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**COLONIALITY AND THE PARADOXES OF MIGRANCY:  
EXPERIENCES OF NICARAGUAN MIGRANTS IN COSTA  
RICA**

**BY**

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**THESIS**

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**Coloniality and Paradoxes of Migrancy: Experiences of Nicaraguan Migrants in Costa  
Rica**

**by**

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**B.A., International Studies and Spanish, Texas A&M University, 2020**

**M.A., Communication, University of New Mexico, 2022**

**ABSTRACT**

Vernacular (personal) discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica were investigated through the lens of coloniality – a theoretical and conceptual process of understanding how the Eurocentered matrix of power and knowledge produces the subjectivity of peoples through exploitation (Mignolo & Walsh, 2019). Compared to national discourses, this study asked how vernacular discourses may challenge colonial social structures of power as well as support those same structures of power. To elicit these discourses, oral histories were conducted with nine Nicaraguans who have fled their country because of political violence. Oral histories allow for a complete account of the past by shedding light on historically hidden voices and collaborating with narrators to share their stories (Perks, et al., 1998). In doing so, the study creates a co-collaborative storytelling space and a mutual plan for the future of the archive through trusted networks and relationship development.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Whether it is for leisure, business or by force, such as violence, the number of people crossing national borders is consistently increasing and the reasons for migrating are as diverse as ever (Kim, 2012). These migratory patterns bring new debates over how nations express the protection of their borders. For instance, in the United States, there is an underlying assumption that those entering “our territory,” especially from Latin America, are poor, criminal, and undesirable (Flores, 2003). Though it may seem that this assumption is unique to the United States, it appears to be universal. In fact, this hierarchal ideology, that White is the “best” race, and that members of other races are deserving of challenges when attempting to enter a “White” country, has been adopted in other parts of the world. The current study will be explored in the context of two Central America countries: Costa Rica and Nicaragua (Fouratt, 2014; Sandoval-Garcia, 2010).

In recent years, Costa Rica has developed a stable health and education system, increased economic equality, abolished its military, adopted democracy, and maintained a positive relationship with the U.S. (Booth et al., 2020; Campos-Saborio et al., 2018). Today it is considered one of the most stable Latin American countries (Campos-Saborio et al., 2018). For these reasons, Costa Ricans (Ticos) have established a strong national identity that distinguishes them from other nationalities. Similar to those in the U.S., Costa Rican national discourses tend to be centered around “exceptionality” and “Whiteness” (Fouratt, 2014; Otterstrom, 2008; Sandoval-Garcia, 2010). At the same time, there has been a rise in Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica, causing economic pressures on the Costa Rican government.

In the current project, critical and colonial studies are combined to provide a rich lens to investigate how immigration discourses can both perpetuate and transform historical relations

of power and social stratification, relations that have been sustained in postcolonial Central America by nationalist ideologies and U.S. hegemonic regimes of power. More specifically, I am interested in how social hierarches of power, such as colonial race and gender, formed during the European colonial era, exist and/or are challenged in Costa Rica through discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration. To further bring nuance to the dominant and national discourses in Costa Rica, vernacular, or personal, discourses produced by Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica will be the focus of the study; therefore, the remainder of the project will refer to vernacular discourses when discussing discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration. For these reasons, I believe the theory of coloniality (Quijano, 2000) can provide a close examination of how colonial gender and race are communicated by Nicaraguans to explore the following questions:

- 1) How do personal (vernacular) discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration reproduce and/or challenge colonial racial and gender hierarchies in Costa Rica?
- 2) How do these narratives activate conflicting discourses on national and other forms of social identity (race, gender, sexuality, etc.)?

My interest in this project was initially sparked by a visit to La Carpio, the largest Nicaraguan immigrant community in Costa Rica with about 35,000 residents (Costa Rican Humanitarian Foundation, n.d.). Initially, I was curious as to why Ticos appeared unwelcoming toward Nicaraguans (Nicas). At surface level, it seems that the two countries share a common language, have similar colonial history (they were both occupied by Spain), and are considered “developing” countries (Gilding, 2009). However, through personal experience and secondary research, I discovered that educational, political, cultural, and spiritual reasons, along with xenophobia, have complicated this matter. Consequently, in the present study, my goal is to



advance decolonial studies, reveal notions of coloniality through Nicaraguan immigrants' discourses and, at the same time, highlight actions that are being taken to challenge the coloniality of knowledge through those discourses.

In chapter 2, I will explore the theories of (de)coloniality and vernacular discourses, and previous literature on adaptation, immigration, and border studies in the communication field, and the history of Costa Rican-Nicaraguan relations. In chapter 3, I explain the procedure of conducting oral histories and choosing the narrators for the current study. In chapter 4, I discuss my findings, and in chapter 5, I will provide a recap of the current project as well as contributions, limitations and implications for future research. In doing so, I hope to contribute to the literature of communication, coloniality and Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica and to suggest new ways of understanding how the three are in immediate conversation together.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This study is informed by the theory of coloniality. Not to be confused with *colonialism*, coloniality was first conceived in the late twentieth century by Peruvian social scientist Anibal Quijano (2000). It is a recent concept that helps explain a 500-year-old phenomenon. For the purposes of this study, I will first define both colonialism and modernity in relation to how the concept of coloniality is constructed as my theoretical framework. Then, I will look at the ways that more recent studies have advanced decolonial work, within and outside of the topic of immigration. Following (de)coloniality, I will define the second theoretical framework: vernacular discourses. Next, I will present an overview of previous empirical studies that have focused on immigration, adaptation, and border studies in communication. Lastly, I will introduce the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan context and describe relevant background information about the two nationalities and their relationship with one another. By discussing research on the

topics of coloniality, communication and Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica, the current study will address what is missing and how these fields can come into conversation with one another.

### **Colonialism and Modernity**

Colonialism refers to the material processes and consequences that exist as a result of one nation-state maintaining dominance over another (Veracini, 2010). Coloniality, on the other hand, is the thought process behind how we understand the consequences of colonialism theoretically, conceptually, and ideologically, rather than materially, as colonialism suggests (Veracini, 2010). Colonialism is also expressed through modernity. Modernity, according to Giddens (1992), “refers to modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards” (p. 1). It represents the Eurocentric viewpoint that agrees with the hierarchical ideology in which Whiteness is at the top and is represented through the dominant narratives such as those in textbooks that are the most taught. These narratives, then, become circulated as what is known about our past. According to Mignolo & Walsh (2019), coloniality is the darker or hidden side of modernity and is “the (un)intended consequences of the narratives of modernity” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2019, p. 140). With coloniality, the whole story of human history is revealed; modernity alone only covers half of the story (Walter & Walsh, 2019). Although modernity was developed from a Eurocentric viewpoint, coloniality was established in the Global South to describe the same phenomena from another perspective (Mignolo & Walsh, 2019). Therefore, coloniality is the counterpart of modernity, but one that has been “hidden” underneath Eurocentrism. One of the goals of the current study is to expose the coloniality of knowledge – the hidden side of modernity.

## Coloniality

Now that I have put coloniality into context, it is important to define what it is.

Coloniality is the continuation of the domination and power of the structuring systems, such as colonial race and gender, that were put in place during European colonialism (Grosfoguel, 2008). It is “based upon ‘racial’ social classification of the world population under Eurocentered world power” (Quijano, 2007, p. 171). Taken from Quijano’s (2000, 2007) and Mignolo & Walsh’s (2008, 2019) theoretical insights, I define coloniality, or the colonial matrix of power, as a Eurocentered matrix of power and knowledge that produces the subjectivity of peoples through exploitation. According to Quijano (2000), coloniality is the creation of “new social historical identities...so ‘race’ (biology and culture or, in our present terms, ‘race’ and ethnicity’) was placed as one of the basic criteria to classify the population in the power structure of the new society” (p. 171). Additionally, “it is the reason why racism still continues to classify human beings in ways which deprive many of their humanity” (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2008). Thus, the hierarchical order of society was created through arbitrary differences, such as colonial race.

A prerequisite to exploitation is domination; modern/colonial empires have accomplished this by building “...the colonies as the locus of the erroneous, the inferior, the weak, the barbarians, the primitives, and so on” (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2008, p. 110). This belief system is “the reason why racism still continues to classify human beings in ways which deprive many of their humanity” (Mignolo & Tlostanova, 2008, p. 110). Mignolo and Tlostanova (2008) further organize coloniality into four consequences as a result of colonialism: 1) creation of the capitalist economy 2) creation of institutions 3) control of gender and sexuality and 4) control of knowledge and subjectivity. Although each creation intersects with each of the others, the current study will center on the last two consequences – control of gender and sexuality, and

control of knowledge and subjectivity – to investigate Nicaraguan immigrant experiences in Costa Rica.

### **Decoloniality**

A related term of key importance for my research is decoloniality, defined here as the undoing/delinking or uncovering of colonialism *and* relinking it by supporting groups outside of coloniality (Mignolo & Walsh, 2019). It involves two steps: “to unveil the hidden logic of modernity (e.g., coloniality) and to work toward another globalization” (Water & Tlostanova, 2008, p. 121). Just as coloniality cannot be explained without the existence of modernity, decoloniality cannot be imagined without understanding coloniality, because coloniality makes decolonial thought possible and necessary. Mignolo and Walsh (2019) describe coloniality as a decolonial concept: “thinking decolonially made it possible to *see* coloniality and seeing coloniality materialized decolonial thinking” (p. 112).

### ***Research on Decolonial Concepts***

Although decolonial work has been overlooked, it is starting to gain greater recognition in the scholarly realm. Empirical studies have applied a decolonial lens, and therefore have exposed the coloniality matrix of power to remapping and naming places in the Marianas, LBGTQ and immigrant rights’ organizations in the U.S., the nuclear production process in indigenous territories, and discourses surrounding indigenous girls (Chávez, 2010; Endres, 2009; Finney, 2015; Na’Puti, 2019). This scholarship has informed how we communicate about people, places and with the land; thus, it matters how we name things (Endres, 2009; Na’puti, 2019). Decolonial work has also showed that it is important to call out the center for what it is (Chávez, 2010). Overall, these studies show us that the spirit of categorization produces the relationship

between identities (Endres, 2009; Finney, 2015; Na'Puti, 2019). They have us question why it is necessary to define such identities in the first place.

### **Vernacular Discourses**

Ono and Sloop (1995) define vernacular discourses broadly as “speech that resonates with local communities” (p. 20). These local communities commonly include those “that have been systematically ignored” (Ono & Sloop, 1995, p. 20). Therefore, there is a greater emphasis on paying attention to them. Vernacular discourses affirm the voices of the local and specific communities on the margins, give agency to them, and challenge “conceptions of subjectivity and centeredness in critical rhetoric” (Lechuga, 2020, p. 261). However, Ono and Sloop (1995), emphasize that vernacular discourses do not always contradict mainstream ideologies. They exist anywhere in-between dominant and nondominant narratives. Therefore, they must be appropriately gathered; they can be discovered through culture and texts which are “unique to specific communities” (Ono & Sloop, 1995, p. 20). Additionally, Ono and Sloop (1995) advise that the discourses should not merely be gathered and observed, but rather they should be reflected upon. They should look deeper to “understand how a community is constructed and how that constructed community functions” (Ono & Sloop, 1995 p. 26). This includes describing and analyzing the discourses. Ono and Sloop (1995) call this critiquing vernacular discourses. Major work on critical vernacular discourses has come from Latino/a Vernacular Discourses and Mestizaje/Nomadism and have challenged U.S. nationalist systems and political agendas through performance ethnography, critical rhetoric, political images, mediated spaces, and film (Calafell, 2004; Flores, 2003; Holling, 2006; Lechuga; Wanzer, 2011). These findings have been able to compliment dominant discourses by giving voices to specific communities.

Vernacular discourses, then, become essential to the formation of this project since a goal of the current study is to allow Nicaraguan migrants to “‘construct themselves’ outside of centered discourses” (Lechuga, 2020, p. 261). In order to examine how subjectivities exist and were formed through coloniality, and advance decolonial work by revealing hidden stories, it only makes sense to defocus the research on national discourses and toward personal or vernacular discourses. The current study will gather vernacular discourses constructed by Nicaraguan migrants in Costa Rica through the collection of oral histories. It will also critique vernacular discourses by exploring how they challenge or affirm central, national discourses in Costa Rica surrounding Nicaraguan immigration. In particular, the current study seeks to understand how the Nicaraguan migrant community living in Costa Rica challenges or reproduces Costa Rican nationalist ideologies and constructs their lives in the new environment accordingly. Further, the discourses will be used to determine how to recreate representations of Nicaraguans currently migrating to Costa Rica.

### **Adaptation and Immigration**

Traditionally, intercultural communication studies have focused on the migrants’ perceptions of adaptation to another country. One of the most coherent, organized, and recognized theories in the field is the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation, developed by Young Yun Kim (1998). As a social scientific approach, the theory presents a list of dimensions to determine how quickly and to what extent an individual will adapt to a new culture at the individual or micro-level (McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014). Some of the dimensions include communication competence, functional fitness – ability to meet the challenges of the host environment – and psychological health – an immigrant’s well-being in the host environment, and host-receptivity which is “the degree to which mainstream cultural

members are open, welcoming, and willing” to help cultural strangers (McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014, p. 150).

### ***Non-Environmental Constructs in Cross-Cultural Adaptation***

Empirical studies have primarily focused on adult sojourners and long-term immigrants to Asian or European countries. Kim’s theory has been applied to South Korean business-workers and their American counterparts (Kim & Kim, 2004), Turks working in Germany (Braun, 2001), international students in France (Pitts, 2009) and Japan (Maruyama, 1998), Hong Kong’s ethnic minority groups (Ling, 2017), and Muslim immigrants to Spain (Croucher, 2013).

Studies have found a link between host interpersonal communication (the interpersonal relationships that a member of the non-dominate culture has with members of the dominate culture), psychological health and functional fitness, and between host communication competence (how competently a member of the non-dominant culture group can communicate in the new environment), psychological health and functional fitness among Hispanic youth in the United States (McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014), Turks working at an American military site in Germany (Braun, 2001), refugees in Germany (Anderson, 2017), and study abroad students in Paris, France (Pitts, 2009). Host communication competence has also been found to have a strong correlation with satisfaction in life (Ling, 2017) and facilitating adaptation (Kim & Kim, 2004). To sum it up, the more migrants interact with and befriend members of the dominant culture, the easier it will be to overcome challenges and establish a state of happiness, health, and comfort. (Anderson, 2017; McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014; Pitts, 2009). In addition, learning the language of the dominate culture has been linked to greater overall functional fitness (McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014); however, another study challenged this ideal, and concluded that co-ethnic communication *can* also promote adaptation (Kvam, 2017).

More recently, this approach has been criticized for addressing the immigrant's perspective in the absence of, or rather than, the environmental context to which the immigrant is migrating, and assuming that migrants *want* to adopt the new environment's culture. The environmental context includes: the reasons for migrating, migrants' experiences, and the cultural/racial power dynamics that affect a migrant's acceptance or rejection by the people/culture of the new place (Bardhan & Zhang, 2017). Even though most scholars have not taken this perspective, many have agreed that the environment plays a crucial role in influencing an individual's adaptation (Anderson, 2017; Braun, 2001; Croucher, 2013; McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014).

### ***Research on Environmental Constructs in Cross-Cultural Adaptation***

One study that focused on the perspective of the environment's role in cross-cultural adaptation compared American expatriates in South Korea to South Korean expatriates in the United States (Kim & Kim, 2004). They found that American expatriates were more accepted in Korean than Korean expatriates were in the U.S. (Kim & Kim, 2004, p. 7). Host receptivity has also been shown to correlate with life satisfaction and with perceived threats. In Ling's study (2017), greater receptivity by the dominant culture can influence the non-dominant culture's satisfaction in their new cultural environment; thus, host receptivity has a strong correlation with being satisfied in life.

In another study, Croucher (2013), worked with Muslim immigrants in France, Germany and the UK, and determined that when members of a dominant culture felt threatened by an immigrant population, the dominant culture was more likely to assume that the immigrants would not be willing to adapt or conform to the dominant culture's norms. When this happens, they are more likely to impose host conformity pressure on the immigrant – the dominant



culture's expectation that the minority group should conform to their norms. Sarah Bishop's (2013) rhetorical analysis of *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants* adds to this example. She criticizes the government-created guide and argues that the government is "welcoming" the immigrants by imposing American norms on them. This was accomplished by creating a sense of ignorance in the immigrant, developing a positive self-representation as the "helpmate," and by imposing normalcy (Bishop, 2013). In response, the immigrants were left with few options but to "become like the majority at all costs" as a way to feel secure in the midst of "threatening" the majority group (Croucher, 2013, p. 57).

### ***Critical Approaches to Immigration Communication***

While social scientific studies assume the immigrant is predominantly responsible for their own adaptation into another culture, critical scholars have begun to ask how power structures, discrimination, prejudice, subjectivity, "cultural displacement...and other such complex non-linear phenomena" impact adaptation instead of or in addition to traditional assumptions (Bardhan & Zhan, 2017, p. 290). One example is De La Garza and Ono's (2015) Differential Adaptation Theory, which addresses limitations in traditional theories of adaptation, including Kim's theory. De La Garza and Ono advocate for an atypical adaptation theory with the following aspects: recognition of the role of power, agency and diverse immigrant experiences, distinction between adaptation and assimilation, validation of co-ethnic interaction, and adaptation as dialogical – that is, as a reciprocal process that influences the immigrant *and* the host culture (2015).

One study that sheds light on this theory is Kvam's (2017) research, which showed that differences in agency and privilege among Mexican immigrants at *La Plaza* immigrant-serving

organization resulted in the presence or absence of *confianza* (trust) among the interlocutors.

Other research studies that have used the Differential Adaptation theory found following:

instances when ‘assimilated’ Americans decide to help new immigrants by standing beside them at rallies, by offering tutorials in law, language, culture, and history, or even attempting to make space for difference could be a form of reverse adaptation or metropolitanization, suggesting that the process of cultural influence is not unidirectional but is reciprocal and multidirectional (De La Garza & Ono, 2015, p. 282).

To serve as this type of aid, organizations have demonstrated cultural responsibility by looking to communication phenomena.

**Core Symbols and Metapragmatic Terms.** Communication scholars emphasize the importance of understanding how specific interactional and communicative patterns construct meaning while, simultaneously, cultural contexts and social structures influence meaning making. Two communication phenomena are explored as a route toward cultural responsibility: core symbols and metapragmatic terms. Metapragmatic terms, are synonyms of “talk”.

Communication *means* (communication terms) hold certain sociolinguistic significances, known as the communication *meaning*. Kvam (2017) observes an immigrant support center (ISC) to investigate how certain metapragmatic terms influenced immigrants’ participation at the ISC. She concluded that some means led to positive participation responses while others resulted in a reluctance to participate. These discoveries hold promising answers as to how organizations become culturally responsible when helping Mexicano/as. For instance, knowing that the term *intercambio* created the greatest response among immigrants advanced the organizations’ agenda.

Second, core symbols are key terms played out in everyday life which make explicit that which we take advantage of every day. They can be principles, values or themes that extract deeper cultural meanings from speech communities – societies that share common rules for communicating (Lindsley, 2009). The most salient core symbol in Mexican immigrant research was *confianza*. According to Covarrubias (2002), *confianza* is defined as

the enactment of *tú* (informal you) generally to engage in and develop relational alignments wherein participants tacitly contract to reciprocate trust, assistance, confidentiality, intimacy, and freedom of expression to the degree to which the lines of appropriateness are not breached at the expense of either party (98).

Kvam (2017) found that while *confianza* “offers opportunities for connection and social support,” it also “presents challenges to obtaining resources necessary to make lives in the United States because of immigrants” varying agency and access, thus supporting De La Garza and Ono’s theory (p. 355).

### **Borderlands**

In addition to adaptation, immigrants also cross another country’s border on their journey to a new environment. Communication scholars studying borders and the movement of people have primarily focused on the U.S.–Mexico border, and migration *to* the U.S. Within these studies, scholars have investigated the fluidity and malleability of crossing the border (Flores & Villarreal, 2012; Goltz & Perez, 2012; Ono, 2012). They toil with the concept of physical versus figurative borders (DeChaine, 2009; Flores & Villarreal, 2012; Goltz & Perez, 2012; Ono, 2012). By figurative, they mean that the border exists near and far away from the actual “dividing line” between the U.S. and Mexico (DeChaine, 2009; Goltz & Perez, 2012; Ono, 2012). Beyond the literal border, scholars have found that border crossing is a performance, completed in bodies,

and exists somewhere between integration and separation, exceptionalism and alienation, and centralized and marginalized; migrants gain some rights but never as many as those in the center (Goltz & Perez, 2012; Ono, 2012; DeChaine, 2009; Flores & Villarreal, 2012).

Bodies, therefore, become an essential aspect of border studies because they are the center of migration; they are the ones migrating. (Goltz & Perez, 2012). The fluidity of the border emerges when bodies that look different exist beyond the immediate boundaries of the U.S.–Mexico border and carry with them the consequences of those differences. According to Ono (2012), “citizen bodies have to be differentiated from immigrant noncitizen bodies” and this is how borders are maintained throughout (p. 29). Based on these findings, scholars argue for a critique of the objectified, centered, hetero-normative, White, dominant narratives to encourage intersectionality and difference and pave the way for authentic, organic voices to build their homes and spaces (Goltz & Perez, 2012; Chavez, 2009; Flores & Villarreal, 2012; Ono, 2012).

Conversations about the U.S.–Mexico border are almost always complimented with a discussion of Whiteness (Goltz & Perez, 2012; Cisneros, 2011; Flores & Villarreal, 2012). The “racialized categories” of migrants’ bodies, specifically Mexican migrants, appears to come up more often than other issues when studying this border (Flores, 2003, p. 382). Fewer studies have focused on other borders about nationalism and indigeneity, including the movement of people within Latin America, especially from one Latin American country to another. The current study focuses on the movement of Nicaraguan immigrants to Costa Rica from a communication lens.

### ***Filling Gaps in Research: Contributions of this Project to the Field***

Very few empirical studies have explored immigration through the lens of coloniality. Most studies that have done so have focused on immigration *to* the United States (Bardhan &

Zhang, 2017; Campano & Ghiso, 2013; Flores, 2003; Kinefuchi, 2010; McKinnon, 2008). One such study focused on the interconnectivity of communication, race and identity of international students migrating from the Global South to the United States (Bardhan & Zhang, 2017).

Another applied coloniality to two immigrant school contexts to challenge traditional teaching methods (Campano & Ghiso, 2013). Other critical empirical studies, though not specifically decolonial, have focused on the resettlement of refugees and immigrants from the Central Highlands of Vietnam, Sudan, and Mexico to the U.S. (Flores, 2003; Kinefuchi, 2010; McKinnon, 2008). They found that, in each situation, migrants have been criminalized, racialized, and primitivized, battling negotiations of identity and belonging (Flores, 2003; Kinefuchi, 2010; McKinnon, 2008). The current study will add to these conversations by applying coloniality and immigration communication to a Latin American country.

### **The Costa Rican-Nicaraguan Context**

Conflicts between Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans have persisted since their colonial years in the early sixteenth century. To understand the Costa Rican-Nicaraguan context, it is important to distinguish how current colonial structures of power presented in this project are similar or different from those of the colonial period.

From the beginning, the two countries developed very distinctly. Before the sixteenth century, when the Europeans arrived, the region that is known as Nicaragua today had a denser population of indigenous people because the land was better suited for cultivation, especially growing corn (Walker et al., 2011; H. Michelsen, personal communication, Dec.12 2021). Once the Europeans arrived, they discovered a transit route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, gold and silver, and a greater number of people to enslave as agricultural workers than Costa Rica (Walker et al., 2011). The Spanish were naturally more attracted to Nicaragua than Costa

Rica because they could easily get rich there. Ultimately, greater Spanish physical presence in Nicaragua led to greater authoritative presence and more exploitation, slavery, and oppressive social structures (Walker et al., 2011). As was common among peoples that had been colonized, Nicaragua's population grew to be majority mestizo; that is, a mixture of European and indigenous ancestry. Due to this history, Nicaraguans in Costa Rica have been, and continue to be, compared to indigenous peoples and Africans during the slave trade (Sandoval-Garcia, 2010).

Costa Rica, on the other hand, had a tropical climate where people caught deadly diseases, a less densely populated and mountainous land which made it more difficult for agricultural production, little gold and silver, and no transit route (H. Michelsen, personal communication, Dec.12 2021). Colonial authorities could not rely as heavily on enslaved indigenous people and therefore had to work their own land with fewer opportunities for finding wealth. Since Costa Rica did not have a large indigenous presence, the country primarily grew out of a demand to populate the Central Valley (the area surrounding San Jose, the capital) with White immigrants. In fact, starting in 1881, an order confirmed that, of those migrating to Costa Rica, at least "eight thousand five hundred individuals" had to be of the White race (cited in Sandoval-Garcia, 2010, p. 6). Since the countries' colonial years, European or "White blood" has been the preferred race to populate this Central American region while indigenous and "mixed-blood" individuals were looked down upon (Sandoval-Garcia, 2010).

Although Nicaragua during the colonial years was richer and more powerful than Costa Rica, the continuation of Nicaraguan dictatorships since the 1930s, coupled with rising Costa Rican stability – high-quality health, educational, economic, and political systems – and strong relationship with the U.S. – has influenced the shift we see today (Fouratt, 2014; Otterstrom,

2008; Sandoval-Garcia, 2010). More importantly, Costa Rica has maintained a strong, positive relationship with the United States. In fact, implementing Costa Rica's healthcare system was a strategic establishment by the United States in hopes to persuade Costa Ricans to side with the U.S. during the Cold War years (Sandoval-Garcia, 2010). The United States' national discourses has contributed to the echoing dominant discourses of Costa Rican "exceptionality" in Central America because of Costa Rica's long-standing stability.

Today, there continue to be disputes over territorial ownership of Guanacaste, a region in northern Costa Rica that borders Nicaragua; the San Juan River, which also borders the two countries; and Calero Island (Fouratt, 2014; Sandoval-Garcia, 2010). In addition to this, Nicaraguans are steering away from the traditional pattern of migrating south-to-north (from a developing country to a developed country) and have adopted a south-to-south migration pattern (Gilding, 2009). The recent rise of Nicaraguans staying *permanently* in Costa Rica because of political violence in their country has created tensions about economic pressures on the Costa Rican government (Fouratt, 2014).

As a way to compliment dominant discourses with vernacular discourses, the current study focuses on the narratives of women. According to Sandoval-Garcia (2010), women are the most discriminated against because of their ability to reproduce; this has led to an increase in Nicaraguan births in Costa Rica. Additionally, Nicaraguans have historically had more children than Costa Ricans, which has commonly been connected to lower education levels (Sandoval-Garcia, 2010). These facts, coupled with Costa Rica's extensive governmental support system which provides anyone born in Costa Rica with free healthcare until age 25, has created economic burdens on the Costa Rican government (Sandoval-Garcia, 2010). This also has

resulted in anxiety among Costa Ricans who fear the “inferior race” is multiplying beyond their control (Sandoval-Garcia, 2010).

Although there is a wide range of literature on immigration in the field of communication, on the topic of Nicaraguan immigration in Costa Rica and an increasing scholarship on (de)coloniality, the three fields have rarely been combined together. The current study will uniquely investigate the migratory patterns within a Latin American context through a colonial and communication lens to understand the construction of vernacular (personal) discourses by the Nicaraguan immigrant community in Costa Rica.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The present study is informed by the critical perspective. According to Davis & Lachlan (2017), this approach is used “as a tool to challenge unjust discourse and communication practices” (p. 33). This is one of the goals of the current study. My project seeks to expose colonial social structures of power that currently exist in discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration in Costa Rica and consider how they might be challenged.

The critical approach challenges three main components of social structure and society: “structure and control of language,” lack of resistance, and the acceptance of science “without adequate critique” (Davis & Lachlan, 2017, pp. 33–34). To address these components, this study analyzed various vernacular discourses to determine how they challenge and/or “perpetuate power imbalances in society” (Davis & Lachlan, 2017, p. 33). Secondly, this study draws from Nicaraguan immigrants’ vernacular discourses as examples where resistance might take place. Lastly, the current study critiques traditional notions of social hierarchies.

#### **Research Questions**

To recap, the research questions that guided the study are:



- 1) How do vernacular (personal) discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration reproduce and/or challenge colonial racial and gender hierarchies in Costa Rica?
- 2) How do these narratives activate conflicting discourses on national and other forms of social identity (race, gender, sexuality, etc.)?

### **Concepts Defined**

Discourse, for this proposal, is defined as “different patterns that people’s utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, p. 1). Language is only one example. Other examples include body language, visual aids, and “anything from historical monument, a *lieu de memoire*, a policy, a political strategy, narratives in a restricted or broad sense of the term, text, talk, a speech, topic-related conversation, to language per se” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 3). Discourse is the act itself that is taking place. Narrative, on the other hand, is the collection of discourses. It involves storytelling and the larger understanding of a situation/event that is built around collective thought.

National identity in Costa Rica is considered “exceptional” and “unique,” which is contrasted with that of other Central American countries (Fouratt, 2014). When I use this term, I am referring to what it means to be “Tico/a” – what Costa Ricans call themselves. Within this identity, I specifically speak to the pride Tico/as have for their nation, including their quality of health care, education, economic system and “Whiteness” (Fouratt, 2014; Otterstrom, 2008; Sandoval-Garcia, 2010). They verbalize this pride through their national saying, “Pura Vida” (Pure Life), and for being known for their friendliness, humility, strong values, patriotism and humanitarianism (Hernandez, 2017).

## **Data Collection**

### ***Sampling plan***

**Purposive Sampling.** Nine in-person, unstructured, collaborative/interactive oral histories were collected to elicit the vernacular discourses. Purposive and snowball sampling were pertinent for gaining access to my population of study. Purposive sampling is used to identify a group of people we are interested in studying for a particular purpose (Guthrie, 2010). I used this method to study participants with a specific experience – Nicaraguans who have immigrated to Costa Rica because of political violence in their country. Initial attempts at finding participants involved directly reaching out to organizations whose stated goal is to support the human rights of migrants, specifically the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica. These organizations included Cenderos (El Centro de Derechos Sociales de Inmigrante) [Immigrant’s Social Rights Center] and HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), an associated agency within El Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados (ACNUR) [the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] (UNHCR). Additionally, I reached out to individuals who have conducted research on a similar topic, including scholars of the books and articles I reference in the literature review: Dr. Carlos Sandoval Garcia and Dr. Caitlin Fouratt. Lastly, a friend of mine – Fiore – who in 2021 completed her MA in Latin American Studies at UNM on a similar topic provided me with the contacts of those whom she interviewed in Costa Rica (via Zoom) for her thesis.

The contacts she sent me included additional organizations such as Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes en Costa Rica [Jesuit Service to Migrants in Costa Rica]; Hora Cero, a research group that uses communication media, such as digital newspapers and other mechanisms to influence political, economic, and social topics about exiled Nicaraguans; and two freelance journalists. After reaching out to the organizations and individuals mentioned above, I received three

responses: from the director of HIAS, a worker from Hora Cero, \*Maria, and one of the freelance journalists – Ximena. All who responded agreed to collaborate with me. Maria at Hora Cero agreed to be interviewed and provided me with two additional contacts, one of whom also agreed to be interviewed. After Maria sent me the two contacts, her messages no longer delivered, and I could not communicate with her further. The contact that Maria had sent me, who agreed to be interviewed, stopped responding to my messages after the second reply. HIAS, on the other hand, was concerned about the privacy and safety of the refugees because of increased violence in Nicaragua and was overloaded with work; ultimately, they decided it was best not to collaborate. Ximena initially responded favorably but her response times were very slow and far between; we did not set up a time to meet until I was physically in Costa Rica in January of 2022.

**Snowball Sampling.** Next, snowball sampling was crucial for the data collection process. Snowball sampling involves asking personal contacts to reach out to and help recruit other people who fit my population criteria (Guthrie, 2010). Beyond reaching out to Fiore, a curator at UNM recommended that I contact Milton Machuca-Galvez, the UNM Humanities librarian and visiting scholar. During our meeting, he connected me with former colleague and director of the Praxis Center in Costa Rica – Heidi Michelsen – and she connected me with my initial four participants. As I discovered, trust is very important among Central Americans; therefore, establishing connections with my participants through already trusted friendships was a necessary route to go. Merely passing along someone else’s contact was not enough. Knowing this, Heidi initiated communication with each of the four narrators. Only after she talked with them, and they agreed to be interviewed, did she send me their contact information a few days prior to the interviews.

Snowball sampling continued when Heidi introduced me to Rev. Dr. Karla Ann Koll, a professor at Latin American Biblical University. She and her husband, a native Nicaraguan, support many Nicaraguans who flee to Costa Rica from their country. After I had a conversation with Karla, she initiated communication with three additional narrators, similar to Heidi's tactic. The last snowball sampling occurred through the Venezuelan couple who works at Casa Paz y Flora. The couple's niece goes to school with my soon-to-be narrator's son. In this circumstance, I did not have the narrator's contact information until after we finished the interview; the couple contacted the narrator and set up the interview.

Of the 11 individuals who I personally reached out to, I interviewed nine in total. I initiated communication with three individuals, meaning I contacted them without anyone else letting them know ahead of time that I would be doing so. Two of those three were the ones who did not follow through with the interview process, although initially they agreed to be interviewed. One of them was my first narrator's daughter and the second was an acquaintance of the same narrator. She provided me with both of their numbers but did not initiate any communication between us. The third individual I initiated communication with was Ximena. After having started communication in October, we finally set up the interview once I had informed her, in January, that I was in Costa Rica. Unfortunately, because official written consent was not given, I chose not to use the data from our conversation in my analysis.

### *Site and participants*

**Site/Location.** I stayed from January 6 to 15, 2022, in Santa Rosa de Santo Domingo de Heredia, Costa Rica. It is located about 20 minutes outside of San Jose, the capital, but is part of Costa Rica's larger Central Valley region. The Central Valley was a strategic location because it houses two-thirds of Costa Rica's entire population and is within 30 minutes from the homes of

all but one of my narrators. The first two days I stayed at Casa Adobe, an intentional Christian community where Heidi, her son, and other missionaries and refugee families live. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, I moved to another part of the neighborhood, within walking distance of Casa Adobe, and stayed at the Bed and Breakfast, Casa Paz y Flora, that serves as a guesthouse and extension of Casa Adobe. In addition to conducting the interviews, I had the opportunity to participate in Praxis Center's activities with the Spring 2022 study abroad students. These activities included attending Heidi's History and Ethnology of Costa Rica class and lectures on Central American history, watching historical documentaries, and visiting the National Museum, all of which enhanced my knowledge on the topic of study.

**Participant Description and Criteria.** All participants I interviewed identified as Nicaraguan, were born and raised in Nicaragua and have been living in Costa Rica for at least 2 years. This criterion ensured that the narrators could speak in-depth about their experiences in Costa Rica and were knowledgeable about both countries and cultures. Although I maintained this set of criteria for the participants, there was still a wide range of variation among them, including city of origin, family life, circumstances leading to immigration, socioeconomic status, education, types of careers, etc. Four of the narrators are mothers of young children (10 years old or less), one is single, one is a newlywed, and three are mothers/father to adult children. Five of the nine attended or were attending University in Nicaragua, and six of the nine have full-time jobs. Although I originally planned to have all participants be female, I had the opportunity to interview one male participant who lives in the same neighborhood as Casa Adobe and hosted one of the Spring 2022 study abroad participants. Of the nine total, only one was male.

These are the descriptions of the nine Nicaraguans that I interviewed: Luz, a 51-year-old, and Nubel, a 50-year-old who escaped from the war in Nicaragua in the late 1980s; Olga, a 48-

year-old, and Gabby, a 26-year-old who left Nicaragua because of the political violence of the Ortega regime two-and-a-half and four years ago, respectively; \*Comandante Pino, a 30-year-old, and Nadia, a 35-year-old who were targeted by Nicaragua's Ortega regime for protesting three years ago and four years ago, respectively; Eveling, a 29-year-old who escaped political violence by the Ortega regime three-and-a-half years ago; and Elizabeth, a 39-year-old who escaped from imprisonment in Nicaragua two years ago. Since there has been a backlog in applying for refugee status in Costa Rica, not all the narrators are legally considered refugees; for that reason, I broadened my scope of study to focus on Nicaraguans who left their country *because of* political violence in Nicaragua.

Only one narrator requested a pseudonym – Comandante Pino. All the other narrators approved of me using their real names. Olga, though, personally requested that I leave out her last name; ultimately, I decided to refer to all the narrators by just their first names. For future publishing plans, I would consult them ahead of time about any necessary changes they would like me to make.

### ***Oral History***

Steering away from popular national/dominant discourses, the current project seeks to understand how vernacular discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica may reveal the darker side of modernity: coloniality. Oral histories were chosen because they provide a complete account of the past by shedding light on historically hidden voices, add nuance to dominant discourses and allow for collaboration with narrators to share their stories (Baylor, 2016; Perks et al., 1998). Eyewitnesses' accounts are able to "fill in gaps in documented history, sometimes correcting or even contradicting the written record" (Baylor, 2016, p. 2). In doing so, the current study attempts to reveal coloniality by creating a co-collaborative storytelling space

and a mutual plan for the future of the archive through trusted networks and relationship development.

I, as a collaborator, established this storytelling, narrative space by using the trusted networks that I built through years of expertise – working with migrants in Chile, Spain and the U.S., working in Central America, and becoming proficient in Spanish. Additionally, oral histories allowed me to move away from having a rigid, “objective” approach as a researcher and instead go into the space as a trusted participant who also recognized my privilege. My narrators and I were both aware that I am a White-presenting, English speaking person; however, they were still willing to share their stories, collaborate in the storytelling process, and agree to archive their narratives for their community. As I went into the space, the narrators already knew my position even before meeting me face-to-face, but I had also done the work to build trust with the community and that is what mattered most, and which is the object of this study.

Since the current project seeks to contribute to decolonial initiatives in Latin America, I started by identifying groups that are most affected by coloniality to support and collaborate with them. Through doing so, it is my hope that this project gives a voice to Nicaraguan immigrants, a group most affected by Costa Rican xenophobia, by including “within the historical record the experiences and perspectives of groups of people who might otherwise have been ‘hidden from history’”(Perks et al., 1998, p. ix). Oral histories are a growing, one-of-a-kind method for uncovering hidden narratives for the various reasons mentioned below.

**Qualities of Oral Histories.** Oral histories provide unique ways to get at people’s stories. A goal is to seek to reverse traditional procedures of conducting interviews; one way this is done is by giving data ownership to the narrators (Oral History Association, n.d.). The historian cannot share or use the data at any capacity without the narrator’s specific permission

to do so (Oral History Association, n.d.). Additionally, oral histories allow the historian and narrator to come to a mutual agreement about the future of the archive through relationship development and co-authorship; these challenge the traditional power dynamics of “researcher-participant” (Baylor, 2016; Oral History Association; Perks et al., 1998).

Oral histories allow narrators a unique opportunity to reflect on the present through the past. Since oral histories are interested in bringing “depth to our understanding of the past,” collecting specific information about an individual’s entire *life* is crucial (Baylor, 2016, p. 2). With this in mind, I organized my questions in such a way. First, I asked about their life in Nicaragua – before the violence and during their childhood – what circumstances led to their decision to immigrate, their life in Costa Rica, and where they see themselves in the future. This allowed me to get acquainted with most of their life story from beginning to end. I probed for further details if I felt the narrator’s story was only reaching surface level, a technique recommended by Baylor University (2016). Most of the time, this enabled the narrators to open up more. One of the last questions I asked the narrators was, “what would you like more people to know about your story?” This helped identify how I can serve their needs through my project and what benefits I can bring them as well.

**Preservation of Oral Histories.** Lastly, preservation is another important component of oral histories. They serve to complete both sides of history, remove stereotypes and judgment, and provide voice to individual experiences not only in the present but for the future. In addition to writing up this current project, I will provide each narrator with their own audio recordings and give back to the community in exchange for their stories. One way I will do so is by creating a digital archive of the oral histories where the stories will be accessible to the entire community permanently. I will collaborate with my chairperson (advisor) to house the digital audios so the



community can access them whenever they want. Those with a special passcode will be able to enter the digital archive where the audios are stored. Additionally, to ensure accessibility among the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica, I will compose a written summary of the project in Spanish and invest in a Spanish translation of the entirety of the paper.

**Procedure.** As is the practice when collecting oral histories, I attentively listened and acknowledged what the narrators shared, and retained a respectful environment, being sensitive to real differences between the narrator and me. Many times, it was difficult to know how to respond because I could not relate to the narrators' lived experiences. However, I quickly discovered that they were grateful that someone would take the time to just listen to their stories. The third narrator I interviewed, Elizabeth, repeated, "I couldn't keep [it] inside anymore [I had to] let everything out." At the end, she expressed deep gratitude: "I tell you that you become depressed because there is no one to talk to, to vent to, to tell you how you feel." When asked what the most important thing was that we talked about together, she responded, "to let everything out that I had kept inside. That did me well. I feel good. I feel good...I give thanks to God that I met you and have your trust." Genuine responses such as the above demonstrated how the narrators and I were creating a community of trust and respect that distinguishes oral histories from other types of interviews (Oral History Association, n.d.).

### ***Procedure and design***

**Procedure.** In early December, I had my first conversation with Heidi Michelsen, the director of Praxis Center and my primary contact in Costa Rica. She informed me that the narrators would open-up more in person and encouraged me to come to Costa Rica myself. When Heidi informed me that she had secured four interviews and would provide lodging for me in her neighborhood, all that was left was to buy my ticket.

I arrived three days prior to my reserved Bed and Breakfast – Casa Paz y Flora – to refamiliarize myself with the language and culture and to visit friends nearby. During these first few days in the country, I finalized my consent form and interview questions, and reviewed everything I had read about oral histories to make sure I was remaining ethical in my procedures, according to the Oral History principles and the University of New Mexico’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Initially, I wrote the consent form and interview questions in English and translated them into Spanish. The translation was reviewed by a close friend and student in Costa Rica as well as Milton Machuca-Galvez. The day before my appointed reservation, the manager at Casa Paz y Flora sent me the lodging confirmation and Heidi forwarded the four narrators’ phone numbers. Heidi initially waited to send me personal contacts until I was in the country; she predicted that once I messaged the potential narrators, they would offer to meet within a few days. When events are planned months in advance, they usually fall through. That is exactly what happened. As soon as I texted the potential narrators, “Hi, my name is…” two responded with “how about tomorrow?”

**Design.** On the morning of January 7, 2022, I conducted my first two interviews back-to-back. They both took place in the living room at Casa Adobe, an intentional Christian community where Heidi resides. The third interview took place in Casa Paz y Flora. These were the only interviews where the narrators came to my location. All the others took place at either the narrator’s or a friend’s home or workplace. I reached out to each narrator via text, except for Ximena, who I contacted via email. My first text message to each potential narrator contained similar information:

Good morning (narrator’s name), my name is Darcey, I am the one who is going to interview you. I received your number from...I am staying at Casa Paz y Flora. You are

welcome to come here, and I will pay for your Uber both ways. Whatever works best for you. What day and time can you meet? Thank you for being willing to be interviewed and I look forward to hearing from you!

From there, they had the choice to either accept my offer or invite me to where they were already. The one male narrator, Nubel, I initially met in person, and he invited me over to his house for tea. Two other interviews were set up without me initiating any communication with the narrators because my acquaintances set them up for me. The last two interviews were conducted via Zoom because one of the women lived outside of San Jose proper and the second one, Ximena, was exposed to friends who had tested positive for COVID-19 the day prior (see Appendix B).

Overall, I followed the same interview guide questions for every narrator but asked clarifying and follow-up questions when appropriate (see Appendix A). Each of the recordings started with an introduction that included the location, date, my name, the narrators' names, and the sponsor and purpose of the recording. Specific questions about theoretical concepts were translated into everyday language that participants could understand. For instance, I asked what differences they have noticed, if any, between the treatment of Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans in Costa Rica in order to understand how social hierarchies might play out in everyday language and experiences. For the overall oral history process, I followed a combination of Baylor University's (2016) and the Oral History Association's (n.d.) planning process regarding what to do before, during, and after the interview. Specific interview questions were influenced by Tracy's (2013) interview question types and sequences to determine the best order of asking what kinds of questions when: opening questions, generative questions, directive questions and closing questions.

## **Transcribe and translate**

### ***Transcriptions***

To maintain consistency when translating and transcribing the interviews, I led and supervised a team of two students and one librarian. They were each chosen, first, because Spanish is their native language; thus, they could recognize words quicker and smoother, especially in the case that the audio might not have been clear. Next, each of them is familiar with Central American, and more specifically, Costa Rican dialect, and as students and an educator, have exhibited strong written skills and great attention to detail. The last important consideration was that they were reliable and had sufficient time available to dedicate to the transcripts and complete the tasks. After the initial transcripts were returned to me, I “fact checked” all nine of them to make sure they were as consistent as possible. This involved “listening to the recordings while simultaneously reading over transcripts and stopping along the way to input corrections or modifications” (Tracy, 2013, p. 180). Also, this allowed me to get in touch with the data in a deeper way and prepare me for the translation process.

### ***Translations***

All interviews were conducted in Spanish and all translations were initially completed by me and. My expertise in the Spanish language includes nine years of learning Spanish, starting from 7<sup>th</sup> grade and living with a Spanish speaking family for nine weeks in Argentina, seven months total in Spain, two months in Mexico, six weeks in Chile, and five visits to Costa Rica within two years, while being in a heterosexual, romantic relationship with a Costa Rican for two years. In addition, I earned my undergraduate degree in Spanish at Texas A&M University. While transcriptions were initially produced by my research team, I served as the Spanish-to-English translator of all the interview content.

Even though it was time-consuming, I chose to do it this way so that I could translate the data in a way that was uniform and made sense to me since I would be the one analyzing the data. There are multiple ways to translate the same sentence, phrase, or word and I wanted to ensure that the data was translated as accurately to the narrators' intentions as possible. A third person translating the data when they were not physically present during the interview could easily miss the context the narrator was trying to communicate. The English skills of those on my research team also varied. However, I continued to work with each of them during this process; I met with them one-on-one depending on the transcripts they had completed to get clarity about any uncertain sections of my translation. Together, we determined the best way to translate those sections. I decided that the time it took to translate myself was worth the energy over any level of verification that I might have had to do otherwise. Additionally, this task enabled me to engage richly with the data and equip me for the analysis process. My proximity to the oral histories gave me a unique understanding of the codes and meanings behind the different narratives.

### **Iterative Analysis**

After transcribing and translating, the discourses collected from the oral histories were analyzed “through a close look at the communication,” to examine “the social and cultural context...in order to understand how the discourse and its context construct meaning and understanding” (Davis & Lachlan, 2017, p. 378). Using Tracy's (2013) iterative approach, which “alternates between emic, or emergent, readings of the data and an etic use of existing models, explanations, and theories” I was able to go back and forth between the etic data – what was already out there and available – and the emic data – the collected data (p. 202). Essentially, I read through the data multiple times.

First, before the interviews took place, I identified key themes that presented themselves through the theory of coloniality and then wrote my interview questions in order to draw those themes out. Then, once I was familiar with the data through transcribing and translating and reviewing, I went back and looked at the emerging data and asked, “what is happening here?” and “how does it support or not support my theory?” “What codes need to be modified, eliminated or added?” Through this process, the initial themes grew more complex in order to align the data together. Similar to that used for critical discourse analysis, this process allowed me to understand how specific discourses “both shape and are (being) shaped by situations, institutions, and social structures” through connecting daily interactions (vernacular discourses) with larger “institutionalized issues of conflict” such as colonial race and gender (Tracy et al., 2011, p. 245).

### ***Codebook***

The iterative approach occurred through the development of a codebook (Tracy, 2013, p. 184). As recommended by Tracy (2013), I created my own codebook alongside the interview guide, based on themes from my theory (see Appendix C). Tracy (2013) defines a codebook as “a data display that lists key codes, definitions, and examples that are going to be used in your analysis” (p. 191). Each code was given a represented color. All the codes were defined and matched with an interview question that best represented that code. As I analyzed the actual transcripts, codes were modified according to what was found or not found. The analysis process was completed through Word. This included going through each transcript and color-coding phrases and sections that fit into one of the codes by highlighting them. Then, to distinguish certain aspects of the codes, I went through the transcripts a second time to add a symbol that represented that aspect. This gave me time to correct or change codes if I decided that a section

fit better into a different category than where I originally put it. Lastly, I went through the coded transcripts and selected the best narrative to serve as an example of each.

Collaborative/interactive oral histories were conducted in Spanish with nine Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica who left their country due to political violence. Through a third-party contact, I was able to establish trust with the narrators which paved the way to creating a storytelling space. Through a critical perspective of Tracy's iterative approach, I was able to go back and forth between the theories and the data to elicit a total of 11 themes which will be summarized in chapter four. Then, in chapter five, I will connect the themes with larger concepts and goals of the study while also providing limitations and implications for future research.

#### Chapter 4: Data/ Findings

[Warning: In the following section, there are vivid narratives of violence.]

A total of 11 themes emerged from the iterative analysis approach and will be described in detail below. For each of the overall themes, examples and descriptions from the narrators will be provided to add context to the discussion. The nine main themes include: coloniality, class and poverty, political violence and activism, race, gender, family, memory, additional advice and comments to the audience, spirituality, cost, and environment. In addition, there were subthemes that were found alongside each of the main themes and will be introduced with the main themes accordingly.

<p>Coloniality Color is RED</p>	<p>Example: Coloniality</p>	<p>Coloniality</p>	<p>The thought process behind how we understand things theoretically, conceptually, and ideologically which sheds light on the Eurocentric worldview that produces the subjectivities of people through exploitation</p>	<p>* Names of places</p>	<p>* <i>What place do you consider or call home?</i>  * this is a beautiful question</p>
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					because I think that my identity is half and half because I love CR a lot....and Nicaragua, well I was born in Nicaragua. I will never forget it.
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## Analysis

### *Coloniality*

Coloniality is the thought process behind how we understand things theoretically, conceptually, and ideologically; it sheds light on the Eurocentric worldview that produces the subjectivities of people through exploitation. Within this overarching theme, the different subthemes are: names of places, names of people, nationality, borders, and perceptions of nationality.

**Names of places and people.** The first two subthemes emerged when I asked narrators about their home lives: where they are from, who they grew up with or who is in their family and what place they would call “home.” The names of places included locations where narrators were born and have lived, and other locations that were identified by proper titles/names. Names of people included the narrators’ full names, names of family members or other proper names of individuals.



**Nationality.** Nationality reoccurred frequently because narrators mentioned their nationality more than any other concept to identify themselves. They differentiated themselves as “Nicaraguan” or “Nica” by their culture, food, history, and dance. Gabby especially emphasized to me that if I were to go to Nicaragua, I would notice the “great *difference*...it is that [the] indigenous culture is maintained more in Nicaragua than in Costa Rica.”

**Borders.** Borders were mentioned mostly when narrators were reflecting on their experiences physically crossing from Nicaragua to Costa Rica, which was usually illegally.

**Perceptions of nationality.** Lastly, perceptions of nationality was a subtheme that I initially was not expecting as narrators gave examples that prejudices were held against them merely for being Nicaraguan rather than for any other reason such as race. For instance, Nicaraguans migrate to Costa Rica with their minds already made up that “over there they will discriminate against me” and “over there they will not accept me because I am Nicaraguan.”

### ***Class and Poverty***

Class and poverty refer to an individual’s living conditions which can be marked by financial circumstances. Underneath this theme are the subthemes: living situations, workforce, education, and perceived perceptions of class and education.

**Living situations.** Narrators frequently told me that they lived or are living in Costa Rica and described how drastically their lifestyles have changed since they moved from Nicaragua. Beyond scenery, money and family, there also are cultural differences that narrators witness. Gabby, for instance, claimed that in Costa Rica she “doesn’t have the luxury to be going out every moment [in Nicaragua] it was not just working and working like [it is] here; that’s the big difference.”

**Workforce.** Since working is such a common pastime, and migrants need to find the

means to survive in Costa Rica, jobs and the workforce was a topic that came up amongst all narrators at one point or another. All narrators expressed the difficulties in finding a job when they first moved, most were successful after a few months, while the mothers of young children usually stay at home with the kids while their spouses work. Similar to Gabby's concerns about number of hours at work, Elizabeth shared how her husband "does not have time to spend with the family because he only works. He works Monday through Sunday, day and night for a miserable salary of 75,000 colones (109 usd)."

**Education.** Even more important to the narrators was education. First, I directly asked narrators what their highest level of education was. Each of the narrators came from different education levels – elementary school, high school and college. A little unexpectedly, though, many narrators brought up education naturally in their interviews, because it is an important consideration for many. Luz believed that "education comes from the mom [parents]" and saw "Ticos are well educated" because "they are attentive to people, asking how you are, if you are well." Though this may be true, it is often contrasted and compared with Ticos' perceptions of Nicaraguans' education levels as being lower than theirs. Comandante Pino, a former university student at the Autonomy University of Chinandega who couldn't complete her degree because classes were canceled due to protesting, explained:

For me, what they tell me, [is] that my level of schooling is minimal compared to theirs; he doesn't know that I might actually have a level of schooling higher than him, and they treat me as if I didn't have an education, but I know that I am very educated.

**Perceived perceptions of class & education.** Since education level is usually connected to class, Nicaraguans are seen as poor because they are uneducated or uneducated because they

are poor. Even though this does not excuse the behavior, Nadia recognizes that this assumption could be due to the fact that

before the immigration wave here in 2018, they (Ticos) were accustomed to seeing Nicaraguans from the farms... because they say that I don't speak like a Nicaraguan because they are accustomed to the tone that people from the rural areas speak or people who didn't study.

Actually, the protests in Nicaragua are primarily held by and run by university aged students. As Luz clarifies, "well, it's that the war before...it started, let's say, in the rural zones. Now it is different between now what they are doing is wanting to raise up university groups." Now that the recent wave of migrants is bringing in higher educated individuals like Comandante Pino and other university students, who are targeted in Nicaragua for protesting, the assumptions of previous types of migrants have not completely caught up with Ticos' perceptions.

### ***Political Violence and Activism***

The theme of political violence and activism is defined as violence that is induced by the government toward their own citizens and the citizens' response to that violence. The subthemes within this main theme include: coercion/war stories, emancipation (or lack thereof), emotional effects of violence, and fights against perceptions.

**Coercion/war stories.** Since all the narrators I interviewed left Nicaragua due to political violence, about half of each narrative went into detail about the circumstances leading up to their decision to leave their country. Narrators who left more recently witnessed coercion in the form of finding dead bodies on the street, observing beatings of elderly standing up for their rights, and watching anyone who expressed negative opinions against the government killed instantly. Narrators who migrated in the 1980s retold war stories about waking up in the middle of the

night to soldiers fighting in their backyard. Narrators explained that the reason they left their country was because they had no other option. They were forced to exile to Costa Rica either because they were involved in protests or because of the unlivable conditions in their hometowns.

**Emancipation.** At the same time, it is important to note that emancipation came up almost as frequently. Most narrators have actively fought against Nicaragua's dictatorship. The most common form of emancipation was participating in protests. In most cases, however, this participation eventually led to narrators' exile because protesting is illegal and government officials were tasked with searching for them. Some narrators have continued to be involved in activism in Costa Rica, but this number is few. Only two narrators admitted to serving somewhat actively in Costa Rica because it is still a dangerous act. There have been cases where "they have killed many opponents here in Costa Rica, people who have come as exiles," as Nadia explained. She even admitted that she currently does not feel safe in Costa Rica because "they threatened my partner." Additionally, many of the narrators saw the opportunity to share their stories with me as a form of emancipation. Half of the narrators urged the audience: "don't stay silent." Both Elizabeth and Nadia remarked that silence is a result of fear. Elizabeth said, "it is not good to remain silent because you will always live in fear," and Nadia agreed, saying, "women sometimes are very silent...because of fear." Unexpectedly, though, the other half, such as Eveling, warned audience members to keep silent "for the well-being of the family" and because "nobody can change the injustice that is happening in my country, Nicaragua."

**Emotional effects of violence.** Another consequence of political violence on migrants, besides being physically displaced from their families and homes, is the emotional strain that migration has had on them. Nadia admitted that she has often felt depressed and "wanted to die,"

and Elizabeth expressed, “the truth is that there are moments when I can’t continue. I can’t continue. Nor do I let myself cry in front of my kids or in front of my husband because someone has to be strong.” These moments, I realized, were caused by the emotional pain that resulted from their exile, either because they were torn from their family, country, and culture or simply because they struggle to make ends meet trying to build their lives from scratch in a brand-new environment.

**Fights against perceptions.** Not only have narrators fought against their governmental power, but they have already started to find techniques to fight against Ticos’ perceptions, such as those of Nicaraguans’ nationality, class, gender and race. Olga provided an example of how she tries to combat and teach Ticos that their perceptions about Nicaraguans might be incorrect. She asks them

a series of questions to convince myself that what they are saying is true. And in the end when they don’t respond to me, I can see that they are not convinced...so that is why I think that it is good to make them reflect to avoid labeling. And that makes us work in a way. I mean that is what breaks the barriers and makes a society more, how do I say, more harmonious, more harmonious, more, more tolerant.

Therefore, narrators’ violent situations are very real, but they have also found ways to overcome these circumstances both in Nicaragua and in Costa Rica.

### ***Race***

Race involves the social categorization of people based on skin color and/or ethnicity. Surprisingly, race was not mentioned as often as I had predicted, based on the assumptions of coloniality. For this reason, the only subtheme of race is the perceived perception of racism. When race was mentioned, it was not the object of the conversation, rather one word that was

used to hint at the perceived perception of racism. For instance, Luz provided an example of a conversation she had with her son, when another classmate in school told her son that “yes, you are a Nica, because you are dark skinned.” That was one of the few times that race was mentioned and even in this example it was not the focus of the story. It was one comment that a classmate had said to the narrator’s son, but the rest of her narrative centered around nationality.

### ***Gender***

Gender was a significant finding in the narratives. Gender is a culturally defined understanding of what social behaviors are generally believed to be representations of masculinity and femininity. The subthemes in this category are: motherhood/femininity, masculinity, violence against women, and queer/non-binary. Motherhood/femininity were frequently mentioned, especially since all except two narrators are mothers.

**Motherhood/femininity.** Originally introduced as femininity, I noticed that motherhood was very connected to what it means to be feminine. When motherhood was brought up, narratives about women’s strength almost always followed. In Elizabeth’s case, she has three kids and one of her children has a disability. Therefore, she constantly repeated how difficult it is to find a school and education for her disabled child and that she cannot work because she has to be with him and take care of him at all times. However, coupled with this was her reassurance that she is “a super mom, super housewife and super woman as well because I have kept going with my own strength, without the help of anyone [else].”

**Masculinity.** When masculinity came up, it was usually connected with machismo – a strong pride in traditional masculine qualities. One narrator noticed that “Nica men are much more physically aggressive. And yet, I notice for the Ticos, men are more passive-aggressive I would say...they don’t express it openly and that can translate as micromachismo.”

**Violence against women.** These traditional gender roles and strong sense of machismo can lead to males believing that they should dominate women. Indeed, out of the eight narrators, two admitted to having been abused or attempted to be abused by either family members or by members of the government. Olga shared how one day a “man was able to barge into my apartment” and wanted to abuse her. Thankfully, she escaped but women like Elizabeth weren’t so lucky. In her case, not even her husband knows that she was abused by an uncle and her family did not believe her when she told them.

**Gender/nonbinary.** While this subtheme was more common than initially expected, queer/non-binary identities were not mentioned as often. The only time that they were brought up in the narrative was when Comandante Pino listed all the different communities that are being persecuted in Nicaragua: “you can put in your thesis that women are being persecuted and abused and I am one example of what they have done to many, [but also] to men, the LGBTI community, and lastly, the world.” However, none of my narrators expressed that they or anyone else in their family personally identified as part of that community.

### ***Family***

Family was a very important theme for the narrators as it describes the feeling of being close to a small group of individuals; there is assurance that they will support you in any given situation whether they are blood related or not. The subthemes that emerged were: support from others (or lack thereof), trust/love, communication, traditional family values – gender, and traditional family values – culture.

**Support from others (or lack thereof).** Whether it was family members back home in Nicaragua, community or family members that supported and cared for them when they moved to Costa Rica, or their own spouses and children, all narrators acknowledge the need for support

from others. Olga recognized the “heartbreak and an enormous pain to leave the family, that is the hardest...” In order to “soften the pain of that separation we aren’t left without anything else than to look for a support system, unconsciously – neighbors, friends – and to find a guide under this new family structure.” That is, in order to “resave your life” as Olga describes it, you must find new support networks since the old ones are no longer tangible. Nadia also “appreciated one family that is Nicaraguan that realized everything that was happening, and they gave me a place to stay [in Costa Rica].” At the same time, narrators also mentioned experiences in which people did not support them, including their own family members. Elizabeth’s family, as mentioned earlier, sent her to the street when she confessed being abused. She exclaims that they “turned their backs on me. I am going alone. My family has always only been my sons and my husband. Nobody else.”

**Trust/love.** As an extension of support from others, trust and love was a common subtheme since this is how narrators commonly referred to children and partners. Elizabeth’s love story was especially unique. When I asked her how she met her husband, she shared that he was the brother of a friend of hers from prison. She continues that, “he visited her sister, and she would tell him about me and his sister told me about him. It made my heart fly.” He also sent her letters in prison in which she “got carried away by his words.” After she escaped prison, they met in person “and from there it is history.”

**Communication.** When there is strong support from loved ones, it becomes challenging when you can no longer “give them that emotional bond [and] love that they had constructed,” as Olga relates. For the three narrators – Nubel, Luz, and Olga – who lived during the war in the ‘80s, communication was even more difficult to maintain. “At the time there wasn’t Internet, there wasn’t Facebook, there wasn’t anything,” Olga declares. They did not have access to the



Internet like we have today. It was much harder to stay in touch with loved ones. In Nubel's case, as his wife remembers, "in those times there wasn't Internet, cell phones, or anything so they told him mom that both (him and his brother) had died." Since there was not a way for them to communicate, his mom believed this lie for two years before she realized her sons had arrived in Costa Rica safely and were alive.

**Traditional family values – gender.** Traditional gender family values did not come up as often as expected but in Gabby's case, she dealt with the tension of father-daughter roles shifting when she decided to emigrate to Costa Rica. Her father told her that he did not want her to go to Costa Rica because he "wasn't able to protect [her] in another country." He embodied his role as the man of the house who should protect and support his daughter as long as he is able or before another is able to do so. However, she later "demonstrated that he was mistaken, that I was able to do it on my own" independently from him. Migration altered the traditional course of family gender roles when single female narrators had to learn to support themselves or, in some cases, become the bread winner in the family.

**Traditional cultural values – family.** Traditional cultural family values were fairly common as they related to Nicaraguan nationality and culture. Narrators actively discussed differences between Nicaraguan and Costa Rican culture. Multiple narrators pointed out that Nicaragua is has a very inviting culture which is big on sharing. This is seen in the example of Olga, a single mom living alone in Costa Rica; even though she has family (a daughter) in Costa Rica, she feels disconnected with the people. In her country, on the other hand,

We share whatever, if we know that an elderly lives alone, we bring him food. If we know that a mom is single next door and doesn't have a job to go to, then we bring it to her...or we invite her. So, you say, *come to my house*; that is something that happens a

lot. And here I haven't seen it.

She has also witnessed a difference in family holidays. As she reflects, "Christmas in Nicaragua, we share. And even though there is little chicken, we share it. Here I don't see that coexistence." Therefore, family values about culture were very important to Nicaraguan immigrants and was something that they missed and lacked in Costa Rica.

### *Memory*

Memory includes events that happened in the past that impactfully stay in people's thoughts in the present. The narrators reflected on a variety of life circumstances throughout their oral histories. The subthemes that emerged were: remember Nicaragua, comic relief moment, and life reflection.

**Remember Nicaragua.** First, I had the narrators tell me about their childhood and memories of Nicaragua. Many recalled growing up in a very peaceful environment and having fond memories. Comandante Pino remembers,

It was free in the sense that I could spend time talking with my friends until 12 or 1 in the morning outside of my house and I never had problems with anyone...so all the time you lived a very peaceful life.

Likewise, one of the things Gabby misses most is "saying 'I'm going to visit a friend today,' and I end up spending the entire day there." Luz also recalls that the "start of my childhood was beautiful because we lived on a farm...because you lived very free. You weren't scared to say, 'I can't go to the street,' 'I can't go to wherever.'" Less than half did not have as pleasant a childhood, but all narrators, except Luz, who has built her entire family in Costa Rica, would return to Nicaragua if circumstances were different. All narrators also mentioned that their memories took a shift at a certain point when they described how Nicaragua had changed. They

all agreed that it used to be a better place to live than it is today.

**Comic relief moment.** I asked narrators, about halfway through the interview, to recall the most unexpected or the funniest thing that happened since they have been in Costa Rica. This allowed for a moment of comic relief as their tones changed from serious and somber to laughter for a period of time. Every one of them thought of something, even if it was making fun of how the border patrols accused them of ridiculous things, such being a drug trafficker, in Elizabeth's situation. She recounts, "that's what they accused me of. That my kids had been taken from me because of drug trafficking and it made me laugh." Just as unimaginable but in a more positive sense, Olga was called to play the role of an actress. As she remembers, "that made me laugh because out of everything that I have had to do."

**Life reflection.** On a more serious note, while the narrators spoke, many of them gave life advice when I asked them questions such as, "what advice would you give to someone who is in a similar situation that you were in before you decided to emigrate?" and "what would you like more people to know about your story? Is there something that most people don't know about you, and you'd like to share?" These questions led them to many answers. Most narrators could not advise someone to emigrate as it is a very personal and difficult decision to make. If they could have prevented it, they would have chosen otherwise. For the second question, the majority of the narrators, such as Elizabeth and Eveling, primarily wanted the world to know not just what they have been through but to understand that they have made to where they are because of their strength as women. As Eveling puts it, "I am a hard-working woman...that has kept going...I have worked very hard and now I have what I have...so [to others] continue working no matter if you are Nicaraguan, Tico, Venezuelan, Cuban, American, whoever it is." In addition to this, memory is important to Comandante Pino to realize *why* she is where she is and

that her efforts are not in vain:

The historic memory is important to know why I am here; my friends that were assassinated and their blood is still in the pavement where they cry out for justice so that is what I remember. It is important to talk about that because I remember that I should talk about it and claim justice.

### *Spirituality*

Religion and spirituality came up often, especially aspects of Christianity. I define this theme as the belief in a higher being or supernatural force. The subthemes are hope and Christianity.

**Hope.** Narrators often needed to rely on hope as this was a crucial element to help get them through their difficult circumstances, especially the emotional effects of violence. Hope was beautifully displayed when Nadia ran into someone at Mercedes Park in Costa Rica who had fought with her in Nicaragua, and who she did not know was still alive. As she explains, she “wasn’t able to see everyone alive because they killed a lot of people but running into someone that was alive was, was so good...finding people alive that were fighting over there. That is priceless.”

**Christianity.** Nadia, also discovered a new source of hope during her time as an exile. The difficulties of exiling to Costa Rica “was what made me look more to God.” As she has turned to God through her circumstances “that has given me more serenity and peace. And emotional stability.” Over half the narrators credited their faith as a source that kept them going. Even Elizabeth, who repeated multiple times that she has done everything on her own, recognized that “only the help of God and God’s hand” as one thing that *has* enabled her strength.

### *Cost*

Differing from class and poverty, cost specifically refers to how high or low prices are in a given location. Oftentimes narrators would mention how much more expensive Costa Rica is in comparison to Nicaragua. Prices are higher and Gabby explains that in Costa Rica “here, you spend the same as you earn” Instead, she imagines living in a place where, “one doesn’t have to work to live each day but instead you have the opportunity to save [and] you can gain more than you spend.”

### *Environment*

The environment, or the natural landscapes that are depicted in storytelling, was mentioned by three narrators. This theme has one subtheme: preservation of nature against acts of violence. When asked about the shift that took place in 2018 which set off protests, Olga and Comandante Pino both started their stories with the Indio Maiz incident. Indio Maiz, as Comandante Pino describes, “is one of the most important reservations in Nicaragua. It is one of the natural reserves and it was burning, so the government didn’t do anything and there were many youth in Managua that started to protest.” She adds that many animals died as a result as well. Olga elaborated further: “the government of the US, the government of Costa Rica offered to stop it, to put out the fire...well, they denied help from the U.S., from the firefighters in Costa Rica to put out the fire.” This was the first time that the importance of environmental conservation was emphasized by one of the narrators. Nicaragua’s environment was also described in detail when Nubel shared that he walked for two weeks through a mountain range, which was covered with bombs, to get to Costa Rica. The mountain range, Serranías de Yolaina, “is very vast. If you don’t have a compass, you die in the mountain because you can walk for days and never leave.” In both circumstances, positive interactions between the environment and

people are evident. The narrators reveal how governmental violence did not only harm people, but nature as well.

### *All*

This is an all-encompassing theme that was created for narratives that did not completely fall into a specific category, such as when I asked the question, “what do you think was the most important thing that we talked about today? Why?” This led to multiple answers that related important summaries for the reader to ponder. The one subtheme is titled additional advice or comments to the audience. For example, Nadia recognized that certain narratives may stand out more to people than others:

I think everything, all of it was important, each step that someone gives and each thing that someone says is important. And the experience, I can give a testimony and say something and maybe what I said, in the end, someone likes it, and it makes them feel good and it motivates them to keep going and the other [thing] maybe what motivates you is what I said at the start, so I think that all the things are important.

### **Chapter 5: Discussion**

In my study, I attempted to discover how Nicaraguan immigrants’ vernacular discourses in Costa Rica, produced through oral histories, would challenge colonial social structure of power while, at the same time, support those same structure of power. My research questions were:

- 1) How do vernacular (personal) discourses surrounding Nicaraguan immigration reproduce and/or challenge colonial racial and gender hierarchies in Costa Rica?
- 2) How do these narratives activate conflicting discourses on national and other forms of social identity (race, gender, sexuality, etc.)?

In order to answer them, I conducted nine oral histories with Nicaraguan immigrants in Costa Rica. To recap, I found that nationalism was more predominant than race. Gender, on the other hand, was an important element for the Nicaraguan immigrants, who were mostly female, as sexuality was their way of surviving migration and equalizing themselves with men.

### **Race Versus Nationalism**

Every narrator brought up the topic of prejudices either naturally or when prompted with a question. They were all aware of these stereotypes, whether they experienced them personally or witnessed them in the lives of their friends and acquaintances. The underlying understanding that these stereotypes exist was nothing new.

However, one major insight taken from these narratives was that the concept of race did not come up naturally nor automatically. Even though Coloniality claims that “‘race’ (biological and cultural or, in our present terms, ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’) was placed as one of the basic criteria to classify the population in the power structure of the new society,” this part of the theory was not completely supported by the vernacular discourses (Quijano, 2000, p. 171). I could count the number of times the term “race” or a synonym thereof was mentioned in the narratives.

Coloniality further describes how one of the ways that modern empires dominate, and exploit is through creating a belief system that uses race to classify humans in such a way so that they are viewed as “erroneous, the inferior, the weak, the barbarians, the primitives, and so on” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2008, p. 110). According to the vernacular narratives, however, the concept of nationalism was more pertinent to migration in the context of Nicaraguan migration to Costa Rica.

Nationalism naturally came up in all of the narratives without any specific language to steer them toward an answer. When asked about their thoughts on Nicaraguans being labeled as

“naturally violent,” “poor,” “uncultured,” “analfabetos,” “mestizos,” and “dark skinned,” I noticed myself pushing for an answer that they were not going to give. Additionally, although all narrators acknowledged that these stereotypes exist, only three out of the eight narrators adamantly experienced poor treatment by Costa Ricans whereas the other five expressed little concern and had positive relationships with Costa Ricans. All three who expressed concern had migrated to Costa Rica in the last three years; two are mothers to young children, one was a mother to a married daughter who also escaped Nicaragua, and one had darker skin tone whereas the other two were lighter skin toned Nicaraguans. There were at least two darker skin toned Nicaraguans who had not experienced discrimination. Therefore, skin color showed to be of little importance in this situation. When asked where these stereotypes came from, narrators also repeated the issue of xenophobia over anything else. Xenophobia encompasses the fear of something foreign merely for being foreign. This concept was coded with nationalism in the theme of coloniality because it relates specifically to one’s home country, or nation, rather than race or skin tone. It focuses on where a person is from; for instance, stereotypes against Nicaraguans existed merely because individuals were from Nicaragua.

### ***Control of knowledge and subjectivity***

As is supported by Coloniality, one of the consequences of colonialism, the control of knowledge and subjectivity, is demonstrated through political violence in Nicaragua. Very frequently when political violence – coercion – was coded in the transcripts, coloniality – nationality – immediately followed. This shows that despite the destruction that is occurring in their country, the narrators still hold strongly to their national identities. Many of them reassured me that how Nicaragua is today is not an accurate description of the country, and that in fact, it is a beautiful location and used to be a pleasant place to live. Through these narratives, most



narrators distinguished Nicaraguan culture from Costa Rican culture. For example, they recognized that their indigeneity is more greatly emphasized and is something to be proud of rather than ashamed of. Through these narratives, it becomes clear that the vernacular discourses do challenge the subjectivity of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica. Coloniality claims that “indigenous blood” and “dark skinned” are something the Eurocentric viewpoint seeks to dominate, but the Nicaraguan narrators looked upon these traits as an honorable quality to define their nationalism.

### **Gender and Sexuality**

Another consequence of coloniality, according to Mignolo & Walsh (2019), is the control of gender and sexuality. Gender is a big indicator of belonging. When directly asked if they have noticed a difference in the treatment of Nicaraguan men versus Nicaraguan women by Ticos, most narrators did not relate any significant observation. Some compared Nicaraguan men to Tico men, and others recognized that generally women hold different gendered jobs compared to men. However, when talking about their personal experiences, all of the female narrators demonstrated examples of being subjected as women in a predominantly male, patriarchal society. A reoccurring narrative was that they have survived this journey on their own, without the help of others, and desire to be remembered as strong women. Commandante Pino was denied her rights and benefits when she gave birth in Costa Rica, Gabby proved to her father that she could live without his support, Elizabeth longed to be remembered as a “super mama” who takes care of three kids, one disabled, while her husband works all day six days a week, Olga demonstrated that she does not need a partner to thrive in her new environment, Nadia works to empower women to find their capacity as individuals that can bring change, and Eveling also helps with an organization that supports women’s rights. Indeed, all women recognized their assumed position in society but work fearlessly to combat the subjectivities of their gender.

Ultimately, these examples portray how vernacular discourses challenge gender hierarchies in both Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

### **Contributions**

A main contribution that this study makes is to reveal Coloniality – the dark side of modernity – that exists in Central America and bring forth specific narratives that would otherwise be “hidden from history” (Perks et al., 1998, p. ix). By doing so, the current study advances scholarship in the fields of communication and Latin American studies. Although research on the topic of Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica is diverse, this study uniquely investigated the topic through a communication and colonial lens. Coloniality opened up dialogue for a common yet “hidden” phenomenon that has been taking place for generations in Central America. Out of the three main areas of Latin American studies – South America, Central America, and Mexico – Central America is the least studied, especially at UNM (F. Bran Aragón, personal communication, Nov. 8 2021). Through an uncommon analytical and theoretical lens, the study advances literature on Central American studies and communication scholarship.

Oral histories created a unique and lasting trust network with the narrators which has continued beyond the interviewing room. As I witnessed, trust is an essential element within Central American communities. Without this element and without having conducted oral histories specifically, I predict that I would not have had access to interview the Nicaraguan community in Costa Rica at all. Additionally, this method gave further voice and agency to the Nicaraguan immigrants. As this study adds onto decolonial initiatives in Latin America, oral histories contributed to this most, because narrators are given their audios to keep permanently. This ensures their stories will be accessible to the entire community and passed onto future

generations. As a way to delink coloniality *and* relink it, the stories that are uncovered will not stay with me; the community will decide how to share and preserve them. An access code will be given to the narrators so that they can access the digital archive whenever they want and to also ensure that the archives remain secure and private.

### **Implications for the Future Research**

Further research should deepen the study of Nicaraguan immigration to Costa Rica through a colonial lens by interviewing more narrators and focusing on a specific wave of migration. Now that I have witnessed the complexes of a migration pattern in Central America, it is evident that coloniality exists differently in Latin America than it does in the United States. Although the concept roots to a similar origin (Colonialism) and brings to the forefront similar concerns and needs, it is expressed differently; for instance, race is a concept of greater concern in the U.S. than in Central America. Future research should investigate coloniality in other Latin American countries and among different migratory patterns and populations. Race and gender are a central to colonial studies but are understood differently in other countries and contexts. Further, research can continue to develop a greater understanding of migration in Latin America through the lens of communication to broaden the scope of immigration communication by reaching beyond the boundaries of the U.S.

### **Limitations**

For this study, I had a relatively small number of collaborators. If time had allowed, I would have interviewed many more narrators. It was not until I arrived in Costa Rica that connections were made, all of them quickly. As mentioned earlier, trust was an essential factor but so was timing. The fact that I was physically in Costa Rica increased the number of contacts I had. Planning interviews months in advance was not an effective strategy. If I had been in the

country longer, I would have kept making new contacts. As it was, I had to Zoom with two narrators instead of interviewing them in-person because of lack of time. I also had a short list of narrators that I was not able to reach out to because I was leaving the country a few days after I received their contact information.

Another limitation that should be addressed in future studies is to focus on a specific population. When I first started the research, I did not have any criteria for my narrators beyond, “Nicaraguan immigrants living in Costa Rica.” A few supportive individuals advised me to narrow my scope further. Since there are many types of immigrants, I then decided to reach out to immigrants who left Nicaragua specifically because of political violence. However, within this category, my narrators varied among many other qualities that I previously had not considered – education, age, occupation, age of children, life stages, specific reasons for migrating, and year of migration.

More specifically, future studies should be consistent with the year that migrants emigrated because I noticed a large gap in experiences between the narrators that migrated in the 80s versus the ones that migrated more recently. First, the circumstances that motivated their migration were very different – in the 80s, Nicaragua was facing a war but today it is a dictatorship not a war specifically. Second, the immigrants from the 80s have lived in Costa Rica longer than they did in Nicaragua. Therefore, their memories of Nicaragua and sentiments toward the country are not as fresh as those who emigrated more recently. This opened up more room for inconsistencies as variance in certain responses could be credited to a vast number of reasons. Therefore, future research should focus on a very specific criteria and stick to it as much as possible.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, oral histories and vernacular discourses allowed the study to bring non-dominant discourses to light. As migrants that see tensions, they were able to relate their voices; while not all narratives challenged the dominant, national discourses in Costa Rica, their vernacular discourses centered around what it means to be a woman, and for most, their spirituality. All the women's views about the significance of femininity and motherhood and their capabilities as women were greater than their society assumed of them. Additionally, they all proved in their own way that they exceeded those societal expectations through their actions when migrating and living in Costa Rica. Ironically, even though Christianity was introduced to the Americas through Colonialism, its values were a positive way that narrators coped with their circumstances. How much the Nicaraguan migrant community in Costa Rica affirms or challenges Costa Rican national discourses is of less concern than it is to guarantee that this community has been given the space they need and deserve to share what their values, beliefs, and concerns are, and when properly preserved, that they will not remain hidden from history.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Guide

I started the interview by stating the following: My name is Darcey Rydl. Today is (date). For the first time, I am interviewing (name). The interview is taking place in La Casa Paz y Flora in San Jose, Costa Rica. The interview is supported by the University of New Mexico, in the United States as part of my master's thesis.

I am glad to have the opportunity to learn about your personal experiences and perspectives. I would like to start by asking you about your childhood.

1. Where were you born and raised?\*
2. ¿Dónde ha vivido la mayor parte de su vida? \*
3. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en su residencia actual? \*
4. ¿Qué lugar considera o llama su hogar? \*
5. (IDENTIDAD) ¿Cómo se describiría usted antes los demás, por ejemplo, quien es y de donde es?
6. ¿Cuál es el nivel más alto de educación que ha obtenido? @
- ¿Cómo era su vida en Nicaragua? \*\*
7. ¿Cuál es su mejor recuerdo de su vida en Nicaragua? \*\*
8. ¿Qué le motivó a emigrar a Costa Rica? #
9. ¿Por qué Costa Rica en lugar de otro país? +
10. ¿Cuáles fueron las circunstancias que le llevaron a emigrar a Costa Rica? #
11. ¿Cuáles fueron las mayores dificultades al llegar a CR? +

12. ¿Qué ha hecho en el pasado para lidiar con la violencia política en Nicaragua? &
13. ¿Se consideraría usted misma, o a algún miembro de su familia, líderes comunitarios o activistas? Cuéntame sobre su activismo o liderazgo o el de su familia. &
14. ¿Es usted actualmente miembro de una organización formal? &
15. Si estuviera a cargo del Nicaragua, ¿qué cambiaría? &
16. ¿Donde identifica el poder en su comunidad en CR? #
17. ¿Cómo fueron los primeros meses en Costa Rica? †
18. ¿Qué fue lo más chistoso o lo más inesperado que le sucedió? !!
19. Entre ticos y nicas, ¿qué diferencias ha notado en los tratamientos en Costa Rica, si las hay? =
20. Entre hombre y mujer ¿Qué diferencias ha notado en los tratamientos en Costa Rica?
- ◇
21. ¿Cómo compararía su vida en Nicaragua con la de Costa Rica? †
22. En comparación con Costa Rica, ¿consideraría que Nicaragua tiene una fuerte identidad nacional? !
23. Cuando piensa en su vida dentro de 10 años, ¿Qué cree que será lo que recuerde más? %
24. ¿Dónde se imaginas dentro de 10 años? \*
25. ¿le gustaría regresar a Nicaragua? ^
26. 18. ¿Cómo imaginaba que sería su vida en CR antes de venir aquí? ¿Cómo se cumplieron o no se cumplieron sus expectativas? †
27. 19. ¿Le gustaría que algo fuera diferente en su vida en CR? Que seria? ^
28. 20. Por los datos que yo he leído y consultado en CR etiquetan a los nicas como

"naturalmente violentos", "pobres", "analfabetos", "incultos", "mestizos" y "de piel oscura".

29. ¿Puede explicar cómo cree que surgieron estos sentimientos? =

30. ¿Cómo se han dirigido los ticos a usted personalmente?

31. ¿Qué le gustaría haber hecho de manera diferente sobre su decisión de inmigrar? \*

32. ¿Qué pregunta(s) no hice que debería haberle preguntado? ##

33. ¿Qué consejo le daría ahora a alguien en una situación similar en Nicaragua? ##

34. ¿Qué cree que fue lo más importante de lo que hablamos hoy? ¿Por qué? ##

35. 25. ¿Qué le gustaría que más personas supieran o se dieran cuenta de su historia?

36. ¿Hay algo sobre usted que la mayoría de la gente no sabe y que le gustaría compartir conmigo? %\

## Appendix B

### Design and Procedure Continued

A typical day in Costa Rica included waking up, eating breakfast, and doing various activities in the morning. These activities consisted of sending text messages to potential narrators – introducing myself or confirming times and dates – reading, attending Praxis activities, or talking with my hosts, Heidi, or the study abroad students. My very first interview took place in the morning, but the rest were in the afternoon or evening – 3pm was a popular selection. The first two interviews took place on a Friday. Over the weekend, I contacted Rev. Dr. Karla and scheduled my third and fourth interview. On Monday, I met with Karla, and confirmed my third interview at 3pm that same day – she never arrived. When the hosts at the Bed and Breakfast heard the news, they immediately contacted their friend, who spontaneously showed up two hours later, ready to be interviewed. On Tuesday, I interviewed the male narrator, Nubel, that I met the previous Friday evening. The rest of the interviews were scheduled the day of, meaning I did not know that I was going to schedule an interview that day until the morning I woke up.

Once I had introduced myself to the narrator, coffee and bread were offered by the host – a typical Costa Rican midday snack. Next, I “inform(ed) narrators about the nature and purpose of oral history interviewing in general and their interview specifically” (Oral History Association, n.d., p. 3). I accomplished this by explaining in more detail what my project was about, what kind of questions I would be asking and what the goals of oral history are. At this time, I handed the narrators the consent form for them to read for themselves. In response, I asked the narrators if they would like to make any changes to the consent form such as adding



pseudonyms. Then they signed the form. The same procedure was followed with all the in-person narrators.

Since I was very flexible, I let the narrators decide what location and time worked best for them. Apart from the first few days in the country, I did not make many changes to my interview questions after each interview. Although, I did reword some questions that I felt did not make sense to my narrators in hopes that I could explain myself better. Before I met with the three narrators at Casa Adobe and Casa Paz y Flora, I made sure my recorder – a Philips Voice Tracer – worked and tested it in the room where the interview would be held. For the others, although conducting interviews in a new environment made this task more challenging, everyone was very conducive to finding a quiet place to speak and making any necessary changes, such as moving the recorder closer to the narrator or closing doors etc. Except for Nubel's interview, all the recordings were completed in one sitting. In Nubel's case, once I ended the recording, he admitted that he was very nervous. His wife then came over and joined the two of us in conversation. They both started sharing very rich stories from his childhood and the immigration process. Once I determined that he was going to dive deeper, with his permission, I started recording again. We were talking as if it was a causal conversation. His wife chipped in when she felt that he had forgotten something or wanted to provide further detail. He had shared his story with her many times. On two other occasions, the narrators and I ended up in informal conversation prior to the start of the recording. In both cases, we ended up talking about their lives at some capacity so I would add "oh, this would be great to also get on the recording, so do you mind if I start it?"

For the interviews that occurred on Zoom, a similar procedure was taken. One difference was that I sent out the consent form ahead of time, asked them over Zoom if they would like to

make any changes, and then had them send it back to me after the interview. In the first Zoom interview I used both the Zoom recording feature and my personal recorder but for the second I relied only on the Zoom recording. Before hitting the record button, I informed the narrators when I was going to start.

**Appendix C**  
Codebook

Abbreviation	Code	Theory	Explanation	Subcodes	BEST Representative Examples of Codes and Sub-codes (narrative prompts italicized)
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<p>Coloniality</p> <p>Color is RED</p>	<p>Example: Coloniality</p>	<p>Coloniality</p>	<p>The thought process behind how we understand things theoretically, conceptually, and ideologically which sheds light on the Eurocentric worldview that produces the subjectivities of people through exploitation</p>	<p>* Names of places ~ Names of people ! Nationality + Borders %% perceptions of nationality</p>	<p>* <i>What place do you consider or call home?</i> + <i>What were the biggest difficulties you faced once you arrived in Costa Rica?</i> ! <i>Between Ticos and Nicas, have you noticed a difference in how they are treated in Costa Rica?</i></p> <p>* this is a beautiful question because I think that my identity is half and half because I love CR a lot....and Nicaragua, well I was born in Nicaragua. I will never forget it.</p> <p>~ My name is Damaris Elizabeth Carvajal. I am 39 years old, I am Nicaraguan. I have lived in Costa Rica for almost 2 years because of problems in my country</p> <p>! Here, in Costa Rica, yes, they have lost a lot...but if you have the opportunity to go to Nicaragua, look at the <i>great</i> difference...it is like more that,</p>
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					<p>that culture <i>indigenous</i> is maintained more in Nicaragua than in Costa Rica.</p> <p>+ Yes, my reason why I didn't bring clothes nor shoes was because I knew how to swim very well; that's why I was the second one to get into the water, a river like the one that y'all have on the border of the U.S. – very dangerous.</p> <p>%% Yes, I think that it is a lot of prejudice, like thinking and thinking that "it's that they don't treat me well," and thinking "it's that over there they will discriminate against me," "it's that over there they will not accept me because I am Nicaraguan."</p>
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<p>{CODE 2}</p> <p>Color is ORANGE</p>	<p>Class and Poverty</p>	<p>Coloniality</p>	<p>An individual's living conditions which can be marked by their financial circumstances</p>	<p>† living situations          @ Education          @@ perceived perceptions of class, education          \$\$ workforce</p>	<p>† <i>How did you imagine your life looking like in Costa Rica before you came? How were those expectations met or not met?</i>          @ <i>What is the highest level of education that you have?</i>          @@ <i>From previous studies that I have read and reviewed, Costa Ricans label Nicaraguans as "poor," and "illiterate," and "uncultured"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Can you explain why you think these feelings arose?</i></li> <li>- <i>What have Ticos personally called you?</i></li> </ul> <p>Someone doesn't have the luxury to be going out every moment...so I had more time for myself in Nicaragua...it was not just working and working like [it is] here; that's the big difference.</p> <p>Yes, [from the parents] so I believe that education comes from the mom [parents] because it's just that Ticos are well educated...they are attentive to people, asking how you are, if you are well.</p>
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					<p>@ I think that Costa Ricans before the immigration wave here in 2018, they were accustomed to seeing Nicaraguans from the farms... because they say that I don't speak like a Nicaraguan because they are accustomed to the tone that they people from the rural areas speak or the people that didn't study</p>
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r me, what they tell me, that my level of schooling is minimal compared to their, he doesn't know that I might actually to have a level of schooling higher than him and they treat me as if I didn't have an education but I feel that I am very educated.

As he says (husband), "I am tired, I can't anymore." He does not have time to spend with the family because he only works. He works Monday through Sunday, Monday through Sunday, day and night for a miserable salary of 75,000 colones.

<p>{CODE 3}</p> <p>Color is YELLOW</p>	<p>Political Violence and activism</p>	<p>Coloniality</p>	<p>Violence induced by the government toward their own citizens and the citizens' responses</p>	<p># Coercion/war stories &amp; Emancipation (or lack thereof) % emotional effects of violence [] fight against perceptions</p>	<p><i># What were the circumstances leading up to emigrating to Costa Rica? &amp; If you were in charge of Nicaragua, what would you change?</i></p> <p># at the farm, there was a hill that [and] there was another hill towards the other side and the other from the other side and we stayed as we were in the center and they started to fight and to beat up and to shoot, from one hill to the other hill. So we were observing, just watching the bullets pass. And it was hard because someone in that moment can't do anything...It was very sad, we watched how they killed some woman and we went to see and I didn't. At that time I was 14 years old, they went to see them over there, horrible. Women that some of them knew. Very hard. To watch how they killed. Hard, hard. Those are marks that stay with someone for the rest of their life.</p>
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& I had been there for 3 months, and the information got to us that there had been a bunch of events so I didn't want to remain silence with anyone and I started to talk about this topic and I was fired automatically because one of the owners is socio of the people. They fired me and well with my anger we start to organize with many youths to organize a walk/march and protest...

% The truth is that there are moments when I can't continue, I can't continue. Nor do I let myself cry in front of my kids or in front of my husband because someone has to be strong.

% Because it was something that I couldn't...keep inside anymore. Because I tell you that you become depressed because there is not anyone to talk to, to vent to, to tell how you feel. With that. What you are truly going through with your family.

					<p>[] So, I have a series of questions that are convenient of what they are saying. And in the end when they don't respond to me, it's that I see that they are not convinced... So that is why I think that it is good to make them reflect to avoid the labeling. And that makes us work in a way. I mean that is what breaks the barriers and makes a society more, how would I say, more harmony, more harmony, more, more tolerant.</p>
<p>{CODE 4}</p> <p>Color is LIGHT/BRIGHT GREEN</p>	<p>Race</p>		<p>Social categorization of people based on skin color and/or ethnicity</p>	<p>== perceived perceptions of racism</p>	<p>= <i>From previous data that I have read and reviewed, Costa Ricans label Nicaraguans as "naturally violent," "mestizos," and "dark skinned,"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Can you explain why you think these feelings arose?</i></li> <li>- <i>What have Ticos personally called you?</i></li> </ul> <p>== and so he told me, I mean, when he was older when he was in the school, older, he told me that that I also was a Nica. I told him why? So he told me (that's</p>

					<p>what happened at school), “I am not a Nica” and then someone told him “yes, you are a Nica because you are dark skinned.”</p>
<p>{CODE 5}</p> <p>Color is DARK GREEN</p>	<p>Gender</p>	<p>Coloniality</p>	<p>A culturally defined understanding of what social behaviors are generally believed to be representations of masculinity and femininity</p>	<p>&lt;&gt;motherhood/femininity  () masculinity  (&gt; violence against women  &amp;&amp; queer, non-binary</p>	<p><i>Have you noticed a difference between the treatment of men and women Nicaraguans in Costa Rica?</i></p> <p>I am a super mom, super housewife and super woman as well because I have kept going with my own strength, without the help of anyone.</p> <p>I noticed that Nica men are much more physically aggressive. And yes, I notice for the Ticos, men are more passive-aggressive I would say. Yes, much more passive-aggressive: they don't express it openly and that can translate as micromachismo...</p> <p>he was able to get in, but I felt that what he wanted to do was to abuse me</p> <p>&amp; you can put it in your thesis</p>

					that...the LGBTI community [is being persecuted]
<p>{CODE 6}</p> <p>Color is LIGHT/BRIGHT BLUE</p>	Family	Vernacular Discourses	The feeling of being close to a small group of individuals; ones who you have assurance will support you in any given situation whether blood related or not	<p>^ loved ones (or lack thereof)</p> <p>*) communication = trust, love</p> <p>^^ traditional family values, gender</p> <p>++ traditional family values, culture</p>	<p>^ <i>Would you like something about your life in Costa Rica to be different? What would that be?</i></p> <p>^ I appreciated one family that is Nicaragua that realized everything that was happening, and they gave me a place to be/stay</p> <p>*) at the time there wasn't Internet, there wasn't Facebook, there wasn't anything; so, you weren't even able to communicate and continually give them that emotional/affectionate bond, love and family that they had constructed at the first stages of your infancy, so, over there, yes.</p>

= So, sometimes I tell him, let's go all of us, if we die, well we will all die. [Crying]. But to be separated and to tolerant hunger or other needs in life, that's not living, that's not living. [Long pause].

^^ Yes, in that moment he told me that he didn't agree, he simply told me that he didn't agree that I come here. In fact, one of these days he was telling me just that, he said "daughter, I didn't want you to go because I felt that I wasn't going to be able to protect you in another country."

++ For example, Christmases in CR and Christmases in Nicaragua. Christmas in Nicaragua we share. And even though there is little chicken, but we share it. Here I don't see that coexistence. ... We share whatever, if we know that an elderly lives alone we bring him food. If we know that a mom is

					<p>single next door and doesn't have a job to go to, then we bring it to her...or we invite her. So you say, <i>come to my house</i>, that is something that happens a lot. And here I haven't seen it.</p>
<p>{CODE 7}</p> <p>Color is DARK BLUE</p>	<p>Memory</p>	<p>Vernacular Discourses</p>	<p>Events that happened in the past that impactfully stay in people's thoughts in the present</p>	<p>** Remember Nicaragua !! Comic relief moment % Life reflection</p>	<p><i>** What is your favorite memory about your life in Nicaragua? !! What was the funniest/craziest/unexpected thing that happened to you in Costa Rica? % What would you like more people to know about your story? Is there something about you that most people don't know and you'd like to share?</i></p> <p>** So, it was free in the sense that I could spend time talking with my friends until 12 or 1 in the morning outside of my house and I never had problems with anyone...So all the time you lived a very peaceful life. I lived</p>

					<p>a peaceful life, I studied, sometimes I went out. And well I spent all my life like that, right: peaceful, in the sense that they always taught me to educate myself...</p> <p>!! So, one day they called me to be an actress, but it wasn't a very relevant role. But I went and participated so that made me laugh because out of everything that I have had to do and that was an experience very fun and beautiful.</p> <p>% It is important to return to talk about something that I had, in 2019 was the last time and for me to remember because the historic memory is important to know why I am here; my friends that were assassinated and their blood is still in the pavement where they cry out for justice so that is what I remember. It is important to talk about that because I remember that I should talk about it and claim justice.</p>
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More if needed	All	Vernacular Discourses	Encompass elements from all the codes above	## Additional advice or comments to audience	<p>## <i>What do you think was the most important thing that we talked about today? Why?</i></p> <p>## I think everything, all of it was important, each step that someone gives and each thing that someone says is important. And the experience, I can give a testimony and say something and maybe what I said, in the end, someone likes it and it makes them feel good and it motivates them to keep going and the other [thing] maybe what motivates you is what I said at the start, so I think that all the things are important.</p>
	Spirituality	Vernacular Discourses	Belief in a higher being or supernatural force	~! Hope { } Christianity	<p>~! I wasn't able to see everyone alive because they killed a lot of people but running into someone that was alive was: was so good...finding people alive that were fighting over there. That is priceless.</p> <p>{ } Well that situation that happen, it was what made me look more to God. I have not left</p>



					the fight, I am still active, but always I took care to look more to God and that has given me more tranquility/serenity and peace. And emotional stability.
	Cost	Coloniality	How high or low prices are in a given location	\$ Expense	\$ Maybe foreigner can go to Nicaragua and say it is very cheap but for someone to live in Nicaragua it is expensive because what someone earns is very little.
	Environment	Coloniality	The natural landscapes that are depicted in storytelling (about violence)	+ = preservation of nature against acts of violence	+ = and it is very vast, if you don't have a compass you die in the mountain because you can walk for day and never leave. so strong like when the burn of Indio Maiz started that is one of the most important reserves/reservations in Nicaragua. It is one of the natural reserves and it was burning, so the government didn't do anything and there were many youth in Managua that started to protest...