .050 | 1 | 1 | .341 |
| Help anyone who is in need | 47 | 1.23 | .062 | 1 | 1 | .428 |
| Be hard-working, do the best job possible | 46 | 1.28 | .067 | 1 | 1 | .455 |
| Attend or participate in La Purísima | 47 | 1.32 | .069 | 1 | 1 | .471 |
| Embrace Pacifism | 46 | 1.35 | .071 | 1 | 1 | .482 |
| Attain a high level of education | 47 | 1.38 | .089 | 1 | 1 | .610 |
| Use the phrase “pura vida” | 47 | 1.45 | .079 | 1 | 1 | .544 |
| Believe strongly in God | 47 | 1.47 | .100 | 1 | 1 | .687 |
| Believe in equality for all | 46 | 1.52 | .092 | 1 | 1 | .623 |
| Eat nacatamales, indio viejo or vigarones | 47 | 1.55 | .090 | 2 | 2 | .619 |
| Be simple, don’t require much for happiness | 47 | 1.66 | .082 | 2 | 2 | .562 |
| Play or watch a soccer match | 47 | 1.68 | .114 | 2 | 2 | .783 |
| Eat gallo pinto, casados, or picadillos | 47 | 1.70 | .221 | 2 | 2 | 1.517 |
| Play or watch a baseball game | 45 | 1.73 | .107 | 2 | 2 | .720 |
| Dance Palo de Mayo | 46 | 1.76 | .077 | 2 | 2 | .524 |
| Dance cumbia or swing | 47 | 1.77 | .147 | 2 | 2 | 1.005 |
| Prefer to live in the country, not the city | 47 | 1.81 | .099 | 2 | 2 | .680 |
| Embrace new technologies | 47 | 1.81 | .084 | 2 | 2 | .576 |
| Discuss the legend of Juan Santamaria | 47 | 1.83 | .098 | 2 | 2 | .670 |
| Drink or serve pinol | 47 | 1.83 | .098 | 2 | 2 | .670 |
| Watch a performance of El Gueguense | 47 | 1.87 | .084 | 2 | 2 | .575 |
| Drink or serve agua dulce | 47 | 1.87 | .065 | 2 | 2 | .448 |
| Worry about your appearance, try to look good | 47 | 1.89 | .076 | 2 | 2 | .521 |
| Discuss the story of Augusto Sandino | 47 | 1.96 | .096 | 2 | 2 | .658 |
| Be flexible or adaptable | 47 | 1.98 | .116 | 2 | 2 | .794 |
| Watch a performance of El Caballito Nicoyano | 47 | 2.09 | .095 | 2 | 2 | .654 |
| Have laws for everything | 46 | 2.11 | .104 | 2 | 2 | .706 |
| Use the phrase “va pues” | 46 | 2.33 | .108 | 2 | 2 | .732 |
| Have or desire a large family | 47 | 2.34 | .130 | 2 | 2 | .891 |
| Believe your country is the best | 47 | 2.51 | .136 | 3 | 3 | .930 |
| Prefer to be with friends over family | 47 | 2.85 | .105 | 3 | 3 | .722 |
| Be hot-headed or impulsive | 47 | 2.89 | .106 | 3 | 3 | .729 |
| Act in a loud and animated way | 47 | 2.91 | .095 | 3 | 3 | .654 |
| Drink a lot of alcohol | 47 | 2.96 | .118 | 3 | 3 | .806 |
| Be weak-willed or passive | 46 | 3.00 | .124 | 3 | 3 | .843 |
| Believe money brings happiness | 46 | 3.28 | .086 | 3 | 3 | .584 |
| Believe than one race is better than others | 47 | 3.55 | .085 | 4 | 4 | .583 |
| Use physical violence to resolve disputes | 47 | 3.60 | .099 | 4 | 4 | .681 |
| Be false, say one thing but mean another | 46 | 3.63 | .072 | 4 | 4 | .488 |
| Display machismo | 47 | 3.64 | .071 | 4 | 4 | .486 |

Items shaded in green were rated “Very Good” (dark green) or “Good” (light green) while those shaded in purple were rated “Bad” (light purple) or “Very Bad” (dark purple)

Figure 7: A Scatterplot Showing All Participants' Loadings on Factors 1 & 2 for Social Value Items



The scatterplot in Figure 7 shows only minimal differences in the overall pattern between Costa Rican participants (indicated by red circles) and Nicaraguan participants (indicated by blue squares). An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare each item's rating among Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. There were significant differences at the 95% CI between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in scores for several items, with many showing a large magnitude of difference in the means (eta squared). Items with significant differences are listed in Table F.

For most items, Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans agreed upon whether a particular trait was good (mean < 2.5) or bad (mean > 2.5), but the significant differences revealed in the t-tests indicate a perceived difference in the degree of "goodness" or "badness" of the item. Interestingly, Costa Rican respondents overall rated items closer to the extremes of "very good" and "very bad" more often than Nicaraguans. For example, regarding "good" items like equality for all and pacifism the mean for Costa Rican respondents is lower than that of Nicaraguan respondents. The higher sample means when compared with Nicaraguan respondents indicate

that Costa Rican respondents also rated “bad” items like being false, machismo, racism, physical violence and materialism as worse on average than Nicaraguan respondents.

Table F: Significant Differences in Social Value Ratings between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Participants (N=47)

| Interview Item | | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error Mean | Mean diff. | t | df | Sig (2-tailed) | Effect size (eta squared) |
|---|----|------|-----------|-----------------|------------|--------|----|----------------|---------------------------|
| Have or desire a large family | CR | 2.67 | .816 | .167 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 2.00 | .853 | .178 | .667 | 2.738 | 45 | .009 | .14 |
| Play or watch a baseball game | CR | 2.00 | .798 | .166 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 1.45 | .510 | .109 | .545 | 2.719 | 43 | .009 | .15 |
| Discuss legend of Juan Santamaria | CR | 1.58 | .584 | .119 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 2.09 | .668 | .139 | -.504 | -2.755 | 45 | .008 | .14 |
| Believe one race is better than others | CR | 3.79 | .415 | .085 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 3.30 | .635 | .132 | .487 | 3.128 | 45 | .004 | .18 |
| Use physical aggression to resolve disputes | CR | 3.83 | .381 | .078 | | | | | Moderate |
| | N | 3.35 | .832 | .173 | .486 | 2.591 | 45 | .016 | .13 |
| Believe in equality for everyone | CR | 1.30 | .559 | .117 | | | | | Moderate |
| | N | 1.74 | .619 | .129 | -.435 | -2.500 | 44 | .016 | .12 |
| Be hypocritical or false | CR | 3.83 | .381 | .078 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 3.41 | .503 | .107 | .424 | 3.241 | 44 | .003 | .19 |
| Discuss the story of Augusto Sandino | CR | 1.75 | .532 | .109 | | | | | Moderate |
| | N | 2.17 | .717 | .149 | -.424 | -2.310 | 45 | .026 | .11 |
| Display Machismo | CR | 3.83 | .381 | .078 | | | | | Large |
| | N | 3.43 | .507 | .106 | .399 | 3.057 | 45 | .004 | .17 |
| Believe that money is necessary for happiness | CR | 3.48 | .511 | .106 | | | | | Moderate |
| | N | 3.09 | .596 | .124 | .391 | 2.390 | 44 | .021 | .11 |
| Act as a pacifist | CR | 1.21 | .415 | .085 | | | | | Moderate |
| | N | 1.50 | .512 | .109 | -.292 | -2.131 | 44 | .041 | .09 |

The one exception where Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans disagreed on the value of an item was for having or desiring a large family, which Nicaraguans rated as good (M=2.00, SD=.853), and Costa Ricans rated as slightly bad (M=2.67, SD=.816; p=.009). Not surprisingly,

Costa Ricans rated having a discussion about their national hero, Juan Santamaría as more “good” ($M=1.58$, $SD=.584$) than Nicaraguans did ($M=2.09$, $SD=.668$; $p=.008$), whereas Nicaraguans rated playing or watching a baseball game as more “good” ($M=1.45$, $SD=.510$) than Costa Ricans did ($M=2.00$, $SD=.798$; $p=.009$).

Putting Together the Cultural Models of Identity

In the overall sample of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican participants, more items were strongly associated with Costa Rican identity than with Nicaraguan identity. Items with the largest standard deviations regarding cultural identity included: Drinking lots of alcohol ($SD=1.05$), Believing your own country is the best ($SD=1.02$), Machismo ($SD=1.01$), and Believing strongly in God ($SD=1.01$). Generally, the social value ratings of the items showed lower standard deviations, with the highest divergences in social value including: Believing your own country is best ($SD=.98$), Having or desiring a large family ($SD=.86$), Playing or watching soccer ($SD=.84$), and being weak-willed or passive ($SD=.83$).

An analysis of the means, modes, and medians of each item among Costa Ricans only and Nicaraguans only varied somewhat from the patterns seen in the overall sample of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans. Table G shows variation in the perceptions of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultural identities according to Costa Ricans and to Nicaraguans when the groups of participants were analyzed separately. The first row displays Costa Rican participants’ views of Costa Rican cultural identity (first column) and Nicaraguan cultural identity (second column). The second row of the table shows Nicaraguan participants’ views of Costa Rican cultural identity (first column) and Nicaraguan cultural identity (second column). Within a quadrant, the

items are listed in order of perceived saliency to each cultural identity (as measured by average sample means).

Table G shows that there is some agreement across both samples of participants regarding the items that constitute each cultural identity. The items of each model shared across both samples of participants are italicized in the quadrants representing each sample's self-ascribed cultural identity (shaded in gray); other-ascribed items that were not included in the self-ascribed cultural models are italicized in the quadrants representing other-ascribed models of cultural identity (not shaded).

The self-ascribed Costa Rican model of cultural identity includes a collection of behavioral characteristics, values, pastimes and folkloric traditions. It includes three items that were rated as negative items by Costa Ricans themselves (racism, materialism, and the preference to spend time with friends instead of family). Left out of the self-ascribed model of Costa Rican identity, but included in the other-ascribed model are three items: "embracing new technologies", "being weak-willed or passive", and "saying one thing and doing another" (the last one being perceived negatively by Nicaraguan participants).

The self-ascribed model of Nicaraguan cultural identity also includes behaviors, values, pastimes and folkloric traditions. It includes only one item negatively rated by the Nicaraguan sample: "acting in a loud and animated fashion". The items not included in the self-ascribed model, but included in the other-ascribed model are interesting; "displaying machismo", and "using physical aggression in disputes" (both rated negatively by Costa Ricans), along with one neutral valued item, "being simple or humble". Overall, the results indicate highly shared models of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity across all respondents.

Table G: Models of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Cultural Identities by Nicaraguan Participants and Costa Rican Participants (Analyzed Separately) Items Listed with Average Sample Means

| | Costa Rican Identity | | Nicaraguan Identity | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|---|-------------|
| By Costa Ricans (n=24) | <i>Use the phrase “pura vida”</i> | <i>1.33</i> | Play or watch a baseball gam | 3.54 |
| | <i>Play or watch a soccer match</i> | <i>1.42</i> | <i>Use physical aggression in disputes</i> | <i>3.54</i> |
| | <i>Attend La Romería</i> | <i>1.45</i> | Use the phrase “va pues” | 3.52 |
| | <i>Discuss Juan Santamaria</i> | <i>1.46</i> | Drink pinol | 3.51 |
| | Watch El Caballito Nicoyano | 1.48 | Eat nacatamales/indio viejo/vigarones | 3.50 |
| | <i>Eat gallo pinto/picadillo/casados</i> | <i>1.48</i> | Discuss Augusto Sandino | 3.44 |
| | Attain a high educational level | 1.50 | Watch El Güegüense | 3.42 |
| | Worry about appearance | 1.54 | Have or desire a large family | 3.38 |
| | Drink agua dulce | 1.58 | Be flexible/adaptable | 3.38 |
| | <i>Believe one race is better</i> | <i>1.65</i> | Dance Palo de Mayo | 3.35 |
| | Dance cumbia or swing | 1.65 | Attend La Purísima/Gritería | 3.29 |
| | Believe and act as pacifist | 1.67 | <i>Display machismo</i> | <i>3.04</i> |
| | <i>Respect and protect environmnt</i> | <i>1.71</i> | <i>Be simple/humble</i> | <i>3.00</i> |
| | <i>Have laws for everything</i> | <i>1.79</i> | Work hard and do best job possible | 3.00 |
| | <i>Believe money brings happiness</i> | <i>1.83</i> | | |
| | <i>Make big deal out of little hings</i> | <i>1.92</i> | | |
| | <i>Prefer friends over family</i> | <i>1.96</i> | | |
| | Believe your nation is best | 2.00 | | |
| By Nicaraguans (n=23) | Play or watch soccer match | 1.30 | <i>Watch El Güegüense</i> | <i>3.80</i> |
| | <i>Embrace new technologies</i> | <i>1.48</i> | <i>Eat nacatamales/indio Viejo/vigarones</i> | <i>3.80</i> |
| | Have laws for everything | 1.52 | <i>Drink pinol</i> | <i>3.79</i> |
| | <i>Say one thing and mean another</i> | <i>1.52</i> | <i>Play or watch a baseball game</i> | <i>3.73</i> |
| | Discuss Juan Santamaría | 1.54 | <i>Work hard and do the best job possible</i> | <i>3.61</i> |
| | Attend La Romería | 1.55 | <i>Use the phrase “va pues”</i> | <i>3.54</i> |
| | Use the phrase “pura vida” | 1.65 | <i>Discuss Augusto Sandino</i> | <i>3.36</i> |
| | <i>Believe money brings happiness</i> | <i>1.73</i> | <i>Have or desire a large family</i> | <i>3.30</i> |
| | Make a big deal out of little things | 1.78 | <i>Be flexible/adaptable</i> | <i>3.26</i> |
| | <i>Believe one race is better</i> | <i>1.86</i> | <i>Dance Palo de Mayo</i> | <i>3.25</i> |
| | <i>Be weak-willed or passive</i> | <i>1.91</i> | <i>Attend La Purísima/La Gritería</i> | <i>3.23</i> |
| | Eat gallo pinto/picadillos/casados | 1.94 | <i>Act loud and animated</i> | <i>3.13</i> |
| | Respect and protect environment | 2.00 | Believe strongly in God | 3.11 |
| | | | Prefer living in country over city | 3.09 |
| | | | Be charitable/giving | 3.04 |
| | | | Act impulsively/be “hot-headed” | 3.00 |

Self-ascribed models shaded in gray. Italicized items in the self-ascribed models (shaded in gray) were agreed upon by both Nicaraguan and Costa Rican participants. Italicized items in the other-ascribed models (not shaded) were not perceived to be part of the self-ascribed models of identity. Items in red text were perceived negatively by Costa Rican participants (top row) and Nicaraguan participants (bottom row).

Chapter 6: How Does Cultural Identity Affect Well-being? Methods and Results

“Here in Costa Rica, life is hard for immigrants. Many people suffer so much, and they are humiliated daily...you feel like a little kid because you can’t respond to it, you can’t defend yourself, so it is better to do what they [Costa Ricans] want in order to keep surviving... I have succeeded in many ways even though they have mistreated me a lot... I just duck my head and work to try to be the best I can here so that I can provide a good image of my country, to erase the bad that others have done... the schools are hard on Nicaraguan kids too, so I say to my kids, “carry yourself well, pretend you hear nothing, because we are in a strange place and we have to be humble and be like the people here. I say conform to what you need to in order to be treated better.”

-Nicaraguan man, 34, construction worker with 10 years in Costa Rica. Father of a 14-year old son and 11-year old daughter

“Work is the best thing here, it is the only reason, really, to be here at all. I don’t like much else and there is nothing that really interests me about Costa Rica. I liked living in Nicaragua better, but it is just too poor to stay there, you suffer too much. Here we can make money, but life is sad, all we [Nicaraguans] ever do is work, nothing else, go to work in the morning, and come back home at night. In Nicaragua, people are out at the plaza in the evenings, or at a party... there is a lot of joy, people are happy and having fun...not like here where they [Costa Ricans] celebrate even the holidays inside their houses...In Nicaragua, it all happens outside, with the processions, the special foods like ayote en miel, the drinks, like pinolillo... here it is always the same, there is no festivity”

-Nicaraguan woman, 36, from Masaya. Former domestic worker with 9 years in Costa Rica

“I love my country, but I love it here in Costa Rica too, there is just more opportunity, you can live better. For example, I can’t read, I know nothing, but my kids do, so I want to stay here and keep working so that they can get ahead. I remember when I first came here, I walked 8 days and nights to get here. I came in wet and dirty. I ached everywhere, but I didn’t care because I saw the beauty here. I remember the climate was so fresh...I haven’t been treated too badly by Ticos. They like to see a hard worker, and I am one. I am not a *vago*. It makes them happy. I treat them well, so they treat me well. I always try to make friends with them, to be *pura vida* so they don’t see me as being any different. I still feel Nicaraguan in my heart, but since my son is Costa Rican, you could say I am both, half and half.”

-Nicaraguan man, 33, security guard and father of three young children, two born in Nicaragua, and one born in Costa Rica.

“I probably wouldn’t go back to Nicaragua, if I ever left here, because I wouldn’t fit well. Where I come from there aren’t many intellectuals, and there are many crude people that were cruel to me before; they laughed at my glasses and at my disability. For Nicaraguans a lot of bad things have come through the generations, like the machismo and the domestic violence. Men want to be dominant and women have to do what they want...Nicaraguans are not reserved at all. They say and do what they want, which I appreciate. It is better than how they [Costa Ricans] are here, where they keep it all inside...Ticos are close-minded and think they are the only people on earth; they don’t understand that it is a diverse world. They exploit Gringos for their money, and tell ugly jokes, like the ones about the Nicaraguan getting killed by dogs...I stay here because it is better for me, but I would prefer to go somewhere like the United States to learn English and gain new experiences, to learn about other cultures...”

-Nicaraguan woman, 18, visually impaired, who came to Costa Rica at 8 years old and trying to get into college in Costa Rica despite her undocumented status.

The stories of Nicaraguans' experiences in Costa Rica are diverse, exhibiting a wide range of beliefs, attitudes and emotions about Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the people from both nations. Immigrants vary themselves as well, in demographic characteristics like age, gender, and region of origin. They also differ in their goals, including their reasons for coming to Costa Rica and in their plans to stay permanently or only temporarily. Other factors affecting Nicaraguans' lives in Costa Rica include the length of time they have lived there and their desire and/or ability to legalize their status. Immigrants also differ in their ability to find meaningful work and care for their families, both those co-residing with them in Costa Rica and those back home in Nicaragua; some enjoy a high degree of social support gained from networks in Costa Rica and abroad, while others are more isolated in the new unfamiliar place.

Immigrants also differ in internal factors, such as personality and degree of resiliency, with some better able than others to psychologically confront the stressors of daily life and the continual assaults on their dignity as foreigners in a strange land. This chapter presents an exploration of the effects of immigration on Nicaraguans' well-being in Costa Rica, looking specifically at their divergent adaptation strategies and the role of cultural identity and social boundaries in this process.

Migration Outcomes and Psychological Well-being

The link between migration and psychological health has been an issue of great interest among researchers in the social sciences, which has led to an enormous proliferation of studies exploring elements of the processes of migration and acculturation in various societies. Factors related to migration have been linked to disparities between immigrants and citizens across a

broad range of social and health problems including stress (Berry 1997; Mirdal 2006; Young 2001), psychological disorders (Harker 2001; Mahalingham 2006), overall well-being (Borrel 2005; DeJong, Chamrarrithirong & Tran 2002), self-esteem (Phinney et al. 2001), family challenges (Portes 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001) and even physical health (McGuire & Georges 2003).

The results of these studies have led to a search for answers about the underlying factors that make immigrants so vulnerable to adverse outcomes in their new societies. Anthropologists have situated the threat to migrant well-being in the status of immigrants as ‘liminal’ persons whose lives take place in the metaphorical borderlands that exist between the home and host cultures and communities (Alvarez 1995; Chavez 1991). Introduced to anthropology by Arnold van Gennep (1960) and later popularized by Victor Turner, the concept of liminality describes a state of being “betwixt and between” two stages of a ritual process intended to transform one’s self or status into something new (Turner 1969: 95). Similarly, migration is also a rite of passage for individuals who begin life as members of one country or community, spend an unspecified period of time in the liminal stage as unacculturated migrants, only to emerge from their passage as full members of their new host societies (Alvarez 1995; Aguilar 1999; Chavez 1991).

Immigrants live out a large portion of their lives in between two places, no longer a resident of their home country and not yet a citizen of the new one. This indeterminate citizenship status limits an immigrant’s capacity and/or ability to access the rights and protections usually granted to citizens belonging to a host nation (Ong 1996). The factors limiting this access can be structural constraints, such as restrictive immigration policies in the host country that limit opportunities to legalize one’s status and/or use health and social services (McGuire & Georges 2003). Internal factors may play a role as well, as immigrants who have

difficulties understanding the language and cultural norms of the host country may be unfamiliar with the appropriate channels within which to access assistance, leaving them vulnerable to psychosocial distress and/or exploitation (Rocha Gomez 2006).

Moving to a new place can also bring about a sense of loss for many immigrants who mourn their separation from the people and culture left behind in their country of origin. The challenges of life in the new society can generate nostalgia for home, including people, special places, traditions and ways of doing things (Bhugra & Becker 2005; Magat 1999). Immigrants experience fragmentation of their social support networks both physically and symbolically as they leave their culture, friends and family behind; this can lead to feelings of guilt or even grief as they deal with “bereavement” for what they have lost (Bhugra & Becker 2005).

In addition to the challenges that come with unfamiliarity with the host country institutions and culture, immigrants’ outcomes are influenced by the attitudes of citizens of the host society. Immigrants and their children may be viewed in derogatory ways by the larger society and awareness of these negative stereotypes may create conflicting or negative attitudes regarding one’s ethnicity that result in decreased self-esteem and self-efficacy (Diener 2000; Phinney et al. 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). Discrimination can make it difficult to access the educational and/or employment opportunities necessary to improve one’s standard of living in the host country, thereby furthering the social exclusion of immigrants.

The poor economic, political and security conditions in countries with high emigration rates may have adverse effects on immigrants even before they make the decision to migrate. Like any transition, the act of migration is fraught with risk and occasionally pain. Immigrants who lack the means to enter a country via legal channels are especially likely to face dangers along the way, including threats from hazardous conditions along the route and from predatory

*coyotes*³¹ upon whom they are forced to rely to attain illegal entrance. Undocumented immigrants are highly vulnerable to the actions of unscrupulous others, and have little recourse to protect themselves from these assaults (Chavez 1991; Rocha Gomez 2006; Suarez-Orozco 1990).

Though the stresses brought about by migration, including cultural fragmentation and social marginalization by the host society are strong predictors of decreased well-being, this is not always an inevitable outcome, as several protective factors mediate immigrant outcomes. Many migrants leave impoverished or otherwise stressful social environments for those of greater opportunity and may perceive their current situation positively when compared with the past (Diener 2000). Immigrants may also be buffered to some extent by their low income and employment expectations relative to members of the host society (Funkhouser et al. 2003; Portes 1994). Additionally, immigrant social networks exist in many host countries, which may provide immigrants with access to niches of opportunity open even to those that lack the qualities (such as education, language skills and social etiquettes) desired by outside employers (Portes 1994). Advances in communication and transportation technologies have even made it possible for today's immigrants to enjoy the support of transnational networks (Glick Schiller 2009) that can buffer feelings of loneliness and isolation and improve mental health outcomes (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2006; Murphy 2006).

While social support networks are important resources for immigrants, their utility varies across different social contexts. For example, networks can weaken or collapse in the face of poverty and/or other structural constraints that condition the resources immigrants have to help families and friends (Portes 1994). Segmented assimilation into low status groups can also keep

³¹ A term used in both the United States and Costa Rica to describe individuals who aid in the illegal transport and trafficking of migrants in exchange for money and/or other forms of payment including labor or sex.

immigrants stuck in low-paying, low prestige jobs and decrease their interaction with the population of the host country, thereby furthering any negative effects of discrimination and social exclusion (Funkhouser et al. 2003; Phinney et al. 2001; Portes 1994). Transnational networks can keep immigrants oriented to the past instead of the future and can also be an economic drain on immigrants when their resources are dispersed to the home country as remittances (Jasinskaja-Lahti 2006; Rocha Gomez 2006).

Another potential stressor for migrants may be the mismatch between the cultural worldviews and values of the home and host societies. Socialized into a particular culture, migrants may find their own values and goals conflicting with those favored in the host society. As cross-cultural studies have linked individual psychological well-being to the achievement of culturally-valued goals (Diener 2000; Dressler & Bindon 2000) immigrants may suffer due to an actual or perceived conflict between the goals valued by their cultural group and those of the host society. Socially-marginalized groups, in particular, may struggle to create a positive image of their group but may suffer when their efforts go unnoticed or are rejected by the host society (Mahalingham 2006).

Identity and Adaptation

The construct of identity may be a useful tool for explaining the variation in well-being outcomes among migrants (Harker et al. 2001; Phinney 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). Researchers from multiple disciplines have long suggested that a coherent sense of identity is essential to one's psychological health (Erikson 1963; Marcia 1966; Phinney et al. 2001). Since the act of immigration involves a separation from one's country and culture of origin, it inevitably results in some degree of shifting in one's identity.

Researchers have sought to understand the process by which immigrants negotiate their identities from citizen of the country of origin, to immigrant, and eventually to some new formation upon settlement in the host country. Early models of immigrant adaptation were linear (Gordon 1964) and assumed that immigrant social outcomes always improved with time as individuals acquired the knowledge, experiences and behavior of citizens in their new country.

However, decades of research on this topic has suggested that adaptation to a host society and strong identification with one's culture of origin are not mutually exclusive realities—acculturation is not an 'all or nothing' process where the old values of a group are replaced by new ones (Harker et al. 2001; Nibbs 2004; Phinney et al. 2001). As migration brings different populations together, individuals and groups renegotiate concepts of national belonging and cultural identity in the context of the newly created social boundaries between the host society and the migrant population (Brettell 2000; Ong 1996) leading to diverse acculturative strategies for migrants

A model commonly referenced in psychological studies of immigrant adaption is John W. Berry's (1997) four-strategy model, where migrants adapt to host societies via one of four possible paths depending upon their degree of assimilation to the host culture and the extent to which they maintain cultural association with their place of origin. This model sees the strategy of "assimilation", giving up the old identity for the new, as just one of four possible outcomes, along with "segregation", which entails a strong identification with the country of origin and a weak identification with the host culture, "marginalization", which is a weak identification with either home or host cultures, and "integration", which describes an immigrant who maintains a strong identification with the culture of origin but takes on some cultural elements from the host society, thereby becoming "bicultural" (Berry 1997).

A large body of research suggests that it is the combination of a strong ethnic association and a strong sense of identification with the host nation that produces optimal well-being among immigrant populations (Harker et al. 2001; Phinney et al. 2001; Portes 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001; Tadmor, Tetlock & Peng 2009). Migrants who craft ‘bicultural’ identities—creatively integrating aspects of the norms, values and institutions of both the host and home cultures—experience more positive outcomes than those who assimilate completely or those who remain marginalized from the mainstream culture of the host society (Phinney et al. 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001).

High levels of well-being among these individuals may be the result of their ability to operate with ease across multiple cultural contexts and access opportunities and support from a wide network of resources (Portes 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). It has also been suggested that exposure to multiple cultures enhances an individual’s cognitive functioning by increasing their “integrative complexity”—their ability to meld divergent perspectives on an issue to explain why people differ in their norms and worldviews (Tadmor et al. 2009). Though research has demonstrated the benefit of biculturalism for individuals, further work is necessary to understand the variety of characteristics and experiences that make some individuals more likely to develop bicultural identities than others.

Another issue related to the link between identity and well-being is the issue of saliency. While most people are able to identify the set of cultural behaviors, values and customs that make them part of a group and even show high levels of consonance with the models by thinking and behaving ‘culturally’, only some individuals will feel strongly enough about those behaviors and symbols that they internalize their cultural identity to the point where it becomes emotionally salient and/or motivational (D’Andrade 1992; Spiro 1987). Internalization of cultural identity can

have positive and negative consequences for well-being. Particular cultural identities are valued differently among groups and individuals within a society, and the social value of a particular cultural identity likely reduces or enhances the protective effects of an internalized identity on individual well-being (Mahalingam 2006). In the face of a hostile host population, immigrants may internalize a negative representation of their culture and suffer from lower levels of well-being (Goffman 1986; Phinney 1990; Sandoval Garcia 2004).

Social Boundaries and Identity

Existing research on migrant identities has largely neglected to consider how the social location of immigrant populations affects individual identity formation in host societies (Eriksen 1993; Mahalingam 2006). The social location of a particular ethnic or cultural group is embedded in the particular context that brings the different ethnic groups in contact with one another. Because immigrants are almost always less powerful in the host society than citizens, the social value of their ethnic or cultural identities is usually devalued relative to those of the host population.

As displaced populations, many immigrants are forced to confront their own cultural identity as they become aware of their group's position within local social hierarchies (Eriksen 1993). Some immigrants may attempt to 'pass' as members of the host society by downplaying their cultural identity in exchange for social acceptance. However, this strategy may come at the cost of shame, doubt and alienation for those who become estranged from their families and ethnic peers (Portes 1994; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). Other immigrants who maintain the identities of their country of origin in the face of a hostile host population may experience poor physical and psychological health outcomes as a result of the enormous degree

of effort expended to defend their identities from “an unprivileged position” (Mahalingam 2006: 4).

Where high levels of “personal nationalism” (Cohen 2000: 163)—the marked convergence of individual and national identities—exists, impermeable social boundaries are likely to exist between migrant and host populations, one or both of whom may be highly committed to their group’s differences from the other (Cohen 2000). To counteract negative representations of their culture perpetuated by the dominant group, individuals from marginalized groups may develop a strong sense of community based upon an “idealized cultural identity” (Mahalingam 2006:4). Individuals from immigrant and host populations frequently define themselves in relation to others through constructs of national identity—shared notions of a distinctive common culture and ideology strengthened through nostalgia for a particular homeland (Eriksen 1993; Smith 1991).

In constructing their groups’ collective identity, immigrants often incorporate ideologies, figures and symbols from their nation’s history, highlighting important events and cultural heroes as well as traditions that convey a rich cultural heritage and promote a strong sense of cultural pride. To deal with the hardships many immigrants experience in their host countries, many of the idealized narratives of identity convey the character of the people as one that enable them to persist despite untold obstacles (Mahalingam 2006). Host-country citizens, who may perceive immigrants as a threat to their own distinct cultural identities, often highlight qualities in their narratives of national identity that they feel distinguish themselves from the threatening others, which can lead to increased social distance between host citizens and immigrants and foster strong sentiments of xenophobia and/or racialization of particular identities that can make

it difficult for immigrants to adopt a bicultural identity and the psychosocial benefits that may come from it.

In this chapter, I describe the methods and results from phase 2 of the project to explore the complex relationships between cultural identity, the perceived strength of social boundaries between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica, and the psychological well-being of immigrants.

Phase 2: Methods for Assessing the Relationship between Cultural Identity and Well-being

The objective of the second phase of the research project was to use the cultural models of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican identity from phase 1 to assess two hypotheses regarding the relationship between cultural identity and psychological well-being:

H1: An individual's perception of the permeability of social boundaries will predict whether they are likely to pursue a singular or bicultural identity

Perceived impermeability of social boundaries→singular cultural identity
Perceived permeability of social boundaries→bicultural identity

H2: An individual's cultural identity type will be related to their psychological well-being, with bicultural identities displaying the highest levels of psychological well-being

Bicultural identity→high well-being

Creating the Phase Two Questionnaire

Investigating these hypotheses required the development of a questionnaire that incorporated scales to measure the variables in each hypothesis: cultural identity type, perception of social boundaries, and psychological well-being. Scales for other variables, such as social support, perceived discrimination, and exposure to violence that are known to be related to the

dependent variable, psychological well-being, were also included in the questionnaire to control for their effect during the analysis of the data. Scales for some variables were derived from published measurements. Measures of cultural identity type and social boundaries were developed from ethnographic data collected during phase one of the research.

Before data collection for this phase of the research began, several meetings of the research team³² were held during the months of March and April 2008 where results of the data analysis from phase 1 of the project were presented and discussed. The purpose of the meetings was to plan and develop the questionnaire to be used for data collection in phase 2 of the research project. The research assistants, due to their familiarity with and/or membership in the cultural identities of interest, played a crucial role in the interpretation of the cultural models derived in phase 1 of the project and in the selection of items for incorporation into the phase two questionnaire.

One task of particular importance was the construction of measures for the independent variable of cultural identity type, which was determined by an individual's cultural consonance (Dressler & Bindon 2000) with the derived models of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican cultural identity. To measure cultural consonance—the degree to which an individual personally identifies with a particular cultural model—selected items from the phase 1 interview instrument that were particularly salient to the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultural identities were re-phrased to assess an individual's likelihood to act or think in the manner depicted in the item³³.

Two cultural identity scales were created, one to assess a respondent's consonance with the Costa Rican identity model and one to assess their consonance with the Nicaraguan identity

³² The research team for Phase two was made up of the principal investigator and the same three research assistants who participated in phase one data collection. The assistants included one Nicaraguan college student and two Costa Rican college students, one of whom was bilingual in English and Spanish.

³³ For example, a cultural scenario where a person "makes medicines from herbs to treat ailments", would be modified into an item asking the respondent how likely they would be to perform that particular action.

model. To be incorporated into the scale, the items had to meet a set of pre-determined criteria. For the Nicaraguan identity scale, items with means closer to 4 and above 2.5 for all samples analyzed (Costa Ricans, Nicaraguans, or both) were selected. For the Costa Rican identity scale, items with means closer to 1 and less than 2.5, among all three samples were selected. Items rated significantly differently by Costa Rican and Nicaraguan samples were not included, nor were items with particularly negative social value ratings³⁴. Even though more items were associated with Costa Rican identity than with Nicaraguan overall, for brevity and balance of the instrument, both cultural identity scales were limited to eleven items each.

The research team also worked together to create items based on phase 1 ethnography for inclusion in a measure for the perception of social boundaries. This scale consisted of eight items to assess the respondents' perceptions of the strength of the social boundaries perceived to exist between Nicaraguan immigrants and Costa Ricans. Published scales to measure acculturation, the Short Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (Marin, Sabogal, Van Oss-Marin, Otero-Sabogal & Perez-Stable 1987), social support, the Multidimensional Scale of Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley 1988), and perceived discrimination (Samaniego & Gonzalez 1999), were modified to better suit this sample based upon observations from ethnographic data collected in phase 1. This step was necessary because the existing scales for these variables, as written, were inappropriate for the goals of this project³⁵.

The dependent variable in hypothesis 2, subjective well-being, was measured using a Spanish language version of the Satisfaction with Life Scale [SWLS] (Pavot & Diener 1993), an

³⁴ The decision to leave strongly negative items out of the identity scales was based on the assumption that people would not answer these items honestly. The research team also wanted to avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes.

³⁵ Most existing scales to measure these variables among immigrants have been developed for use in the United States or other large english-speaking receiving countries. In Costa Rica, Nicaraguan immigrants and Costa Rican citizens speak the same language, a common component of acculturation scales. Also in Costa Rica, discrimination is typically less overt than other places, so existing scales of this variable may underestimate it (Biesanz et al. 1999).

abridged version of Cohen's perceived stress scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein 1983) and depression and anxiety scales from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP). IPIP scales are abridged versions of published scales that have been tested cross-culturally and shown to have the same levels of predictability as the full-length versions (Golberg, Johnson, Eber, Hogan, Ashton, Cloninger & Gough 2006). This combination of measures has been recommended to assess a broad spectrum of psychological well-being (Diener 2000).

Control variables known to affect assessment of psychological well-being included in the questionnaire consisted of a short two-item scale to measure an individual's experience as a victim or witness of violent crime, and single item measuring an individual's degree of religiosity. These variables were included since they could potentially confound the relationship between cultural identity and well-being. The Nicaraguan respondents were asked a series of questions related to their migration experiences. These items asked about their reasons for emigrating and/or immigrating, their plans to remain in Costa Rica, and their current legal residency status. To assess respondents' reasons for immigrating to Costa Rica, they were asked to check boxes next to a list of five potential reasons for migration. Respondents could check as many boxes as they wanted to accurately represent their situation, and a space was available for writing in reasons that were not listed. Respondents were also asked if they planned to stay permanently in Costa Rica or if they planned to return to live in Nicaragua.

Demographic data was also collected on age, gender, country of birth, parents' countries of birth, monthly household salary, highest level of education completed, current occupation, marital status, number of children, and religious denomination. Immigrants were also asked about their current residency status as well as their reason or reasons for migrating to Costa Rica. The instrument was translated into Spanish with the assistance of a bilingual Costa Rican

research assistant. Complete versions of the Spanish and English language instruments can be seen in Appendix D.

Data Collection

Data collection for phase two of the research project took place during a four-week period spanning July and August of 2008. For this phase of the project, questionnaires composed of the variable scales were administered to a purposive sample of Nicaraguans (n=108) over the age of 18³⁶. In this phase of the research, Nicaraguans immigrants were the target population for evaluating the hypotheses, however, a shorter, modified version³⁷ of the questionnaire was administered to a smaller purposive sample of Costa Ricans (n=54) for purposes of comparison with the target population on some variables³⁸.

Potential study participants were recruited from two public parks, Parque La Merced and Parque Sabana, both located in San Jose. These locations were chosen for this purpose because of their respective concentrations of Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, and because data collection efforts during phase one of the project had been successful in these locations³⁹. These public parks in the city provide a gathering place for families and friends, and there were usually a good

³⁶ Nicaraguan nationality was determined by having at least one parent born in Nicaragua.

³⁷ The questionnaire version given to Costa Rican respondents was one page shorter and left off scales measuring acculturation, perceived discrimination, reasons for immigrating, plans to stay in Costa Rica, and Documentation status.

³⁸ In particular, I was interested in comparing the overall levels of subjective well-being of Costa Ricans with Nicaraguans. I was also interested in comparing Costa Ricans' identification with the cultural identity scales to that of Nicaraguans.

³⁹ During phase one, the research team found that people in the parks were more open to being approached by strangers, and more willing to participate in the study than in some of the other locations. This may have been because the parks were spaces for spending leisure time, and the participants were not engaged in other activities, or in a hurry to get somewhere else. The parks were also low-risk areas for the research team, and easily accessible by public bus lines.

number of individuals in these parks on both the weekday and weekend afternoons that data was collected on.

Individuals within the parks were approached by a member of the research team, given a fact sheet about the project, and invited to participate in the study by completing an anonymous questionnaire that they were told would take about 20 minutes of their time. Individuals who agreed to participate were given a copy of the questionnaire and a pencil and asked to fill out each scale on the questionnaire according to the printed directions. Members of the research team remained nearby to answer any questions participants had as they completed the questionnaires. After completing the questionnaires, participants placed them in sealed envelopes and handed them to a member of the research team. Participants were then offered a copy of a flyer listing the addresses and phone numbers of several non-governmental organizations that were available to consult with immigrants on a variety of issues.

In Parque La Merced, with a high concentration of Nicaraguan immigrants, the majority of people approached to complete a questionnaire agreed to do so (about 78%). Potential respondents were more likely to decline to participate in Parque La Sabana, but the research team still reported a participation rate of about 61% of those approached to complete a questionnaire. The reasons for the discrepancy between participation rates are not clear⁴⁰, but common reasons for not participating in either research location included lack of time, discomfort with topic, the person was not Nicaraguan or Costa Rican, the person was under 18 years of age, or the person

⁴⁰ One hypothesis for this is that La Merced is a park where the space facilitates sitting and socializing with others. In contrast, La Sabana tends to have space for more active pursuits including sports and exercise. It is also possible that because the people at La Merced are generally Nicaraguans, or Nicaraguan-friendly people, that they were more comfortable with the research topic.

could not read the questionnaire. A few respondents in La Merced mentioned that they chose not to participate because they were afraid they would be harassed by police officers.⁴¹

Analysis of Phase Two Data

After leaving the field site, the 163 questionnaires collected were removed from the sealed envelopes and assessed for completion; questionnaires with a large amount of missing data⁴² (n=10) and questionnaires from people not qualifying as Nicaraguan or Costa Rican according to the criteria set for the project (n=2) were removed from the sample, resulting in 151 useable questionnaires. The final data set included 99 Nicaraguans and 52 Costa Ricans. Table H shows the characteristics of the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican samples. Nicaraguan and Costa Rican data was analyzed separately.

Descriptive statistics were produced on demographic variables for the overall sample, including age, gender, urban or rural upbringing, monthly salary, education level, marital status, number of children, and religious denomination. Continuous variables were analyzed for means and standard deviations, while ordinal variables were analyzed for frequencies.

Among the Nicaraguan sample, variable scales were analyzed using principal components analysis to test their internal validity. In several cases where internal validity was low and the presence of two or more factors was apparent, the scales were divided into new variables based upon the pattern matrices generated in SPSS. A MANOVA analysis on all of the newly created variables was used to test the two hypotheses. A MANCOVA analysis controlling

⁴¹ This fieldwork was conducted prior to the passage of reforms in the national immigration legislation, so in theory, police officers could ask anyone in the park to show their documents. On most trips to La Merced, I noticed police officers standing nearby, and a few people told me that this had happened to someone they know.

⁴² Questionnaires lacking responses for more than 10% of the items overall were discarded from the sample as were questionnaires lacking responses to more than 2 items on the cultural identity scales and the well-being scales.

for the effects of perceived discrimination, acculturation, and exposure to violence was conducted between the cultural identity variables and the well-being variables.

Table H: Demographic Characteristics of the Nicaraguan Sample Compared to Costa Rican Control Sample (listed in percentages)

| | Costa Ricans (n=52) | | Nicaraguans (n=99) | |
|--|---------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|
| Age | Mean | Std. dev. | Mean | Std dev. |
| | 28.82 | 9.66 | 33.31 | 10.17 |
| Gender | Male | 60 | 51 | |
| | Female | 40 | 49 | |
| Where you grew up | Urban | 89 | 23 | |
| | Rural | 11 | 77 | |
| Monthly Salary (in thousands of colones) | 0-70 | - | 25 | |
| | 71-200 | 14 | 41 | |
| | 201-500 | 63 | 24 | |
| | 501-1000 | 19 | 6 | |
| | >1000 | 5 | 4 | |
| Marital Status | Single | 60 | 42 | |
| | Union de hecho | 8 | 24 | |
| | Married | 24 | 26 | |
| | Separated | 4 | 2 | |
| | Divorced | 4 | 3 | |
| | Widowed | - | 3 | |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|------|-------|------|-------|
| Do you have kids? | No | 70 | 35 | |
| | Yes | 30 | 65 | |
| How many? | Mean | Stdev | Mean | Stdev |
| | .56 | .99 | 1.96 | 2.26 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| What religion are you? | Jewish | 2 | - | |
| | Catholic | 47 | 43 | |
| | Christian, not Catholic | 22 | 28 | |
| | Evangelical | 12 | 17 | |
| | Pentecostal | - | 2 | |
| | Jehovah's Witness | - | 4 | |
| | None | 16 | 6 | |
| How religious are you? | Mean | Stdev | Mean | Stdev |
| 0=not at all, 3=profoundly | 1.25 | .91 | 1.27 | .85 |

Support for hypothesis 1, that perception of the permeability of social boundaries affects the likelihood of an individual to pursue a bicultural identity, would be indicated by a significant relationship between the interaction of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity and the social boundaries variables. Support for hypothesis 2, that bicultural identities were associated with greater well-being, would be indicated by a significant relationship between variables measuring well-being and the interaction of the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultural identity scales. Correlations were calculated between background demographic variables and well-being to assess any significant associations, and correlations between the two cultural identity and immigration characteristics variables (reasons for immigrating, plans to stay, documentation status) were calculated.

Phase 2: Results from the Questionnaire

Characteristics of the Samples

The average ages of the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican samples were fairly close, with Costa Ricans being slightly younger (28.8 years) on average than Nicaraguans (33.3 years). The Nicaraguan sample was relatively balanced regarding gender, with 51% of respondents male and 49% female, however the Costa Rican sample had a substantially higher number of male respondents (60% male, 40% female). The two samples also differed in regard to urban or rural background with 77% of Nicaraguan respondents growing up in rural and 23% growing up in urban or suburban areas. In contrast, among Costa Rican respondents, 89% of respondents grew up in urban or suburban areas compared to only 11% who grew up in rural areas. The Nicaraguan sample reported far lower monthly income levels than the Costa Rican sample with

66% of Nicaraguans making less than 201,000 colones per month⁴³ compared to only 14% of the Costa Rican sample reporting incomes this low.

Among Nicaraguan respondents, 42% were single, and 50% were in some type of committed relationship, either an official marriage or a *union de hecho* (de facto marriage). This contrasts with the Costa Rican sample within which only 32% were in committed relationships and 60% classified themselves as single. Additionally, 65% of the Nicaraguan respondents indicated they had children whereas only 30% of the Costa Rican respondents did.

The Costa Rican and Nicaraguan samples were fairly well-matched on religion with Catholicism being the largest religious category for both samples (43% of Nicaraguans and 47% of Costa Ricans) followed by non-Catholic Christians (28% of Nicaraguans and 22% of Costa Ricans). Other notable religious categories included Evangelicals (17% of Nicaraguans and 12% of Costa Ricans) and individuals with no religion which was a far more populous category among Costa Ricans (16%) than among Nicaraguans (6%). Interestingly, the two samples on average did not differ greatly on their degree of religiosity.

Immigration-related Characteristics of Nicaraguan Respondents

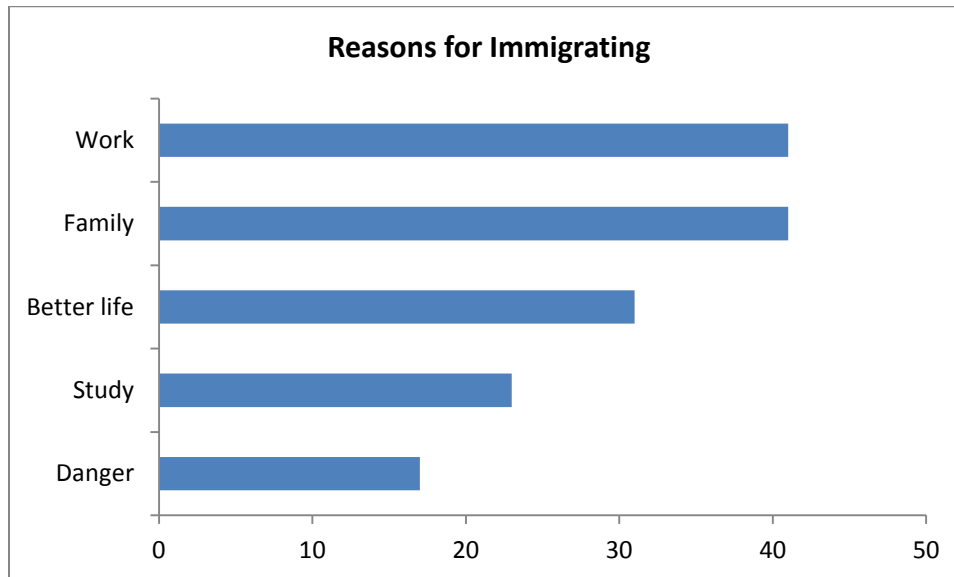
Nicaraguan respondents indicated a variety of reasons for immigrating to Costa Rica and many indicated multiple reasons in their responses to this item on the questionnaire. The frequencies of respondents who selected each reason are presented in Figure 8.

Finding work (n=41) and being with family (n=41) were the most popular reasons for migrating to Costa Rica, followed by achieving a better life (n=31), to study (n=23), and to escape from a dangerous situation (n=17). Other reasons mentioned by more than one

⁴³ At the time of the study 200,000 colones was roughly equivalent to \$400 U.S.

respondent to the “other” category included political reasons, the economic situation in Nicaragua, and getting ahead in life.

Figure 8: Reasons for Immigrating by Frequency of Responses



In regard to their plans for future residency, 36% of Nicaraguan respondents planned to stay in Costa Rica and 29% planned to return to Nicaragua eventually, while another 26% were uncertain, and 9% did not respond to this item (Figure 9).

When asked about their current documentation status, 58% of respondents claimed to have documents stating their legal right to be living in Costa Rica at the time (residency cards or working permits), 22% of the respondents were undocumented, 9% were in the process of obtaining documentation, and 11% did not respond to this item (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Percentage of Respondents Planning to Stay in Costa Rica

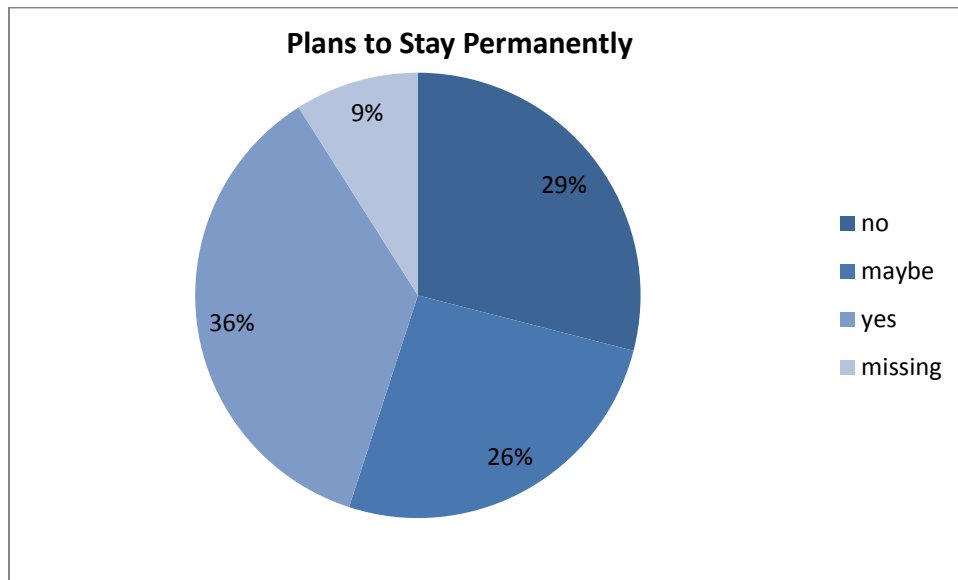
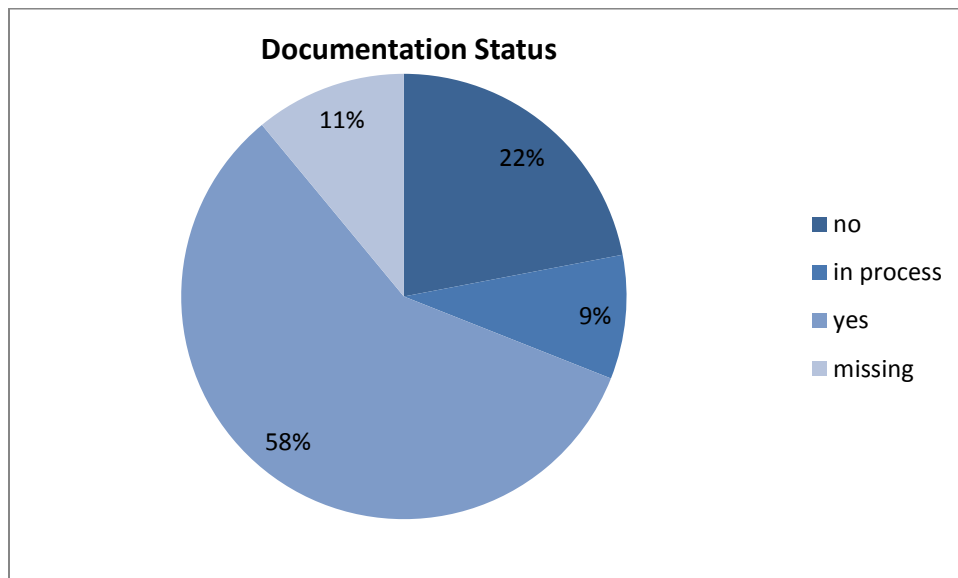


Figure 10: Percentages of Respondents with Legal Documentation



Validity Testing of Variable Scales

All scales used to measure variables in the questionnaire among Nicaraguan respondents were subjected to principal components analysis in order to test for internal validity. Variable

scales with more than one component, as demonstrated on pattern matrices produced by SPSS, were split into multiple variables for the later analyses and the tests of both hypotheses.

Cultural Identity Scales

The 11 items included on the Costa Rican identity scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and the three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obliquely rotated with the Oblimin procedure in SPSS. Those three factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0 accounted for 40%, 14%, and 10%, respectively, of the variance. The pattern matrix from this analysis is presented in Table I.

Three new variables to measure aspects of Costa Rican cultural identity were created from the results of the factor analysis. The 8 items with loadings on factor 1 were combined into a variable called “Costa Rican identity”, which measures the respondents’ identification with Costa Rican traditions, pastimes and folklore. The 2 items with loadings on factor 2 were combined into a variable called “Costa Rican presentation” to measure the respondents’ identification with Costa Ricans’ presentation of self, including the tendency to appear well-dressed, professional and modern. The third new variable “Costa Rican law” contains a single item that loads highly on factor 3 and measures respondents’ approval of the Costa Rican laws and law enforcement norms.

The 11 items from the Nicaraguan identity scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and the two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obliquely rotated with the Oblimin procedure in SPSS. Those two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 accounted for 38% and 11.5% respectively, of the variance. The pattern matrix from this analysis is presented in Table J.

Two new variables to measure aspects of Nicaraguan cultural identity were created from the results of the factor analysis. The 8 items with loading greater than .50 on factor 1 were combined into a variable called “Nicaraguan identity”, which measures the respondents’ identification with Nicaraguan traditions, past times and folklore. The 3 items loading on factor 2 were combined into a variable called “Nicaraguan values” to measure the respondents’ identification with Nicaraguans’ cultural values regarding family, work ethic and lack of materialism.

Table I: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Costa Rican Identity Items

| | Component | | |
|---|-----------|-----|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Be familiar with the legend of Juan Santamaría | .83 | | |
| Attend a performance of El Caballito Nicoyano | .82 | | |
| Eat Gallo Pinto with Salsa Lizano, or a casado | .76 | | |
| Use the phrase “pura vida” in conversation | .73 | | |
| Drink or serve agua dulce to guests | .70 | | .20 |
| Attend or participate in La Romería | .58 | | |
| Play or watch a soccer match | .52 | | -.23 |
| Be very concerned with your appearance and spend time to look your best | | .84 | |
| Use a computer to search the internet for fun during your leisure time | | .84 | |
| Feel good about living where many laws are enforced regularly | | | .91 |
| Care about the environment, recycle and use less energy when you can | .33 | | .38 |

Table J: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Nicaraguan Identity Items

| | Component | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| | 1 | 2 |
| Use the phrase “va pues” in conversation | .85 | |
| Be familiar with the history of Augusto C. Sandino | .83 | |
| Go to a club where you can dance Palo de Mayo or watch others dancing | .80 | |
| Watch a performance of El Güegüense, if given the opportunity to do so | .74 | |
| Drink or serve pinol to guests | .65 | |
| Attend or participate in La Gritería | .65 | .22 |
| Play or watch a baseball game | .59 | |
| Eat nacatamales, indio viejo, or vigarones | .52 | .28 |
| Have, or would like to have more than two children | .68 | |
| Work hard at whatever task you are doing, and try to do the best job possible | .67 | |
| Be humble and not require very much in life to be happy | .52 | |

Subjective Well-being Scales

The five items in the Satisfaction with Life Scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis that revealed only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than one, which accounted for 59% of the variance, indicating a multidimensional scale. The Cronbach alpha coefficient in this sample was .77. The component matrix from this analysis is presented in Table K.

The four items from the Perceived Stress scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and the two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obliquely rotated with

the Oblimin procedure in SPSS. Those two factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0 accounted for 56.5% and 21.2%, respectively, of the variance. The pattern matrix from this analysis is presented in Table L.

Table K: Component Matrix for Satisfaction with Life Items

| | Component 1 |
|---|----------------|
| I am satisfied with my life | .86 |
| Up until now, I have obtained the things that are important to me in life | .78 |
| The conditions of my life are excellent | .76 |
| In the majority of things, my life is close to my ideal | .61 |
| If I could do things over again, I wouldn't change anything in my life | .60 |

Table L: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Perceived Stress Items

| | Component 1 | Component 2 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Felt you could not control the important things in life | .92 | |
| Had confidence in yourself to manage your personal problems | .86 | |
| Felt that things were going well, or better than usual | | .90 |
| Have felt you had so many problems that couldn't be solved | | .71 |

Two new variables to measure aspects of perceived stress were created from the results of the factor analysis. The two items with loadings high on factor 1 were combined into a variable called “internal stress”, which measures the respondents’ stress level due to internal factors and qualities of themselves. The two items loading on factor 2 were combined into a variable called “external stress” to measure the respondents’ stress levels due to external factors that were out of one’s own control.

The five items from the Depression scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and the two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obliquely rotated with the Oblimin procedure in SPSS. Those two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 accounted for 41% and 29% of the variance. The pattern matrix from this analysis is presented in Table M.

Table M: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Depression Items

| | Component | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| | 1 | 2 |
| I am not comfortable with myself | .91 | |
| I am not satisfied with myself | .88 | |
| I have frequent mood swings | -.38 | .79 |
| I feel that my life lacks rhythm or direction | .23 | .77 |
| I often feel sad or depressed | | .67 |

Two new variables to measure aspects of depression were created from the results of the factor analysis. The two items with loadings high on factor 1 were combined into a variable called “negative self-perception”. The three items loading on factor 2 were combined into a variable called “depressed mood”.

The five items from the anxiety scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and the two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obliquely rotated with the Oblimin procedure in SPSS. Those two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 accounted for 41% and 24%, respectively, of the variance. The pattern matrix from this analysis is presented in Table N.

Two new variables to measure aspects of anxiety were created from the results of the factor analysis. The three items with loadings high on factor 1 were combined into a variable called “general anxiety”, measuring respondents’ anxious emotional reactions to events and/or

things in their everyday lives. The two items loading on factor 2 were combined into a variable called “strangeness anxiety”, measuring respondents’ emotional reactions to new and/or strange things or ideas.

Table N: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Anxiety Items

| | Component | |
|---|-----------|-----|
| | 1 | 2 |
| I am afraid of many things | .85 | |
| I am trapped in my problems | .80 | |
| I get tense and stressed easily | .76 | |
| Things disturb me easily | | .82 |
| I have trouble adapting to new situations | | .75 |

Perception of Social Boundaries

The eight items from the Social Boundaries scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and the three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obliquely rotated with the Oblimin procedure in SPSS. Those three factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1.0 accounted for 24%, 19% and 17%, respectively, of the variance. The pattern matrix from this analysis is presented in Table O.

Three new variables to measure aspects of the perception of social boundaries were created from the results of the factor analysis. The three items loading high on factor 1 were combined into a variable called “living boundaries”, which measures the respondents’ perceptions that Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans live and exist separately in Costa Rica, and do not interact with each other regularly. The four items loading on factor 2 were combined into a variable called “societal boundaries” to measure the respondents’ perceptions that Costa Rican

society does not allow for Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans to interact. The third new variable “cultural boundaries” measures respondents’ perceptions that Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans are very different in culture and behavior.

Table O: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Social Boundaries Items

| | Component | | |
|---|-----------|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| There are not opportunities for Nicaraguans to have a good life in Costa Rica | -.75 | | |
| Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans have different priorities in life | .71 | | |
| The Nicaraguan community is very separate in Costa Rican society | .61 | .38 | |
| Friendships are not common between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans | -.47 | .30 | |
| Nicaraguan culture is not very respected in Costa Rica | | .83 | |
| Nicaraguans do not fit in well in Costa Rican society | | .78 | |
| Costa Rican culture and Nicaraguan culture are very different | | | .84 |
| The behaviors of Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans are very different | | | .77 |

Social Support

The six items from the Social Support scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and the two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were obliquely rotated with the Oblimin procedure in SPSS. Those two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 accounted for 33% and 19%, respectively, of the variance. The pattern matrix from this analysis is presented in Table P.

Two new variables to measure aspects of the perception of social support were created from the results of the factor analysis. The four items loading on factor 1 were combined into a variable called “general social support” that measures the strength of respondents’ social support

networks for various purposes. The three items loading on factor 2 were combined into a variable called “trust support networks” to measure the strength of respondents’ networks of people who can be trusted with confidential personal information.

Table P: Principal Components, Oblique Rotation for Social Support Items

| | Component | |
|--|-----------|-----|
| | 1 | 2 |
| There is someone I can talk to about anything | .80 | |
| There is someone important in my life who will be there in good and bad times | .75 | |
| There is someone I know that will help me if I am in danger | .60 | |
| There is someone close to me that I trust, and to whom I can reveal my secrets | .47 | .46 |
| I don’t tell anyone my problems because I am afraid of the authorities | | .74 |
| I don’t know anyone in whom I can confide | | .73 |

Perceived Discrimination

The five items from the Perceived Discrimination scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and only a single factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was extracted. This factor accounted for 61% of the variance, indicating the presence of a unidimensional scale. The Cronbach alpha coefficient in this sample was .84. The component matrix from this analysis is presented in Table Q.

Acculturation

The seven items from the acculturation scale were subjected to a principal components factor analysis and only a single factor with an eigenvalues greater than one was extracted. This factor accounted for 56.5% of the variance, indicating a unidimensional scale. The Cronbach

alpha coefficient in this sample was .87. The component matrix from this analysis is presented in Table R.

Table Q: Component Matrix for Perceived Discrimination Items

| | Component 1 |
|---|----------------|
| How often have people mistreated you because of your nationality? | .85 |
| How many times have you been called offensive names or racist slurs? | .82 |
| How often have you been rejected because of your nationality? | .78 |
| How often have you been accused of something because of your nationality? | .74 |
| How often has someone tried to hurt you because of your nationality? | .70 |

Table R: Component Matrix for Acculturation Items

| | Component 1 |
|--|----------------|
| I prefer to speak like a Costa Rican | .82 |
| I prefer to go out with Costa Ricans | .80 |
| I prefer to dress and look like a Costa Rican | .77 |
| I prefer to live in a community that is mostly Costa Ricans | .74 |
| I prefer to spend the majority of my free time with Costa Ricans | .75 |
| I prefer to maintain a Costa Rican lifestyle | .71 |
| In my heart I feel more like a Costa Rican | .66 |

Comparison of the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Samples

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted for each scaled variable in order to compare the differences between those of Costa Rican or Nicaraguan nationality. The

results of this analysis are presented in Table S. There were statistically significant differences at the $p < .05$ level in “Costa Rican identity” $F(1, 143) = 77.31, p = .000$, with Costa Ricans having higher scores for this variable; and for “Nicaraguan identity” $F(1, 143) = 48.13, p = .000$, and “Nicaraguan values” $F(1, 143) = 9.32, p = .003$, with Nicaraguans showing higher scores for these two variables. These results demonstrated that Costa Rican or Nicaraguan nationality was associated with the respective Costa Rican or Nicaraguan cultural identity scale.

On the well-being variables, there were also statistically significant differences at the $p < .05$ level including: “negative self-perception” $F(1, 143) = 4.48, p = .036$; “depressed mood” $F(1, 143) = 12.75, p = .000$; and “general anxiety” $F(1, 143) = 6.47, p = .012$; with Nicaraguans showing higher levels than Costa Ricans on all three of these variables. There was also a statistically significant relationship at the $p < .05$ level on “trust support networks” $F(1, 143) = 11.78, p = .001$; with Costa Ricans reporting higher scores on this variable. These results indicated that overall Costa Ricans had higher levels of psychological well-being (Figure 11) than Nicaraguans.

Figure 11: Comparison of Well-being Variables between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Respondents

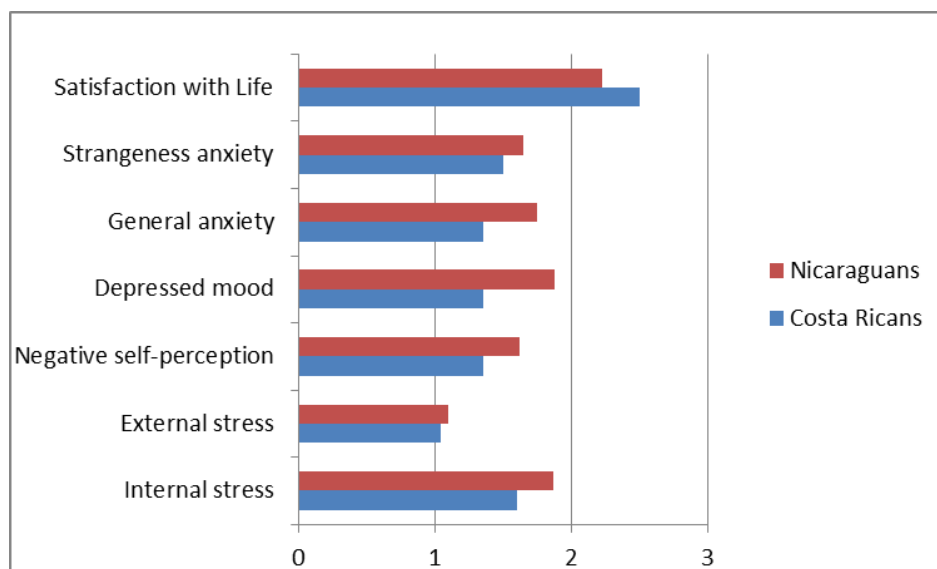


Table S: Descriptive Statistics, F and p Values for Nicaraguans Compared to Costa Ricans

| | | N | Mean | SD | Std. Error | Range Low High | | <i>F</i> df= 1/143 | <i>p</i> |
|--------------------------|------|----|--------|------|------------|------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|----------|
| Costa Rican Identity | Nic. | 97 | .2745 | .36 | .037 | .2011 | .3479 | 77.31 | .000 |
| | CR | 48 | .9271 | .52 | .075 | .7770 | 1.0772 | | |
| Costa Rican Presentation | Nic. | 97 | .9742 | .63 | .064 | .8463 | 1.1022 | 2.77 | ns |
| | CR | 47 | .9362 | .70 | .102 | .7317 | 1.1406 | | |
| Costa Rican Laws | Nic. | 97 | .3299 | .66 | .067 | .1975 | .4623 | 0.11 | ns |
| | CR | 47 | .0426 | .20 | .030 | -.0174 | .1025 | | |
| Nicaraguan Identity | Nic. | 97 | .6151 | .57 | .057 | .5010 | .7291 | 48.13 | .000 |
| | CR | 48 | .0443 | .09 | .012 | .0189 | .0697 | | |
| Nicaraguan Values | Nic. | 97 | .7268 | .46 | .047 | .6340 | .8196 | 9.32 | .003 |
| | CR | 47 | .4894 | .39 | .056 | .3760 | .6027 | | |
| Internal Stress | Nic. | 97 | 1.8660 | .88 | .089 | 1.6887 | 2.0432 | 2.52 | ns |
| | CR | 46 | 1.5978 | 1.07 | .157 | 1.2807 | 1.9149 | | |
| External Stress | Nic. | 97 | 1.0979 | .85 | .087 | .9261 | 1.2698 | 0.14 | ns |
| | CR | 46 | 1.0435 | .74 | .110 | .8225 | 1.2644 | | |
| Negative Self-Perception | Nic. | 97 | 1.6203 | .71 | .072 | 1.4779 | 1.7627 | 4.48 | .036 |
| | CR | 46 | 1.3478 | .74 | .110 | 1.1268 | 1.5689 | | |
| Depressed Mood | Nic. | 97 | 1.8729 | .81 | .082 | 1.7097 | 2.0360 | 12.75 | .000 |
| | CR | 46 | 1.3478 | .85 | .125 | 1.0966 | 1.5991 | | |

Table S. (continued). Descriptive Statistics, F, and p Values for Nicaraguans Compared to Costa Ricans

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------|----|--------|-----|------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| General Anxiety | Nic. | 97 | 1.7474 | .90 | .092 | 1.5655 | 1.9294 | 6.47 | .012 |
| | CR | 46 | 1.3478 | .82 | .121 | 1.1036 | 1.5920 | | |
| Strangeness Anxiety | Nic. | 96 | 1.6458 | .85 | .087 | 1.4732 | 1.8185 | 0.92 | ns |
| | CR | 46 | 1.5000 | .84 | .124 | 1.2496 | 1.7504 | | |
| Satisfaction with Life | Nic. | 96 | 2.2255 | .94 | .096 | 2.0352 | 2.4158 | 2.77 | ns |
| | CR | 48 | 2.5000 | .92 | .133 | 2.2324 | 2.7676 | | |
| Living Boundaries | Nic. | 97 | 2.4433 | .90 | .091 | 2.2620 | 2.6246 | 0.21 | ns |
| | CR | 48 | 2.3715 | .85 | .123 | 2.1239 | 2.6191 | | |
| Societal Boundaries | Nic. | 97 | 2.4038 | .84 | .086 | 2.2340 | 2.5735 | 0.24 | ns |
| | CR | 48 | 2.4757 | .81 | .118 | 2.2392 | 2.7121 | | |
| Cultural Boundaries | Nic. | 97 | 2.1031 | .62 | .063 | 1.9778 | 2.2284 | 0.42 | ns |
| | CR | 48 | 2.0295 | .68 | .098 | 1.8318 | 2.2273 | | |
| General Social Support | Nic. | 96 | .7700 | .27 | .028 | .7144 | .8255 | 0.19 | ns |
| | CR | 48 | .7917 | .31 | .044 | .7027 | .8807 | | |
| Trust Support Networks | Nic. | 95 | .6719 | .33 | .034 | .6054 | .7385 | 11.78 | .001 |
| | CR | 48 | .8542 | .24 | .034 | .7853 | .9231 | | |

Hypothesis Testing

To test the two hypotheses, a 2 (Costa Rican identity, high versus low) x (Nicaraguan identity, high versus low) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted for the 14 scale scores derived from the factor analysis using Nicaraguan respondents only (N=91). The multivariate (Pillar's Trace) effect for the Costa Rican identity main effect trended ($F(12,76)=1.66, p=.130$); the multivariate main effect for Nicaraguan identity trended ($F(12,76)=1.99, p=.071$); and the multivariate interaction was significant ($F(12,76)=2.11, p=.023$).

These results indicated the likelihood of independent effects of each cultural identity, and the interaction of both identities, on one or more of the dependent variables in the set that were not the result of random error.⁴⁴ These results suggested that a real relationship exists between each independent variable (Costa Rican identity, Nicaraguan identity, Interaction of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identities) and something in the set of dependent variables and thereby warranted a further examination of the relationships between independent and dependent variables via a series of univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA).

With respect to the univariate Fs for the 14 scales (see Table T) the only significant main effect for Nicaraguan identity was the acculturation scale ($F(1,87)=17.94, p=.0005$). For Costa Rican identity, the univariate F was also significant for the acculturation scale ($F(1,87)=7.35, p<.008$) and the univariate F on the societal boundaries scale trended ($F(1,87)=, p=.054$). The only significant univariate interaction was for Internal Stress ($F(12,76)=11.13, p=.001$).

⁴⁴ A MANOVA analysis tests for a relationship between each independent variable and the *set* of dependent variables. It controls for the potential error due to probability when the analysis for each dependent variable is run separately.

Table T: Univariate F Values for Cultural Identity and Other Variables

| Tests of Between-Subjects Effects | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Source | Dependent Variable | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Costa Rican Id (high/low) | Internal Stress | .346 | 1 | .346 | .494 | .484 |
| | External Stress | .584 | 1 | .584 | .798 | .374 |
| | Negative self-perception | .002 | 1 | .002 | .004 | .952 |
| | Depressed mood | .000 | 1 | .000 | .000 | .985 |
| | General anxiety | 1.898 | 1 | 1.898 | 2.332 | .130 |
| | Strangeness anxiety | .856 | 1 | .856 | 1.205 | .275 |
| | Living boundaries | 2.416 | 1 | 2.416 | 3.084 | .083 |
| | Societal boundaries | 2.715 | 1 | 2.715 | 3.833 | .054 |
| | Cultural boundaries | .166 | 1 | .166 | .457 | .501 |
| | General social support | .023 | 1 | .023 | .286 | .594 |
| | Trust support networks | .040 | 1 | .040 | .363 | .548 |
| | Acculturation | 1.069 | 1 | 1.069 | 7.350 | .008 |
| | Satisfaction with Life | .575 | 1 | .575 | .639 | .426 |
| | Perceived Discrimination | 33.623 | 1 | 33.623 | 1.452 | .232 |

Table T. (continued) Univariate F Values for Cultural Identity and Other Variables

| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------|---|--------|--------|------|
| Nicaraguan Id (high/low) | Internal stress | .048 | 1 | .048 | .069 | .794 |
| | External stress | .216 | 1 | .216 | .295 | .589 |
| | Negative self-perception | .153 | 1 | .153 | .300 | .585 |
| | Depressed mood | .494 | 1 | .494 | .761 | .385 |
| | General anxiety | .150 | 1 | .150 | .185 | .669 |
| | Strangeness anxiety | .008 | 1 | .008 | .012 | .913 |
| | Living boundaries | 1.115 | 1 | 1.115 | 1.423 | .236 |
| | Societal boundaries | .974 | 1 | .974 | 1.375 | .244 |
| | Cultural boundaries | .704 | 1 | .704 | 1.937 | .168 |
| | General social support | .006 | 1 | .006 | .079 | .780 |
| | Trust support networks | .002 | 1 | .002 | .016 | .900 |
| | Acculturation | 2.608 | 1 | 2.608 | 17.936 | .000 |
| | Satisfaction with Life | .483 | 1 | .483 | .537 | .465 |
| | Perceived Discrimination | 24.091 | 1 | 24.091 | 1.040 | .311 |
| Costa Rican Id (high/low) * Nicaraguan Id (high/low) | Internal Stress | 7.810 | 1 | 7.810 | 11.125 | .001 |
| | External Stress | 1.718 | 1 | 1.718 | 2.346 | .129 |
| | Negative self-perception | .141 | 1 | .141 | .276 | .601 |
| | Depressed mood | .526 | 1 | .526 | .811 | .370 |
| | General anxiety | 2.392 | 1 | 2.392 | 2.938 | .090 |
| | Strangeness anxiety | .593 | 1 | .593 | .834 | .364 |
| | Living boundaries | 2.299 | 1 | 2.299 | 2.934 | .090 |
| | Societal boundaries | .658 | 1 | .658 | .929 | .338 |
| | Cultural boundaries | 1.185 | 1 | 1.185 | 3.260 | .074 |
| | General social support | .003 | 1 | .003 | .036 | .849 |
| | Trust support networks | .040 | 1 | .040 | .363 | .548 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------|---|--------|-------|------|
| | Acculturation | .094 | 1 | .094 | .645 | .424 |
| | Satisfaction with Life | 2.491 | 1 | 2.491 | 2.770 | .100 |
| | Perceived Discrimination | 60.315 | 1 | 60.315 | 2.605 | .110 |

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------------|----------|----|--------|--|--|
| Error | Internal Stress | 60.370 | 86 | .702 | | |
| | External Stress | 62.990 | 86 | .732 | | |
| | Negative self-perception | 43.847 | 86 | .510 | | |
| | Depressed mood | 55.778 | 86 | .649 | | |
| | General anxiety | 70.017 | 86 | .814 | | |
| | Strangeness anxiety | 61.143 | 86 | .711 | | |
| | Living boundaries | 67.376 | 86 | .783 | | |
| | Societal boundaries | 60.912 | 86 | .708 | | |
| | Cultural boundaries | 31.252 | 86 | .363 | | |
| | General social support | 6.939 | 86 | .081 | | |
| | Trust support networks | 9.368 | 86 | .109 | | |
| | Acculturation | 12.507 | 86 | .081 | | |
| | Satisfaction with Life | 77.348 | 86 | .145 | | |
| | Perceived Discrimination | 1991.329 | 86 | 23.155 | | |

Table T. (continued) Univariate F Values for Cultural Identity and Other Variables

The results from this series of ANOVAs appeared to validate the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity scales as high Costa Rican identity among Nicaraguans was associated with high levels of acculturation and high Nicaraguan identity was associated with lower levels of acculturation (see Figure 12). Though the result was not statistically significant, high Costa Rican identity among Nicaraguans was associated with the perception that strong societal boundaries separate Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica (see Figure 13).

Figure 12: Significant Main Effects of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity on Acculturation

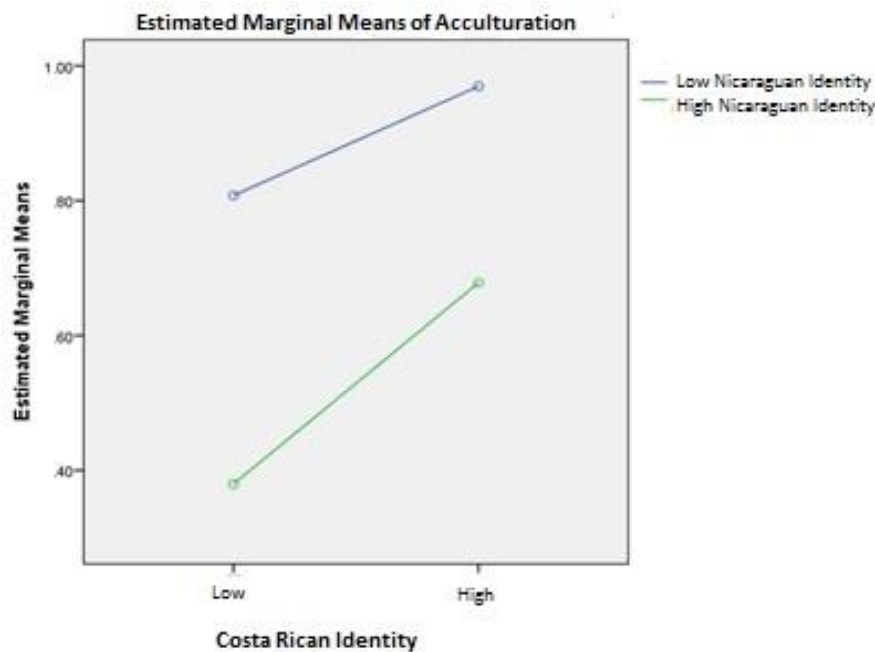


Figure 12 shows that the highest levels of acculturation are among respondents with low Nicaraguan identity (blue line) and high Costa Rican identity. The lowest levels of acculturation are among those with high Nicaraguan identity (green line) and low Costa Rican identity.

The statistically significant relationship between the interaction effect of both identity scales and internal stress supported an association between bicultural identity and low levels of internal stress (see Figure 14). High levels of internal stress were found among Nicaraguans

with high Costa Rican identity and low Nicaraguan identity as well as among those with high Nicaraguan identity and low Costa Rican identity. Having both high Costa Rican and high Nicaraguan identity was associated with relatively low levels of internal stress, however, interestingly, the lowest internal stress was found among those with low Costa Rican and low Nicaraguan identity.

Figure 13: Trending Main Effect of Costa Rican Identity on Societal Boundaries

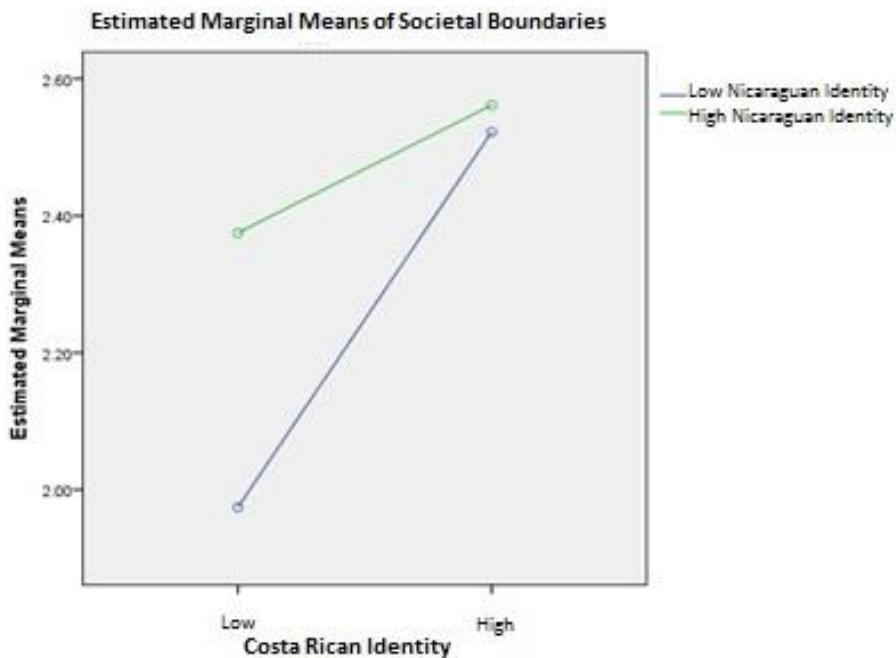


Figure 13 shows a high perception of societal boundaries among bicultural respondents with high levels of Nicaraguan identity (green line) and Costa Rican identity, and among respondents with high levels of Costa Rican identity and low levels of Nicaraguan identity (blue line).

Controlling for Effects on Well-being

In order to control for the effects of other variables on well-being, a 2 (Costa Rican identity, high versus low) x (Nicaraguan Identity, high versus low) multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to control for the effects of perceived discrimination, social support and exposure to violence on the well-being variables.

Figure 14: Significant Interaction Main Effect of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Identity on Internal Stress

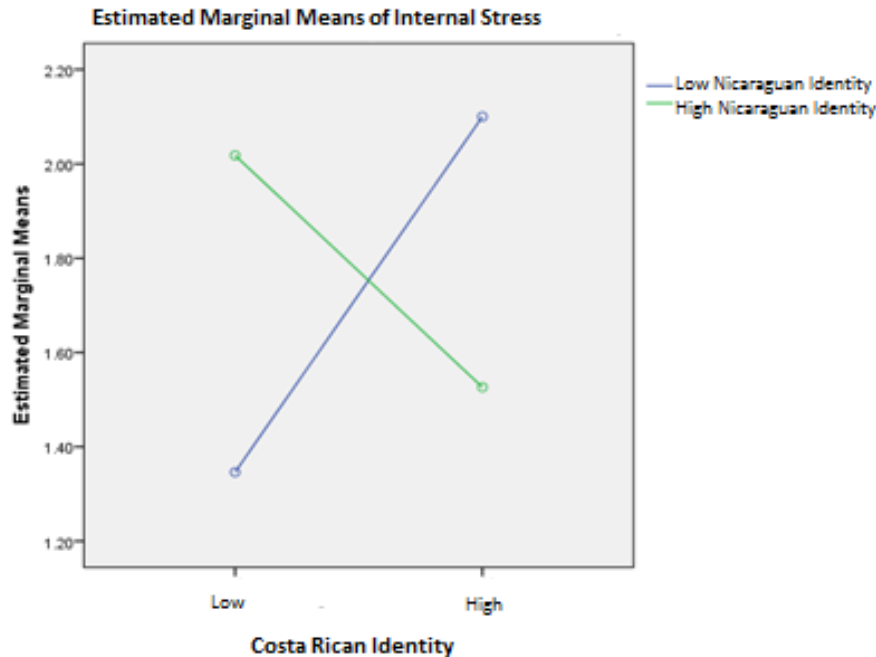


Figure 14 shows low levels of Internal Stress among respondents with low Costa Rican identity and low Nicaraguan identity (blue line) and among bicultural respondents with high Costa Rican identity and high Nicaraguan identity (green line).

The multivariate main effects for all three control variables were insignificant. The multivariate (Pillar's Trace) interaction (Costa Rican Identity and Nicaraguan Identity) was the only significant effect ($F(7,77)=2.84, p=.011$) indicating an independent effect of the interaction of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identities on the set of dependent well-being variables. With respect to the univariate F s for the 7 well-being scales, a significant main effect was shown for perceived discrimination and depressed mood. ($F(1, 77)=6.77, p<.011$); and a significant main effect was shown for the interaction of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity and internal stress ($F(1, 77)=9.1, p<.00$

These findings indicate that high levels of perceived discrimination were significantly associated with high levels of depressed mood. Most importantly, these results confirm that the

significant relationship found previously between the interaction of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity and internal stress remains after controlling for the effects of other variables known to influence well-being (perceived discrimination, social support, exposure to violence).

Correlates of Background and Demographic Variables

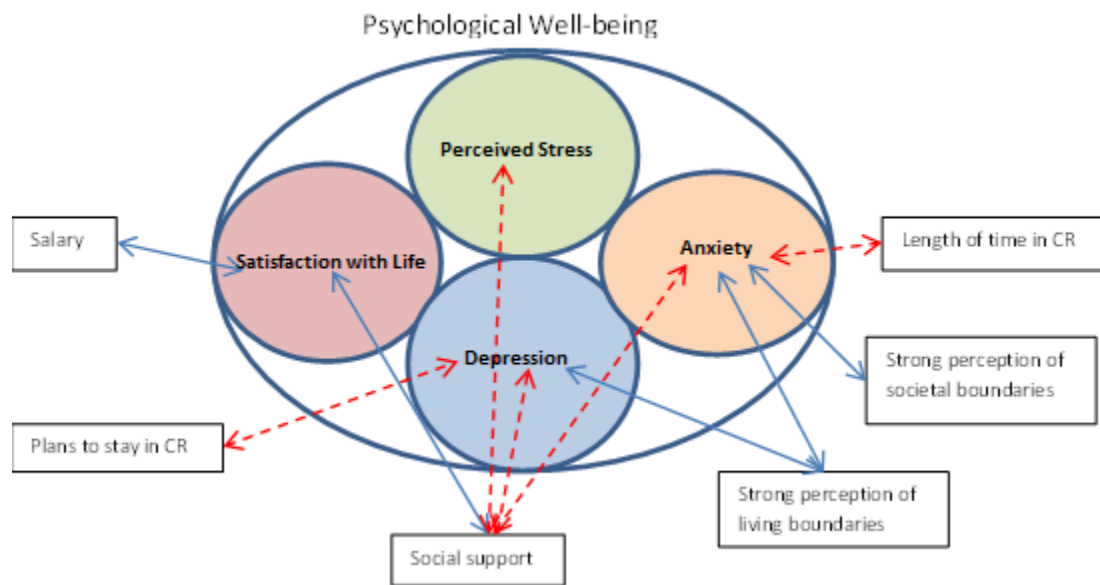
A Pearson's correlation analysis performed to assess for significant relationships between background characteristics and other variables showed a pattern of some immigrants being more settled in Costa Rica than others. For example, plans to stay permanently in Costa Rica were significantly correlated with having legal documentation ($r=.30, p<.01$) and with length of time in Costa Rica ($r=.44, p<.01$). Having legal status was significantly correlated with being married ($r=.26, p<.01$), having children ($r=.38, p<.01$) and higher acculturation ($r=.24, p<.01$). Gender was also significantly correlated with acculturation ($r=.21, p<.01$), with women showing higher levels than men.

Correlates of Well-being

The seven well-being variables correlated significantly with each other and with social support and trust support networks. In addition, a significant positive correlation was found between salary and satisfaction with life ($r=.31, p<.01$) and a negative correlation was found between plans to stay permanently in Costa Rica and negative self-perception ($r=-.28, p<.01$). Time in Costa Rica was negatively correlated with strangeness anxiety ($r=-.23, p<.01$), and a strong perception of living boundaries was significantly correlated with depressed mood ($r=.31, p<.01$) and general anxiety ($r=.31, p<.01$). A strong perception of societal boundaries was also

significantly correlated with general anxiety ($r=.27, p<.01$). A model of these relationships is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Significant Correlates of Psychological Well-being



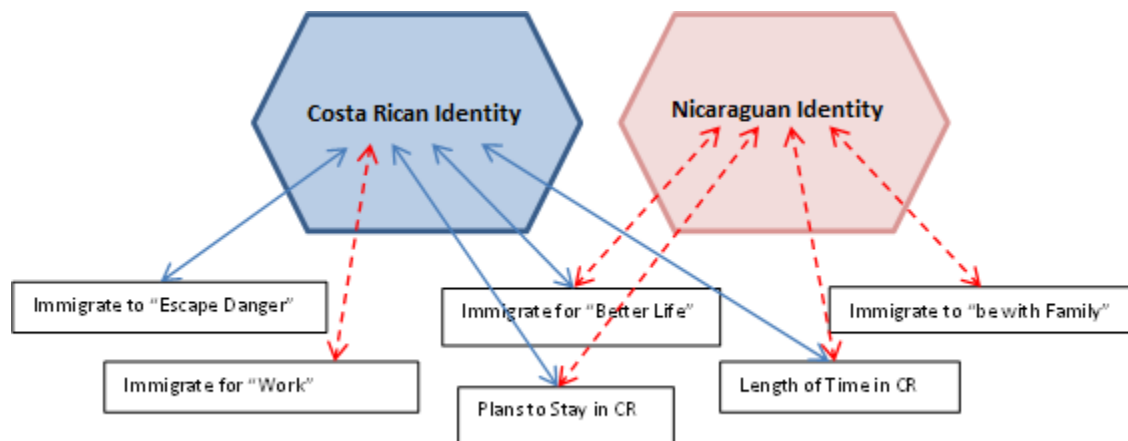
Postive correlations between variables are represented by blue (solid) arrows and negative correlations are represented by red (dashed) arrows.

Correlates of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity

A Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to assess for relationships between the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity scales and other variables. Costa Rican identity was positively correlated with plans to stay permanently in Costa Rica ($r=.44, p<.01$), with immigration for a better life ($r=.28, p<.01$), and with immigration to escape danger ($r=.21, p<.01$). Costa Rican identity was negatively correlated with immigration for work ($r=-.27, p<.01$).

Nicaraguan identity was negatively correlated with length of time in Costa Rica ($r=-.40$, $p<.01$), with plans to stay permanently in Costa Rica ($r=-.43$, $p<.01$) and with immigration for a better life ($r=-.31$, $p<.01$). Nicaraguan identity was positively correlated with a strong perception of societal boundaries ($r=.28$, $p<.01$). Acculturation was strongly positively correlated with Costa Rican identity ($r=.58$, $p<.01$), and negatively correlated with Nicaraguan identity ($r=-.54$, $p<.01$). The results of this correlation analysis are presented in Table U. A graphical representation of these relationships is shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Significant Correlates of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan Identity



Positive correlations between variables are represented by blue (solid) arrows and negative correlations are represented by red (dashed) arrows.

Table U: Pearson's Correlations between Immigration Characteristics and Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Identities

| | Costa Rican Identity | Nicaraguan Identity | Years in Costa Rica | Plans to Stay | Document Status | For Work | To Study | Be with Family | For Better Life | Escape Danger |
|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Costa Rican Identity | - | -.43** | .23* | .44** | .08 | -.27** | .13 | .17 | .28* | .21* |
| Nicaraguan Identity | -.43** | - | -.40** | -.43** | -.09 | .18 | -.20 | -.22* | -.31** | -.20 |
| Years in Costa Rica | .23* | -.40** | - | .43** | .48** | -.28** | -.09 | .04 | .21* | .20 |
| Plans to Stay | .44** | -.43** | .43** | - | .26* | -.52** | .10 | .43** | .37** | .19 |
| Documents Status | .08 | -.09 | .48** | .26* | - | -.17 | -.22* | -.04 | .05 | -.03 |
| For Work | -.27** | .18 | -.28** | -.52** | -.17 | - | -.05 | -.25* | -.22* | -.14 |
| To Study | .13 | -.20 | -.09 | .10 | -.22* | -.05 | - | .35** | .29** | .18 |
| Be with Family | .17 | -.22* | .04 | .43** | -.04 | -.25* | .35** | - | .42** | .26* |
| For Better Life | .28** | -.31** | .21* | .37** | .05 | -.22* | .29** | .42** | - | .42** |
| Escape Danger | .21* | -.20 | .20 | .19 | -.03 | -.14 | .18 | .26* | .42** | - |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Chapter 7: Discussion and Future Directions

“Isn’t it a bit early for all this rain”, I asked the young Nicaraguan teenage volunteer who so generously held his large umbrella over my head in an attempt to protect me from the unrelenting downpour that had been going on now, non-stop, for about four hours. “It’s normal”, he said, as he smiled, the water flowing off of his face and head as if it were a downspout. “But the rainy season isn’t supposed to start for a few more weeks, right?” I asked. “Tell that to the rain, he replied as he pointed up to the gray sky, thick with clouds and water vapor, and showing no signs of drying up soon.

It was mother’s day, or specifically *el día de las madres Nicaragüenses*—celebrated each year in Nicaragua on April 30th. As Costa Ricans celebrate their mother’s day in August, I knew that the faces I looked out at in the crowd this day were primarily Nicaraguan. The small plaza in downtown San José was filled beyond capacity, even overflowing into the nearby blocks. I remember thinking how strange it was to see such a large crowd gathered despite the miserable weather. The young volunteer’s umbrella followed my head as I sat down on a nearby bench and attempted to salvage what was left of my belongings.

Jorge and Daisy Martinez, my mentors in Costa Rica regarding all things Nicaraguan, had recruited me as a volunteer to help out at this event, which was sponsored by a local bank and organized by representatives from a variety of non-governmental organizations working with the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica. They said it would be a great place for me to talk to Nicaraguans and to get a taste of Nicaraguan culture. “They were right”, I thought to myself as I sorted through the stack of completed questionnaires, scraps of paper with phone numbers on them, business cards, and all the other paper treasures I had collected at this event, that were quickly turning into paste at the bottom of my bag.

The crowd was focused on the stage, where throughout the day they had been entertained by speakers, local musicians, and several bands and dancers from various genres and different parts of Nicaragua. Before the rain began, dozens of young attractive couples had exquisitely performed the folkloric dances of Nicaragua in their colorful costumes, each woman’s dress more fantastic than the next. The street vendors walked around the plaza with their carts, doling out the strong scents and flavors of Nicaraguan street food. Another attraction, of course, were the very generous door prizes donated by the bank, shiny new appliances—washing machines, microwaves and rice cookers—for all those hard-working moms.

As the ecstatic mothers ran up to the stage to claim their prizes, I stood up to join the rest of the volunteers to get a better view. Aside from myself, all the volunteers were Nicaraguans, lined up in their crisp new baseball caps and white T-shirts emblazoned with the logo of the bank that sponsored the event. Earlier that day, at the Martinez’s house, as we headed out for the event, Jorge had stopped us, “wait”, he said, and giggled as he went back into his room and brought out a camouflage New York Yankees shirt and a black military-style cap. “You, Marisa, should wear this instead”, he said as he yanked the neatly folded bank T-shirt out of my hands. A few of the other volunteers smiled in amusement, and I finally caught on: I was a *Yanqui*, and I was to be singled out for it on this most festive day for Nicaraguans. “Let’s go, *comandante*”, Jorge saluted me, “you lead the way”.

I knew Jorge’s taunting was all in good fun, so I obliged with his odd request and submitted myself to take the punches for all the bad things done to Nicaraguans by my countrymen over the centuries. It’s not as though I wouldn’t stand out at this event anyway, and a little camouflage, I thought, wouldn’t hurt my efforts to blend in. In fact, this was the first time I could ever remember being in downtown San José without another North American in sight. It was a very different Costa Rica that day, one I felt privileged to be a part of. As the sun went down and the event drew to a close, another volunteer I had met only briefly before, a woman in her mid-thirties smiled at me, as she noticed me watching her twist the bottom of her shirt in a futile effort to wring out some of the water she was drenched in. As I watched, I felt suddenly very grateful for the thick and warm Yankees shirt I had on. “What are you doing down here with all these Nicas?” she asked as we walked around picking up waterlogged trash from the streets. After several minutes of conversation, I managed to convince her that I was there for the same

reason everyone else was, to hear the music and partake in the festivities, and that I had thoroughly enjoyed it. “Well you must be a Nica then, to be here still, even with all this rain”, she smiled, “A *gringa-nica*, that’s what we’ll call you”, she said warmly as we continued on our task.

Unknowingly, this Nicaraguan woman on that day had paid me the ultimate compliment an anthropologist could be given. In this time of isolation, awkwardness and uncertainty, it was a wonderful feeling to be accepted into this community of Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica. Of course, good ethnographic data depends upon having a good rapport with the people one is studying, but given the long length of time required for fieldwork, making friends with people in the field fulfills the more immediate human need for companionship and support. The friendships I formed with people made it easier to understand and empathize with the situations they live their lives in.

While I was flattered by her words, I still doubted their veracity. As many ethnographers before me have discovered, the reality of truly becoming part of another culture, though a highly romanticized notion in anthropology, is unlikely. In many ways, my rapport with the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica came about because of our shared experiences as outsiders in a nation that was not our own. They too were separated from loved ones back home, as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers had come to work, leaving their spouses, children and parents behind in Nicaragua. Though some of them, like me, were able to live transnational lives, going back and forth occasionally to visit, others were only beginning what would become the long process of starting over, with new lives and families in Costa Rica.

While my Nicaraguan friends and I swapped stories of our experiences as foreigners in a strange land, and of our difficulties learning how to get by in Costa Rica, I tried not to lose sight of the fact that our statuses as outsiders were not equivalent. I was a different kind of outsider, one with different privileges than those of the average Nicaraguan immigrant in Costa Rica. My

identity as a citizen from one of the richest and most powerful countries on earth gave me the luxury of unlimited mobility throughout Central America, allowing me to pass in and out of countries without forethought. Each time my passport was stamped and I paid my nominal fees to enter a country I was reminded that the opportunity to visit my country, as I do theirs, is not so readily available to citizens of either Costa Rica or Nicaragua.

While I enjoyed the opportunities to join in on the festive events celebrating Nicaraguan culture, like the one described above, I sensed that these occasions were very different experiences for me than they were for Nicaraguans. While these events were great fun to partake in and I did so whenever the opportunity presented itself, they did little to alleviate my feelings of homesickness for my own culture. On each of these occasions where I watched Nicaraguans celebrating together with their fellow countrymen, I found that I was desirous for a similar opportunity to be around other Americans, to be where I understood what was going on, and where I was understood by those around me. Though I was able to converse regularly with Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, my shaky grasp of the Spanish language often limited these conversations to superficialities and left me unable to express my deeper sentiments or interpret the finer nuances of the words and feelings of others.

Perhaps with more time, these linguistic and cultural barriers would have eroded somewhat, but my awareness that this time in my life was temporary may have subconsciously stemmed my willingness to work harder at it. I found that this knowledge of my imminent departure haunted me throughout the year, and each time I began to form a meaningful relationship with someone local, I was filled with great sadness at the thought that I would eventually leave. Nevertheless, these occasions served as an important reminder for me that

anthropological fieldwork is a somewhat artificial set of circumstances, rather than a natural and spontaneous platform for human interaction.

Being that this was a study of well-being, it was hard for me to disregard my own experience when looking at those of others similarly detached from their countries and cultures. Anecdotally, I thought that there must be something comforting to the human spirit about being in a place where one feels accepted, knowledgeable and capable—that is, within the cultural milieu with which one is most familiar. I saw the events taking place on that day in late April of 2008 as providing a temporary respite for all those Nicaraguans who had otherwise been living outside of their comfort zones for various lengths of time in Costa Rica.

The observations I made throughout my year in Costa Rica continued to bring me back to the original question asked in this study: does attaching oneself to a cultural identity emotionally, through action and/or through participation in cultural events, serve to protect immigrants from the stressors they otherwise face in their new homelands? As I watched the thousands of Nicaraguans of all ages enjoying this day together, celebrating and spending time with their friends and families, I couldn't help but think of those others I had met earlier who lacked the opportunity, for one reason or another, to join in on this and other celebrations of Nicaraguan identity.

I recalled the faces of so many immigrants I had interviewed earlier as they had described to me the great costs involved in traveling to San José, their inability to take time off from work, and their fears of being detained by authorities who may ask them for papers they did not have. This realization that opportunities to participate in Nicaraguan identity were not equally distributed, along with my awareness of the lack of Costa Rican faces in the crowd, served as potent reminders to me that the answer to this question was complicated and not likely to be

resolved in a single study. I can only hope that this effort has helped to shed a small amount of light on the complex relationship between cultural identity and well-being among immigrants in Costa Rica and beyond.

Discussion of Findings

This project used ethnographic fieldwork, including qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine the relationship between cultural identity and well-being among Nicaraguan immigrants living in and around San José, Costa Rica. In the first phase of the project I conducted a series of unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews with purposive samples of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in order to reveal shared cultural models of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity. Analysis of the qualitative data from unstructured and semi-structured interviews revealed several collective themes related to Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity that served as the basis for a series of items that were incorporated into a structured interview. The data collected in structured interviews was analyzed using cultural consensus analysis and revealed four shared models of cultural identity: self-ascribed and other-ascribed models of Costa Rican identity and self and other-ascribed models of Nicaraguan identity.

In phase 2 of the project, a questionnaire was distributed to purposive samples of Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica in order to assess the relationship between cultural identity and psychological well-being. An individual's level of cultural consonance with a composite of the shared models of identity (from phase 1) was used as a measure of cultural identity. The phase 2 questionnaire also contained scales to measure a broad spectrum of psychological well-being and scales for variables that could potentially confound the relationship between cultural

identity and well-being, as well as demographic and immigration-related characteristics of the respondents. The data from questionnaires distributed to a sample of 97 Nicaraguan immigrants was analyzed to test two hypotheses: that bicultural identity would be associated with higher levels of well-being and that a perception of strong social boundaries between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans would be associated with a singular, rather than a bicultural identity strategy.

Cultural Identity and Psychological Well-being

The first hypothesis tested in this study sought to find out whether a bicultural identity—one fusing aspects of both Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity—was associated with higher levels of psychological well-being among Nicaraguan immigrants living in Costa Rica. The results suggest that bicultural identity, as indicated by the interaction effect of the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identity scales, was significantly related to one component of well-being, the internal stress variable, which is a sub-component of the Cohen et al. (1983) perceived stress scale specifically addressing the ability and confidence in oneself to manage problems. This finding is in line with those of prior studies that have shown the protective effects of bicultural identities on psychological well-being (Phinney et al. 2001; Harker 2001, Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001; Portes 1994).

Prior research on immigrant adaptation to host societies has shown *acculturative stress* to be a common outcome of the migration experience (Berry 1974; Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok 1987). In this study, Nicaraguan respondents on average had somewhat higher levels of stress than Costa Rican respondents though this difference was not statistically significant. On the other hand, large differences were found between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans on other well-being variables including anxiety and depression that did reach the threshold of statistical

significance. On average, Nicaraguan respondents reported much higher levels of anxiety and depression than Costa Ricans respondents. While this study did not find a significant association between cultural identity and depression or anxiety, this may be due to the fact that these indicators represent true psychopathology and may not show high incidence in this or any population. Psychological disorders like depression and anxiety may be linked to migration in more complex ways than stress, because they likely factor in variations in personal characteristics of migrants such as genetic susceptibility and degrees of resiliency, as well as variations in risk factors aside from migration. Though stress likely affects a wide range of migrants, not everyone subjected to high levels of stress will go on to develop mental illness.

Though neither Costa Rican nor Nicaraguan cultural identity on its own was significantly associated with well-being, the interaction effect of these two scales showed both the predicted relationship between biculturalism and relatively low levels of stress among immigrants, but it also presented the interesting and unexpected finding that individuals who did not identify strongly with either identity scale had the lowest levels of perceived internal stress in this sample, even lower than bicultural individuals. This is interesting because this adaptation strategy is typically characterized as social “marginalisation” (Berry 1997: 10) or as an “adversarial” strategy (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001: 103) in most models of immigrant adaptation to host societies.

Individuals adopting this type of strategy are often assumed to be vulnerable to high levels of psychological distress due to their isolation from both immigrant and citizen communities (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001). The increased vulnerability of marginalized individuals is thought to be the result of suffering from “enforced cultural loss” of their identity of origin, as well as forced exclusion and high levels of discrimination preventing

them from adopting the identity of the host society (Berry 1997: 9). Generally, in the immigrant adaptation literature, marginalization is not assumed to be a strategy that individuals choose for themselves but rather one that they are forced into out of a lack of alternative options.

If we assume that the Nicaraguan immigrants in this study who showed low levels of both cultural identities were indeed marginalized, this makes their lower levels of internal stress puzzling. Could it be that individuals who do not identify strongly with either the Costa Rican or Nicaraguan models are buffered somewhat from the highly sensationalized identity struggles taking place currently in Costa Rica? Could the lack of identification with any one shared model of identity actually be protective in a highly charged social context like the perceived ‘crisis’ of immigration in Costa Rica?

As discussed earlier in this dissertation, the Costa Rican media portrayals of Nicaraguans during this period of fieldwork (2005-2008) were overwhelmingly negative (Fonseca Vindas 2005), which could explain the skepticism an immigrant may have toward proactive engagement with a Nicaraguan identity. However, it is also important to note, that during this same time period, Costa Rican xenophobia toward Nicaraguans had begun to attract the attention of local and international researchers, and immigrant advocacy organizations in Costa Rica were on the rise. Several highly publicized incidents of “symbolic violence” by Costa Ricans (Sandoval Garcia 2007: xviii), such as the 2005 unprovoked police raid on the community of La Carpio, or the stinging insensitivity of the commentary surrounding the death of Natividad Canda, a Nicaraguan immigrant killed by dogs, were still fresh in the public imagination, thereby tainting any lingering notions of Costa Rican exceptionalism.

Had Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identities become equally unattractive options for immigrants in this social context? Perhaps these individuals who were not tied strongly to either

identity found that the identities of others were less of a factor in their lives? While this study looked at cultural identity as a protective factor against the stressors related to migration, perhaps investing oneself in a particular cultural identity can be stressful in itself? These are interesting hypotheses for future research.

Permanence of Settlement and Cultural Identity

The Nicaraguan immigrants in this sample were diverse in backgrounds, experiences and future goals. As the immigration literature has pointed out migration can be temporary or permanent, and immigrant identity formation probably depends a great deal upon one's personal circumstances and goals, for example, whether one is a sojourner migrating only to work or whether one migrates in hope of finding a new place to live (Chavez 1991). Among the immigrants in this study, higher levels of Costa Rican cultural identity seemed to be associated with those whose migration was more permanent, as assessed by their length of time in Costa Rica, plans to stay permanently and legal documentation status. This set of more permanently-based Nicaraguan immigrants were also more likely to be married and have children, and to indicate that they migrated to Costa Rica "for a better life".

Looking at past and current immigration policies in Costa Rica, along with insight from the interviews conducted with immigrants in this study provides a good explanation of the existing patterns. The large scale amnesty following the devastation wrought by Hurricane Mitch granted legal status to tens of thousands of Nicaraguans who could prove their residence in Costa Rica prior to 1998, however, since that time it has been increasingly difficult for Nicaraguans without immediate family links to Costa Ricans to obtain legal residency (Rocha Gomez 2006).

Another factor potentially affecting patterns of Nicaraguan settlement in Costa Rica is the native soil policy of awarding citizenship to all those born in Costa Rica (Goldade 2007).

Although this study did not ask about where a person's children were born, it is possible that having a Costa Rican spouse and/or children increases the likelihood of a more permanent settlement in Costa Rica, which possibly motivates one toward identifying more with a Costa Rican identity. Having Costa Rican family members is one of the most reliable ways for a Nicaraguan to obtain legal residency, and anecdotal evidence from the semi-structured interviews with immigrants in this study indicated that the lack of legal documentation was a substantial barrier to a full participation in Costa Rican social life.

A substantial portion of the set of immigrants showing high levels of Nicaraguan identity in this study were likely to be temporary migrants, sojourners, or those who had only recently arrived in Costa Rica. Many indicated that "finding work" was their primary reason for coming to Costa Rica. As Nicaraguan identity was negatively correlated with the length of time one had been in Costa Rica, it is possible that over time, some of these individuals could begin to identify more with Costa Rican identity as linear models of immigrant adaptation suggest (Chavez 1991; Gordon 1964).

Interviews with Nicaraguans in this study indicated that an initial decision to migrate to Costa Rica for work could morph for some, but not all, into a more permanent stay when conditions favored or required this strategy (i.e. marriage and/or children, disintegration of support networks in Nicaragua, etc.). Nicaraguan identity was also positively correlated with age, indicating that older Nicaraguans maybe more committed to their culture of origin than younger ones, perhaps out of the nostalgia that comes from a deeper memory of it.

Social Boundaries and Identity Options

This study predicted that individuals who perceived strong boundaries to exist between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans would be more likely to pursue a singular identity strategy (assimilation or segregation) rather than a bicultural one, however this hypothesis was not supported by the data in this study. Though the relationship between the social boundaries variables and either Costa Rican or Nicaraguan cultural identity was not statistically significant, the main effect of Costa Rican identity trended in this direction, showing that higher levels of Costa Rican identity (assimilation) may be associated with a greater perception of strong *societal* boundaries between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica.

The societal boundaries variable was one of three sub-scales derived from the original social boundaries scale after factor analysis was performed to assess the scale's internal validity. This component of the social boundaries variable specifically addressed Costa Rican society's attitudes towards and acceptance of Nicaraguan immigrants. Because immigrants who perceived Costa Rican society to be less welcoming toward Nicaraguans were more likely to adopt elements of Costa Rican identity, this may be one strategy for immigrants to disassociate themselves from their culture of origin in the face of a hostile host population. This explanation, however is highly speculative, and should be subjected to further testing in the future.

Additionally, a small but statistically significant correlation ($r=.28$) was found between the *cultural* boundaries subscale and Nicaraguan identity. This variable addressed an individual's perception of behavioral and cultural differences between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans, and this finding indicates that among those in this study, higher levels of Nicaraguan identity were associated with a perception of greater differences between these two groups in behavior and in culture. Again, though this represents only a preliminary and speculative

finding, it would be interesting to explore the possibility that maintenance of one's cultural identity of origin may be related to the belief in essential differences between oneself and those belonging to the host society.

Despite the language used in the written theories of immigrant adaptation that so often implies individual choice in immigrants' acculturation strategies, the reality is that attitudes and characteristics of the host society and population operate to constrain the identity options available to individuals (Berry 1997; Mahalingham 2006). The ability of an immigrant to achieve assimilation or biculturalism requires a host society that is willing and able to imagine immigrants as a part of the community (Chavez 1991; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco 2001), and this happens only when the dominant society is open and inclusive to cultural diversity (Berry 1997). In a society like Costa Rica, where narratives of national identity and claims to regional exceptionalism depend upon the depiction of stark contrasts with neighboring nations, immigrants from these nations are unlikely to find such a receptive host (Basok 1993; Hayden 2003; Sandoval Garcia 2004)

Measuring Identity: How Good are the Cultural Models?

As I discussed extensively in Chapter 2, scholarly examination of the concept of identity is fraught with challenges and controversies, however the enormous proliferation of research on identity in the social sciences suggests that researchers are continuously finding new ways to apply it to social issues (Brettell 2000; Mahalingham 2006; Sökefeld 1999). Immigration research in many disciplines has embraced various conceptions of identity to understand the processes and consequences of migration, both for nations and individuals. Since there is no universally agreed upon way of operationalizing the construct, researchers interested in exploring

identity must tread carefully into hotly contested waters, guarding their intent by specifically outlining the goals and methods of their research while remaining aware of potential criticisms from those who disagree with their theoretical constructs and/or methods.

For the purposes of this project, I used the term ‘cultural identity’ to refer to sets of cultural characteristics including behaviors, traditions, beliefs, ideas, values and knowledge that were highly shared among samples of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. Study participants’ conceptions of their culture and identity were used in the construction of measures and variables for most of the instruments used. In order to reveal a model of cultural identity that would be meaningful across a broad spectrum of people living in Costa Rica, individuals diverse in background characteristics, including age, gender, and socioeconomic status were invited to participate in the study.

The four derived models of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican cultural identity did show consensus on many items, and the items perceived differently by Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans were generally ambiguous positive characteristics that each group claimed for themselves (i.e., charity, religiosity) or negative characteristics that a group either rejected or felt to be less salient to their identity than the other group did. Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans generally agreed about the placement of popular national symbols including foods, phrases, religious festivals, and folklore. However there was less agreement between the two groups on the cultural characteristics and behaviors associated with each identity, especially regarding items perceived as negative qualities. For example, Nicaraguans saw the characteristics of being “false” and being “weak-willed” or “passive” as associated with Costa Rican identity, but Costa Ricans did not. Costa Ricans saw the use of physical aggression and machismo as associated with Nicaraguan identity, whereas Nicaraguans did not.

Interestingly, Costa Ricans did attribute some negatively evaluated items to their own collective cultural identity, including racism, materialism, and the preference to be with friends over family, whereas Nicaraguans only associated one slightly negatively rated item, “acting in a loud and animated fashion” with Nicaraguan identity, while rejecting the negative items that Costa Ricans associated with the collective Nicaraguan cultural identity. One possible explanation for the differences in the groups’ willingness to associate negative traits and characteristics with their cultural identities is that Nicaraguan identity was already highly stigmatized and the denial of these negative aspects may have been a distancing mechanism to fight back against the stereotypes that were so prevalent and damaging to Nicaraguans in Costa Rica.

Deriving items to measure cultural identity proved to be a confusing and at times even a painful process. There was little agreement among the research team, which was made up of myself and a few Costa Rican and Nicaraguan college students, about how to approach this task. Some of the research assistants expressed their deep reservations to me about the content of some of the preliminary versions of the instrument, mostly due to their fears of offending potential participants. Ultimately a compromise was reached through the decision to exclude potentially negative items from the identity scales on the phase 2 questionnaire.

This decision may have indeed been the correct one given that people generally are less likely to identify with negative behaviors and characteristics in self-assessments. However, the compromise may have biased the identity scales toward the more superficial elements of cultural identity such as differences in what is eaten or how one dresses oneself at the expense of the ability to assess any cultural divergences in deeper ideological and value systems.

Additionally, there was some concern among the research team (myself included) about how the results of this project could be taken out of context. Some of the interviewees themselves also expressed concern about the research questions perhaps because the stereotypes about Nicaraguans were so pervasive in Costa Rica at the time of this study that any attempt to document them ran the risk of making them ‘real’. Nicaraguan participants worried that admitting any wrong-doings by other Nicaraguans would feed into the already negative image of their culture, while Costa Rican participants sympathetic to the situation of Nicaraguan immigrants worried that the attitudes and behaviors of a few bad ‘racist’ Costa Ricans would obscure the positive elements of their culture.

These are legitimate concerns that I have hopefully addressed in this paper through a detailed outline of the methods and study limitations. I also emphasize that the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all Costa Ricans or all Nicaraguans. Rather, these results apply only to the specific group of people who participated in the project and they are only valid for the time period within which the data was collected.

Study Limitations and Biases

As is the case in any study where the subjects are immigrants, particularly if the population includes undocumented immigrants, it is difficult to obtain a representative sample. An additional challenge in this study was the requirement of several different samples at various stages of the research project that may or may have not been culturally or demographically similar to one another. In phase 1, which focused on deriving cultural models of identity, most participants were recruited for semi-structured interviews from local universities and non-

governmental organizations, potentially leading to an oversampling of college students, academics, immigration advocates and immigrants seeking help from these organizations.

As a result of this haphazard sampling strategy, the qualitative data used to reveal themes of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultural identity may not adequately represent the thoughts and sentiments of the wider populations of immigrants and citizens in Costa Rican society.

Additionally, the sample recruited for the structured interviews in phase 1 showed a strong male bias in both the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan samples, making it unclear how applicable the findings regarding the content of cultural models are to the women of these two populations.

The collection of data from Nicaraguan participants during phase 2 took place primarily at Parque La Merced, a public park in downtown San José that was a popular gathering spot for Nicaraguan immigrants. Though this location was productive in that a large percentage of those solicited agreed to participate, the choice of field sites for research always involves compromises of one sort or another. The selection of this particular site for data collection may have led to an underrepresentation of the immigrants I had met earlier in phase 1 interviews that were either too busy working to spend time in social gatherings, or were too afraid to venture out into public spaces because of their documentation status or financial difficulties.

One solution to address issues related to the potential mismatch of subsequent samples in one study may be to triangulate the samples by inviting participants in earlier stages of the project back to participate in later stages. This alternative method of sampling would allow researchers to better assess cultural identity by ensuring that measurements of participants' levels of cultural consonance with identity models more accurately represented their own conceptions of cultural identity rather than a model derived from a different sample of immigrants that may or may not be relevant to their personal conceptions of identity. Given the diverse characteristics

of these different samples at different points in the research project, the risk of a mismatch in collective conceptions of cultural identity between the various groups of Nicaraguans sampled remains a possibility with unclear implications for the research findings.

Another concern with the data collected during phase 2 was the substantial number of incomplete questionnaires received. Out of 115 questionnaires collected from Nicaraguans, only 97 met the criteria for inclusion in most of the analyses and several of the questionnaires included were still missing data for one or more variables. Because participants were asked to place their questionnaires in sealed envelopes upon completion, the full extent of missing data was not apparent until after I had left Costa Rica, thereby making it impossible to investigate the reasons for why items, and in some cases, entire scales were left blank. Though low literacy levels may have been somewhat of a factor, additional unknown factors may have also contributed to this outcome.

Efforts were made in the research design and throughout the research process to ensure that a broad range of participants were sampled in order that the models of cultural identity would be applicable to the larger Nicaraguan population in Costa Rica. However, given that identity is such a highly contested concept even within a population originating from the same country, it is possible that the demographic variation in the sample led to an overgeneralized conception of identity that ultimately was not embraced particularly strongly by many of the participants.

In retrospect, perhaps selecting a more closely targeted sample with a greater degree of commonality in demographic characteristics like age or gender would have allowed for the revelation of more specific cultural models of identity that were more meaningful and salient to participants that would have better assessed the impact of cultural identity on migration

outcomes, including psychological well-being. One area for future studies may be with Nicaraguan youth, particularly second-generation immigrants and/or those who came to Costa Rica at a young age and therefore may not have been familiar with traditional symbols of Nicaraguan identity although they still may identify ethnically as Nicaraguans.

Finally the twin issues of vocality and investigator bias must be addressed. An investigation of a concept such as identity must acknowledge the multitude of voices that make up the diverse narratives reflecting on national or cultural identity. Additionally, there are things about who I am that have likely affected the results of this study to some unknown degree. For example, my Spanish language skills were adequate to communicate and conduct interviews with native speakers, but certainly not advanced enough to pick up on all of the subtle nuances, idiomatic expressions, and local dialects present in Costa Rican or Nicaraguan Spanish. As these very things are so often invoked as cultural boundary markers, a strong possibility exists that I have overlooked some key elements of cultural identity in Costa Rica.

As I close this project, I refer the reader back to the critical words at the beginning of Chapter 2 that the anonymous young Costa Rican woman wrote on the questionnaire she completed. Her words had a powerful effect on me because they echoed doubts of my own about the research I had just conducted. I too questioned the methods, the theory, the assumptions, and the validity of any results to be found. I questioned everything. I also worried about what I would find out and how it would be received by those who so graciously participated in the project. Would they agree with this particular description of their identity? And if not, what could I or should I do about it? These are questions that all anthropologists surely face and issues they must address as they discuss their research findings. As an

anthropologist conducting a study on a concept so powerful and contested as identity, I did not take this task lightly.

Ethnography and Reflexivity

I would be short-sighted to end this discussion of identity in Costa Rica without commenting on my own identity and how this may have affected the process and results of this project. Being North American in Costa Rica is not a neutral position, and it comes with its own set of stereotypes that are at times flattering and at times insulting. North Americans are a common sight on the streets of San José. In addition to the huge proliferation of North American and European tourists passing through on their way to the beaches and rainforests, the region is also home to a growing community of ex-pats. Although cultural anthropologists are not unheard of in Costa Rica, I found it difficult on many occasions to explain my purpose for being there and to escape from the tourist mold I had been cast into because of my language and physical appearance.

North American tourism is an important sector of the Costa Rican economy, and Costa Ricans have grown accustomed to sharing their country with foreigners who come to take in the sights and sounds of the land for a week or two at a time. However, since ‘vacation’ represents a break from the normal conventions of behavior for many Americans visiting Costa Rica, Costa Ricans’ perceptions of Americans are based largely on a snapshot of our culture—one of tourists who spend money freely, eat and drink to excess and loosen their moral inhibitions at night.

During the period of time I lived in Costa Rica, the context of international tourism had created an image of Americans of which I, as a researcher and temporary resident, had to bear

the brunt. Stereotypes prevailed regarding our copious amounts of wealth, lack of cleanliness, and sexual immorality. However at the same time some positive traits were also attributed to gringos: the men were said to be more faithful and less *machista* while the women were considered to be more interesting and laid back than Ticos, whom the Costa Rican men complained frequently were just interested in money.

I did pay attention to the effect these stereotypes of Americans had on my interactions with people in Costa Rica. Certain of my personal characteristics made it somewhat difficult to form warm friendships with the locals, particularly with Costa Rican women. My status at the time as an unmarried, childless woman in her thirties aroused suspicions in some in regards to my morality, but most importantly, I felt that it was my being there alone that made it difficult for people to relate to me. I had been told often that Ticos don't like to be alone, and this was quite apparent from just a glance around the malls, restaurants, nightclubs and coffee shops throughout San José.

Unlike most Americans, Ticos seemed to budget a large amount of time for socializing and connecting with friends and family. Several hours out of a workday could be spent by groups of friends lingering over cups of coffee and a good dose of daily gossip. In fact it was quite unusual to see someone go out for coffee on their own (which contrasts sharply with coffee shops here in the U.S. which are geared toward efficiency and solo customers). During the year I spent in Costa Rica I rarely heard anyone express a desire to have 'time to themselves'. On the weekends parks were filled with families and other group gatherings, not by solo joggers or people off to read a book on their own. This collectivism in Costa Rican society made my solo presence unusual and made me a bit odd in the eyes of the locals.

My identity as an American shaped my relationships with Nicaraguans a bit differently, because for Nicaraguans, the United States brought up memories of the long history of U.S. intervention in the domestic affairs of Nicaragua, including the imperialist drive to control the strategically important Río San Juan, The William Walker fiasco, and the U.S. role in training and equipping the contras during the bloody civil war of the 1980s that killed tens of thousands of Nicaraguan citizens.

For the most part, I was surprised that politics did not play more heavily into my interactions with Nicaraguans, and on those few occasions that it did, it came through as gentle teasing, usually in reference to President Bush and/or the Iraq war (both of which were very unpopular in Costa Rica at the time). I came to realize that my occasional labeling by Nicaraguans with the term *Yanqui* had multiple connotations both complimentary, because many Nicaraguans are avid baseball fans, but also mildly insulting when it referenced American imperialism. However, in general, I felt a stronger sense of rapport with Nicaraguans than I did with most Costa Ricans, which likely came from our shared experiences as outsiders who could bond over our mutual struggles to find a way for ourselves in this new society.

As North Americans are a growing population in Costa Rica, the effects of their presence on Costa Rican and Nicaraguan identities should not be underestimated. Though often left out of the national dialogues on identity in Costa Rica, it is clear that American and other foreign influences have contributed greatly to the social and cultural changes in Costa Rica over the past several decades. Popular culture in Costa Rica, including movies, music, fashion, and fast food restaurants, is dominated by American exports, and English is becoming somewhat of an unofficial second language in Costa Rica, particularly among the youth. In fact, the Nicaraguan and North American migration patterns in Costa Rica are interrelated; North American

investments in tourism infrastructure and commerce have helped to create the most significant pull factor for Nicaraguan immigrants to Costa Rica—jobs.

Costa Rica's 'egalitarian' dream has become instead a three-tiered socioeconomic pyramid, with North American and European foreigners making up the wealthy top, Costa Ricans making up the middle, and Nicaraguans increasingly making up the bottom. As Costa Rican society changes with these relatively recent influences, their collective sense of culture and identity will become inevitably altered. Up until now, North American immigration to Costa Rica has been a neglected area of study (Calderón Steck & Bonilla Carrión 2007) but clearly one with important implications for future research on identity and culture in Costa Rica.

Implications and Future Directions

In the current era of widespread global migration, it is quickly becoming a reality that millions of people will not live the majority of their lives in the country in which they were born. Expanding patterns of globalization and transnationalism require comparative research in a variety of host societies to examine the interplay between migration and social boundaries, and their consequences for the identities and well-being of both migrants and their hosts. Most of our existing knowledge about migration outcomes is based upon research carried out in typical receiving nations like the United States, Canada and Britain, where the assumption has been one of permanent settlement of migrants and eventual adaption to the host society culture over time (Berry 1997; Gordon 1964).

However, recent trends suggest that the patterns of global migration are changing. South-south migration, where migrants leave one developing country for another, and transnational migration, where migrants maintain strong ties with friends and family in their homeland are

increasingly becoming the norm rather than the exception in today's accounts of international migration (Glick Schiller 2009; Hugo & Piper 2007; Margolis 2006). These changes in the nature of global migration require new strategies for understanding immigrant adaptation in diverse societies. The old models of linear assimilation and language-based assessments of acculturation need to make room for theoretical and methodological advances that are more universally applicable in cross-cultural settings.

Developing countries are not always adequately prepared to deal with the increasing number and diversity of migrant populations and the social consequences that stem from hosting migrant populations (Margolis 2006; Hayden 2003). My hope is that knowledge gained from this research can aid program developers and policymakers in Costa Rica—and in other countries facing similar circumstances—to implement policies and programs that foster the well-being of minority populations by improving their health and social outcomes while honoring their unique cultural heritages. Efforts should be made to increase social awareness of the marginal position of Nicaraguans and the hardships they face in Costa Rica, which could further a dialogue that may ultimately lead to improved social relations between the groups.

Closing Thoughts

As most ethnographers undoubtedly do, I felt pressured by the time constraints posed by this project. One year was barely enough time to study one, not to mention two cultures, their interaction, and the effects of this interaction on the citizens of two nations. However, to adequately study a concept like identity, even ten years would just barely scratch the surface of what it means to be a Costa Rican or a Nicaraguan immigrant in Costa Rica. Because cultural identity is a concept into which we as humans invest a great deal of emotion, I am aware that the

data presented in this paper will not make everyone happy; there will be no great consensus across host citizens and immigrants in Costa Rica.

It follows that this dissertation should not be read as an encyclopedia of Nicaraguan and Costa Rican culture. I am not trying to say, nor could I, what the true Costa Rican or Nicaraguan identities are, but rather I have tried to show readers what I was told by Costa Rican and Nicaraguan study participants that spoke with me between 2005 and 2008. As Central America—like the rest of the world—responds to the internal and external social, political and economic forces brought about by globalization, the Costa Rican and Nicaraguan peoples and cultures described in this study will continue to change through the years to come. As anthropologists know, doing ethnography is like chasing a moving target, but rather than be frustrated by a dynamic construct like identity, we should remember that it is this very quality that makes it so fascinating to study.

APPENDIX A: Semi-structured Interview Guides (Phase 1)

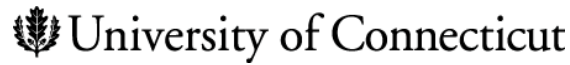
Semi-structured Interviews with Nicaraguans

- **Tell me about your decision to migrate to Costa Rica, and your experiences during the migration.**
 - Who did you come with, and who made the decision to migrate?
 - What were the conditions back home that led to this decision?
- **Tell me your thoughts about Costa Rica in general, about the society.**
 - What were your immediate thoughts upon arriving in Costa Rica?
 - What are some of the best and worst things about living in Costa Rica?
 - What, if anything, are some of the things you miss the most about Nicaragua?
- **Tell me about your experiences with Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans?**
 - What are some of the best and worst things about Costa Ricans?
 - Are Costa Rican people different from Nicaraguans? If so, how?
- **Tell me your thoughts about Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultures.**
 - Are Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultures similar or different? In what ways?
 - What parts of Costa Rican culture do you like?
 - What things about Nicaraguan culture are you able to partake in here in Costa Rica?
- **Tell me about your acquaintances and relationships with Costa Ricans.**
 - Do you know any Costa Ricans personally? If so, in what context do you know them?
 - In general, is it easy to form friendships with Costa Ricans? Why or why not?
 - Do you spend more time with Nicaraguans or Costa Ricans? Who do you prefer to spend time with, and why?
- **Tell me about your goals for the future?**
 - Do you plan to stay in Costa Rica, or return to Nicaragua at some point? Why or why not?
 - What would your ideal life look like? Would it be here in Costa Rica, or somewhere else?

Semi-structured Interviews with Costa Ricans

- **Tell me your thoughts about Costa Rica in general, about the society**
 - What are some of the best and worst things about living in Costa Rica?
 - How has life in Costa Rica changed over the years?
- **Tell me some of your thoughts about immigration in Costa Rica.**
 - How is immigration affecting everyday life in Costa Rica? Has it affected your life? If so, how?
 - What, if anything should the government do about or for immigrants?
- **Tell me about your experiences with Costa Rican and Nicaraguan people?**
 - What are some of the best and worst things about Costa Ricans?
 - Are Costa Rican people different from Nicaraguans? If so, how?
- **Tell me your thoughts about Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultures.**
 - Are Costa Rican and Nicaraguan cultures similar or different? In what ways?
 - Are you familiar with Nicaraguan culture? If so, what are some of the things you like/dislike?
 - What cultural elements and/or events of Costa Rica do you enjoy participating in?
- **Tell me about your acquaintances and relationships with Nicaraguans.**
 - Do you know any Nicaraguans personally? If so, in what context do you know them?
 - In general, is it easy to form friendships with Nicaraguans? Why or why not?
- **Tell me about your goals for the future?**
 - What would your ideal life look like? Would it be here in Costa Rica, or somewhere else?
 - Would you be interested in visiting Nicaragua in the future? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B: Information Sheet Given to Study Participants



INFORMACIÓN SOBRE ESTE PROYECTO

EL OBJETIVO

Queremos aprender acerca de inmigración y el bienestar, y acerca de las percepciones de distintas personas incluyendo inmigrantes y ciudadanos nativos en Costa Rica.

¿NOS AYUDARÍA?

Necesitamos su ayuda. Nos gustaría que usted complete un cuestionario diseñado para ayudarnos a comprender los efectos de la inmigración en el bienestar individual. Aunque usted no beneficiará directamente de tomar parte en este proyecto, nosotros esperamos que los resultados ayudarán a otras personas en el futuro. No hay respuestas correctas ni incorrectas. Nosotros sólo queremos comprender lo que usted piensa. El cuestionario debe tomar menos de 30 minutos.

ESTA ENCUESTA ES ANÓNIMA

Nosotros no vamos a incluir su nombre ni cualquier otra característica. Sus respuestas a **el cuestionario será completamente anónima**. Deseamos que usted participe sólo si usted se siente cómodo para contestar abierta y honestamente. Usted es libre de negarse al cuestionario, o pararlo en cualquier momento. Puede decir si no desea que nosotros utilicemos alguna información que usted nos dio. Cuando usted termina el cuestionario, por favor lo dobla y lo coloca en el sobre proporcionado. Selle el sobre y diga al investigador para colocarlo en la bolsa con los otros cuestionarios anónimos.

¿QUIERE SABER MÁS ACERCA DEL PROYECTO?

Por favor siéntase libre de hacer cualquier pregunta que con gusto responderemos las dudas que tenga. Si usted tiene preguntas después de termine el cuestionario, por favor contacte la investigadora principal del proyecto:

Marisa L. Prosser, M.A.
Candidata Doctoral, Department of Anthropology
University of Connecticut, U-2176
Storrs, CT 06428-2176
USA
correo electrónico: marisa.prosser@uconn.edu
teléfono en Costa Rica: 8-316-0241

APPENDIX C: Phase 1 Structured Interview Instrument (English and Spanish)

Part 1: Circle the number that most accurately represents the type of person each item applies to:

| | | Very Costa Rican | Costa Rican | Nicaraguan | Very Nicaraguan |
|----|---|------------------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Someone who believes strongly in God | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | Some who embraces new technology | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | Someone who believes their country is best | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | Someone who is false, says one thing but means another | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | Someone who cares about the way they look | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | Someone who respects and tries to protect the environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | Someone who believes in social equality for all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | Someone who likes living where there are many laws | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | Someone who is a hard worker | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | Someone who has or desires to have a large family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11 | Someone is simple and does not require much to be happy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Someone who is flexible, who will take whatever comes along | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13 | Someone who gets angry easily, who is hot-headed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14 | Someone who prefers to be with friends over family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15 | Someone who displays machismo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16 | Someone who eats gallo pinto, picadillos, and/or casados | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17 | Someone who drinks agua dulce, or serves it to guests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18 | Someone who plays fútbol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | Someone who admires and respects Juan Santamaría | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20 | Someone who enjoys watching El Caballito Nicoyano | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21 | Someone who says “pura vida” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22 | Someone who likes to dance cumbia or swing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23 | Someone who participates in La Romería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24 | Someone who eats nacatamales, indio viejo or vigarones | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25 | Someone who drinks pinol, or serves it to guests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26 | Someone who plays baseball | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27 | Someone who admires and respects Augusto Sandino | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28 | Someone who enjoys watching El Gueguense | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29 | Someone who says “va pues” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30 | Someone who likes to dance Palo de Mayo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31 | Someone who participates in La Purísima/La Gritería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32 | Someone who thinks or says racist things | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33 | Someone who uses violence to resolve disputes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34 | Someone who acts in a loud or animated way | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35 | Someone who is a pacifist and avoids conflict at all times | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36 | Someone who is charitable and helps those in need | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37 | Someone who believes that money brings happiness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38 | Someone who drinks a lot of alcohol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39 | Someone who attains a high level of education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40 | Someone who prefers to live in the country and not the city | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Part 2: Circle the number that most represents how good or bad each item is:

| | | Very Good | Good | Bad | Very Bad |
|----|---|-----------|------|-----|----------|
| 1 | Someone who believes strongly in God | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | Someone who embraces new technology | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | Someone who believes their country is best | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | Someone who is false, says one thing but means another | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | Someone who cares about the way they look | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | Someone who respects and tries to protect the environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | Someone who believes in social equality for all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | Someone who likes living where there are many laws | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | Someone who is a hard worker | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | Someone who has or desires to have a large family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11 | Someone who is simple and does not require much to be happy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Someone who is flexible, who will take whatever comes along | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13 | Someone who gets angry easily, who is hot-headed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14 | Someone who prefers to be with friends over family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15 | Someone who displays machismo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16 | Someone who eats gallo pinto, picadillos, and/or casados | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17 | Someone who drinks agua dulce, or serves it to guests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18 | Someone who plays fútbol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19 | Someone who admires and respects Juan Santamaría | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20 | Someone who enjoys watching El Caballito Nicoyano | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21 | Someone who says “pura vida” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Someone who likes to dance cumbia or swing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23 | Someone who participates in La Romería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24 | Someone who eats nacatamales, indio viejo or vigarones | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25 | Someone who drinks pinol, or serves it to guests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26 | Someone who plays baseball | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27 | Someone who admires and respects Augusto Sandino | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28 | Someone who enjoys watching El Gueguense | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29 | Someone who says “va pues” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30 | Someone who likes to dance Palo de Mayo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31 | Someone who participates in La Purísima/La Gritería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32 | Someone who thinks or says racist things | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33 | Someone who uses violence to resolve disputes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34 | Someone who acts in a loud or animated way | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35 | Someone who is a pacifist and avoids conflict at all times | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36 | Someone who is charitable and helps those in need | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37 | Someone who believes that money brings happiness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38 | Someone who drinks a lot of alcohol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39 | Someone who attains a high level of education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40 | Someone who prefers to live in the country and not the city | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

41. How old are you?_____

42. Circle your gender M F

43. What is your occupation?_____

44. How many years of school did you complete?_____

45. What country were you born in?_____

46. What country was your mother born in?_____

48. What country was your father born in?_____

50: Please list below any additional characteristics of Costa Rican and Nicaraguan culture that are not included in this questionnaire.

| Costa Ricans/Costa Rica | Nicaraguans/Nicaragua |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| | |

Parte 1: Por favor, haga un círculo alrededor del número que mejor describa su opinión:

| | | Muy Costarricense | Costarricense | Nicaragüense | Muy Nicaragüense |
|----|---|----------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Alguien que cree fuertemente en Dios | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | Alguien que usa las tecnologías nuevas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | Alguien que cree su país es el mejor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | Alguien que es falso, dice algo pero hace un otra | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | Alguien que se preocupa por su apariencia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | Alguien que respeta y protege el medio ambiente | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | Alguien que cree en la igualdad para todos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | Alguien que prefiere un lugar que tiene leyes para todo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | Alguien que es muy trabajadora | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | Alguien que desea o tiene una familia grande | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11 | Alguien que es sencillo y no necesita mucho para ser feliz | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Alguien que es flexible, trabaja en que lo haya | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13 | Alguien que es impetuoso, se enoja facilmente | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14 | Alguien que prefiere estar con amigos en vez de familia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15 | Alguien que es machista | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16 | Alguien que come gallo pinto con salsa lizano, casados, o picadillos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17 | Alguien que bebe o sirve agua dulce | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18 | Alguien que juega fútbol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19 | Alguien que admira la leyenda de Juan Santamaría | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | Alguien que le gusta mirar El Caballito Nicoyano | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21 | Alguien que usa la frase “pura vida” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22 | Alguien que baila cumbia or swing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23 | Alguien que participa en La Romería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24 | Alguien que come nacatamales, indio viejo o vigarones | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25 | Alguien que bebe o sirve pinol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26 | Alguien que juega beisbó | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27 | Alguien que admira la leyenda de Augusto Sandino | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28 | Alguien que le gusta mirar El Güegüense | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29 | Alguien que usa la frase “va pues” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30 | Alguien de baila Palo de Mayo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31 | Alguien que participa en La Purísima/La Gritería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32 | Alguien que piensa o dice cosas racistas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33 | Alguien que usa aggression física para resolver desacuerdos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34 | Alguien que hace escándolo o actua con mucha energia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35 | Alguien que ama la paz y evita conflictos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36 | Alguien que ayuda a quienes lo necesiten | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37 | Alguien que cree que el dinero trae la felicidad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38 | Alguien que toca mucho alcohol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39 | Alguien que completa un nivel alta de educación | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40 | Alguien que prefiere vivir en el campo en vez de la ciudad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Parte 2: Por favor, haga un círculo alrededor del número que mejor describa su opinión:

| | | Muy Bueno | Bueno | Malo | Muy Malo |
|----|--|-----------|-------|------|----------|
| 1 | Alguien que cree fuertemente en Dios | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | Alguien que usa las tecnologías nuevas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | Alguien que cree su país es el mejor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | Alguien que es falso, dice algo pero hace otra | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | Alguien que se preocupa por su apariencia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6 | Alguien que respeta y protege el medio ambiente | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | Alguien que cree en la igualdad para todos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | Alguien que prefiere un lugar que tiene leyes para todo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9 | Alguien que es muy trabajadora | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10 | Alguien que desea o tiene una familia grande | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11 | Alguien que es sencillo y no necesita mucho para ser feliz | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Alguien que es flexible, trabaja en que lo haya | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13 | Alguien que es impetuoso, se enoja fácilmente | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14 | Alguien que prefiere estar con amigos en vez de familia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15 | Alguien que es machista | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16 | Alguien que come gallo pinto con salsa lizano, casados, o picadillos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17 | Alguien que bebe o sirve agua dulce | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18 | Alguien que juega fútbol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19 | Alguien que admira la leyenda de Juan Santamaría | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20 | Alguien que le gusta mirar El Caballito Nicoyano | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21 | Alguien que usa la frase “pura vida” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Alguien que baila cumbia or swing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23 | Alguien que participa en La Romería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24 | Alguien que come nacatamales, indio viejo o vigarones | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25 | Alguien que bebe o sirve pinol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26 | Alguien que juega beisbó | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27 | Alguien que admira la leyenda de Augusto Sandino | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28 | Alguien que le gusta mirar El Güegüense | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29 | Alguien que usa la frase “va pues” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30 | Alguien de baila Palo de Mayo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31 | Alguien que participa en La Purísima/La Gritería | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32 | Alguien que piensa o dice cosas racistas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33 | Alguien que usa aggression física para resolver desacuerdos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34 | Alguien que hace escándolo o actua con mucha energia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35 | Alguien que ama la paz y evita conflictos | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36 | Alguien que ayuda a quienes lo necesiten | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37 | Alguien que cree que el dinero trae la felicidad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38 | Alguien que toca mucho alcohol | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39 | Alguien que completa un nivel alta de educación | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40 | Alguien que prefiere vivir en el campo en vez de la ciudad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

41. ¿Cuántos años tiene usted? _____

42. ¿Cuál es su género? M F

43. ¿Cuál es su ocupación? _____

44. ¿Cuántos años de escuela completa usted? _____

45. ¿Cuál es su país de nacimiento? _____

46. ¿Cuál es el país de nacimiento de su madre? _____

48. ¿Cuál es el país de nacimiento de su padre? _____

50: Por favor, escriba otras cosas no incluido aquí que le parezca muy Costarricense o muy Nicaragüense a usted:

| Costa Ricans/Costa Rica | Nicaraguans/Nicaragua |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| | |

APPENDIX D: Phase 2 Questionnaire Instrument (Spanish)

Abajo se encuentran afirmaciones con las que usted puede estar de acuerdo o en desacuerdo. Responda (haga un círculo alrededor del número) a las preguntas de manera sincera. Seleccione solo una respuesta a cada pregunta:

1. Usualmente me preocupa mi apariencia. Trato de vestir lo mejor posible y lucir bien todo el tiempo.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

2. Usualmente trabajo muy duro en cualquier cosa tengo que hacer. Siempre trato de hacerlo en la mejor manera posible.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

3. Me encanta aprender las tecnologías nuevas. Paso mucho tiempo en internet para divertirme.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

4. Realmente no requiero muchas cosas para ser feliz. Prefiero vivir una vida simple.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

5. Me preocupa mucho por conservar el medio ambiente, así que intento reciclar y utilizar menos energía cuando sea posible

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

6. Temo o planeo tener una familia con más de dos niños.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

7. Creo que es bueno vivir en un lugar donde hay muchas leyes que se aplican con regularidad.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

8. Me gustaría ir a lugares donde la gente baila Palo de Mayo, para que pueda bailar o ver a otros bailar.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

9. Cuando comparto una comida con mis familiares, normalmente comeríamos gallo pinto con salsa lizano, casados, or picadillos.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

10. Disfruto de jugar béisbol o mirar un juego del béisbol.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

11. Estoy familiarizado con la leyenda de Juan Santamaría, y admiro su espíritu y sus acciones.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 12. Me hace sentir bien a ver o participar en La Gritería, y trato de cada año, siempre que pueda. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 13. Disfruto de jugar fútbol o mirar un partido del fútbol. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 14. Cuando comparto una comida con mis familiares, comeríamos nacatamales, indio viejo, or vigarones. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 15. Me gusta beber agua dulce o sirven a los huéspedes, en mi casa de vez en cuando. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 16. Me encanta la historia de El Güegüense y asistir a una actuación si he tenido la oportunidad. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 17. Me encuentro usando la frase "pura vida" con frecuencia en la conversación. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 18. Estoy familiarizado con la historia de Augusto C. Sandino y admiro su espíritu y sus acciones. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 19. Me encanta mirar El Caballito Nicoyano y asistir a una actuación si he tenido la oportunidad. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 20. Me hace sentir bien a ver o participar en La Romería, y me trate de asistir a cada año que tengo. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 21. Me gusta beber pinol o sirven a los huéspedes, en mi casa de vez en cuando. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| 22. Me encuentro usando la frase "va pues" con frecuencia en la conversación. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |
| Abajo se encuentran cinco afirmaciones con las que usted puede estar de acuerdo o en desacuerdo. Por favor, responda a (haga un círculo alrededor del número) las preguntas de manera sincera. | | | | |
| 23. En la mayoría de las cosas, mi vida esta cerca de mi ideal. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo | completamente de acuerdo |
| 24. Mis condiciones de vida son excelentes. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo | completamente de acuerdo |
| 25. Me encuentro satisfecho con mi vida. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo | completamente de acuerdo |

26. Hasta ahora, he conseguido las cosas que para mí son importantes en la vida.

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo |

27. Si volviese a nacer, no cambiaría casi nada en mi vida.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---|------------|-----------------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo | completamente de acuerdo |

Durante el mes pasado, cuántas veces:

28. ¿Sintió que no podía controlar las cosas importante en su vida?

| | | | |
|-------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| nunca | casi nunca | de vez en cuando | frecuentemente |

29. ¿Sintió confianza en si mismo para poder manejar sus problemas personales?

| | | | |
|-------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| nunca | casi nunca | de vez en cuando | frecuentemente |

30. ¿Sintió que las cosas le estaban llendo muy bien o mejor que otras veces?

| | | | |
|-------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| nunca | casi nunca | de vez en cuando | frecuentemente |

31. ¿Ha sentido que usted tenía tantas dificultades que no podría solucionarlas?

| | | | |
|-------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| nunca | casi nunca | de vez en cuando | frecuentemente |

A continuación se le presentan unas frases. Debe seleccionar la frase que describe de acuerdo con la opinion que tiene usted.

32. A menudo me siento triste o deprimido.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta |

33. Me encuentro satisfecho conmigo mismo.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta |

34. Tengo frecuentes cambios de humor.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta |

35. Me siento cómodo conmigo mismo.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta |

36. Siento que mi vida carece de rumbo o dirección.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta |

37. Los acontecimientos no me perturban con facilidad.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta |

38. Le temo a muchas cosas.

| | | | |
|--------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | Exacta |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------------------|--------|--|
| 39. Me pongo tenso y estresado con facilidad. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta | |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------------------|--------|--|
| 40. Me encuentro atrapado en mis problemas. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta | |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|--------------------------|--------|--|
| 41. Me adapto con facilidad a nuevas situaciones. | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| Muy inexacta | inexacta | No es exacta ni inexacta | exacta | |

Por favor indique si se encuentra esta de acuerdo o no con las siguientes frases:

| | | | |
|-----|--|------------|---------------|
| | | de acuerdo | en desacuerdo |
| 42. | Existe alguien con quien puedo hablar abiertamente sobre cualquier cosa | 0 | 1 |
| 43. | Alguien cercano (familiar, amigo o conocido) me hace sentir a gusto revelando mis secretos y confidencias | 0 | 1 |
| 44. | Alguien importante en mi vida se encuentra conmigo siempre aun en los buenos y malos momentos | 0 | 1 |
| 45. | Alguien que conozco me ayudará si me encuentro en peligro | 0 | 1 |
| 46. | No conozco a nadie en quien pueda confiar. | 0 | 1 |
| 47. | Dudo antes de contarle a alguien mis problemas porque temo que las autoridades pueda darse cuenta de mi situación. | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|---------|-------------|---|
| 48. | ¿Alguna vez, ha sido víctima de un crimen violento? | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| | nunca | una vez | pocas veces | |
| 49. | ¿Alguna vez, ha sido testigo un crimen violento contra otra persona? | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| | nunca | una vez | pocas veces | |

Por favor indique su nivel aprobacion o consentimiento con las siguientes frases:

| | | | | | |
|-----|--|---------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 50. | Los comportamientos de los Costarricenses y los Nicaragüenses son muy parecidos. | | | | |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo | completamente de acuerdo |
| 51. | Los Costarricenses y Nicaragüenses tienen diferentes prioridades en la vida. | | | | |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo | completamente de acuerdo |
| 52. | La cultura Costarricense es muy similar a la Nicaragüense. | | | | |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | completamente en desacuerdo | en desacuerdo | no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | de acuerdo | completamente de acuerdo |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 53. | Los Nicaragüenses no son realmente aceptados y no encajan bien en la Sociedad Costarricense. | | | | |
| | 0 completamente en desacuerdo | 1 en desacuerdo | 2 no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | 3 de acuerdo | 4 completamente de acuerdo |
| 54. | La cultura Nicaragüense no es muy respetada en la sociedad Costarricense. | | | | |
| | 0 completamente en desacuerdo | 1 en desacuerdo | 2 no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | 3 de acuerdo | 4 completamente de acuerdo |
| 55. | Existen mayores oportunidades para los Nicaragüenses para superarse y tener una mejor calidad de vida en Costa Rica. | | | | |
| | 0 completamente en desacuerdo | 1 en desacuerdo | 2 no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | 3 de acuerdo | 4 completamente de acuerdo |
| 56. | Es común la amistad entre Costarricenses y Nicaragüenses | | | | |
| | 0 completamente en desacuerdo | 1 en desacuerdo | 2 no estoy de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo | 3 de acuerdo | 4 completament e de acuerdo |
| Por favor, seleccione la respuesta de acuerdo a sus preferencias. Seleccione solo una: | | | | | |
| 58. | Prefiero pasar la mayoría de mi tiempo libre con: | | | | |
| | 0 Nicaragüenses | 1 No me importa | 2 Costarricenses | | |
| 59. | Prefiero vivir en una comunidad donde la mayoría de gente son: | | | | |
| | 0 Nicaragüenses | 1 No me importa | 2 Costarricenses | | |
| 60. | Prefiero salir con: | | | | |
| | 0 Nicaragüenses | 1 No me importa | 2 Costarricenses | | |
| 61. | Prefiero vestirme y lucir como: | | | | |
| | 0 Nicaragüenses | 1 No me importa | 2 Costarricenses | | |
| 62. | Prefiero hablar como: | | | | |
| | 0 Nicaragüenses | 1 No me importa | 2 Costarricenses | | |
| 63. | Prefiero mantener un estilo de vida como: | | | | |
| | 0 Nicaragüenses | 1 No me importa | 2 Costarricenses | | |
| 64. | Prefiero conocer mas: | | | | |
| | 0 Nicaragüenses | 1 No me importa | 2 Costarricenses | | |
| Por favor indique que tan amenudo ha experimentado cada una de las siguientes situaciones cuande se ha encontrado viviendo en Costa Rica. | | | | | |
| 65. | ¿Qué tan amenudo la gente le rechaza por su nacionalidad? | | | | |
| | 0 nunca | 1 de vez en cuando | 2 a veces | 3 muchas veces | 4 siempre |
| 66. | ¿Qué tan amenudo la gente le trata injustamente solo por su nacionalidad? | | | | |
| | 0 nunca | 1 de vez en cuando | 2 a veces | 3 muchas veces | 4 siempre |
| 67. | ¿Cúantas veces le han dicho sobrenombres ofensivos o racistas? | | | | |
| | 0 nunca | 1 de vez en cuando | 2 a veces | 3 muchas veces | 4 siempre |
| 68. | ¿Qué tan amenudo le han acusado de hacer algo indebido solamente por su nacionalidad? | | | | |
| | 0 nunca | 1 de vez en cuando | 2 a veces | 3 muchas veces | 4 siempre |
| 69. | ¿Qué tan amenudo alguien a intentado lastimarlo o agredirlo solo por su nacionalidad? | | | | |
| | 0 nunca | 1 de vez en cuando | 2 a veces | 3 muchas veces | 4 siempre |

Por favor, indica las razones que usted venía a Costa Rica. Marque todos que apliquen:

70. Trabajar ☐ Estudiar ☐ Estar con familia ☐ Una vida mejor ☐ Escaper peligros ☐ Por otra razón ☐

Describirla: _____

71. ¿Tienes planes de quedarse en Costa Rica permanentemente?

Si ☐ No ☐ Tal vez ☐

72. ¿Tienes cédula o otros documentos ahora?

Si ☐ No ☐ En proceso ☐

Por favor, responda a las preguntas siguientes. Marque el cuadro.

1 ¿Qué edad tienes? _____

2 ¿Cuál es su género?

☐ Masculino ☐ Feminino

3 ¿Cuál es su país de nacimiento?

☐ Costa Rica ☐ Nicaragua ☐ Other Cual? _____

4 ¿Cuál es el país de nacimiento de su madre?

☐ Costa Rica ☐ Nicaragua ☐ Other Cual? _____

5 ¿Cuál es el país de nacimiento de su padre?

☐ Costa Rica ☐ Nicaragua ☐ Other Cual? _____

6 ¿Por cuanto tiempo ha vivido en Costa Rica?

menos de uno año ☐
1-3 años ☐
4-7 años ☐
8-15 años ☐
15-20 años ☐

6a La mayor parte de su vida usted ha vivido en el campo o la ciudad?

☐ en la ciudad ☐ en el campo

6b ¿Dónde crecía? (provincia y país)

| | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--------------------------|
| | | Por favor, seleccione el nivel de educación que usted ha alcanzado (seleciona una): | |
| 7 | Por favor, seleccione el monto de su salario mensual (si usted es ama de casa, marque el salario de su esposo): | 7b | |
| | 0-70,000 <input type="checkbox"/> | primaria | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 71,000-200,000 <input type="checkbox"/> | secundaria/colegio | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 201,000-500,000 <input type="checkbox"/> | educación tecnica | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 501,000-1,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/> | diplomado | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | mas de 1,000,000 <input type="checkbox"/> | bachillerato | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | licenciatura | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7a | Cual es su ocupacion? | posgrado | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Soy _____ | | |

| | | | | | |
|----------|---|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8 | Su estado civil es: | 8a | Tiene hijos? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Soltero(a) [nunca casado] <input type="checkbox"/> | | si | | no |
| | Union de hecho <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | Casado(a) <input type="checkbox"/> | | Cuantos? _____ | | |
| | Separado(a) <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | Divoriciado(a) <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | Viudo(a) <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| 9 | Si usted es casado(a) o tiene union de hecho, ¿de cual nacionalidad es su esposo(a) o compañero(a) | | | | |
| | _____ | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 12 | ¿Es usted religioso? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | No soy religioso del todo | soy un poco religioso | soy muy religioso | Soy profundamente religioso |
| 13 | ¿Cuál es su credo religioso (cuál es su religion)? | | | | |
| | Judaismo <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | Musulmana <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | Cristiana católica <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | Cristiana pero no católica <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | Otra religion <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| | | | Describe cual: _____ | | |
| | | | Describe cual: _____ | | |

APPENDIX D (cont.): Phase 2 Questionnaire Instrument (English)

Below you will find some statements with which you may agree or disagree. Respond to the questions thoughtfully (make a circle around the number) Choose only one response to each question

| | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I care a great deal about my appearance. I always try to look my best whenever possible. | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 2. I work hard at whatever job or task I perform. I always try to do the best job possible | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 3. I love to use new technologies and I spend a lot of my leisure time on the internet for fun | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 4. I don't really require a lot of things to be happy. I prefer a simple life | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 5. I care a great deal about conserving the environment so I try to recycle and use less energy when possible | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 6. I currently have more than two children, or if not, I would love to in the future | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 7. I think it is good to live in a place where there are many laws that are enforced regularly | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 8. I like to go out to places where people dance Palo de Mayo so that I can dance or watch others dancing | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 9. I normally eat gallo pinto with Salsa Lizano, casados, or picadillos at mealtimes | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 10. I enjoy playing baseball or watching a baseball game | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 11. I am familiar with the legend of Juan Santamaría and I admire his spirit and actions | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 12. It makes me feel good to watch or participate in La Gritería and I try to each year when I am able | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 13. I enjoy playing or watching a soccer match | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 14. I like to eat nacatamales, indio viejo, or vigarones | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 15. I like to drink agua dulce or serve it to guests in my home | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |
| 16. I enjoy the story of El Güegüense and would attend a performance if I had an opportunity to | | | | |
| 0 agree completely | 1 agree | 2 neither agree nor disagree | 3 disagree | 4 disagree completely |

| | | | | |
|--|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 17. I find myself using the phrase “pura vida” frequently in conversation | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

| | | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 18. I am familiar with the history of Augusto C. Sandino and I admire his spirit and actions | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

| | | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 19. I enjoy watching El Caballito Nicoyano and would attend a performance when given the opportunity | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

| | | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 20. It makes me feel good to watch or participate in La Romería and I try to attend each year when I am able | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

| | | | | |
|--|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 21. I like to drink pinol or serve it to guests in my house | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

| | | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| 22. I find myself using the phrase “va pues” in conversation | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| agree completely | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | disagree completely |

Below you will find some statements with which you may agree or disagree. Respond to the questions thoughtfully (make a circle around the number) Choose only one response to each question.

| | | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 23. In the majority of things my life is close to my ideal | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| disagree completely | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 24. The conditions of my life are excellent | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| disagree completely | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

| | | | | |
|--|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 25. I am satisfied with my life | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| disagree completely | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 26. Up until now I have found the things that are important in my life | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| disagree completely | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

| | | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 27. If I could start over again I wouldn't change anything about my life | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| disagree completely | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

The following questions are about your thoughts and feelings during the past month. For each question please indicate how frequently you felt this way.

During the past month, how many times have you felt:

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|
| 28. You could not control the important things in your life? | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | almost never | once in a while | often | almost always |

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|
| 29. Had confidence in yourself to manage your personal problems? | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | almost never | once in a while | often | almost always |

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|
| 30. Felt that things were going very well or better than at other times? | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | almost never | once in a while | often | almost always |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------------|-------|---------------|
| 31. Felt that you had so many problems that you couldn't solve? | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | almost never | once in a while | often | almost always |

Below you are presented with some phrase. Please select the answer that best corresponds to your feelings

32. I often feel sad or depressed.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

33. I am satisfied with myself

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

34. I have frequent changes in mood

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

35. I am comfortable with myself

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

36. I feel that my life lacks rhythm or direction

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

37. Things don't bother me easily

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

38. I am afraid of many things

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

39. I get tense and stressed easily

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

40. I am trapped in my problems

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

41. I adapt easily to new situations

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| very inaccurate | inaccurate | not accurate nor inaccurate | accurate | very accurate |

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following phrases

| | Agree | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------|
| 42. There is someone I can talk openly with about anything | 0 | 1 |
| 43. There is someone close to me to whom I feel comfortable sharing my secrets and confidences | 0 | 1 |
| 44. There is someone in my life who will be with me in good and bad times | 0 | 1 |
| 45. Someone that I know will help me if I am in danger | 0 | 1 |
| 46. I don't know anyone in whom I can confide | 0 | 1 |
| 47. I am afraid to tell anyone about my problems | 0 | 1 |

Please indicate approximately how often the following has happened to you:

| | | | | |
|--|------|-------------|------------|--|
| 48. Have you ever been a victim of a violent crime? | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | |
| never | once | a few times | many times | |

49. Have you ever witnessed a violent crime against another person?

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| never | once | a few times | many times |

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following phrases:

| | | | | |
|---|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 50. The behaviors of Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans are very similar | | | | |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

51. Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans have different priorities in life

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

52. Costa Rican culture is very similar to Nicaraguan culture

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

53. Nicaraguans are not really accepted well in Costa Rican society

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

54. Nicaraguan culture is not respected in Costa Rica

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

55. There are a lot of opportunities for Nicaraguans to have a good quality of life in Costa Rica

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

56. Friendship is common between Costa Ricans and Nicaraguans

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

57. The Nicaraguan community is very segregated in Costa Rica

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|----------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| completely disagree | disagree | neither agree nor disagree | agree | agree completely |

Please selecta an answer according to your preferences. Select only one answer for each ítem.

58. I prefer to spend the majority of my free time with:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nicaraguans | It doesn't matter | Costa Ricans |

59. I prefer to live in a community where the majority of the people are:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nicaraguans | It doesn't matter | Costa Ricans |

60. I prefer to date:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nicaraguans | It doesn't matter | Costa Ricans |

61. I prefer to dress myself and look like:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nicaraguans | It doesn't matter | Costa Ricans |

62. I prefer to speak like:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nicaraguans | It doesn't matter | Costa Ricans |

63. I prefer to live the life style of:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nicaraguans | It doesn't matter | Costa Ricans |

64. I prefer to know more:

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Nicaraguans | It doesn't matter | Costa Ricans |

Please indicate how often you have experienced each of the following situations since you have been living in Costa Rica.

65. How often have people rejected you because of your nationality?

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | once in a while | sometimes | many times | Always |

66. How often have people treated you unfairly because of your nationality?

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | once in a while | sometimes | many times | Always |

67. How often have you been called offensive nicknames or racial slurs?

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | once in a while | sometimes | many times | Always |

68. How often have you been accused of doing something you haven't because of your nationality?

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | once in a while | sometimes | many times | Always |

69. How often has someone tried to hurt you because of your nationality?

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-----------|------------|--------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| never | once in a while | sometimes | many times | Always |

70. Please indicate your reasons for coming to Costa Rica. Mark the box beneath all that apply

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| to work | to study | to be with family | to find a better life | to escape danger | for another reason(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Describe _____

71. Do you plan to stay in Costa Rica permanently?

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| yes | no | maybe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

72. Do you have a residence card or other legal documents to be in Costa Rica?

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| yes | no | in process |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please respond to the following questions:

73. How old are you? _____

74. What is your gender?

☐

Male

☐

Female

75. In what country were you born?

☐

Costa Rica

☐

Nicaragua

☐

Other

Which one? _____

76. In what country was your mother born?

☐

Costa Rica

☐

Nicaragua

☐

Other

Which one? _____

77. In what country was your father born?

☐

Costa Rica

☐

Nicaragua

☐

Other

Which one? _____

78. How long have you lived in Costa Rica?

< one year ☐

1-3 years ☐

4-7 years ☐

8-15 years ☐

15-20 years ☐

>20 years ☐

78a. Did you spend the majority of your life in the city or in the country?

☐

in the city or suburbs

☐

in the country

78b. Where did you grow up? (country and province)

79. Please select the amount of your monthly household salary:

0-70,000 ☐

71,000-200,000 ☐

201,000-500,000 ☐

501,000-1,000,000 ☐

>1,000,000 ☐

79b. Please select the highest level of education you have completed (select only one)

Primary school ☐

High school ☐

Technical school ☐

Associates ☐

Bachelors ☐

Masters ☐

Doctorate ☐

79a. What is your occupation?

80. Your marital status is:

- Single (never married) ☐
Common-law marriage ☐
Married ☐
Divorced or separated ☐
Widowed ☐

80b. Do you have children?

- ☐ ☐
Yes No

80c. If yes, how many?

80a. If you are married (or in common-law marriage) what is the nationality of your spouse or partner?

81. Are you religious?

0
not at all

1
a little

2
very

3
extremely

81a. What is your religion?

- Judaism ☐
Islam ☐
Catholic ☐
Christian, not Catholic ☐
Other religion ☐
None ☐

☐ Which one? _____

☐ Which one? _____

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