

DOCUMENTING THE UNDOCUMENTED
JOURNEYS OF HONDURAN MIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES

by

JANA SLÁDKOVÁ

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

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Abstract

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Jana Sládková

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This dissertation is a psycho-social study of the process of migration of Hondurans to the United States. Many Honduran migrants try to solve the increasing oppression of poverty in the poorest country in Latin America through migrating illegally to the United States. Even though there is demand for such undocumented labor in the United States, most migrants undergo a long and dangerous journey to fulfill this demand without documents they cannot obtain due to stringent visa policies. In this dissertation, I explore the dynamic complexity of this migration process and bring attention to the individual, subjective experiences of individual migrants while also taking into consideration the historical, social, and economic structures and contexts in which their migration takes place. I collected my data, 21 in-depth individual interviews, 220 newspaper articles, and field notes, during summers of 2004 and 2006, in Copán Ruinas, a migrant sending community in Honduras. Because of the difficulty of the journey, the majority of people who attempt it, do not get to the United States. Hence, the interviews included migrants who reached their destinations and those who did not. Systemic narrative design and analysis of individual and public narratives was instrumental in unfolding the complexities of the migration process and the interplay of individual experiences and larger structures. The narrative tools of script/story analysis (Daiute, in press; Labov & Waletzky, 1997) helped me identify shared and unique meanings in the

individual interviews and led to findings about the immigration process as well as the subjective psychological processes of the journey. Analysis of public narratives in Copán Ruinas provided socio-historical context of the journeys and their interaction with individual narratives illustrated which of them were persuasive for the individual migrants (Bakhtin, 1986) and mediated their future actions (Sarbin, 2004; Sladkova, 2007).

The results indicate that the success of the journey is mostly determined by migrants' access to finances. Those who are able to hire a coyote to facilitate the journey have a better chance of reaching their destinations. Those who can't afford one, travel alone mostly on top of freight trains in Mexico. Those trains, along with gangs and the Mexican police, present major obstacles for migrants and lead to deportations, injury, and death. The hardest part of the journey for Honduran migrants is Mexico, not the U.S.-Mexican border, mostly because the United States has enlisted the Mexican authorities in the efforts to stop undocumented migrants before they reach the U.S. soil. The findings further suggest a systematic nature of this undocumented migration involving many actors in sending, transit, and receiving countries and illustrate the journey with detailed accounts of lived experiences of Honduran migrants. The narrative analysis also revealed how migrants psychologically resolve the results of their journeys. While some unsuccessful migrants stressed the positive aspects of being back home with their families where they were most needed, others were bitter and sad comparing themselves to others who made it and were in better situations than they were after going through a terrible experience. On the other hand, many of those who made it to the United States minimized their own suffering and explained the journey's hardships through other less fortunate migrants.

Acknowledgements

I dedicate this dissertation to the thousands of migrants who travel from their homes to the United States to better their own lives and the lives of their families. I dedicate it to those who survive the difficult journey and to those who die along the way. I hope fewer and fewer people will need to experience the hardships of such migrations.

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Table of Contents

TABLES AND FIGURES.....	X
CHAPTER 1 – RATIONALE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	1
INTRODUCTION	1
RATIONALE.....	2
<i>Honduran Migration: History and Contemporary Context</i>	6
<i>Home Countries/Communities</i>	11
<i>What is known about Honduran journeys</i>	16
<i>Across Mexico</i>	19
<i>The U.S.-Mexico border</i>	24
<i>U.S. immigration policies and border enforcement</i>	26
PSYCHO-SOCIAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH THE UNDOCUMENTED JOURNEY	36
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	40
CHAPTER 2 – RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGY, AND ANALYSIS.....	43
RESEARCH SETTING: COPÁN RUINAS, HONDURAS	44
DATA COLLECTION	45
INDIVIDUAL NARRATIVES	46
PUBLIC NARRATIVES	49
<i>Field Notes</i>	49
<i>Local Newspapers</i>	51
<i>Television</i>	52
SOCIAL SCIENCE AND JOURNALISTIC LITERATURE	53
<i>Ethical Issues</i>	54
PARTICIPANTS	56
ANALYSIS	60
<i>Individual Narratives: Interviews</i>	60
<i>Public Narratives: newspaper articles, field notes</i>	68
BRINGING THE DATA TOGETHER.....	69
CHAPTER 3 – PUBLIC NARRATIVES.....	72
<i>Newspapers 2004</i>	76
<i>Field Notes 2004</i>	82
<i>2004 public narratives summary</i>	85
<i>2006 newspapers</i>	86
<i>2006 Newspaper Narratives Summary</i>	94
<i>Field Notes 2006</i>	96
<i>Discussion</i>	99
CHAPTER 4 - CONSTRUCTING A COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE – SCRIPT OF THE JOURNEY.....	103
SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY	107
UNSUCCESSFUL JOURNEY	115
DISCUSSION/SIGNIFICANCE	122
<i>Mexico as the Main Obstacle</i>	123
<i>Corruption</i>	124
<i>Differences btw successful and unsuccessful journeys: Access to Finances</i>	125
<i>The Systematic Nature of the Journey</i>	128
SUMMARY	130

CHAPTER 5 – INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES AND MAKING OF THE SELF THROUGH NARRATION.....	133
CASE STUDY: CONCHETTA, A SUCCESSFUL FEMALE MIGRANT	135
CASE STUDY: PAULO, AN UNSUCCESSFUL MALE MIGRANT	143
OTHER HIGH POINTS.....	151
COMPARISON OF HIGH POINTS	158
DISCUSSION/SIGNIFICANCE.....	161
CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS, SIGNIFICANCE, AND IMPLICATIONS.....	166
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	169
<i>Narration and the Self</i>	169
<i>The System and its Constituents</i>	170
<i>It comes down to money</i>	175
<i>Coyotes</i>	176
<i>Mexico</i>	177
<i>More on Policy and Policing in Mexico and elsewhere</i>	178
<i>Assistance to Migrants</i>	179
<i>The U.S.-Mexico Border</i>	180
CONTRIBUTIONS	181
IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	185
OTHER IMPLICATIONS.....	193
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN SPANISH.....	198
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT IN ENGLISH.....	199
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT IN SPANISH.....	200
REFERENCES	201

Tables and Figures

Table 1. Participants' Characteristics.....	59
Table 2. High Point Evaluative Markers	64
Table 3. High Point Illustration.....	67
Table 4. Interview Script Analysis	104
Table 5. Differences between successful and unsuccessful journeys.....	126
Table 6. Summary of High Points	160
Table 7. Actors and Factors involved in the process of Honduran migration	172
Figure 1: Map of Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico with a possible journey route	10
Figure 2: Details of Border between Guatemala and Mexico.....	17
Figure 3. Map of Crossings from Guatemala into Mexico	117
Figure 4. Migration System/Process.....	173

Chapter 1 – Rationale and Theoretical Framework

“On Wednesday it will be 8 days since they left,” my friend Maria¹ tells me as I talk to her on the phone, long distance, New York-Honduras. “Who? What?” I ask in confusion. As Maria answers “Luis and Pedro . . . with a coyote. I have not heard from them,” my heart freezes. I now understand that Maria’s son and son-in-law, both fathers of young children, left for the United States in hopes to resolve the family’s difficult economic situation she had told me about. I worry because of what may happen to them as they negotiate their way North. (Field notes, 2006)

The research described in this dissertation, originally driven by academic curiosity, has become personal, as friends I’ve made over the past four years in Honduras participate in the growing undocumented migration from Honduras to the United States. We hear much about undocumented immigrants in discussions critiquing or supporting their presence in the United States but not much is known about what these migrants go through to get to the United States. Thus, one of the goals for this dissertation is to present the complex process of the journey from Honduran migrants’ perspectives.

Introduction

Luis and Pedro did not join the approximately 1 million people who enter the United States without required documents (The Economist, 5/2005), most in hopes to improve their economic conditions in their home communities. Instead, they shared an experience of many other migrants who get captured in Mexico and deported back to Honduras. Many Central American migrants undergo a long journey on their way to the United States and are often exposed to various dangers both before and during the crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border. Even though some research exists about the U.S. border crossing (e.g., Andreas, 2001; Chavez, 1998; Eschbach, 1999; Hagan, 1998;

¹ All names throughout the dissertation are fictional to protect individuals’ identities.

Massey, 1998; Spener, 2001), mostly with a specific focus on Mexican migrants, the migration process of Central Americans has not received much attention in social science research (for exceptions see Mahler, 1995; Menjivar, 2001).

Crossing the Guatemala-Mexico border and traveling across Mexico seem to have become a big challenge for Honduran migrants on their way to the United States, one that many do not overcome. Although approximately 80,000 Hondurans try to reach the United States annually, only 25% succeed on any one attempt (CEDOH, 2005; Puerta, 2005). The odds stacked against those migrants are incredibly high and even those who reach their destinations get robbed, raped, injured, or delayed on their way. The remaining 75% are deported or return due to exhaustion or other difficulties. In Mexico, Hondurans accounted for 33% of the 11,000 detained and deported migrants in January 2007 (Instituto Nacional de Migración, Mexico). And this number does not include Honduran migrants who were stopped and possibly detained in Mexico but who were able to continue on their journey or those who returned voluntarily because they ran out of resources, psychological, physical, or financial. Moreover, in 2005, the U.S. border patrol apprehended almost 53,000 Hondurans, making up the second most detained nationality of migrants after Mexicans (Office of Immigration Statistics, Homeland Security).

Rationale

The above data along with the following four arguments make up the overall rationale for research presented in this dissertation:

1. Honduran migration (especially undocumented) is emerging as one of the largest migrations from Latin America, right after Mexican migration. It is estimated that

there are approximately 1 million Hondurans living in the United States (10% of the approximately 7 million inhabitants of Honduras) and the migration, which increased exponentially after hurricane Mitch in 1998 (CEDOH, 2005; Puerta, 2005; Schmalzbauer, 2004, 2005), continues to rise. Yet, very little research on Honduran migration exists to date.

2. Previous academic research on *Latin American* journeys concerns mostly Mexican migrants' crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border and is collected primarily from migrants who made it to the United States. Only limited research exists on journeys of Salvadoran migrants (Mahler, 1995, Menjivar, 2000) who reached it to the United States. No research on Honduran journeys or on the experiences of migrants who attempted the journey but did not make it to the United States has been carried out. In addition, the geopolitical context, which determines the nature and results of the journey, needs to be included in research.
3. Some recent journalistic coverage has focused on increased dangers for migrants on the Guatemala/Mexico border and in Mexico (i.e., Nazario, 2006; Chasing El Norte, 2005; El Tren de la Muerte, 2006). While this work is very important, especially in void of social science research, the coverage typically consists of sensationalistic accounts of events along the journey and thus excludes other experiences of migrants.
4. Psycho-social research that focuses on individual experiences of the journey, on what is psycho-socially important in migrants' experiential terms, is lacking in the immigration literature.

This dissertation bridges these gaps and expands on the existing social science and journalistic work by focusing on Honduran journeys. I investigate what is known about the journey from the migrants' experiences as they narrate them to me and I analyze their narratives for causes of success and failure of the journey, for roles of various actors involved in the process and the psychological impacts the journey may have on the migrants. Furthermore, I hypothesize that the contexts impact psycho-social experiences of migration and their understanding is necessary to create a fuller theory and explanation of the complex realities of undocumented migrants. I also focus on how studying the journey as a process or activity in the face of challenges and dangers contributes to psychological and immigration scholarship. The research also aims to humanize the migration process as in the United States both pro- or anti-immigrant forces, have often dehumanized and sometimes demonized immigrants (Conover, 1986; Heyman, 1995; Nazario, 2006). In the U.S., migrants often appear stripped of what Foucault called the "ordinary individuality, the everyday individuality of everybody" (Billig, 1994, p. 310). Hence, in this dissertation, I aim to capture the dynamic complexity of the migration process via the perspectives of migrants and by analyzing and (re)presenting their stories humanize the migration experience.

The following research questions guided my research:

1. Is there a quintessential journey of Honduran migrants to the United States? What is the nature and complexity of the journey?
2. What factors and actors (e.g., finances, transportation, migrants, coyotes, immigration and border officers, police, gangs, politicians, humanitarian and religious agencies) contribute to the success or failure of the journey? Do individual migrants portray these differently than other narrators (media, immigration policies, etc.)?
3. How do undocumented migrants narrate the journey? How do the narratives and the narrative genres of successful undocumented migrants and migrants who tried but did not

reach the United States differ? What do migrants narrate as most salient to them and how do they frame these narratives?

4. What new insights about the migration process emerge from a psycho-social narrative analysis?

To answer these questions and achieve the research objectives, I first conducted a thorough comprehensive literature review on the topic, followed by multilayered research carried out in Honduras with female and male migrants who have experienced a version of the journey to locate potential patterns and causes of failed and successful² journeys, and cross-analyzing their data with other public narratives found in local press, media, and other observations.

I designed my research (for detailed methodology and analysis, see chapter 2) to solicit narratives from migrants through in-depth semi-structured interviews set in the context of the sending community of Copán Ruinas in Honduras. Narrative analysis aided me in understanding individual sources of data as well as connecting them across. I presume that narrating is an active process and that narratives are cultural meanings and interpretations that guide perceptions, thought, interaction, and action (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). The way people tell stories influences how they perceive and remember past and prepare for future events. In addition, narrative analysis includes multiple referential meanings that point to objects, people, events and evaluative meanings that indicate why the story is being told (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Narrative analysis can also generate unique insights into the various forces that order and illuminate relations

² Success in this context means that the migrant reached his/her destination in the United States. It does not pertain to any economic or other gains from the migration or that they remain in the United States. Previous research (Sladkova, 2007) shows that Hondurans intend to stay in the U.S. only for a limited period of time (2-4 years), save money, and return to Honduras. Thus, remaining in the U.S. long-term does not constitute success in this context.

between self and society. In this research, I used script/story analysis (Daiute & Nelson, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1997) of the individual interviews. The goal of a script/story analysis is to identify shared and unique meanings in a data set to address research questions and designs. The script-phase seeks common patterns of meaning or generalizations, while the story-phase focuses on more personal, nuanced meanings and provides details on events important to the narrator (Daiute, in press). Thus, the script analysis aided me in answering my first two questions, while the story portion addressed question three (see questions on p. 4).

In addition to the individual narratives, I analyzed public narratives as they enact values and interactions about various topics, including migration, and are available for analysis of cultural beliefs, practices, actors, and policies. Cross analysis of public and individual narratives enabled me to determine the influence the public narratives may have had on individual migrants.

I begin the body of my dissertation with setting the geopolitical context of the journey as known both from research and journalistic accounts.

Honduran Migration: History and Contemporary Context

The roots of Honduran migration to the United States go deep into the history of the country and its relations with the United States. Honduran politics and economy have been defined by the presence of American fruit companies, who owned much of its productive land for almost 200 years and created dependence on banana exports (Euraque, 1996; Lapper, 1985; Schmalzbauer, 2005). While other Central American

countries developed independent production of coffee, the emphasis on banana production (mostly American owned) in Honduras actually impeded Honduran independent development (Schmalzbauer, 2005). The 1960s and 1970s liberal reforms prevented the revolutions and civil wars that took place in other Central American countries. Instead, the country continued to implement reforms under the supervision of the military. In the 1980s, the United States used Honduras to launch military operations in Nicaragua and El Salvador and changed it from a Banana republic to a Pentagon republic (Chomsky, 1985). Thus, Honduras did not go through an explicit civil war like El Salvador or Guatemala (Euraque, 1996; Kruckewitt, 2005; Lapper, 1985), but it still experienced a lot of human rights violations and repression, including disappearances, torture, and other killings. Schmalzbauer (2005) concludes that this violence, along with persisting poverty, spurred the first official wave of Honduran migration to the United States in the 1980s. Even though Honduras no longer has significant U.S. military presence and the civil wars in the region have ceased, its widespread gang violence and poverty continue to push people out.

The difficult history and complex contemporary Honduran realities have driven many Honduran households to send a member with the highest wage-earning potential to the United States expecting that s/he will be able to send remittances back home to support the family (Schmalzbauer, 2004). Recently, Honduras has become one of the poorest countries in the global south, with 48% of its population living below its poverty line. 22% of Hondurans are undernourished, which means that their food intake is chronically insufficient to meet their daily energy requirements. Honduras ranks 117 out of 177 countries in the human development index, “a composite index measuring average

achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living” (Honduras in Human Development Report, 2006). According to the Honduran newspaper *Tiempo* (8/7/04), 4.5 million of the total 7 million inhabitants do not earn enough to cover their basic necessities. In addition, more than 207,000 young people are neither working nor studying, and one in every five persons over 15 years of age doesn’t know how to read or write (*Tiempo*, 8/9/04). In 1998, Hurricane Mitch caused major damage to the already weak economy and destroyed many fruit fields. This resulted in the closing of many of the multinational fruit companies (Euraque, 1996; Schmalzbauer, 2004), worsening the already dire economic situation in Honduras. One consequence of this disaster has been an increased migration from Honduras to the United States, which is currently at its historical high (Puerta, 2005). Hondurans migrate mostly to the United States mostly because of the strong historical, political, and economic ties of the two countries and the growing social networks that partially facilitate the process (Schmalzbauer, 2005).

While it is difficult to determine the exact numbers of people leaving, Puerta (2005) reports 80,000 annual attempts of which 25% (or 20,000) are successful. CEDOH (2005) estimates the number of migrants reaching the U.S. slightly higher at 27,000 annually. Of those people who leave, 72% are men and 28% women (CEDOH, 2005). Research also indicates that migrants come from more diverse economic strata after hurricane Mitch. They include both very poor and poor people who travel alone as well as people from lower and middle classes who travel with coyotes or tourists visas (CEDOH, 2005).

While it appears that all Hondurans may prefer to travel to the United States freely or with required visas, the following quote from a research participant illustrates why that is an unattainable proposition for most:

They give you lots of requirements. You need to have 200,000 lempiras³ in a bank account, papers for houses, cars, a bunch of documents, which are unattainable... maybe for the society which is a bit middle (class). So, people who have money here in Honduras get visas for the United States (Slackova, 2007).

These unofficial yet stringent requirements for U.S. entry visas, which are supposed to prove that the traveler-to-be has strong (economically defined) ties to his home, are likely designed to stop Hondurans from entering and working in the United States.

Nevertheless, the visa denials do not accomplish their mission completely. Instead, those who have already determined they want or need to leave Honduras, travel to the U.S. as *mojados* (wetbacks), without visas. Many of the less educated and poor do not even attempt the complicated and costly process of applying for a passport (\$50), making an appointment in the US embassy (\$100), and traveling to the capital for their interview. Instead, they set on the arduous journey across three borders between Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States, as well as across the entire countries of Guatemala and Mexico. It is not uncommon for the journey to span 3,000 miles over several weeks, months, even years (CEDOH, 2005). See map in Figure 1 (p. 10) for span of the journey.

³ Lempira is the national currency of Honduras. \$1 = 18.93 Lempiras (3/25/07). 200,000 Lempiras = \$10,565.

Home Countries/Communities

The need and desire to set out on the journey to the United States starts at home. Undoubtedly, the bleak socio-economic conditions in Honduras I mentioned earlier constitute the main motivation for migration (Sladkova, 2007). My own research suggests that the tourism-based economy of Copán Ruinas is not strong enough to support the entire community. In fact, tourism hikes up the prices of food and other commodities, making them unaffordable for many local residents. And so, outside of the small tourist center, many people in Copán Ruinas live in poverty. Despite its historical importance, the state of Copán is the fifth poorest in Honduras, already one of the poorest countries of Latin America, and has high levels of unemployment. In fact, in addition to tourism, remittances from the United States are the most important sources of income in the community and most able members of families continue to migrate to the United States mostly in search of work they are unable to find in Copán Ruinas.

Actually, developing countries usually have an oversupply of workers along with underemployment and thus the loss of labor does not significantly reduce production or constrain economic growth. In fact, the loss of human capital may be offset by the return flow of financial capital in remittances (de la Garza, 2002; Massey et al., 2002). Not surprisingly then, the government of Honduras and other Latin American countries have not done much to stop their citizens from migrating because their economies benefit tremendously from the remittances that migrants send back from the United States (CEDOH, 2005; Cunningham, 2004; de la Garza, 2002; Kyle & Dale, 2001; Mahler, 1995; Pessar, 1995; Puerta, 2005). In Mexico, ex-President Fox “called the Mexican migrants who remit \$9.8 billion annually to Mexico “heroes”” (Cunningham, 2004, p.

337). In Honduras, remittances signify the third biggest portion of the national income, after tourism and foreign owned manufacturing factories known as maquiladoras (Puerta, 2005) and in 2004 reached 1.3 billion dollars (CEDOH, 2005). Moreover, Central American countries typically lack criminal law for most related activities such as human smuggling (Kyle & Dale, 2001). Even the laws that are established are not enforced but rather abused by wide-spread corruption (Chin, 1999; Nazario, 2006; Ruiz, 2003). My research, particularly the analysis of newspaper and television narratives, will illuminate these issues further and help answer questions of the importance of remittances in Honduran economy and the Honduran government's views on emigration.

Nevertheless, hard conditions themselves would not be sufficient for large numbers of people to leave their homes. After all, not everyone emigrates. This desire is perpetuated by potential migrants' expectations, which are heavily influenced by narratives from previous migrants as well as local and international media, tourists, and coyotes (Sladkova, in 2007). According to Appadurai (1990), these narratives or mediascapes contribute to the potential migrants' decision making about migration and their proper interpretations may contribute to the success of their journey. Massey et al. (1987) theorize that access to relatives or friends who have migrated to the United States or those who have gone and come back provides potential migrants with specific social capital that may help migrants to prepare for the journey and to get through it successfully (Massey et al., 1987; Massey & Aysa, 2005; Singer & Massey, 1998). This dissertation will shed more light on the power of previous migrants' narratives and how they are used in the community of Copán Ruinas. Are potential migrants lured by

precious migrants' successes or are they dismayed by their problems and hardships?
What kind of information do people have about the journey from previous migrants?

Prices of assisted undocumented migration from Honduras to the United States have been rising from around \$6,000 in 2004 to \$8,000 a person in 2006 and 2007 (CEDOH, 2005; Puerta, 2005; Sladkova, 2007) for what is often a dangerous journey with no real guarantees of safe arrival at desired destination. Ironically, any price paid for an undocumented journey is 10 times higher than the cost of a regular 3-hour flight from Honduras to the United States, which can be purchased for around \$600 (Mahler, 1995). Financing the trip often involves personal savings, interest loans from friends and local banks (officially applied for improving one's housing or opening a small business), loans with very high interest rates from people in the community who specialize in these loans and who are sometimes referred to as *chulqueros* (Kyle, 2000; Mahler, 19995; Menjivar, 2000), but mostly from relatives in the United States. Menjivar (2000) reports that 47 % of her 150 Salvadoran respondents mentioned that a relative in the U.S. had financed their trip. In most cases the money is a loan and not a gift and is expected to be repaid from wages migrants are to make in the United States. The data in this research will show whether Honduran migrants rely on their relatives in the United States or at home to pay for their journeys. What do those who do not have access to any or enough finances do? Do they travel alone or do they stay home? Do migrants with more financial resources reach the United States more frequently than those who don't?

Many communities in Latin America have an array of unofficial, yet organized networks of services, which include access to migration "merchants" such as coyote assistants, local coyotes themselves, money lenders, document forgers, and special travel

agents (Adler, 2004; Castro, 1998; Kyle, 2000; Mahler, 1995a; Spener, 2001). They provide a variety of services for potential migrants, including trip financing services, getting fake travel documents and visas, and coyote services. In fact, coyotes or their assistants actively seek people to take on the journey, but migrants prefer (if they can choose) to travel with “trustworthy coyotes” who have brought their friends and relatives to the U.S. (Adler, 2004; Castro, 1998; Mahler, 1995a; Spener, 2001). The services purchased are determined by the cost, which in turn varies by the distance between the country of origin and the destination and the level of comfort and security of the trip; and whether one travels by ground, air, or boat (Mahler, 1995). Mahler (1995) lists several alternatives for migrants from El Salvador including falsifying visas, traveling by air to the Mexico-U.S. border, or crossing by land all the way. The most expensive service involves getting fake documents or borrowed passports and visas (Kyle, 2000; Kyle & Dale, 2001; Mahler, 1995; Menjivar, 2000). While traveling with fraudulent documents makes the journey itself faster and safer, the risks of being detected upon entry to the United States are fairly high and if caught, the migrant is charged with a criminal offense. Since prices of fake documents are higher than hiring a coyote and traveling overland, most migrants work with a local coyote assistant or “tramitador” (Kyle, 2000) who arranges the overland journey to the United States.

Coyotes

Much literature exists about human smugglers or coyotes and their roles in undocumented migration world-wide. According to Castro (1998) and Spener (2001) coyotes operating in Central America and Mexico serve different purposes and offer different services for varied fees. Local-interior coyotes are typically local residents who

are known as experienced guides and who lead small groups of 5-6 people. They have gained their knowledge of crossing routes through prior experiences and they often rely on public bus and train systems to facilitate the journey. They are usually recommended by word-of-mouth and operate in a limited geographic area (Castro, 1998; Spener, 2001). Friends and kin, another category identified by Spener (2001), also facilitate new migrants' journeys based on their prior experience and are cheaper than commercial coyotes as well as more trusted. In addition, local-border coyotes identified by Castro (1998) operate in wider geographic areas, have contacts in both home communities and border towns, but still form a somewhat informal network and make contacts in places frequented by migrants. Pateros and commercial border smugglers (Castro, 1998; Spener, 2001) specialize only in crossing the U.S.-Mexico border and differ in the sophistication and range of crossing services they provide. Commercial smugglers are the only ones with formal structured organizations and provide higher success in exchange for higher prices (Castro, 1998).

National governments and some transnational organizations have deemed coyotes international criminals of human smuggling (Chin, 2001; Koslowski, 2001; Kyle, 2000; Spener, 2001). Although coyotes sometimes harm the migrants or abandon them, for the most part, they want to "deliver" the migrants to their destinations because they usually get paid at least half of their fee (for Honduran migrants as much as \$4,000) when the migrants reach their destinations (Castro, 1998; Kyle, 2000; Spener, 2001). Instead of viewing smugglers as preying upon migrant stream, "like foxes hunting sheep," Spener (2001) describes them as part of wider "transborder networks of trust" (p. 14).

Even though prices of smuggling vary, many migrants do not have access to enough money to pay a coyote, or at least not for the entire journey, and thus travel on their own or with friends (CEDOH, 2005). These individual migrants are the most vulnerable because they do not have immediate guidance on how to avoid or negotiate the dangers they may encounter and lack money to bribe their way north. Research presented in this dissertation will contribute to existing literature on coyotes and their roles by answering specifically what roles they play and how they are perceived by Honduran migrants and how the migrants' perspectives confirm or dispute those of scholars and journalists.

What is known about Honduran journeys

All Honduran migrants, traveling overland, alone or with assistance, first have to cross the Honduras/Guatemala border. This crossing has typically not been problematic for Hondurans who only need their IDs to enter and travel in Guatemala. Nevertheless, recent journalistic reports (Jordan, 2004) indicate sexual exploitation of female migrants by border patrol officers in exchange for letting them continue north. Jordan (2004) writes that many women, usually those traveling without a coyote, and desperate to reach the United States, are sexually violated by corrupt officers. Since my research includes female participants, I will be able to compare their accounts to those presented by Jordan and other journalists. Did the female migrants in my research experience abuse? Were those women who traveled alone more vulnerable than migrants who travel in groups or with coyotes?

There is very little known about crossing Guatemala perhaps because it has not been dramatic enough for journalists to explore. Hence, the data from Honduran migrants

in this research will provide new information about the situation in Guatemala in regards to undocumented migrants' crossings.

After traversing Guatemala, Honduran migrants face the challenge of crossing into and across Mexico. See Figure 2 below for map of border between Guatemala and Mexico.

Figure 2: Details of Border between Guatemala and Mexico



Reprinted from <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/guatemala.pdf>

The Guatemala-Mexico border spans more than 500 miles and because much of the border is constituted of wildlife and nature, only small portions of the border are used for crossing (Ruiz, 2003). The biggest border towns and areas used by migrants on their way north include Tecún Umán, Talisman (or Democracia) in Guatemala, Ciudad Hidalgo, Ciudad Cuauhtámoc, and Tapachula in Mexico, on the southern part of the border and all leading to the impoverished Mexican state of Chiapas. Various journalistic accounts report that crossing the border requires either swimming or floating across rivers in inner tubes, or it necessitates crossing through the northern jungle-like part, usually aided by coyotes (Chasing El Norte, 2005; Gutierrez, 2002; Jordan, 2004; Nazario, 2006).

Journalists report that the border zone itself has become dangerous as it attracts gangs looking to rob migrants ready to cross and drug smugglers who deal in the Guatemalan border towns before continuing north. Even though drug and migrant smuggling is mostly separate, their convergence in small locations creates dangerous conditions (Jordan, 2004). These towns harbor many desperate migrants as they try to determine how they are going to cross, and many try to make money there to be able to hire a coyote to help them cross. Ciudad Hidalgo and Tecún Umán on the southern Mexican border have become notorious for prostitution mostly provided by migrant women from Central and South America, whose journey was interrupted, who were robbed and/or raped, and who, ashamed to return back home, try to save up to continue north (Gutierrez, 2002; Jordan, 2004; Nazario, 2006; Ruiz, 2003).

Tecún Umán is controlled by two rival gangs, Mara Salvatrucha and 18th Street (Nazario, 2006), originally formed in Los Angeles but recently spreading through Central

America, fueled by youngsters deported from the United States to places where they have little or no supports because their families have relocated to the U.S. (Conference on Deportation, John Jay College, 2005). Migrants die in these border towns at a rate two or three a week (Nazario, 2006) in the hands of the gangs. Still, many migrants continue going through Tecún Umán because there the river is “slower, easier to ford. A platoon of large passenger tricycles wheels migrants from the bus stop to the riverbank, swerving along the main, rutted, dirt road to avoid pigs and trash burning in the middle of the street.... Migrants prefer to cross in a raft than risk the river alone” (Nazario, 2006, p. 54). While it may take migrants time or several attempts, most do succeed in crossing into Mexico, which they traverse in different ways depending on their finances and whether they are traveling with or without a coyote (Mahler, 1995; Menjivar, 2000; Ruiz, 2003). What will we learn from Honduran migrants’ narratives about these borders? How and where do Honduran migrants in my study cross into Mexico? What problems do they encounter?

Research presented below suggests that regardless of the means of travel, all migrants are exposed to dangers and difficulties while in Mexico.

Across Mexico

In the late 1970s, Mexico started to cooperate with the U.S. mostly to combat professional smugglers due to the rising “concerns over the smuggling of Central Americans to the United States through Mexican territory” (Andreas, 2001, p. 111). In the mid 1980’s, Mexico started requiring visas for Central Americans in order to stop the flow of migrants through Mexico. The requirements mirror those for American visas and are thus unattainable for most Hondurans for reasons mentioned earlier (Mahler, 1995;

Menjivar, 2000; Sladkova, 2007). In 1997, the INS initiated Operation Global Reach, a program that opened 13 offices in sending and transit countries in Central America in order to gather information, assist countries in identifying smugglers, provide support for prosecution, and train law enforcement personnel (Koslowski, 2001).

Without a visa, Central and South American migrants become undocumented and hunted 1,500 miles and more south of the U.S.-Mexico border. Jordan (2004) reports that the United States' increased pressure on Mexico to arrest Central American migrants before they reach the U.S.-Mexico border has quietly moved the U.S.-Mexico border south to the border with Guatemala. Ruiz (2003) claims that although all undocumented migrants are exposed to various dangers on their journey, Honduran migrants suffer the most on their way through Mexico. The obstacles they encounter are "authorities that claim bribes in exchange for letting migrants continue or who detain them without water and food for indeterminate periods of time. Other hindrances are local bandits who dedicate themselves to assaulting and robbing migrants" (Ruiz, 2003, p. 9, translated from the Spanish original). Others report (Jordan, 2004; Mahler, 1995; Spener, 2001) that coyotes themselves sometimes rob the migrants once they enter Mexico and leave them without means and knowledge of where they are and how to either continue or return back. The same gangs that "rule" over the Guatemala/Mexico border towns also attack, rob, rape, and/or kill migrants even more vulnerable in Mexico (El Tren de la Muerte, 2005; Gutierrez, 2002; Mahler, 1995; Nazario, 2006).

Large numbers of migrants have been using the Mexican railway system as a means of transportation across Mexico. The rail system, built in 1908 to connect fertile agricultural parts of Chiapas and Guatemala with markets in the interior of Mexico (Ruiz,

2003), has become one of the preferred means of transportation for the poorest of migrants. These freight trains do not offer the comfort of regular train travel. Hiding where they can near the railway tracks, migrants wait for the trains to either slow down or if it's the first station, to start moving (Chasing El Norte, 2005; El Tren de la Muerte, 2005; Gutierrez, 2002; Nazario, 2006). As the train approaches, they start running, chasing the train, trying to hop on to it sometimes hundreds of people at the same place. One train engineer says that many migrants fall under the train cars as they try to board them or from fatigue by days without food. There are estimates indicating that for every 100 migrants who board the trains, only three or four succeed in reaching the northern Mexican border (Gutierrez, 2002; Nazario, 2006).

Journalists report that the rest get captured by immigration officers and the police along the way, get injured by falling off the trains, or attacked by gangs who board the trains in order to rob migrants traveling on their tops. Immigration checkpoints are stationed along the railways and when the trains approach them, migrants jump off and hide along the rails from *la migra*. If not caught or injured, they continue on the next train and if they are caught, they either bribe their way out or are returned back to Guatemala or Honduras on buses sometimes called El Bus de Lagrimas (the Bus of Tears). From some locations, there are as many as eight buses a day, carrying 100,000 unhappy migrants every year (Nazario, 2006).

The various dangers that traveling on the train presents have led to nicknaming it "El Tren de la Muerte" or the "The Train of Death" (Gutierrez, 2002; Nazario, 2006; Ruiz, 2003). In fact, the Train of Death has been so prevalent in the undocumented migrants' journeys that two documentaries (Chasing El Norte, 2005; El Tren de la

Muerte, 2005) have recently been released about it. Moreover, the train plays major role in Nazario's book (2006) about a Honduran migrant Enrique traveling to the United States to find his mother. This kind of journalism and the information it provides may well represent a shift toward the plight, if not necessarily always a perspective of the migrants, and offers a direction for new psycho-social theories and research to investigate whether and how the journey and the already mentioned elements are prominent in the journey and why. Nevertheless, the journalistic accounts stress the sensationalistic events and likely miss or not report on other experiences. As I aforementioned, social scientists (including psychologists) have not focused on Central American migrants' journeys to the U.S. in their entirety and from the point of view of migrants whether they did or did not make it all way. What are their experiences? Are those who travel on trains less or more likely to reach their destinations? How do they navigate the trains and what do they experience? What obstacles do they face in Mexico? This research will answer those and other questions about the journey in Mexico.

Whether migrants travel alone, with coyotes, on trains, on foot, on buses, or hidden in trucks, most encounter Mexican immigration officials, or the local or federal police (the *federales*) at various checkpoints. Nazario (2006) writes that "for immigration agents, squeezing cash from migrants is central to day-to-day operations, helping underpaid agents buy big houses and nice cars. At highway checkpoints, agents charge smugglers \$50 to \$200 per migrant to pass through" (p. 49) and coyotes factor money for bribes into the cost of the journey (Menjivar, 2000). Corruption is wide-spread not only on the border but through the entire Mexican immigration enforcement system and thus counters the laws that are supposed to detect, stop, and return migrants back home (Kyle,

2001; Mahler, 1995; Menjivar, 2000; Ruiz, 2003). In fact, corruption is so wide-spread and the bribes so central to the income of the officers that “one government worker in the Mexican state of Tabasco, who in 1999 denounced corruption by certain judicial police agents, was dead a few days later in a mysterious car accident” (Nazario, 2006, p. 49).

Even though Mexico is exploring its own migration policies (NYU Conference on Immigration, May 2006), to date, it has not been able to officially adopt either humanitarian or other uniform national policy toward Central American migrants (Kyle, 2001; Menjivar, 2000). In addition to bribes, other violations of human rights such as rape, robbery (Davis, 1990), or keeping migrants in inhumane conditions in detention centers, perpetrated by the Mexican police and other officials (as opposed to gangs and other unofficial actors) have risen drastically in the recent years (Ruiz, 2003). In 1998 and 1999, the authorities were responsible for more than half of grievances and the lack of law enforcement in general plays a role in those abuses (Ruiz, 2003). My research will provide the Honduran migrants’ perspectives on the role of Mexican police and their alleged abuses.

While the migrants seem to be exposed to lots of dangers in Mexico, help is scarce. Nazario (2006) and Ruiz (2003) report that a few religious organizations provide migrants with food and water, treat their injuries, connect them with relatives at home and in the United States, and some provide legal aid (Kyle, 2001; Nazario, 2006; Ruiz, 2003). In locations where many migrants suffer injuries from jumping or falling of the trains are a handful of recuperation centers for those who lose their limbs or suffer other crippling injuries (El Tren de la Muerte, 2005; Nazario, 2006). Those centers along with medical treatment and burials of the migrants cost the Mexican government increasingly

more money and draw opposition from local residents. At the same time, other human rights groups pressure the Mexican government to “ratify international conventions for the protection of the migrants’ rights” (Kyle, 2001; p. 74).

The difficulties and dangers along the way described above offer a possible explanation for the previously mentioned statistics of only 25 % of Honduran migrants successfully crossing Guatemala and Mexico (Puerta, 2005). Do migrants in my research confirm it to the United States or offer other explanations? Are there clear differences between those who made it and those who didn’t that would indicate keys to success? Do the migrants see Mexico as a major obstacle or is it the U.S.-Mexico border that they perceive and experience as the hardest part of the journey?

The U.S.-Mexico border

The most visible (both literally and figuratively) “structure” that hinders undocumented migration and through which most undocumented Latin American migrants enter the United States is the border that separates Mexico and the United States. The border may become more visible as the U.S. government keeps funding fences and more technology to detect and stop border crossers. Alvarez (1995) attributes the contentious role of the border to the inequality of power, economics, and the human conditions stemming from conflicts of power and domination in contemporary global capitalism and the nation-state. According to him, the crossings of the border by persons without required documents are only manifestations of those inequalities and contradictions expressed in local-level practices. Suárez-Orozco (2001) actually labels the border the most contested one because it separates two vastly unequal countries of Mexico and the United States. Anzaldúa (1999) refers to the border as “*una herida*

abierta (an open wound) where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. ... the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture” (p. 25).

Through undocumented migration “the third world continues to extend itself into the first” (Alvarez, 1995, p. 450), and through the export of jobs, financial “loans” and other capitalist policies, the nation-states “encroach onto territories beyond borders” (Alvarez, 1995, p. 450). To engulf and guard the centers of wealth (Cunningham, 2004) and power of the United States, the U.S-Mexico border is probably the most heavily guarded border in the world. Since increased enforcement after 9/11, it has been militarized in unprecedented ways and the American Border Patrol follows only the military as the second largest arms-bearing branch of the U.S. government (Durand & Massey, 2004).

Spener (2001) proposes that there is actually a “battle for the border” (p. 131) between the Mexican transnational migrants and the United States’ government forces. The migrants’ weapons are mostly social networks and relationships across the border that have been built up over the long history of labor migration to the United States, while the government’s weapons are paramilitary and bureaucratic (Spener, 2001). Paradoxically, while the United States promotes globalization and free trade encouraging the free flows of capital, services, information, and production across national boundaries, the flow of people is not included in the agreement. More specifically, only certain kinds of immigrants are included, creating class stratification among migrants. Businessmen can be legal transnational migrants. However, working class laborers cannot be legal transnational migrants so they must mobilize their migration and their transnationalism through other channels/avenues. Since the United States does not provide for legal migration of laborers, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)

now Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) absorbed in the Department of Homeland Security has been engaged in probably the world's largest effort to control human movement. It arrests 1 million persons a year, yet, it has paradoxically also facilitated the entry of undocumented immigrant labor to the U.S. economy (Heyman, 1995) by ambivalent enforcement as explained in the next section.

Nevertheless, the border itself would not be a major obstacle for migrants were it not enforced and guarded by ever-changing immigration laws, or weapons both real and bureaucratic mentioned previously by Spener (2001).

U.S. immigration policies and border enforcement

The U.S. government's recent decision to build more walls and fences along the U.S.-Mexico border is only the latest manifestation of U.S. policies that started in the 1980s and that are based on the assumption that increased enforcement and surveillance of the border will deter and stop undocumented migration. The following review of existing social-science research on this topic overwhelmingly shows that this goal has not been accomplished.

Andreas (2001) claims that the Chinese exclusion Act in 1882, which resulted in Chinese migrants trying to reach the United States via Mexico with the help of smugglers, led to subsequent building of the border force. In 1923, the United States Border Patrol was formed and had 450 officers. They were "protecting" the border from Asian and European migrants using Mexico as a way of reaching their final destinations in the United States. Mexican migrants, mostly temporal agricultural workers, were also affected by the founding of the Border Patrol when their crossing of the border suddenly had legal consequences. The Bracero Program from 1942 institutionalized labor

migration from Mexico and when it ended in the early 1960s, the labor migration continued only subversively (Andreas, 2001; Massey, et al., 2002).

During the 1980s, immigrants were more and more cast in the role of scapegoats for national problems and Ronald Reagan began to frame border control as an issue of national security. As a reaction to communist insurgencies in Central America, he anticipated “a tidal wave of refugees-and this time they’ll be ‘feet people’ and not boat people-swarming our country, seeking safe haven from communist repression to the south” (Washington Post, 6/21/83 as cited in Massey et al., 2002). The media elaborated on this speech and quickly Latin American migrants were portrayed as “steady stream” or a rising “tide,” which was threatening to turn into a “flood.” These natural disaster images transformed into “invasion” with the border “under siege” and the border patrol “outgunned” (Massey et al., 2002). This military narrative became dominant in the use of politicians and media and in this atmosphere, a new regime of immigration control emerged (Massey et al., 2002).

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) “introduced employer sanctions, authorized an expansion of the Border Patrol, and offered a general legalization program” (Andreas, 2001, p. 112). This law also gave many undocumented immigrants in the United States amnesty and provided them with residency or green cards. Some argue that even though it legalized many migrants already in the United States, this Act perpetuated further undocumented migration as family members and friends of the new residents tried to join them in the United States (Andreas, 2001; Orrenius, 2001; Riosemena, 2004). Massey (2002) has argued that tougher border enforcement has led to higher numbers of undocumented immigrants in the United States

because they are not able to engage in cyclical/seasonal return migration. The increased migration in turn led to stronger border enforcement. In fact, “the pendulum continued to swing away from the immigrants with subsequent legislation in 1990 and 1996” (Deaux, 2006, p. 18).

President Clinton launched a campaign to “regain control” of the southwestern border and the single most important growth area since then has been in border enforcement. In 1993, the government launched Operation Blockade, later renamed to Operation Hold-the-Line, in El Paso, Texas. The objective was to deter illegal entries at nine high-traffic points along the border (Cunningham, 2004) and in fact, launching of this operation resulted in immediate drop of crossings in the El Paso area (Andreas, 2001; Orrenius, 2004; Riosemena, 2004). However, it also resulted in increased apprehensions in other parts of Texas, indicating that the operation did not deter undocumented migrants from crossings, but mostly redirected their flows to different parts of the border. Nevertheless, Operation Hold-the-Line was seen mostly as a success in the United States and in 1994 “the INS announced a comprehensive plan to apply the prevention through deterrence strategy across the entire southwest border” (Andreas, 2001, p. 113). In 1995, Operation Disruption meant to target safe houses used by migrant smugglers (to hide the migrants while they wait for payment) in the San Diego area, led to uncovering of 117 safe houses and to 120 arrests of smugglers.

In 1996, the U. S. Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act, which authorized the hiring of one thousand Border Patrol agents a year, and by 1997, the INS had about 1,400 inspectors at 36 points of entry on the southwest border. With the 1996 Act, “the dominance of illegality in the

political discourse was clear. This Act was unambiguously about deterrence and punishment” (Deaux, 2006, p.18). The law “promoted other measures to secure the border, including a sharp increase in penalties against migrant smugglers” (Andreas, 2001, p. 113). Moreover, in 1997, the INS initiated Operation Rio Grande in southeast Texas, which included building 240 miles of roadway, helicopter pads, and high-intensity lights along the border (Andreas, 2001). In late 1990’s, after the intensive and highly publicized build-up, the border was perceived to be under control. At the same time, the U.S. unemployment rates reached record lows and “undocumented migration evaporated as a political issue for a few years” (Massey et al., 2002, p. 109).

Nevertheless, the events of 9/11 changed the discourse and the situation. Border issues have become part of Homeland Security, immigration has been linked to terrorism, and the build-up continues. Still, Reyes et al. (2002) conclude that the border enforcement build-up as such has not significantly reduced unauthorized border crossings (see also Hagan, 2001; Massey et al., 2002). In fact, researchers working with migrant data in the United States found that the number of undocumented migrants residing in the United States increased substantially in the mid to late 1990s and that they are staying longer (Reyes, 2004; Riosemena, 2004). The strategies have achieved increased probability of apprehension, changed crossing routes, deaths, and bigger costs associated with crossing the border. The heightened security of the border has led more migrants’ to hiring coyotes who in turn charge more money for crossing (Koslowski, 2001; Kyle & Dale, 2001; Reyes, et al., 2002; Spener, 2001). A participant in my research expressed his and likely many others’ view on these efforts:

They can build walls, fences, what they want but they won’t stop [immigrants].
We will always find ways under or over.

Other researchers (Heyman, 1995; Singer & Massey, 1998) illustrate the failure of the border enforcement by examining the consequences of detention during illegal border crossing. They found that because border patrol officers are rewarded based on the numbers of migrants caught and returned immediately back to Mexico, the most common consequence of being caught is an immediate “voluntary” return across the border, from where migrants usually attempt to cross again. In 1989, the INS returned 87% of those apprehended, 830,556 people for voluntary departure (Heyman, 1995). Since migrants are aware of the immediate voluntary return practices, the deterring effect of border detention is smaller (Heyman, 1995; Singer & Massey, 1998). While the arrests of many people reinforce the state idea of citizenship for media sale and consumption, the voluntary return negates the effectiveness of these arrests and permits labor migration in numbers well beyond those permitted by law (Heyman, 1995) because most migrants cross the border again. Nevertheless, President Bush declared in his 2007 State of the Union Policy that in FY06 and FY07 the administration funded 6,700 new detention beds (www.whitehouse.gov) in an attempt to minimize the voluntary departure and immediate release practices. Only future research will show whether those practices continue or decrease as President Bush is promising. The research in this dissertation will illuminate whether Honduran migrants know and make the use of the return policy and what they know about the various border protection strategies and technologies.

Singer and Massey (1998), who studied the social process of border crossing of Mexican migrants, concluded that through detentions and repeated crossings, migrants acquire migrant-specific human and social capital which transforms the process of border crossing and yields “a fundamental conceptual distinction between first and later trips”

(p. 569). According to Massey's study, migrants are less likely to use coyotes on subsequent trips and are savvier in interacting with border patrol officers. Still, is this the case for migrants traveling from farther away, like Honduras? If they are returned back after an unsuccessful crossing, are they more or less likely to hire a coyote to ensure success on their next try because they have more at stake in terms of the length and difficulty of the journey? Singer and Massey's study (1998), which revealed interesting data on the process of crossing, did not focus on psychological or other impacts of the experience. My analysis will add this dimension to previous research.

Other researchers (e.g. Chavez, 1998; Mahler, 1995; Menjivar, 2000; Nazario, 2006; Solis, 2003) identify dangerous and traumatic experiences associated with the crossing many migrants would not want to undergo again. In addition to detention, crossing the border poses other risks including those of getting lost or losing one's children during the crossing, being robbed, and raped (e.g., Chavez, 1998; Davis, 1990; Hagan, 1998; Menjivar, 2000). Coyotes, who charge exuberant amounts from migrants for the crossings, are themselves often implicated in migrant abuse or betrayal. A young female migrant traveling with her husband and son, who was abandoned by a coyote on the U.S. side because they did not have additional money the coyote suddenly required (Chavez, 1998), is but one such example. Moreover, the coyotes sometimes sacrifice some migrants to Border Patrol Officers in order to cross larger groups unhindered (Chavez, 1998). But coyotes are not the only actors that present danger to migrants crossing the border. Even though corruption and abuse seems less prevalent among the U.S. Border Patrol officers, there are instances of abuse of power (Heyman, 1995), and female migrant testimonies claim that sexual predators on the border include bandits,

coyotes, and immigration officers (Solis, 2003). Moreover, several U.S.-based and often armed vigilante groups, such as the Minutemen “have taken border enforcement policies into their own hands” (Cunningham, 2004, p. 339) and present new dangers to crossing migrants. Will Honduran migrants’ narratives also include experiences of corruption, abuse, or rape on the U.S.-Mexico border? Will they incriminate the U.S. Border Patrol or coyotes?

Most seriously, the stronger border enforcement and discriminatory immigration laws and economic relations (Solis, 2003) have led to many more migrants dying as they attempt to cross the border. While Eschbach et al. (1999) reported more than 1,600 deaths recorded between 1993 and 1997 mostly due to increased surveillance, current reports indicate that over 1,000 migrants die yearly (60 minutes, CBS, 2006). In fact, a medical examiner in Arizona, interviewed on 60 minutes, has never seen so many deaths as now; so many that the dead bodies do not fit into coroner’s morgue and he has to rent extra refrigerated trucks. Researchers (e.g., Chavez, 1998; Hagan, 1998; Menjivar, 2000; Reyes et al., 2002) concur that the deaths are attributable to dehydration or hypothermia in desert areas where migrants have been pushed to cross and to murders by gangs, border bandits, coyotes, and occasionally border patrol officers. While none of the participants in my research died, their narratives reveal what hardships they underwent or witnessed on the border.

The increased deaths have led to the formation of a special unit in border patrol that looks for migrants in trouble in the dessert areas to prevent their deaths and in placement of water stations in the desert (60 minutes, CBS, 2006; Orrenius, 2004). In addition, individuals and humanitarian groups have begun to put jugs of water along

some of the new migrant routes (Cunningham, 2004). Inspired by the increasing deaths of Mexican migrants, the Mexican government published and distributed a pamphlet, offering advice to migrants about crossing the border, which included suggestions such as: “If you cross the desert, try to walk during hours when the heat is not so intense” or “If you get lost, use power lines, train tracks or dirt roads as guides” (NY Times, 01/09/05). This document shows the involvement of Mexican government in the border disputes. Does Honduran government get involved in Honduran or other migrations? How prepared are Honduran migrants for the crossing? What sources of information do they use? Are there differences in the preparedness and experiences of those crossing alone and with coyotes?

Eschbach et al. (1999) raise ethical questions about the migrants’ deaths and ask “how many migrant deaths are acceptable to the United States in its quest to enforce its borders (p. 451)” and whether the local successes of strict border enforcement justify the mortality bill. They suggest that the equality of all human lives requires to be carefully considered when setting new border and immigration policies because “moral obligations to respect human life should not be conditional on accidents of birth and citizenship, but are universal imperatives” (Eschbach et al., 1999, p. 451). Unfortunately, President Bush’s recent declaration that “border security is the basic responsibility of a sovereign nation and an urgent requirement of our national security” (www.whitehouse.gov) only illustrates that “the ideal of nationhood continues to exert its hold over the political imagination and it continues to be reproduced as a cause worth more than individual life” (Billig, 1995, p. 177).

Andreas (1998), Koslowski (2001), and Krissman (2005) assert that the increased border enforcement and focus on coyotes, bandits, and migrants reinforce the myth that the sources of the problem and the solution are found at the border itself, obscuring other realities of an informal transnational labor market. Most migrants undergo this difficult journey essentially enticed and allowed into the U.S. labor markets (Alvarez, 1995) and American employers using or seeking undocumented migrant labor belong to the international migration network as actors facilitating undocumented migration (Krissman, 2005). Even though the U.S. demand for undocumented labor does not drive the process entirely, it is a clear and profound force (Baker et al., 1998) and the U.S. and other major immigration countries “are not innocent bystanders” (Sassen, 2001, p. 267). Even though IRCA in 1986 introduced sanctions against employers using undocumented labor, even “industries with a history of high usage of undocumented workers, only about 5% of employers are inspected. Thus, even in the worst case, employers have a 95% chance that they will not be inspected. Deterrence seems unlikely under these conditions” (Smith, 1998, p. 149). Massey et al. (2002) suggest that the post-IRCA enforcement led to lowering of wages and working conditions for immigrants with a legal right to live and work in the United States, but did not eliminate undocumented jobs. The criminalization of undocumented migrants only led to their further marginalization and to the encouragement of the informalization of hiring and increasing of income inequality (Massey et al., 2002). Do Honduran migrants in my research have jobs arranged by friends and family waiting for them in the United States? What do they know about the pay and dangers of deportation? What are their views on their contributions to the U.S. economy and the need for their labor?

Adler (2004) found that the experience of the journey serves as “community glue that binds migrants together and helps establish community boundaries. . . . When migrants arrive, there is much discussion of the detail of the journey. These stories are told and repeated over and over in conversations, phone calls, and in letters” (Adler, 2004, p. 56) and despite the “bravado many undocumented migrants express when talking about crossing the border,” (Chavez, 1998, p. 50) the experiences can be harrowing, as this dissertation illustrates. I designed my research to find out whether such bravado would be present in the narratives of migrants who did not make it through the entire journey or those who did. How do they narrate their experiences? What events do they choose to talk about and what selves do they create in the process of narrating?

Clearly, making it to the United States is a difficult endeavor requiring to overcome many difficulties along the way. And still even the migrants who do make it, emerge in the United States not as heroes but as outlaws, as outsiders in a foreign land. The trip transforms through subtraction, not addition; through exhaustion, not rejuvenation. . . . rather than maturing through this process into full-fledged men and women like cultural heroes, they emerge from the border wilderness as children again. They must learn a new language, a new culture, and how to play many new games in which their old traditions will assist them little (Mahler, 1995, p. 58).

Shortly upon arrival, undocumented migrants experience discrimination and are made to feel unwanted outsiders (Adler, 2004), even though they serve clear purpose in the American economy (Sassen, 2001). In order to survive in the U.S., they ignore or circumvent the U.S. immigration laws and whether consciously or not, they challenge the laws, not as criminals as implied by the term illegal alien, but also not as powerless victims (Adler, 2004).

As the previous pages suggest, there is information on the undocumented Latin American migrants' journeys, but the questions throughout the text also suggest that

much remains unexplained, unasked, and unexamined. The experiences of Honduran migrants, what leads to their successful crossing, who aids or stops the migrants and how need to be investigated. Moreover, because they constitute the majority of Honduran migrants, the experiences of those who do not make it to their destination have to be included in research to understand the process fully. Below, I propose a theoretical framework, in particular a psycho-social meaning of the journey, under which this research can be carried out.

Psycho-social theoretical framework for research the undocumented journey

I suggest that a coherent theoretical framework and research with a specific focus on the journey can emerge from the logic of a socio-historical and narrative theory, which I operationalize further in this dissertation. As introduced earlier in this chapter, I believe that a dynamic theory integrating the interactions between the individuals' experiences before, during, and after the journey, with the larger socio-historical contexts is necessary to account for and shed light on previously unexplained aspects of the journey. The theory accounts for the knowledge of the practices and processes acquired growing up or living in Honduras, of expectations of the journey as they may affect its success, and the transformations of the subjectivities via the journey. This is a process that transforms the migrants and the context, and the impacts of which filter into broad range of populations. Since migrant expectations are formed in the home communities before departure, the socio-psychological research and theoretical framework I am proposing is rooted at or at least starts in the migrants' sending community.

The expectations of the journey are influenced by the public narratives of the journey in the media, from prior migrants, and local coyotes (Sladkova, 2007). Like other narratives, those of the journey are socially constructed and built on shared knowledge and understanding of reality in the community (Daiute, in press) and mold the beliefs and opinions and may shape the behavior of individuals and even a large community (Bakhtin, 1986; Sarbin, 2004). Still, the journey is represented in different narratives by migrants who had distinct experiences, by coyotes who need them to support their business, and by media who may represent other interests. To account for this variety, this study includes analysis of individual narratives of migrants with different journey outcomes, public narratives in the community and their interaction with individual migrant's decisions and larger contexts.

Narrative approaches assume “the creation of meanings in the sites of inquiry and in the researcher's struggle for understanding” (Daiute, in press). Furthermore, in individual narratives people recapitulate experiences, events and in this process, they express the significance of these events (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). When people narrate their experience, they scan their memory, reflect upon the events and re-create the scenes, and in this way make sense of the experiences. In addition, events are narrated in different ways in response to audiences both present and perceived and the circumstances in which they are told. Narrating thus involves selecting events and actors to include, organizing the events, and connecting their own purposes with expectations of the audience (Daiute, in press).

The narratives and expectations of the journey come to be and gradually become naturalized forms of social life (Billig, 1995; Parker, 1997) in migrant sending

communities. Over time, the journey becomes a natural part of the discourse in these communities where undocumented migration has become a norm rather than exception; its presence becomes commonsensical. As young people grow up they interact with these narratives that determine values and practices relevant to their lives (Daiute, in press). While the details of the journey from the migrants' perspective, the kind of coyote, the price, or the duration may be discussed and negotiated, the presence of migration in the community is not questioned. It becomes, rather, integrated into daily life and if not contested, eventually contributes to the reproduction of the larger power relations (Parker, 1997) of migration.

This research thus takes place via narratives in the sending community, both verbal and enacted. Local newspapers, for example, represented the journey in the summer of 2004 overwhelmingly with the emphasis on the dangerous and potentially serious consequences. Chapter 3 will explain whether this emphasis remained in the coverage in 2006. The newspaper articles are written and published in response to previous interactions and directed toward future ones, and thus express dialogic relations (Bakhtin, 1986; Daiute, in press). Because they enact values and interactions about policies, events, and people, the newspaper articles are discursive practices available for analysis of tensions, actors, and policies involved in migration. In my social-psychological research, I collect these individual and public narratives and analyze them in their own right as well as their interplay with each other.

Even though the narratives of the migrant journey are ultimately co-constructed and used in the community, they take shape within a larger socio-historical context. The current context is one of unequal power relationships (domestic and international), which

lead to misdistribution of goods and labor (Glick-Shiller, 1992; Hall, 1997; Harvey, 2005) and ultimately entices the migrants from impoverished communities to embark on the journey. Potential migrants in sending communities face dilemmas of staying home and contending with poverty or embarking on a journey which can be life-threatening and dangerous but if successful may lead out of the current situation. Meanings, ideas, and expectations are thus not only socially but also historically and politically constituted, and individuals may be torn in different directions within potentially contradictory larger contexts and ideology (Stanley & Billig, 2004).

This psycho-social research and framework account for and analyze the journey's narratives on individual, community, societal, and international levels. In-depth narrative analysis of individual interviews designed to get to shared experiences (scripts) of the journey and individual stories and meanings (high points), as well as the analysis of local public narratives nested in the larger socio-political-historical context will ultimately enrich our understanding of such migration processes. The dilemmas of the (in)ability to provide for one's family at home and the danger of the journey are temporarily resolved by migrants in different ways. Some of those who decide to leave may completely repress the potential dangers of the journey in order to set out on it. Others may acknowledge those dangers but believe that they will be lucky, that they will join the successful migrants who make it against all odds. And still others in the community decide to stay home, persuaded by the dangers of the journey (Sladkova, 2007), and some who stay or come back may even promote counter-discourse (Parker, 1997) problematizing migration and the representations of the journey all together.

Even though migrants may be aware of or repress the dangers possibly awaiting them along the way before they leave home, it is a different matter to experience or witness the events. Crossing borders illegally “leaves indelible memories in the minds of those who experience them” (Chavez, 1998, p. 48). As presented in the reviewed literature, migrants experience fear, hunger, uncertainty, ambiguity, humiliation, and other psychological, physical, and sexual violence as they migrate. Even those who are fortunate to go through a less dramatic journey often witness such psychologically heightened events indirectly. My review repeatedly points to several such highly charged events, including being subject to or witnessing rape, witnessing death of co-migrants by attacks of others or by environmental conditions and means of transportations, betrayal of those trusted to help them, oppression and abuse by official gate-keepers, or being separated from or losing children along the way.

Analysis of migrants’ narratives will thus reveal how the migrants interact with, internalize, and transform these events. Their post-journey narratives will illuminate the entire process of the journey from the migrants’ perspective because when people narrate past experiences they may justify the risks they took. In addition, in their narration, people construct a new understanding of the events and in so doing construct a certain self for the audience as well as themselves (Freeman, 2004). To account for different experiences, this research examines the effects of the journey on the lives of migrants who did and did not make it all the way to their destinations in the United States.

Research Questions

In summary, the theoretical framework outlined in this chapter is used to study undocumented Honduran journeys through analyses of individual and public narratives. It

calls for multiple methods that correspond to the multiple dimensions of analysis I have discussed, primarily individual and local community narratives situated within a larger socio-economic-historical system. While this is a psycho-social research project, because of the nature of the topic, it draws on resources, research, and analytical methods that span multiple social science disciplines. The literature review, for example, draws on journalistic and other social sciences both because social-psychologists have not made extensive contributions to this topic and because including various disciplinary perspectives broadens our understanding. The research methods as well as narrative analysis are commonly employed by psychologists as well as anthropologists and sociologists. Mark Freeman's (2004) view on narrative analysis expresses my thoughts and intentions for the project perfectly:

Although a great deal of contemporary work in narrative is in fact being carried out by psychologists, much of it intersects with fields other than psychology, such as sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy and literature. I believe that is a potential plus. The question that needs to be asked is not whether a given piece of work is or isn't psychology ... but whether it is adequate to its own aims, and whether the aims themselves have any value (Freeman, 2004, p. 72).

This dissertation presents a project valuable to immigration and psychological research as well as the migrants. The theoretically-grounded practical objectives of this research were formalized in the following research questions:

1. Is there a quintessential journey of Honduran migrants to the United States? What is the nature and complexity of the journey?
2. What factors and actors (e.g., finances, transportation, migrants, coyotes, immigration and border officers, police, gangs, politicians, humanitarian and religious agencies) contribute to the success or failure of the journey? Do individual migrants portray these differently than other narrators (media, immigration policies, etc.)?
3. How do undocumented migrants narrate the journey? How do the narratives and the narrative genres of successful undocumented migrants and migrants who tried but did not

reach the United States differ? What do migrants narrate as most salient to them and how do they frame these narratives?

4. What new insights about the migration process emerge from a psycho-social narrative analysis?

The following chapter discusses the research design, setting, and methods used to respond empirically to these questions. Furthermore, it explains in detail the analysis of the multilayered data and points to findings discussed in later chapters.

Chapter 2 – Research Design, Methodology, and Analysis

While reviewing much social science research, I became concerned with how immigration is studied, or more precisely how it isn't studied. Much immigration work focuses solely on immigrants in their countries of settlement (Schmalzbauer, 2005), their identities, and integration. More recent transnational immigration research explores both the migrants' incorporation to their new communities and their ties and networks with their home communities (i.e., Guest, 2003; Levitt, 2000; Schmalzbauer, 2006; Smith, 2006). Nevertheless, there are few studies that focus on migrant subjectivities (feelings, expectations, motivations) in their home communities and on the processes involved in the complex activity of migration. To begin to address this gap, I designed this multi-method, multi-year study in Honduras.

The research involved an immersion in the research community of Copán Ruinas in Honduras for 16 weeks over the period of three summers. The first part of the research, focused on migrant motivations and expectations, yielded the community's and individuals' deep concern with the increasingly dangerous journey to the United States. For many, the expectations of the journey weighed heavily on their decision to migrate or to stay. Since little social science literature has studied journeys beyond the crossing of the U.S.-Mexican border, I wanted to know what took place along the thousands of miles that separate Honduras from the United States, what caused many Hondurans not to reach their destinations, what aided those who did, as well as how the migrants narrated their experiences and their selves.

Designed to investigate individual accounts, embedded in local and more global contexts, this research incorporates individual interviews with migrants who successfully

reached their destinations and came back to Honduras and those who did not succeed, along with public narratives from community/participant observations and local media. To avoid potential decontextualization, the research presupposes interaction between the local and global socio-historical context and the lived experiences of the migrants and thus goes beyond the individual level and places migrants' decisions, actions, and experiences within a larger framework. By linking individual processes (collected through observations and interviews) with more meso (community observations, local media) and macro (Mexican, U.S. and International migration policies and practices), the project tries to illuminate their interconnectedness.

Research Setting: Copán Ruinas, Honduras

Copán Ruinas is a community of about 3,000 people located in the western-most part of Honduras, twelve miles from the border with Guatemala. Many migrate from this community to the United States, and because of its near-border location, many migrants from other parts of Latin America pass through on their way. Copán's natural beauty and the presence of Mayan Ruins have attracted thousands of tourists, and many foreigners end up staying for long periods of time, establishing and running hotels and restaurants catering predominantly to other foreigners. Even with the influx of tourists, the local economy is not strong enough to support the entire community, especially those who don't participate in the tourism industry. Moreover, tourism hikes up the prices of food and other commodities, making them unaffordable for many local residents. And so, outside of the small tourist center, many people live in remarkable poverty, and are unable to feed, clothe, or house their families. Despite its historical importance, the state

of Copán is the fifth poorest in Honduras (the earnings from the Mayan Ruins go to the federal government and don't stay in Copán Ruinas, personal conversation with the mayor), already one of the poorest countries of Latin America, and has high levels of unemployment. In fact, in addition to tourism, remittances from the United States are the most important sources of income in the community. Thus, many Copán Ruinas households continue to traverse two nation-states as the productive labor occurs in the U.S. and the reproductive labor in Honduras (Schmalzbauer, 2004, 2005). Copán Ruinas is a community similar to many other migrant sending communities in Honduras, yet unique due to the presence of and exposure to foreign tourists, their languages, behaviors, and spending power. Since I maintain that context interacts with subjective experiences, I kept the locality of my research in Honduras constant to Copán Ruinas, instead of collecting data in several communities.

Like many tourists and visitors, I grew to love Copán Ruinas and looked forward to the time I would spend there conducting my research. As I suggested at the beginning of this dissertation, my presence in Copán Ruinas over several years led to wonderful friendships and as my friends planned to or migrated, the research became more personal. These connections and friends eventually helped me in collecting data, recruiting participants, and understanding local context.

Data Collection

The collected data can be divided into three major categories: (1) individual narratives (interviews) (2) community/public narratives (media, observations) and (3) relevant social science and newspaper literature. I collected data (1) and (2) while immersed

in the community, which for me meant living in the community, participating and observing its daily activities, pursuing friendships and other relationships, teaching English, as well as conducting my research over the summers of 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Individual Narratives

I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews (Mishler, 1986) with 21 participants a) who have attempted to reach the United States but did not succeed, b) who made it to and returned from the United States and c) who had both experiences.

I interviewed migrants from these groups because I believed that they could illuminate the journey in different ways. I wondered how their experiences may differ and wanted to know how these migrants coped with their experiences and their outcomes and if there were any patterns in the successful and unsuccessful narratives.

In addition to those who had attempted the journey, I intended to interview participants who were planning or thinking of migrating without documents to the United States. The heightened interest in undocumented immigration in the United States in 2006, which has led to intensified border patrol enforcement as well as increased undocumented migrant deportations from the United States, seemed to have temporarily lowered the migration from Copán Ruinas compared to previous years. In addition, due to these circumstances, migrants who were in fact planning to leave were extra careful and reluctant to reveal or discuss their plans with anyone. As a result, I was not able to interview potential migrants (except for these participants who were thinking of embarking on the journey again) for this dissertation.

I developed semi-structured interview guides (see Appendix A, B) to elicit experiences of the journey itself from those who have attempted it previously. The interview format was shaped by what I already knew from my previous research and the extensive literature review

I conducted. I chose semi-structured interviews because they allow participants to share and reflect on their experiences, their plans as influenced by them, and their recommendations to others. The open-ended nature of the questions allows enough data to accumulate so that patterns/scripts and individual particularities of the journey emerge.

In order to see whether there were shared experiences of the journey, I asked the participants similar questions about the time they traveled, if alone or with a coyote, where and how they crossed borders, whether they would go again and why, and what they would say to President Bush if they had the opportunity. These questions, while constructing a certain time and spatial sequence, provided lots of room for individual experiences to emerge. In fact, each interview took its own course depending on the participant's experience and the nature of our interaction and provided specific individual details. While designing and asking questions, I was aware of my own positioning. For example, based on my previous experience I went out of my way to explain my role as a researcher and not someone helping people to get to the United States. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, the native language of the participants and lasted from 30 to 100 minutes. When appropriate, I used a map of Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States to help revoke the spatial process of the journey.

My previous stay and research in Copán Ruinas and the friendships and relationships I have developed there helped me locate and interview participants. Prior to my research in 2006, I reached out to friends in the community via email and phone and asked them to think of and locate potential participants for this phase of the research based on the criteria of having experienced the journey. These connections were crucial in doing research on such a sensitive topic as undocumented migration, as without certain trust attained through

community participation and connections, I may not have been able to recruit participants and carry this research out. When I arrived in Copán Ruinas in June 2006, my friend, a much-respected high school math teacher, had already lined up several interviews for me and she introduced me personally to the participants I did not know. Even though I went through the detailed explanation of the research and informed consent procedure (See Appendix C, D) before each interview, I am sure that the personal introductions played a major role in the participants' trust in me. In addition to my existing local contacts, the participants themselves sometimes referred me to others who had gone through a similar experience.

Even though my friend's help was invaluable, working with her also presented some challenges. Initially, when she was connecting me to the migrants, she thought it would be best to schedule as many interviews as possible early on. Since I felt really grateful for her help I did not intervene in the scheduling. I knew it was not easy to find people on my own and to get them committed to a particular interview time. As a result, my friend scheduled three interviews in one day, not very far apart. This was a grueling experience for me and made it impossible to write detailed notes about these interviews. Conducting just one interview took a lot out of me because I was working in Spanish, a language I am comfortable with but not completely fluent in and I need to concentrate a lot to understand subtle meanings and because the interviews were often very emotionally charged. After this three-interview day, I explained to my friend I could not do this again. Luckily, she understood and from then on we scheduled one or two interviews in a day at the most.

Because of the highly charged content, the interviews never got really easy even with time. In fact, I was often anxious on my way to the interview site, which was usually the participant's home. The content of the interviews was often disturbing and I found myself

internalizing some of it. For example, one day I interviewed a man who struggled with depression, which he believed had prevented him from making it to the United States. Even though we talked about his journey, much of the interview was about his health and lack of resources and help he can get in Honduras. Even though I knew it was not my role to help him, I felt getting depressed myself. In fact, for two days afterwards, I felt incredibly sad, anxious, and not sure I could continue with my research. I was lucky to be surrounded by caring friends and to be able to reach my adviser in New York and talk about my feelings and experiences with her. Fortunately, since I was in Copán for two months, I had the luxury of taking some time off and resuming later on. The break helped me recover and I continued interviewing until the end of my stay.

Public Narratives

I collected public narratives from local media and my observations in field notes.

Field Notes

Part of my data on public or community narratives comes from my field notes. I tried to take field notes on my observations and interviews almost every day. I attempted to write my notes right after my observations but when it was not possible because I was going to another event right away, I jotted down some impressions or words to “provide stimulations for recall” later (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). My notes included observations of various activities related to migration: observations at banks where local residents receive remittances from their families in the U.S.; of receiving and opening of gifts from relatives and friends in the U.S.; of people making phone calls to the U.S. from the local phone company, and so on. My presence in the community over a longer period of time (3 years) also enabled me to observe other subtle changes in the community such as increased ownership of American

cars sent by migrants from the United States or construction of bigger houses financed by remittances.

In my notes, I separated as best I could, observational notes or discovery (statements about events I experienced through watching or listening-without interpretation), theoretical notes or interpretation (attempts to understand my data), and methodological notes (recalled or planned operational steps and decisions) (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Schartzman & Strauss, 1973). Below are short examples of my notes to illustrate the difference.

Observational note (7/11/04)

Today I watched Maria, her daughter Silvia, and friend Marta open a gigantic box that came from LA. Maria opened the box in the other women's and my presence in a vacant room of her small hotel and started taking out the contents, one by one. Each thing inside was labeled with a name of the intended recipient and Maria divided them into piles accordingly.

Theoretical Note (7/5/06)

Today, I interviewed a third person who used the trains in Mexico. None of them made it to the US. None of the people who did make it so far took the trains. I wonder if this is a pattern, maybe even a cause of success or failure.

Methodological Note (6/25/06)

I can't do three interviews in one day again. It's exhausting and I lose so much detail because they blend together in the end of the day and I don't have time to take notes in between. Talk to Marta about scheduling only one per day, two at the most if absolutely necessary.

In addition, I kept other notes that pertained to my feelings, fears, mistakes, confusions, sort of a journal (Kirk & Miller, 1986). It was in this journal where I internally dealt with some difficult situations and feelings, such as the anxiety and sadness I experienced after doing some interviews.

Field notes provide another level of data that contextualize the individual interviews and offer part of the local public discourse of migration.

Local Newspapers

While in Copán Ruinas, I read and collected relevant articles from locally available Honduran newspapers (*La Prensa*, *Tiempo*, and *La Tribuna*). I read all newspapers daily when they were available (*La Tribuna*, which comes from the distant capital of Tegucigalpa often does not make it to Copán, while *Tiempo* and *La Prensa* coming from closer San Pedro Sula tend to arrive nearly every day), and collected articles that pertain to immigration issues. Since my previous research (Sladkova, 2007) suggests that newspaper narratives interact with or contribute to migrant decision making and behavior, I revisited articles I collected in 2004 to see possible shifts in migration coverage.

Even though many people in Honduras and Copán Ruinas do not have much formal education, newspapers are widely read in the community. For example, *Tiempo*, sold from a local hotel, sells out shortly after its delivery. A few times, when I did not get to the hotel till 8:30 in the morning, the papers were gone. *La Prensa* is distributed from a tiny tailor workshop. Once the newspaper is assembled there (the advertisement section comes separate and needs to put in the middle of the paper), it gets delivered to places and people who “subscribe” to it and sold randomly on the street. All three summers I was in Copán I was able to prepay *La Prensa* with the tailors, usually on weekly basis and pick it up in the morning. Thus, the majority of my mornings in Copán started by the same routine of picking up *Tiempo* at the bottom of the hill and *La Prensa* three blocks further, on its top. I always spent time chatting with the people selling the newspapers, who got to expect me—the only foreigner buying local newspapers regularly and directly from them. *La Tribuna* gets delivered in the afternoon and is sold in a convenience store which opens at 2 pm after a lunch siesta. Thus, to complete my daily newspaper collection, I would make sure to be at

that store not long after 2 pm. Unfortunately, I was often greeted by the owner's negative nod of her head, indicating the paper did not make it that day.

Many of my friends and their friends knew of my daily collection of the newspapers and waited for me to get through them and then get them from me for free, even though often with missing pages I had collected for my research. The diversity of these newspaper-hungry people illustrates the range of people who read the newspaper in Copán Ruinas: my friend I lived with, who dropped out of school at age of 12, her 7-year old daughter just learning to read, a director of the local elementary school, our neighbor's retired mother who claimed she never went to school, and her son, a director of the local Spanish school for foreigners. Overall, I came to understand that reading the newspaper is part of the local culture and contributes to the local public narratives circulating in the community.

Television

In addition to newspapers, people get their news and entertainment from their televisions. On my first visit to Copán Ruinas, I was actually somewhat surprised by the presence of TV sets in most households, even quite poor ones. The few who don't have TVs watch their favorite shows in friends' houses, in local stores, bars, and restaurants. TV seems to be in most houses and some even with access to some cable channels, with programming from the United States, Germany, England, Spain, and Mexico. It's possible to watch CNN in English and Spanish, BBC in English, Mexican and local news in Spanish as well as many movies and telenovelas. My observations and conversations with people in the community indicate that in terms of news, people watch their favorite Honduran channel and occasionally CNN in Spanish. I had somewhat limited access to TV as I was often outside or interviewing and because where I was staying the selection of channels was limited.

Nevertheless, I watched some local and international news and checked the daily programming in the newspapers.

I observed how different the coverage of CNN in Spanish and English was. For example, in the summer of 2006, much of the English CNN focused on the violence in the Middle East between Israel and Lebanon, while Spanish CNN centered on the Mexican elections. Topics relevant to immigration were occasionally covered by international and local news and usually pertained to the increased security of the United States-Mexico border. This coverage possibly impacted the lower numbers of people leaving Copán at that time.

While I do not have a systematic analysis of TV programs available in Copán Ruinas, I know that people watch lots of programs from or about the United States and are exposed to commercials about American products, luxuries, and services. I believe that this varied information on TV contributes to people's imaginations, knowledge, expectations, and decisions about migration, the journey, and life in the United States.

Social Science and Journalistic Literature

I reviewed relevant social science literature and journalistic accounts pertinent to the journey and statistics on Honduran migration to create an overall demographic picture of the journey. The review and statistics of Honduran migration were presented in chapter 1.

The above described data collection resulted in the following data:

1. **Individual Narratives**

a. **21 Interviews** (collected in 2006):

- 6 female; 15 male
- 10 did not reach their US destinations; 8 reached their US destination; 3 had both experiences (reached once and did not reach once)

2. Public Narratives

a. Newspaper articles

- 140 articles relevant to the topic of migration collected in June and July 2006 from the aforementioned locally available newspapers
- 90 articles collected in 2004

b. Field Notes

- Field notes taken during 16 weeks of fieldwork in Copán Ruinas over three summers

3. Social Science and Journalistic Literature

Ethical Issues

My research required immersion in the community and brought me into close and extended contact with my research participants and people in the community, common in ethnographic work. These connections raised issues related to my responsibility to the individuals and the community and have been on my mind the entire time of my fieldwork, analysis, and the write-up. At various times of my research I was both directly and indirectly asked by my participants to help them migrate to the United States. I was tormented by these requests and my inability to help in any way except for explaining my role and the current migration requirements and common problems of other migrants.

I was confronted with extreme poverty of some participants and felt my interview reward of \$6 was inadequate. Nevertheless, as my introduction suggests, the most difficult dilemmas I faced were at times when my close friends expressed the desire to or embarked on what I perceive to be a dangerous journey to the United States. Knowing the research I was doing, they would sometimes openly and sometimes covertly ask me for advice, for what I have been finding in my research. Having collected data exposing much danger along the way, my instinctive reaction was to sway my friends from setting on the journey. Still, I strove to provide as much information hopefully helpful in their decision making. I realized

that in addition to “knowing” of the dangers, I spoke from a position of privilege, since my own situation did not require that I put my life in danger to help my family. Thus, in the analysis, I have been mindful of my own situated readings as well as my role in co-constructing the interview narratives.

Sharing my analysis and write-up of my research with people in the community, though desirable, is challenging because it’s written in English and there are few people in the community who would understand the academically constructed texts. Whenever I go back people ask me about the results, about my progress, and publications. I have shared my article on expectations and motivations (Sladkova, 2007) that came out of my first research project in Copán Ruinas with one friend, a participant at that phase, who was able to understand most of it. She gave me positive though not detailed feedback in an email exchange. Should I have the time and resources, I’d like to translate this dissertation or parts of it into Spanish, so that I can share it with more people in Copán Ruinas. It will be late at that point to incorporate their feedback for this work but would likely be helpful for further research.

Another issue that arose during my interviewing was the possible psychological impact of the interviews on the participants. Many shared very difficult past experiences with me, experiences they said they did not tell many people. On some occasions the participants became quite emotional and so did I. I always assured them that we could stop the interview at any time if it was too hard to talk about the journey. Most continued and in the end actually told me that it was helpful for them to talk about some of the experiences and thanked me for listening and caring. Two participants told me they wished there were some psychological help/services available to them in Copán Ruinas. Unfortunately, the closest psychological

help of any sort is in San Pedro Sula, 2.5 hours away, and very expensive. Basic healthcare in Honduras is unable to provide services and medicine to many Hondurans and psychological health usually does not even enter the picture.

I protect the participants' identity by using nicknames throughout this dissertation. Also, I do not think that this research, should it reach immigration authorities and other agents described in the narratives, could actually contribute to making the conditions of the journey more difficult. The findings do not provide enough specific details that could be used by the police or immigration. Even the details I have would not be of much help to them as the processes involved in this migration are dynamic and change in response to new policies and their enforcement strategies.

Participants

My previous research indicates that while it is possible (though not guaranteed) for middle and upper class Hondurans to receive visas for the United States, they are virtually unattainable for lower-class Hondurans, who seek to reach the United States without documents. Since the focus of this research is on undocumented migrants, the majority of the participants come from low socio-economic strata of Copán Ruinas. The Honduran education system includes six years of compulsory elementary education, two years of colegio, two years of career degree, and college. The majority of Hondurans do not have more than the required six years of schooling, and the research participants have attained 6 or 8 years of schooling. As I mentioned previously, even with the low general education levels, many people in Copán Ruinas are literate enough to read the newspaper and to hold jobs that require various literacies. One participant in 2004 told me that even though he only went to school for three years, he read the newspaper every day. A

participant in 2006 indicated she had little of formal schooling and yet she was working as a waitress in a restaurant catering to foreigners and thus was literate in many different ways.

The literature review and recent journalistic accounts suggest that the experiences of women migrating to the United States present additional challenges to those faced by male migrants. While most aspects of the journey are the same for both genders, female migrants are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation by immigration officers, police, gangs, and smugglers during the journey. In an attempt to see if and what the different experiences may be, I interviewed men and women to get both representations. The ratio of women and men I interviewed mirrors the 28% female vs. 72% male average of overall Honduran migration. Nevertheless, the low number of female participants may not allow me to make general conclusions about the gendering of the journey.

The experiences of the journey may also differ based on the time the participants went to the United States. I solicited information on the times of the journeys and in the analysis paid attention to potential differences due to the changing policies, border enforcement, and different actors and structures in place at different times over the past several years. For example, literature on the crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border reviewed earlier suggests that patrolling the border increased dramatically after 9/11 and has resulted in the movement of migrant routes to more secluded areas, posing more dangers for the migrants (Reyes et al. 2002; Reyes, 2004; Riosemena, 2004). Those who crossed earlier may have crossed at different locations and may have experienced fewer difficulties. The presence of gangs in Mexico seems to have increased in the past few years and thus may have impacted migrants traveling more recently. This anticipation

and potential differences in findings due to the time are part of the socio-historical theorizing of the journey as it takes into account the impacts of changing contexts and will be discussed in the results following result chapters.

Table 1 below summarizes the participants' characteristics.

Table 1. Participants' Characteristics

Partici- pants (total 21)	Gender	Age	Current Employment	Family Status	Suc/ Uns	Time of Journey	# of tries	Time in U.S.
Hugo	M	23	Media Worker	Married, 1 child	U	1998, 9	2	N/A
Javier	M	22	Construction worker	Single	U	2004	1	N/A
Paulo	M	38	Farmer	Married, 8 children	U	2002, 5	2	N/A
Juan	M	21	Farmer	Single	U	2005	1	N/A
Nelson	M	27	Media Worker	Separated, 2 children	U	1995, 7	2	N/A
Kendri	M	38	Unemployed	Married, 3 children	U	2002	1	N/A
Marvin	M	18	Taxi driver	Single	U	2006	1	N/A
Pedro	M	33	Farmer	?	U	2006	1	N/A
Marcela	F	25	Unemployed	Single	U	2005	1	N/A
Maria	F	33	Waitress	Married, 5 children	U	2006	1	N/A
Selena	F	37	Sells basic groceries from her small pulperia ⁴	Single, 2 children	S; U	1998, 2004	2	5 years
German	M	36	Physically disabled, unemployed	Married, 2 children	U, S	1999, 2000, 2001	3	4 years
Henri	M	22	Construction worker	Single	U, S	2001, 02	2	4 years
Ferdi	M	25	Construction worker	Married, 1 child	S	2004	1	1.5 years
Luis	M	28	House painter	Married, ? children	S	1998	1	4 years
Daniel	M	29	Construction worker	Married, 3 children	S	2000	1	3 years
Conchetta	F	35	Helps mother with simple restaurant	Married, 2 children	S	2003	1	2.5 years
Elena	F	33	Homemaker	Single, 2 children	S	Late 90s	1	6 months
David	M	55	Home stay provider for students of Spanish	Married, 2 children	S	2004	1	3 months
Paula	F	38	Sells basic food from her small pulperia	Married, 3 children	S	1999	1	2 years
Carlos	M	43	Construction worker	Married, ? children	S	1999	2	5 years

⁴ Pulperia is a Honduran expression for a small store, a bodega.

Analysis

In this section I will lay out the analytic theory and tools I utilized to make sense of the data.

Individual Narratives: Interviews

After collecting and recording (when allowed by participant) the interviews, I had them transcribed by my friend in Copán Ruinas who introduced me to most of the participants. It is these transcripts that I submitted to narrative analysis. Narrative approaches to qualitative research analysis assume cultural creation of meanings within the site of inquiry and the researcher's struggle for understanding (Daiute, in press). In this view, the narrative process is that of recording events and expressing their significance of those events (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Similarly, Daiute (in press) claims that narratives refer to experiences (explicit naming and pointing to the material world) and their evaluation (implicit expression of the narrator's interpretation of the events). Narrating is a process in which individuals make sense of the events, identify those that are worth telling about, reflect on the significance, and in the process create a particular self (i.e., Daiute, in press; Freeman, 2004, Lightfoot, 2004). At the same time, narrating is also a social-relational process in which the narrators communicate certain events and their feelings about them, and those stories are told in a certain way depending on the audiences and circumstances of the narrating (Bakhtin, 1986; Daiute, in press). The narrators thus always select which events and actors to include, how to organize the events and how to connect them to their perceived expectations of the audience.

Some researchers have used the sense-making and communication functions of narratives with reference to "script" and "story" which have proved to be useful for my own

analysis of the interviews. The goal of a script-story analysis is to identify shared and unique meanings in a data set to address research questions and designs. The script-phase seeks common patterns of meaning or generalizations, while the story-phase focuses on more personal, nuanced meanings (Daiute, in press).

In order to get to the scripts in the interviews, I read the transcripts one by one and identified the main actions (action verbs) within them and then transferred them into a script sheet for each interview. While a chart with the scripts across participants is presented in chapter 4 (p. 105), below is an excerpt from one individual scrip sheet:

- Crossed Guatemala on a bus to the Mexican border
- Waited on the border for 3 nights
- Crossed river to Mexico on an inner tube at Camojasen
- Walked to Tuxla
- Took a bus to Ixtapalapa
- Etc.

After I made these script sheets for all interviews, I checked how many times they occurred across all the interviews and within the groups of successful and unsuccessful migrants. Those that appeared across all interviews constitute the basic general script of a journey and those that appeared several times within one of the groups, make up the successful or unsuccessful scripts. Once I determined the scripts for successful and unsuccessful migrants, I was able to locate possible causes of the ultimate results of their journey as well as determine who the main actors that hinder or support the journeys are. The results, which will be presented in detail in chapter 4, include distinctive scripts of successful and unsuccessful migrants pointing to main causes of success or failure.

While the scripts emerged from the participants' narratives, I acknowledge that my questions and their order may have contributed to a co-construction of the most general script, as I asked for the background first, the excitement, trouble, or problems

next, and the resolution in the end. Since each interview took on its own shape depending on the nature of the interaction between the participant and myself and on the participant's experience, the general script of my interview guide did not develop identically with all participants. This flexibility allowed for individual stories to emerge from the interviews.

Thus, in addition to the scripts within and across the interviews, I looked for individual stories as it is in the stories narrated by the migrants, where we find details about the experiences and their relevance/importance to the migrants. While scripts express shared experiences, stories interpret events from a unique point of view. "Stories individuate the general script by way of the specific noncanonical unexpected happenings and stories evaluate happenings within the narrative from the point of view of the narrator" (Daiute & Nelson, 1997, pp. 208-9; Daiute, in press). Thus, the story phase of the script-story analysis focused on the communicative and evaluative function of the narrative rather than the referential function in script analysis (Daiute, in press). In the story, the narrator tells us whether what happened was triumphant or tragic, surprising, normal/regular, gratifying, or disappointing. According to narrative researchers (i.e., Labov & Waletzky, 1997), the evaluation is indicated by various linguistic markers, such as intensifiers, negatives, qualifying adverbs, adjectives, psychological states, causal connectors, and increased amount of uninterrupted narration by the participants. Identifying these evaluative devices focuses on the communicative function of the interviews, the stories within the script (Daiute, in press). Because much of these linguistic markers are language specific and may not translate well into another language,

I conducted all the analysis in Spanish, and translated them into English only after completion of the analysis for this dissertation.

Using this theory and narrative tools, I analyzed the interviews⁵ for their stories or high points as some researchers call them (Peterson & McCabe, 1983 as cited in Daiute, in press). After reading all interviews several times and becoming closely familiar with them, I tried to intuitively identify the high points for each of the transcripts. After I set the high points apart from the rest of the interviews, I followed by a more systematic analysis of evaluative devices used in those instances. In the long narratives of my transcribed interviews, I finally identified high points in the following ways:

1. The flow of the interview was broken in that the participant took over and talked for an extended period of time without much of my participation.
2. The narrative was more intense than in the rest of the interview and contained clusters of evaluative devices, otherwise not as frequently used together.

Table 2 presents the main evaluative markers identified in the high points.

⁵ Only interviews with transcriptions were used in this analysis – total of 18 (not all participants allowed me to record the interviews and a few recordings were lost due to equipment malfunction).

Table 2. High Point Evaluative Markers

Evaluative markers	Examples
Causal connector	So, then, because, first
Qualifying adverbs	Clearly, uniformly
Qualifying adjective	Big, strange, large, small
Qualifying comparison	Like our village; from here too
Negative	Didn't, can't
Psychological state: cognition	think, thought, mean
Psychological state: perception	Saw, felt, watched
Psychological state: reported speech	They said: "We are in war!"
Psychological state: explanation	They had what we call machetes; we carried logs – sticks
Psychological State: intention	We wanted to help, I intended to cross alone
Psychological state: feeling	I was afraid, I felt lonely, sad, angry; They struggled, I suffered psychologically
Tense shifting	change in tenses, i.e. from past to present, from simple past to subjunctive, etc.
Intensifier	More, much
Quantifier	Three times; five men
Repetition	Again; always; she said, said, she said

Even though these evaluative markers in the narratives are simple linguistic structures, when clustered together in participants' narratives' high points, they often narrate dramatic and powerful stories, which will be further presented in chapter 5.

After identifying high points for each interview, I compared them across to see whether they centered around similar events in the scripts and whether they portrayed

turning points in the journeys. I define turning points as events that set the migrants back either temporarily or permanently. Chapter 5 presents the distribution of high points and offers possible explanations of the selection of certain events by the participants and what message they were trying to communicate to me and other potential audiences.

Freeman's (2004) narrative concept of "poiesis," a process of articulating meanings that could not possibly emerge except in retrospect, through narration, and Sarbin's (2004) claim that one's narrative-inspired imaginings can influence belief and future actions, proved helpful in the analysis and how participants were (re)making their selves in the process of narration. Moreover, besides signaling importance via linguistic devices, most migrants also explicitly evaluated the experience of the journey or migration either spontaneously or in response to my questions in what Labov and Waletzky (1967) call codas.

Below I will illustrate a high point in one participant's interview, in this case his witnessing of an attack on a Honduran female migrant. To show the difference in the narrative, I will also present the interview part that directly precedes the identified high point. Note that in this part of the interview, similar to much of the rest, the participant offers fairly short answers to my questions or other reflections using simple language and following time and spatial sequences.

E⁶: We boarded the train because there the train passes slowly
 J: Sure, slowly
 E: there is no space behind where it could gain momentum
 J: It goes slowly
 E: It passes slowly. We boarded and arrived at Palenque
 J: To Palenque
 E: But getting to Palenque the tracks opened
 J: And what happened?

⁶ In the presented excerpts from interviews, J refers to me (Jana) - the interviewer, and the other letters refer to the participants. All excerpts were translated from Spanish in which the interviews were conducted.

E: We stayed there one day. A machine came and fixed it and we were waiting till the following day

After this sequence, the narrative changes dramatically when the participant starts telling me about what he witnessed on the train. This is what narrative researchers call the break or breach of the narrative (Daiute, in press). In the high point, the participant goes back in time, reflecting on what happened on the train ride he just told me about. He starts producing more narrative in which I rarely participate. In addition, the narrative intensifies and the language changes, including clusters of connectors, qualifying adverbs and adjectives, psychological states, negatives, or changes in tense.

E: On this train, I saw a big experience. Three guys attacked... when we were going on the train, we saw that they were assaulting one girl from here from Honduras too. Her and her companion. They were dressed uniformly with a blue shirt and black pants and they had what we call machetes. They had her here and her companion

J: Aha

E: So already there, when we boarded the train we were seven people

J: Aha

E: So, we carried some logs, aah, sticks ... big

E: And some stones and she told us: "Guys help me, help me. They want to, they want to assail me."

J: Aha

E: So, we climbed down, but when we went down, they shot at us.

J: Ah

E: We climbed the train again, because ... we were afraid that they would shoot us.

E: Or something, aha. And further along, when the train derailed. That we were stopped there for some days, some guys reached us and they said that ... they saw when they killed the girl

J: Ay

E: And, well, I think it appeared on the news and everything... and, first, the three grabbed her, her grabbed her with force. The three of them. And then they passed her....and they shot her, here

J: Shhh

E: OK? And we did not think, we thought they were going to assault her or were going to do something with her but were going to leave her. But they told us, the guys, they told us crying that they saw how they were killing her and they could not do anything

In order to illustrate the clustering in this high point, I put this same passage into Table 3 marking the kind of evaluative language used.

Table 3. High Point Illustration

<p>On <u>this</u> train, I <u>saw</u> a <u>big</u> experience.</p> <p><u>Three</u> guys attacked... <u>when</u> we <u>were going</u> on the train, we <u>saw</u> that they were assaulting <u>one</u> girl <u>from here from Honduras too</u>.</p> <p>They were dressed <u>uniformly</u> with a <u>blue</u> shirt and <u>black</u> pants and they had <u>what we call machetes</u>. They had her <u>here</u> and her companion.</p> <p><u>So</u> <u>already</u> there, <u>when</u> we boarded the train we were <u>seven</u> people</p> <p><u>So</u>, we carried some <u>logs well sticks</u> <u>Big</u></p> <p><u>And</u> <u>some</u> stones and <u>she</u> told us: “Guys <u>help me, help me</u>, they <u>want to</u>, they <u>want to</u> assail me.”</p> <p><u>So</u>, we climbed down, <u>but</u> <u>when</u> we went down, they shot at us; We climbed the train <u>again</u>, <u>because</u> ... we <u>were afraid</u> that they would shoot us or something.</p> <p><u>And</u> <u>further along</u>, <u>when</u> the train derailed, <u>when</u> we were stopped there for <u>some</u> days, <u>some</u> guys reached us and they said that ... they <u>saw</u> <u>when</u> they killed the girl</p> <p><u>And</u>, <u>well</u>, <u>I think</u> it appeared on the news and everything</p> <p><u>And</u>, <u>first</u>, the <u>three</u> grabbed her, her <u>grabbed</u> her <u>with force</u>. The <u>three</u> of them. <u>And then</u> they passed her.....and they shot her, here.</p> <p><u>And</u> we <u>did not think</u>, we <u>thought</u> they <u>were going to assault</u> her or <u>were going to do something</u> with her but <u>were going to leave</u> her. <u>But</u> they <u>told us</u>, the guys, they <u>told us crying</u> that they <u>saw</u> how they were killing her and they <u>could not do anything</u>.</p>	<p>Psychological state: perception; Qualifying adjectives;</p> <p>Quantifier; Qualifying adverb; Tense shifting; Qualifying Comparison,</p> <p>Qualifying adverbs; Qualifying adjectives; Psychological state: explanation;</p> <p>Causal connectors; Qualifying adverbs; Quantifier</p> <p>Causal connector; Psychological state: explanation; Qualifying adjective</p> <p>Causal connector; Qualifying adjective; Psychological state: reported speech; Psychological State: intention; Repetition</p> <p>Causal connectors; Qualifying adverb; Psychological state: feeling,</p> <p>Causal connectors; Qualifying adverbs, Qualifying adjective; Psychological state: perception</p> <p>Causal connectors; Psychological state: cognition</p> <p>Causal connectors: Quantifier; Qualifying adverbs; Repetition; explanation</p> <p>Causal connectors; Negative; Psychological state: cognition; Psychological state: perception; Psychological State: intention</p>
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Public Narratives: newspaper articles, field notes

The expectations of the journey are influenced by the existing narratives of the journey in the media, from prior migrants, and local coyotes (Sladkova, 2007). Like other narratives, those of the journey are socially constructed and built on shared knowledge and understanding of reality in the community (Daiute, in press) and mold the beliefs and opinions and may shape the behavior of individuals and even a large community (Bakhtin, 1986; Sarbin, 2004). It is my assumption that the newspaper articles are written and published in response to previous interactions and directed toward future ones, and thus express dialogic relations (Bakhtin, 1986; Daiute, in press). Because they enact values and interactions about policies, events, people, newspaper articles are discursive practices available for analysis of tensions, actors, and policies involved in migration. Thus, as part of the public discourse, I analyzed 82 articles from the already mentioned locally available newspapers I collected in 2004 and 150 I gathered in 2006. I selected all articles for their relevance to migration.

Every day, after reading the newspapers, I selected articles focusing on the journey as well as other issues and topics about Honduran immigrants in the United States, about factors impacting migration from Honduras, or foreign migrants in Honduras. After I selected the articles, I read each one carefully and summarized its content in English beneath the Spanish original. Then, in the analysis, I isolated actors, actions, and motivations involved in each article and created an overall script of the narratives. In addition, the frequency of particular actors or events narrated in the newspapers, allowed me to categorize the articles. Categories such as foreign migrants in Honduras, Honduran migrants in the United States, and others emerged from the contents of the articles. I did this for the articles from 2006 and

2004 and compared the categories and actors across the years. The analysis of local media thus offered a unique understanding of the research situated in Honduras and presented actors and parts of the system of undocumented migration which would not be apparent from other sources. In addition, the analysis of public narratives allowed me to analyze their interplay with the individual narratives and determine whether and how they impacted individual migrants' decisions about migrating and their own narrations.

In addition, my field notes of observations, conversations, and interviews provided useful contextual information for the research and completed public narratives circulating in the community. My field notes captured observations of narratives in the community originated from migrants in the United States, both in the form of verbal stories and embodied (Parker, 1997) in remittances and other material goods sent from the United States. Moreover, I kept notes on TV programs specific to migration as well as other programs that may contribute to creating a particular image of life in the United States and may thus increase people's desire to migrate.

Understanding of these public narratives then enabled me to determine whether any of them found their way to the individual narratives. In other words, I was able to see which of the narratives were persuasive to individual migrants and how they may have impacted their actions (Bakhtin, 1986; Sarbin, 2004). I elaborate on this theory and the interaction between public and individual narratives in further chapters.

Bringing the data together

To summarize, the script analysis of individual interviews offered an innovative way of identifying commonalities and differences in journeys of successful and unsuccessful

migrants, as well as causes of the ultimate result are discussed in detail in chapter 4. This analysis answered research questions 1 and 2, namely:

1. Is there a quintessential journey of Honduran migrants to the United States? What is the nature and complexity of the journey?
2. What factors and actors (e.g., finances, transportation, migrants, coyotes, immigration and border officers, police, gangs, politicians, humanitarian and religious agencies) contribute to the success or failure of the journey? Do individual migrants portray these differently than other narrators (media, immigration policies, etc.)?

The high points provide details of the lived experiences of the journey(s) and present information about how individual migrants endure the journey and what events they perceive as important. They offer a window into the psychological processes of narration, into evaluation of particular events, and construction of certain selves in their narration. This analysis, presented in chapter 5, addresses research question 3, namely:

3. How do undocumented migrants narrate the journey? How do the narratives and the narrative genres of successful undocumented migrants and migrants who tried but did not reach the United States differ? What do migrants narrate as most salient to them and how do they frame these narratives?

Finally, in the conclusions and contributions in chapter, 6, I address my final question:

4. What new insights about the migration process emerge from a psycho-social narrative analysis?

Public narratives present information about the actors and structures participating in the processes already illuminated through the scripts and stories and thus contribute to answering questions 1 and 2 and provide local context in which the migration occurs.

Results of this analysis are presented in chapter 3.

In chapter 6, an overall discussion, I bring the findings together along with the demographic and other statistical data and historical contexts to further illustrate the nature of the journey and undocumented migration. In addition, I outline the

contributions of this research to the study of migration and present implications for further research as well as practice and policy.

The results chapters follow.

Chapter 3 – Public Narratives

“We Don’t Produce Oil or Dollars but Yes We Have Dignity⁷”(La Tribuna, 6/24/06)

“Deported without her Baby of 10 months”(Tiempo, 7/15/06)

“In Mexico, Brutal Death of Pregnant Honduran” (La Prensa, 7/4/04)

“6 Peruvians Detained in La Entrada” (Tiempo, 8/2/04)

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze public narratives of migration that I collected in the community of Copán Ruinas during my stay in 2004 and 2006. Since I believe in the interplay of context with individuality, I felt that analyzing relevant public narratives was essential in gaining a fuller understanding of Honduran migration processes. In fact, the analysis of both public and individual narratives in 2004 pointed to the journey as a salient issue and led to this dissertation project. While most narratives presented in this chapter are textual or verbal, I use Parker’s (1997) concept of narrative, which goes beyond the verbal. Thus, the narratives included in this analysis come in the form of newspaper articles, TV programs, stories from previous migrants, as well as material narratives of remittances and other goods sent from the United States. Together, they set the context from which people migrate and provide information about the context they may be migrating to (the United States) and migrating through (Mexico, Guatemala). In addition, this analysis may explain how the public narratives influenced the individual narratives analyzed later on.

Altheide (1996) claims that a reason to study media documents is to “understand the nature and process by which a key defining aspect of our effective environment operates and to attempt to gauge the consequences” (p. 68-69). According to this view, the media are consequential in social life because public and individual perceptions of issues incorporate information from the news. Appadurai (1990) uses a similar concept of “mediascapes,”

⁷ Newspaper headlines translated into English.

which refers to the images of the world created by these media. These mediascapes tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and they offer a series of elements (such as characters, plots and textual forms) out of which scripts of imagined lives can be formed. The scripts may constitute proto-narratives of possible lives or fantasies that could “become prologomena to the desire for acquisition and movement” (Appadurai, 1990, p. 299) and may push people towards migrating. Hence, it is reasonable to propose that potential migrants incorporate or use information from the media and other public narratives in their actions and decisions about migration.

In fact, some narrative theory (Bakhtin, 1981; Garró & Mattingly, 2000; Sarbin, 2004) and prior research on migrant expectations and motivations claim that “powerful narratives have perlocutionary power that can influence the subsequent actions of narrator and audience. They can shape future actions in decisive ways, and this only increases the complex and intertwined relation between telling stories and taking actions” (Garró & Mattingly, 2000, p. 18). Nevertheless, the available narratives are often contradictory and do not present a coherent and unified image of a phenomenon or situation. They struggle with each other and compete for the individuals’ attention. Eventually, one narrative becomes more persuasive than others and gets internalized by the individual (Bakhtin, 1986). In the context of migration, newspapers or previous migrants may be presenting narratives warning about the dangers of the journey trying to persuade individuals not to migrate. Remittances and stories of high paying jobs in the United States circulating in the community may persuade others to migrate. Thus, competing narratives may lead some people in Honduras to stay home while others to leave or to utilize different means for migration (Sladkova, 2007).

In my previous research in Copán Ruinas, I found that available public narratives (mainly from local press) do weigh in people's decisions to migrate. In 2004, some people were persuaded by narratives of danger and decided not to migrate, while for others narratives of success and material gain were more convincing. In this chapter, I offer a description and analysis of public narratives I collected from local newspapers, TV programs, and other community observations in the summers of 2004 and 2006. These narratives will help us understand the context of the migrants and see whether and how the individual narratives, analyzed in chapters 4 and 5, interact with them. I will start with newspaper narratives.

Newspaper Narratives

As I mentioned in chapter 2 (p. 68), it is my assumption that newspaper articles are written and published in response to previous interactions and directed toward future ones, and thus express dialogic relations (Bakhtin, 1986; Daiute, in press). Because they enact values and interactions about policies, events, and people, relevant newspaper articles are discursive practices available for analysis of tensions, actors, and policies involved in migration. In chapter 2, I suggested that newspapers are widely read in Copán Ruinas by people of varied literacy levels. People talk about the news as they gather at places where the newspapers are sold, at bus stops, and other public and private spaces. Thus, I believe it is important to understand what narratives about migration and the journey the newspapers are creating and how these narratives are interacting with the individual narratives/interviews.

To achieve this understanding, I collected articles from the three locally available newspapers of *Tiempo*, *La Prensa*, and *La Tribuna* during my research in the summers of 2004 and 2006. I read the newspapers on daily basis or as they were available in Copán

Ruinas. Only *La Prensa* and *La Tribuna* come out 7 days a week. *Tiempo* is not printed on Sundays. In addition, because *La Tribuna* comes from the distant capital of Tegucigalpa, it often does not make it to Copán Ruinas. *La Prensa* and *Tiempo*, which come out of San Pedro Sula, the industrial capital of the country located 2.5 hours from Copán Ruinas, come on fairly consistent basis. In my previous research, I found that although all newspapers claim independent points of view, *La Tribuna* and *Tiempo* are owned by influential politicians of the Liberal Party (PL)-in power since February 2007, while *La Prensa* is associated with the National Party (PN). Nevertheless, when I compared the focus and perspectives presented in articles on migration and the journey, I did not find many differences. Most of the time, they were reporting on the same events and issues and presenting similar points of view⁸ (Sladkova, 2007).

As I suggested in the previous chapter, purchasing, reading, and then sharing the newspapers with others were part of my daily routine and I enjoyed this social part tremendously. I enjoyed chatting with the newspaper vendors and others who happened to be buying newspapers at the same time and learned a great deal from them. In fact, one of the newspaper vendors became a participant in my research in 2004. Many people, in turn, got to know me, which reinforced my presence in Copán Ruinas as someone interested in Honduran and the community affairs. On my recent visit to Copán Ruinas, I stopped by the small tailor workshop from which *La Prensa* is distributed and sold, and received a warm welcome after being away from the community for eight months.

Every day, after reading the newspapers, I selected articles focusing on the journey as well as other issues and topics about Honduran immigrants in the United States, about

⁸ The political influences on the newspapers were not the focus of this analysis. That is not to say that they don't exist. Deeper and different kind of analysis would be needed to establish the differences.

factors impacting migration from Honduras, or foreign migrants in Honduras. Thus, since the purpose is to establish the context from/in which the journey takes place, the focus of the articles I used for this analysis is wider than the journey itself. I read each article carefully, summarized its original contents in English, and based on frequencies of certain topics, actors and their actions and motivations I divided the articles into several categories. In total, I collected 82 articles between 6/26-8/9 in 2004 and 150 between 6/10-7/28 in 2006. Categories such as foreign migrants in Honduras, Honduran migrants in the United States, and others emerged from the contents of the articles. I compared the categories, actors, and motivations between these two years trying to see whether the focus, tone, or portrayed actors have shifted.

Newspapers 2004

The analysis of 82 articles from 2004 yielded the following five main categories related to migration: (1) Honduran migrants or Latinos in the United States (39 articles); (2) Dangers of the journey (19 articles); (3) Issues and policies impacting migration in Honduras and other Central American countries (15 articles); and (4) Illegal foreign migrants in Honduras and other Central American countries (9 articles), and. I will introduce the largest category first.

Honduran Migrants in the United States

The most frequent articles pertained to issues related to Honduran immigrants and immigration issues in the United States. I was able to detect several subcategories or trends within this group. In some, Honduran migrants in the United States were portrayed as victims of crimes (“Relatives of a Dead Honduran in the United States Demand Justice” (*La Prensa*, 8/9/04) “A Wetback Gives more than 20 Blows to his Honduran Wife in the U.S.” (*La*

Tribuna, 7/21/04)); as criminals (“New Jersey: Hit Husband’s Son: Honduran Woman Sentenced to 18 Years in Prison” (*La Prensa*, 7/25/04)); as celebrated and accomplished professionals (“Brilliant Teacher in the U.S.-a Honduran Juan Carlos Ucles Awarded One of the Best Educators of the Country”(*La Prensa*, 7/17/04)); and as deportees from the U.S. (“Deported without her Baby of 10 months” (*La Prensa*, 8/7/04) “More than 24,000 Hondurans Deported from the United States” (*La Prensa*, 8/3/04)).

Even though there were a few articles about Honduran migrants in the United States that described their crimes, the overall message was positive. For example, an editorial argued that Honduran migrants in the United States were much more than just bad news, that there were plenty of compatriots who studied, worked hard and “were a genuine expression of this race, sweet but stoic, brave but modest.” They lived their lives positively and “with their remittances became the pillars that sustain the fragile national economy in Honduras” (*La Prensa*, 7/29/04). Other articles discussed remittances and the efforts of Hondurans in the U.S. to lower the fees associated with the wiring of the money so that they could contribute to the Honduran economy more; the importance and extensions of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Honduran migrants; or the attempt to improve Honduran Consulate services in different parts of the United States.

The articles that reported on deportations of Hondurans from the United States focused on the assistance they were given when they returned back to Honduras and efforts to raise money to smooth the deportation process and helped them reintegrate into Honduran society. One article reported on a program that helps deported migrants find work in Honduras so that they “don’t have to leave again to risk their lives” (*La Prensa*, 7/12/04). In addition, a small group of articles in this category focused on pre-election attempts of U.S.

presidential candidates Kerry and Bush to get Latino votes. The coverage paid more attention to Kerry and his promises to create more jobs and better education for Hispanics as well as immigration reform that would lead to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

An interesting op-ed piece entitled “The Migration Wave will Continue to Rise” in *La Prensa* (8/3/04) claimed that as long as Hispanics in the United States believed in the American Dream despite their relatively low wages and low educational gains and kept telling their relatives in Central America of their “success,” the exodus from Honduras would continue. This article made a direct connection between the narratives of previous migrants and the power they had on potential migrants in Honduras even though it argued that those narratives were inaccurate and misleading people in Honduras. This estimation is consistent with the work of Mahler (1995a) and Pessar (1995), who claim that most immigrants in the United States provide mythical and unrealistic information about immigrant life in the United States and thus perpetuate migration and lead people onto the dangerous journey (Sladkova, 2007).

The overall message of this category of articles seemed encouraging towards migration as it stressed the positives of lives of migrants in the United States, indicating they support not only their families but also Honduran economy by sending remittances and at the same time contributing to American society with their work. The coverage of Kerry’s campaign at the time was also promising legality and improvement of the immigrant situation in the United States.

Dangerous Journey

The dangers of the journey, mostly focusing on Mexico (“Dangerous Journey to the United States” (*Tiempo*, 8/2/04); “In Mexico: Brutal Death of Pregnant Honduran” (*La*

Tribuna, 7/22/04); “Repatriated from Mexico: Return without Legs 5 Youths who Looked for the American Dream” (*Tiempo*, 7/29/04)), was the next prominent category in the 2004 newspapers. Honduran migrants in these reports were portrayed mostly as victims of the dangerous journey as many articles focused on Hondurans who were mutilated by the trains in Mexico. They implicitly and explicitly warned people of the dangers of the journey as some of the train victims as well as various cartoons (see next page) told others through the newspapers NOT to try the journey. These articles confirmed the reports from other journalistic accounts published in the United States and Mexico (and reviewed in chapter 1) about the dangers of traveling on the trains (i.e., *El Tren de la Muerte*, 2005; Nazario, 2006).

Several articles concentrated on the rising numbers of children undergoing the journey and claimed that Mexican authorities rescued these children and thus prevented potential abuse by coyotes and other elements. The children’s parents were said to endanger the children’s lives and health by using smugglers to bring them to the United States. The articles always portrayed coyotes as dangerous and delinquent and sometimes linked them to (child) sex trafficking and drug trade. Reports on detention and deportation of Hondurans from Mexico, though plentiful, were silent about the details of the operations during which migrants got captured. In fact, these stories focused on the objects, the captured Hondurans, and lacked any actors, such as police or immigration officers, who carried out these operations. The typical short article about detention in Mexico looked something like this:

45 Hondurans were among 100 Central Americans detained in an operation on buses in Tuxla. They were held in a detention center in Chiapas for 3 days and subsequently deported to Honduras.

No details about who, why, or how the detentions and deportations happened were provided.

Also notably absent from any reporting about the journey and its dangers were gangs or thieves as well as any negative reports about the police in Guatemala and Mexico.

Nevertheless, overall, the articles warned people against attempting the journey alone or with a coyote because of its dangers as expressed in the following cartoon from *Tiempo* (7/30/04), which says: The American Dream: Don't Attempt It.



By Doumont, *Tiempo*, 7/30/04.

Issues and policies impacting migration in Honduras and Other Central American Countries

In chapter 1, I outlined the bleak situation of Honduras, one of the poorest countries in the southern hemisphere (Honduras in Human Development Report, 2006). Accordingly, numerous articles described the general conditions in Honduras, such as high levels of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy as possibly contributing to and stimulating outmigration. Other migration-related news in Honduras pertained to 35 Hondurans winning the so-called green card lottery, in comparison to 25,000 Peruvians, 299 Venezuelans, or 597 Brazilians. Interestingly, the newspapers did not problematize the low number of Hondurans in comparison to the other countries. In addition, the newspapers reported on a new system of applying for American visas, which was implemented in the summer of 2004 and blamed it for increased lines for passports and appointments in the American embassy. Notably, those lines took place in banks, where the appointments and applications were made in exchange for hefty fees of \$50 for passport and \$100 for an appointment with the American consul in Tegucigalpa (paid to the American Consulate). It is possible that the increase in lines may

have also been caused by the increased coverage of the dangers of the undocumented journey which motivated more people to try to travel legally or by bad economic conditions that drive more and more people to leave.

Illegal Foreign Migrants in Honduras and other Central American Countries

Another group of articles in 2004 focused on foreign migrants detained on their way to the United States in Honduras or other Central American countries (“6 New Cubans Arrived;” 6 Peruvians Detained in La Entrada;” “Foreign Migrants Have a Shelter in Choluteca”). In most of these articles, the migrants were not portrayed as criminals but as people trying to better their situations and sometimes in need of help and included Chinese, Ecuadorian, Cuban, Peruvian, and Haitian nationals. The Honduran government even built a shelter for the migrants in Choluteca (co-funded by the U.S. Embassy), where the migrants could receive various services instead of being held in jail. Cubans who arrived on the shores of Honduras were welcomed and given permission to spend some time in Honduras before continuing north to the United States. They seemed to get preferential treatment over others, who were deported after detention. Similar to the coverage on Mexico, these articles did not detail who, why, and how detained the migrants.

In addition to migrants captured in Honduras, there was coverage of Ecuadorian migrants being detained in Panama and 27,350 migrants of various nationalities in Costa Rica, both Central American countries south of Honduras. No parallels were drawn between migrants caught in Central America and Honduran migrants detained in Mexico, even though their goals and motivations for reaching the United States were identical and the dangers even greater because of the geographical distance they had to traverse. Nevertheless, the presence of these articles suggests that the pressure to detain undocumented migrants on their way to

the United States is shifting further south. The collaboration with the United States is clearly already at work in Mexico from where tens of thousands of migrants are deported yearly, but these articles tell us that detentions and deportations of migrants from other countries also take place in Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama. The documentary *Chasing El Norte* (2005) about a journey of a Honduran migrant claimed that 95% of migrants are detained before reaching the U.S. border.

Overall, the newspaper narratives of the dangers of the journey both for Hondurans who get caught and injured in Mexico and other migrants who get captured as far south as Honduras were juxtaposed with successful stories of migrants in the United States and poor conditions in Honduras. The following analysis of my field notes analysis complete the public narrative data from 2004.

Field Notes 2004

Careful analysis of the content of my field notes from the summer of 2004 showed that the dangers of the journey were very much present in the community. As I spoke to people informally or overheard various conversations, I noticed the concern or fear for loved ones who were on their way to the United States. Conversations such as the following ones were common:

Have you heard from Alicia?

No. It has been three weeks. Last time she called, she was in Chiapas.

or

Maria arrived!

When?

Yesterday morning. After 5 weeks.

People expressed their worries about those journeying north, echoing the narratives in the newspapers about the dangers of the journey. Some, not knowing how their friends and

relatives traveled, were worried about the trains and the harm they could potentially inflict on them. In contrast, I did not hear many specific worries about the U.S. immigration policies and practices in general and the U.S.-Mexico border in particular.

These verbal narratives of worry and concern for the safety of the migrants were juxtaposed by other mostly non-verbal narratives present in the community. The lines in local banks rose exponentially on Mondays, which was when people from Copán and its surrounding communities came to pick up money sent to them by relatives in the United States. Monday seemed to be the family remittance day. I observed people in the banks patiently waiting to pick up the cash they relied on from their family members in the United States. The faces of those on lines usually lit up on their ways out of the bank and only rarely did I see disappointment, perhaps reflecting an amount lower than expected or needed.

In addition to remittances, I recorded notes about observing many children in the community wearing American clothing and shoes, riding American bicycles and playing with expensive foreign toys. These non-verbal narratives spoke of parents supporting their children from afar and perhaps also appeasing their guilt for leaving their children behind (Nazario, 2006; Schmalzbauer, 2004). Actually, in addition to the narrative of parents in the U.S. being good providers, another narrative was present in the community mostly among those who did not migrate. It was a narrative of abandonment of these children by their parents, a narrative of derailed development in which these children, lacking parental guidance, appreciate only material goods, drop out of schools, and join gangs. My observations of the children in the community suggested that these narratives

of lack of care were more important to the adults who stayed in Copán Ruinas than to the children who enjoyed or envied the American toys and clothing.

Even though I did not have the opportunity to watch TV systematically while in Copán in 2004, I did see some TV coverage about deportations from Mexico and the United States and about the lives of immigrants in the United States. I noted that there were reports and programs on TV about the trains in Mexico and humanitarian organizations and individuals helping those injured by the trains. In addition, I watched a program about Honduran children who were in Mexican orphanages waiting to be picked up or deported back to Honduras. When those children were detained they were not put into jails like adults but into orphanages or shelters for children. The TV program made it clear that they were not wanted there because they took space away from Mexican kids in need. Most of these children were traveling with and abandoned by a coyote paid for by parents in the United States or traveling alone in an attempt to find their parents.

In addition to special reports about migration, Honduran TV programs were full of mostly old and second and third-rate American movies, soap operas, music videos, children's programming, and commercials. These were the programs that most people in Copán Ruinas watched on daily basis and from them got images of certain kind of life in the United States. Small children desired the toys and clothing the kids on TV had, or wanted to have a pet (not common in Copán Ruinas) or go to America to see snow. I agree with Appadurai (1990) that these mediascapes may create a certain image of a life elsewhere, a life barely relevant to the reality of undocumented immigrants in the United States. Still, these mediascapes may be powerful and persuasive especially to young Hondurans who increasingly grow up immersed in those TV narratives.

Overall, TV coverage offered programs about dangers of migration contrasted sharply with portrayals of comfortable life in the United States, potentially creating tension or dilemmas for the TV viewers.

2004 public narratives summary

The analysis of public narratives in the community in the summer of 2004 offered numerous topics, concerns, motivations, and obstacles related to migration to the United States. The newspapers identified poverty and lack of opportunities to advance in Honduras as main motivations for migration. Factors and actors portrayed as facilitating or impeding the journey included coyotes, humanitarian organizations, U.S. embassy in Tegucigalpa, and migrants in the United States. In contrast, police, immigration and border patrol officers, and gangs were absent from public narratives in Copán Ruinas in 2004.

Narratives warning people against attempting the dangerous journey were juxtaposed with narratives of economic success of those who reached the United States. Among those I interviewed in 2004 were people who wanted to leave and those who wanted to stay, showing that the different narratives persuaded people in different ways (Sladkova, 2007). Still, I felt that the lure of the more immediate monetary and material narratives of success and the constant images of life in the U.S. from American TV programs were strong and created high expectations and desires to migrate to the United States. A script of those narratives could read something like this:

Migrants set out on dangerous journeys to the United States escaping poverty and high unemployment in their home countries and inspired by various accomplishments of previous migrants in the United States. Many are detained in transnational operations focused on capturing undocumented migrants in Mexico, others are injured by trains, and yet others are caught and deported from the U.S.-Mexico border or elsewhere

in the United States. The perils of the journey should deter people from migrating but the potential benefits of successful migration (ability to send remittances and build a house, start a small business, provide better for children's future) outweigh the risks for many who continue to migrate.

Further analysis of public narratives in 2006 will show whether and how the categories, script, and main actors change over time. Then, in chapters 4 and 5, we will see which narratives were appropriated by individual migrants.

2006 newspapers

In addition to new categories that emerged in 2006, some mirrored those in 2004. Nevertheless, their implicit meanings seemed quite different as I will explain in this section. The main categories of articles collected in 2006 included (1) U.S.-Honduras relations (73 articles) - new category; (2) Hondurans and Immigration Issues in the United States (35) - continued, (3) Foreign Migrants in Honduras (28) - continued, and (4) Issues in Honduras Affecting Migration (14) - continued.

U.S. - Honduras Relations

When I arrived in Honduras in June 2006, the newspapers were full of articles addressing a corruption scandal concerning Honduran identity documents issued to a couple from Cameroon. This couple from Cameroon apparently paid someone to get national Honduran IDs using birth certificates of deceased Honduran citizens and was then applying for passports with the intention to apply for visas to the United States. In the process of application for the husband's passport, fraud was detected and the Cameroonians were arrested. The incident led to extensive revisions and changes in the National Registration (RNP) and Immigration Systems, to accusations of corruption and firing of employees in the system. New automated and electronic systems were ordered to

replace manual registration procedures, and new screening and punishing protocols were introduced for employees in the RNP and immigration offices.

All of this is more interesting because of the involvement of the United States in this process. It was determined that the Cameroonian citizens were trying to get a passport in order to get a visa for the United States. Immediately, the U.S. embassy declared the Honduran registration and immigration systems a danger to U.S. security and imposed various requirements and sanctions on Honduras. The newspaper coverage describes how the U.S. embassy suspended visa-granting procedures for Honduras until the systems were reformed under close American supervision.

Even though most articles portrayed the visa suspension as a major crisis, an opinion piece in *La Tribuna* (6/28/06) acknowledged the reality of the impact of visa suspension on Hondurans:

Visa suspension produces a freezing wave in the spine of the middle and upper classes but 80% of the population never responded because they can never travel to the United States legally. The poor can only travel illegally traversing countries and borders exposed to death and multiple humiliations from the same half-castes in Guatemala and Mexico and now the police strengthened by the National Guard on the Yankee border (*La Tribuna*, 6/28/06).

This piece both explained the correlation between class and wealth and the likelihood to obtain a visa to the United States and alluded to the dangers for those who have no other choice than to travel there illegally through Guatemala and Mexico. As I explain later on, this is one of the only references to the journey in the 2006 newspapers and one that implicates the police, the National Guard, and other actors as participating in the journey.

The suspension of visa-granting by the United States also coincided with Honduran President Zelaya's meeting with Venezuelan President Chavez and a Venezuelan oil

company representatives. Zelaya, the Liberal Party candidate, who replaced the previous National Party President Maduro, was in his position only for three months at that time. Even though the meetings with Venezuelan representatives were not condoned by the United States, the U.S. Ambassador Ford in Tegucigalpa claimed that the suspension of visas was not connected to those meetings and that Honduras-US relations remained in good standing. Nevertheless, headlines throughout the newspapers such as “Honduras Goes through its Worst Crisis with Visa Suspensions” (*La Tribuna*, 6/21/06); “Relations with the U.S. Need to be Stabilized” (*La Tribuna*, 6/24/06); “Problems with the U.S. Exist but We Will Solve Them” (*La Prensa*, 6/22/06); and “Drastic Measures” (*Tiempo*, 6/22/06) indicate that Honduras perceived the suspension as an international crisis. President Zelaya fought back with declarations such as “Honduras is Nobody’s Colony” (*La Prensa*, 6/20/06) and “We Don’t Produce Oil or Dollars, but, Yes, We Have Dignity” (*La Tribuna*, 6/24/06). These statements signified to me his attempt to establish himself as a new President aiming to decrease Honduras’ dependence on the United States, and aligning himself instead with Hugo Chavez and other Latin American leaders.

Nevertheless, these statements were shortly replaced by news promising compliance with the American requests for reform. Emilio Gonzalez, the director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) at Homeland Security, came to check on the progress and results of the reform. After approximately a month when Honduras guaranteed and made progress on the changes, the American Embassy started scheduling visa appointments again. The Embassy warned that it could easily withdraw this privilege should Honduras not demonstrate enough continuous efforts to better the system as the following quote from U.S. consul in Honduras indicates:

We want to see movement to the strongest institutions. If we don't see it, we'll also see what we will do. We will protect our interests and the security of the United States (*Tiempo*, 7/6/06).

Moreover, the inclusion of Honduras in the free trade agreement (CAFTA) with the United States was indicated as endangered should Honduras not reform its systems fast and to the liking of the United States.

Some newspaper articles expressed outrage with the U.S. pressure to control the Honduran registration and immigration system and others claimed it was high time to do something about the existing corruption and welcomed the monitoring. The director of immigration services in Honduras defended his work claiming that the capture of the Cameroon couple was part of a well-planned operation and thus actually confirmed the system's efficiency. He also asked why the United States did not impose the same visa sanctions onto Mexicans when only a month earlier, a very similar case with fraudulent documents of foreign nationals trying to go to the United States was discovered in Mexico. Nevertheless, the "Power of the Coloss of the North" (*La Prensa*, 6/27/06) or the "U.S. Empire that Rules Honduras" (*La Tribuna*, 6/28/06) proved too strong in the end and Honduras obeyed its requirements, continuing its long-lived connection and dependency on the United States I described in chapter 1.

The original protests of President Zelaya against American control were later contrasted with Emilio Gonzalez of USCIS (on his visit to check the reform) being awarded a medal to express Honduran appreciation. Honduran Chancellor proclaimed it was an obligation of the State to prevent Honduras from being used for human trafficking and that Honduran representatives would travel to the United States to learn how the U.S. manages their documentation to be able to "apply measures of similar security in Honduras because it's a must for each country to look after the security of the

international community” (*Tiempo*, 7/19/06). Even though he stated that the reform was not fueled by any pressure from the United States, the planned visit and mimicry of the U.S. Homeland Security rules and his discourse of security reflected the power of American influence.

The newspaper coverage about the pressure of the United States to control the Honduran registration and immigration system indicates the imposition of American Homeland Security and Immigration policies and procedures onto Honduras in order to control people’s movements outside of the U.S. borders.

Foreign Migrants in Honduras

The control over movements of people in Honduras was reflected in the category of foreign migrants detained in Honduras, one already present in 2004. Some articles covered the case of Cameroonian couple as described above, others reported on Chinese, Cuban, Jamaican, and South American migrants detained on Honduran soil. All of these migrants used Honduras as “a trampoline to get to the United States” (*La Prensa*, 7/8/06). It seemed that in 2006, there was an increase in Cubans arriving on Honduran shores, as it was reported that while in 2005, 171 Cubans were captured, the first half of 2006 already saw 302 Cuban balseros. While in 2004, the Cuban migrants were welcomed, given shelter and allowed to stay and continue on their journey north, in 2006, they were being forced to return to Cuba. This is not a simple matter for Honduras who traditionally has very good relations with Cuba who sends doctors to work for free in Honduras. Actually, a meeting of Cuban and Honduran officials took place in July 2006 to determine steps to repatriate Cubans but another article claimed that

sending Cubans back is cruel and the suggestion could have come only from someone lost in the malaise of his own egoism and blind obedience of diplomatic pressure of our big neighbor (*Tiempo*, 7/11/06).

President Zeleña, perhaps trying to straddle these two pressures, acknowledged in one statement that if the trafficking network existed in Honduras, it needed to be combated but that “we should not have double discourse about migration and act with two faces” (*Tiempo*, 6/28/07). He added that while asking President Bush to legalize Honduran migrants in the USA, they should not deport other migrants from Honduras. This was an isolated statement, which did not seem to result in any reduction in detentions or the efforts to treat migrants differently. On the contrary, newspaper articles claimed that internationally connected human trafficking mafia that included smugglers, ID forgers, and dealers had its tentacles in Honduras and needed to be eradicated.

The coverage in 2006 of foreign migrants on their way to the U.S. had shifted and in 2006 underlined the illegality of the crossing, the necessity of early detention, deportation, and the combat of the organized network of human trafficking. Except for President Zelaya’s comment, no comparisons to Hondurans journeying north were made. The articles, once again confirmed that the U.S. border has moved further south with ever-stricter enforcement of policies originating in the United States in Central American countries. In addition, it indicated that various actors including ID forgers and dealers and smuggling networks in Honduras were involved in the illegal immigration process.

Honduran Immigrants in the United States

Similar to 2004, Hondurans and immigration issues in the United States and Mexico in 2006 constituted another big category of articles covered in the newspapers. Immigration news centered on the various immigration reform discussions that were taking place in the

United States but mostly described those favorable to undocumented immigrants as these headlines indicate: “Without the Undocumented the Economy would Fail: Bloomberg” (*La Prensa*, 7/7/06), “Bush: Deportation of Illegals is not Practical” (*La Prensa*, 7/8/06), “California Refuses to Send more Guards to the Border” (*La Prensa*, 6/25/06) and “Famous Susan Sarandon against the Wall” (*La Tribuna*, 6/24/06). Descriptions of anti-immigrant policy proposals were notably missing in the newspaper coverage. Following this trend, either intentionally or unintentionally misunderstanding Bush’ proposed reforms, Zelaya urged Central American and Mexican leaders to support President Bush’s immigration reform and proclaimed:

To want to legalize 12 million people who are suffering from psychological and social instability is an act without precedent in American history and will transcend Bush into a great social reformer in the history (*La Prensa*, 7/22/06).

Zelaya claimed that while immigration had legal issues the human part needed to be considered an essential part of the social process. At a meeting with other Presidents from Latin America, he compared Bush’s reform proposals to the Human Rights Movement and Emancipation of Slaves (*La Prensa*, 7/12/06). Other Central American and Mexican leaders also looked for immigration reform in the U.S. and they believed that Bush would approve a complete immigration reform benefiting thousands of undocumented immigrants in the US. They were optimistic that the reform would enable their immigrants to legalize. At the same time, Central American leaders discussed a plan to eliminate border controls, unify customs, and free migration, modeled on the European Union.

News about Honduran migrants in the United States described deportations of many migrants with criminal records, of gang members, and drug offenders. Other articles were devoted to the Temporary Protection Status (TPS) registration indicating a record number of Hondurans inscribed in TPS in 2006 and explaining that those migrants would not be

included in an immigration reform because they were in the United States legally. Like in 2004, several articles celebrated famous Hondurans in the U.S., while others reported criminal activities ascribed to Honduran migrants. An article in *Tiempo* (6/25/06) described how Honduran migrants in the United States used false birth certificates to bring their children to the U.S. trying to avoid using a coyote. Instead, they asked friends to bring the children as their own. This article related to the corruption of the registration and identification system in Honduras describing the ease of getting a new birth certificate when loss of the original was claimed. This was how the Cameroonians were able to get their Honduran IDs. Even though they seemed to be abusing the same system in Honduras, Hondurans in the United States were urging Honduras to comply with the U.S. requests and to be “modest and prudent and not endanger their situation in the United States by challenging relations with the United States, an ally” (*La Tribuna*, 7/9/06).

The focus of the coverage on immigration reforms that would benefit undocumented migrants in the United States seemed to be projecting hope and pushing an agenda of those who were migrating. President Zelaya’s misreading of Bush’s intentions and proposals was interesting since Bush never suggested legalizing of all undocumented migrants and his proposals were driven much more by economics and pressure from employers than by any concern for human rights for the migrants. Perhaps, in his speech, President Zelaya and other leaders displayed their hopes and expressed their own desires and needs for the outcome of the U.S. reforms.

Issues in Honduras Related to Migration

Finally, certain conditions in Honduras, such as high crime and poverty, were directly linked to outmigration. The Minister of security claimed that the terrible crime in Honduras

led to public insecurity and emigration “as people try to escape the nightmare” (*Tiempo*, 7/18/06). In addition to crime, the newspapers also presented poverty as a factor contributing to outmigration. A whole spread in *Tiempo* (6/26/07) about a Honduran coastal community indicated that emigration was a “valve of escape” from poverty and portrayed young people growing up with a plan to join their parents in the United States. Other articles, instead of portraying it as a fact of life, suggested that migration should be controlled by combating hunger in Honduras. Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga (a Honduran contender to become the Pope) declared that Honduras should worry about the large migration of its young people and the United States should invest more in economic development rather than border repression to mitigate migration. In another interview, he charged Honduras with creating more jobs and investing in social services to stop migration, which he likened to migration from a civil war-stricken country. He called undocumented migrants in the United States “heroes who with their work and poverty maintain the country while the rich take their money and invest it abroad” (*La Tribuna*, 7/14/06). He was referring to remittances, which were reported to be vital to sustaining the economy in numerous articles. Presidential Minister confirmed this by stating that “CAFTA and remittances are the economic future of the country in the next 10 years” (*La Prensa*, 6/16/06).

2006 Newspaper Narratives Summary

In 2006, there was a striking absence of articles about the dangers of the journey through Mexico, apart from one article reporting that 240,000 undocumented immigrants (including Hondurans) were deported from Mexico in 2005. Even though many still get hurt by the trains and the journey has not gotten any easier, there was no coverage of injuries or death like in 2004. I can only speculate about the sudden lack of coverage but it is plausible that the

importance of remittances for Honduras has risen and the government has no interest in warning people against going, and thus may have influenced the focus of migration coverage. The only narratives about the undocumented journey in the newspapers in 2006 focused on the Cuban and South American journeys to Honduras. People advocating for improving conditions in Honduras and celebrating undocumented migrants hinted at the human cost of the journey in comparison to the gain from remittances. The following op-ed piece expressed this sentiment:

“Poverty drives people out to get work and money. Since they can’t get visas they go de mojado (by wetback), through paths of enormous difficulties and paying with savings full of blood and tears, risk their lives and not just few leave their bodies scattered along the way to an adventure, or have to return with a body part missing or completely incapacitated by accidents. They work for inferior pay, some get residency by joining the army. What they send home is essential for the country and yet, Honduran Central Bank takes 10% of remittances-they take in blood what they couldn’t offer our youth to save them from misery” (*Tiempo*, 7/15/06).

The declaration of the Minister that remittances are the future of the country shows that migration is in the interest of the Honduran government that relies on the money migrants send back. President Zelaya’s calls for legalization of undocumented migrants may also be reflecting the need for more remittances from legal migrants, who could make and send more money to Honduras. As I stated earlier, the State of Honduras does not seem to have any interest in stopping or limiting outmigration as their only plan to maintain the economy of Honduras is through receiving remittances of those who leave. The newspapers in 2006 also shed light on ways the United States maintains a strong influence over Honduras, in this case making Honduras follow the U.S. security and immigration rules and thus controlling movements of people far away from its own territory.

To add to the above described newspaper narratives found in the community, I continue with a brief analysis of my field notes focusing on TV and other narratives I observed in Copán Ruinas in 2006.

Field Notes 2006

As in 2004, I recorded various observations in the community in my field notes, including notes about relevant TV programs. I still had only limited access to TV programming but from what I watched myself and heard from others, migration relevant TV coverage in the summer of 2006 included several English CNN reports on the strengthening of the U.S.-Mexico border by posting National Guard there and governmental funding for more technology. Much of CNN in Spanish focused on the Mexican elections at the time of my research in 2006, but I did see several brief reports on the debate of immigration reform in the United States. Local news and programs reported on increased employer raids leading to more deportations from the United States and on the immigration debates. The high focus on immigration in the U.S. was blamed for mass deportations and raids and the overall climate was portrayed as anti-immigrant. In addition, there were two stories, or special reports on immigrants in the United States that caught my attention.

A local channel reported about an undocumented migrant from Guatemala who worked in the United States for over 10 years and was caught as he was leaving the United States on a plane carrying all of his savings of \$60,000 with him. Since it's only permitted to carry \$10,000 on international flights, the rest of his money was taken and he was questioned on how and where he got it. The story explained that he never sent remittances home because he did not trust that his family would use the money wisely. Instead he saved all his money literally under his bed mattress because he did not have a bank account and was happy to be

returning home with such capital. Various lawyers were working on his behalf free of charge, trying to get his money back. Even though the migrant lost most of his savings the amount of money he was going to bring back home was certainly appealing to people thinking about migrating. This story caused a lot of outrage in Copán as people discussed how the U.S. government was stealing money from a hard-working immigrant. People were hoping he would get the money back with the help of his lawyers.

There was another story about a Honduran undocumented immigrant in New Jersey who was dying of cancer. She had not seen her daughter for 13 years (since she was 2 years old) and wanted to say good bye to her before she died. A Honduran consul along with immigrant advocates worked together to get a special visa for the daughter to go to the U.S. to see her mother. They succeeded and the daughter was able to visit her mother in the hospital. She died two days later and the daughter returned back to Honduras. The program showed the mother being treated in a good hospital and also showed the care of the Honduran consul for his compatriot. Nevertheless, it was not clear how the mother obtained or afforded this medical care considering that she was undocumented. It gave an impression that high level and quality medical care was available to all in the United States and I could imagine it encouraging people with medical problems to migrate.

The same variety of American programs, such as movies, sitcoms, music videos, and soap operas that were available in 2004 were still frequent on TV in Honduras in 2006. They continued to present mediascapes of abundance and privileged lifestyle full of opportunity, unfortunately usually unattainable to undocumented migrants in the United States.

In addition to TV programs and news, it did not take much observation on my part to see increased presence of remittances in the community from my observations in 2004. They

showed up in bigger and more American-like houses (being) built in the community or in more and bigger American cars, which to me seemed very impractical for the narrow cobblestoned Copán Ruinas' streets. They screamed status and money.

A second story circulating in the community portrayed a magical ending to one migrant's journey. The way that the migrant in the story (a cousin, son, friend, depending on the narrator) got somehow (not the focus of the story) to Houston, where he was completely lost because he was not met by the people with whom he was supposed to stay. As he was wandering the streets of Houston, a car pulled up and the man inside asked him where he needed to go (language of conversation was not mentioned). At first, the protagonist did not trust this man but later told him he needed to get to a bus station because he needed to travel to another town in Texas. The man in the car said it was far to the bus station and said he would drive him there for free. After some hesitation, the migrant accepted and somehow, magically, the man ended up driving him to his friends' house even though he did not tell him anything about them. I asked one or two of the narrators how it was possible since he did not know of his friends and only got a happy smile and shrug of their shoulders in response. They did not know and did not seem to need to know. The expressions on their faces spoke of hope, happiness, perhaps some sort of justice in the end.

Still, as I mentioned in chapter 2, fewer people were leaving in the summer of 2006 and those who planned to do so were quite secretive about it. I found it much more difficult to talk to people about their potential migration plans than I did in 2004. A few friends explained to me that the U.S. government's focus on undocumented migrants in the U.S. scared a lot of people and they were more careful. Those who told me they wanted to go said they would wait some time for the situation in the United States to cool down. Others chose

not to talk to me at all to protect themselves and still others decided not to go. In general, people perceived the immigration debates in the United States negatively and blamed them for the workplace raids and deportations and border build-up. People asked me why Americans were so angry with undocumented immigrants if they did all the hard work Americans didn't want to do, pointing to the ambivalent stance of the U.S. towards immigrants. Overall, through my observations, I noticed fear associated with the immigration debates as people were concerned about their relatives in the United States. They preferred the more quiet anonymous existence of undocumented migrants in America just a few years ago. They did not believe that these talks or reforms could lead to improvement of the immigrants' situation.

The following script reflects the combination of all public narratives in Copán Ruinas in 2006:

People continue to leave poverty and crime stricken countries, whose economies rely on remittances, in hopes of bettering their situation in the United States, where many migrants succeed and contribute to the economy in the United States as well as their home countries. Because of the difficulty to obtain visas and other legal documents, the majority of migrants try to reach the United States either traveling without documents or with forged documents. Many migrants and other intermediary participants get caught in this process as the United States pressures governments in Mexico and Central America to increase their security systems and detain illegal migrants on their territories. Employer escalated raids and deportations of migrants from the United States (perhaps stimulated by recent focus on immigration issues) caution potential migrants who may temporarily postpone their migration or exercise extra care to succeed.

Discussion

The analysis of public narratives in Copán Ruinas reinforces the importance of doing research at the place from which people migrate, as it presents data that would otherwise

remain obscured. In addition, these analyses will allow me to determine which of these narratives also occur in the narratives of individual participants and which are persuasive to them. I will point to the interplay between public and individual narratives in chapter 4.

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, public narratives that exist in Copán Ruinas do not offer a unitary message or image regarding migration. In addition, they shift over time as the analyses from 2004 and 2006 suggest. In 2004, the dangers of the journey were central to both the newspaper coverage and narratives I observed in the community. Even though the implicit meaning of these narratives seemed to be to stop people from undergoing the journey, many people from the community were still leaving or planning to leave. The narratives gathered in 2006, on the other hand, offered almost no commentary on the journey and its dangers. Yet fewer people were migrating during this time period. It was not the narratives of the dangers along the way to the United States that were persuasive to people staying in Copán Ruinas, but rather the situation in the United States. The immigration debates in the United States, while portrayed in a manner positive for migrants in the newspapers, spread fear in Copán Ruinas as they were linked to wide-spread employer raids and actual increased deportations. This situation, narrated mostly by migrants in the United States, seemed to play a major role in people's decisions not to migrate or at least to postpone leaving.

The U.S. dominance and its power over Honduras were displayed in the coverage of control and sanctions the U.S. imposed on Honduras as a response to irregularities in the Honduran registration and immigration systems. Even though the temporary suspension of visas to the United States did not bother most people in Copán Ruinas because if they were to leave they would travel without them, the newspaper coverage showed the U.S. interest and

involvement in controlling migration outside its own territory. It showed that the policing system, already well established in Mexico, was also at work in some Central American countries. This influence was illustrated by increased hostility towards foreign migrants in Honduras and Central America and even though direct comparisons were not often made, readers could easily translate it to actions taken against Honduran migrants in Mexico and Guatemala. Honduran attempts to align itself with other Latin American countries were at least for the time being crushed by the United States. Honduran historical dependence on the United States was reinforced and continued as the American threats and sanctions made Honduras follow the American orders to reform and model their immigration and registration systems on the Homeland Security.

Remittances were declared the backbone and future of the economy in Honduras by the Minister of Finance, which clearly implied the importance of outmigration for Honduras. I observed the presence of remittances and other material gifts integrated into lives of many in Copán Ruinas. People who had access to remittances relied on them in their daily lives and people who didn't would have liked to have them. Besides their physical presence in the community, the desire for material goods and other luxuries was also fostered by constant presence of American TV shows, which portrayed rich American lives typically not accessible to undocumented migrants in the United States.

The analysis of public narratives also pointed to the complexity and numerous factors and actors participating in the migration process. Poverty, crime, and lack of opportunities to work and advance in Honduras were deemed the main motivations or push factors (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Sassen, 2001) in Honduran migration. Honduran government encouraged migration by building its economy on remittances. Smuggling networks, including coyotes,

ID forgers, dealers, aided by corruption were implicated as enabling the journeys of undocumented migrants. The role of the U.S. government was shown in helping combat the corruption and strengthening the control over migration by imposing its own rules and systems. Coyotes were overwhelmingly portrayed negatively as criminals and exploiters by the newspapers. On the other hand, the police and gangs and their roles in Mexico were absent in public narratives. The build-up of the U.S. Mexico border was presented mostly by CNN special reports and stories of those who crossed it recently. Nevertheless, it was the situation in the United States that seemed to deter or encourage people more than the situation along the way.

The next two chapters will present analyses of individual migrants' narratives. The analyses will show whether and how they agree, disagree, or otherwise interact with the public narratives presented here. In other words, the analyses will reveal which public narratives were appropriated by and became persuasive for the individual migrants (Bakhtin, 1986).

Chapter 4 - Constructing a Collective Narrative – Script of the Journey

One specific reason for this research was the absence of studies that focus on the processes and struggles of undocumented migration as migrants try to reach their destinations in the United States. Since no comprehensive work exists on the topic, the literature review at the beginning of the dissertation presented variations of the journey and participating actors assembled from relevant journalistic and social science accounts. Two of my research questions aim to find out whether the journeys and actors the participants describe concur with the ones gathered together from the various literatures in the Chapter 1. In addition, the research design which involves both successful and unsuccessful migrants aims to find out whether their journeys differ and if so how.

As described in detail in chapter 2, the narrative tool of script (Daiute & Nelson, 1997) allowed me to look within and across all the interviews in order to find the “skeletal general action sequences” (p. 208) that comprise the journeys. At this point of the analyses, I concentrated on the scripts, on what happens along the way in general. The analysis of the personal significance for each individual and his or her experiences is presented in the following chapter. To reach the scripts, I first created a journey script for each of the migrants by checking the main actions in their narratives. Next, I made a list of those actions and checked how many times they occurred across all the interviews and within the groups of successful and unsuccessful migrants. Those that appeared across all interviews constitute the basic general script of the journey and those that appeared several times within one of the groups, make up the successful or unsuccessful scripts. Once I determined the scripts for successful and unsuccessful migrants, I was able to

locate possible causes of the ultimate result of their journey as well as determine who the main actors that hinder or support the success are.

The script that I constructed from the various literatures in chapter 1 can be summarized as follows:

Migrants secure money from local sources or relatives in the United States and hire or are recruited by a coyote. The kind of journey they undergo is determined by the kind of coyote they use and how much they pay her/him. The migrants are robbed and sexually abused by gangs and officials on the border between Honduras and Guatemala, Guatemala and Mexico, and in Mexico. They cross into Mexico in inner tubes near Tecún Umán or on foot at the northern jungle-like portion of the border. Many migrants use freight trains to cross Mexico and many get seriously injured or killed by them. They also jump off trains as they try to avoid immigration officers at set-up checkpoints. Along the way, immigration officers and police solicit bribes and other “services” from the migrants. Some detained migrants are deported back to Honduras. Mexican citizens both help the migrants by giving them food, money and shelter, and report them to local authorities. Immigration policies change over time and impact the patterns of crossing in to the U.S. When the migrants cross into the United States, they get lost, robbed, raped, lose their children and even die. Many who are caught are returned back to Mexico from where they try to cross again.

I begin by presenting results of the script analysis of my interviews in a chart form in Table 4 with numbers of occurrence, followed by the successful and unsuccessful scripts illustrated by excerpts from interviews and relate them to the above script. Since some of the migrants went through the journey more than once, the unit of the script analysis is a journey.

Table 4. Interview Script Analysis

Script events	Unsuccessful 11 (52%)	Successful 10 (48%)	Total
Honduras (not focus of my interview questions)			
Motivations for the journey - poverty, lack of opportunities to advance, prosper, survive	11	10	21
Left Alone	3	2	5
Left with friend, relative, group	6	4	10
Hired a coyote	3	7	10
Guatemala			
Cross on a bus in short period of time (1 day)	7	4	11

Give money/bribe to Guatemalan police	3	2	5
Meet with other migrants and/or coyote	2	8	10
Guatemala/Mexico border			
Migrants cross into Mexico at El Naranjo, La Mesilla, Tecún Umán,)	4	1	5
- on foot			
- floating in inner tubes across a river	5	2	7
- hidden in a truck, car or bus		3	3
Mexico			
Migrants randomly join other migrants	6	0	6
Major modes of transportation in Mexico	6	0	6
- top of freight trains			
- on buses	3	6	9
- on foot		5	5
- hidden in trucks	1	3	4
They encounter Mexican police and immigration	6	6	12
- get beaten up, robbed	2	0	3
- pretend they are Mexican, having learned various facts, songs, jargon, dialect, etc.	1	3	4
- bribe the police	1	3	4
- are detained	6	2	8
- get deported from Mexico	6	2	8
They encounter gangs or thieves	5	1	6
They contact their relatives in the US or Honduras to send them money	6	3	9
They get help from casa del migrante or Grupo Beta	4	0	4
They wait on the Mexican side of the US/Mexico border side before crossing	2	5	7
They find a coyote for the crossing of the border	0	4	5
US-Mexico border			
They cross the border in Texas and Arizona (Nuevo Laredo, Ciudad Juarez, Aguas Prietas, Reynosa)	3	11	9
- in inner tubes, walking across, driven across			
They encounter US immigration and	3		
- are imprisoned and deported to Honduras			
- are taken across the border to Mexico		3	3
- are given a permit to enter the country		2	2
They escape US immigration and continue further into the US		2	2
Migrants are taken to specific (safe) houses where coyotes hold them captive until they get second half of their fees paid and then are brought to their destinations		6	6

The chart shows that the longest part of the basic script involves Mexico. Across the interviews, Mexico is the part of the journey the migrants refer to as the most difficult. Even though crossing into the United States is not an easy endeavor, Mexico seems to put forth more obstacles presented by the police, gangs, thieves, and means of transportation. One migrant put this clearly in his interview:

So, already we are undocumented, the most difficult for us Hondurans is to pass Mexico. ... Yes, for us Hondurans. The Mexicans, it only costs them the border with the United States, nothing else. Now for Central Americans the hard [part] is Mexico.

In the next part of the chapter, I transform the above chart into short script narratives and illustrate the successful and unsuccessful scripts with examples from the interviews.

General Journey Script (as emerged from interview analysis)

Honduran migrants leave their homes for the United States because of poverty, lack of opportunities to advance, or just to survive. They travel across Guatemala, Mexico and the borders between the countries by a variety of means (inner tubes, freight trains, buses, hidden in trucks and cars, and on foot), alone, with friends or family, and/or a coyote. They cross into Mexico near El Naranjo (the northern jungle-like part of the border), La Mesilla (further south) and Tecún Umán (in Southern-most part of Guatemala). The majority of events or problems take place in Mexico usually as the migrants encounter the Mexican police and /or gangs. Migrants often stop as they try to avoid these encounters and to determine best timing and location to cross into the United States at different points (Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, Nogales, Ciudad Juarez, Agua Prieta, Piedras Negras, Monterrey). Some end up returning to Honduras voluntarily or by force from Mexico or the United States, while others reach their destinations in the United States.

This general script resembles the script that came from the literatures in chapter 1 (on p.104). There is less detail here, which is to be expected since the literature review combines reports of many studies and journalistic accounts that pertain to the journey, while here I use only data from my participants from Copán Ruinas. The successful script

presented below is still narrower as it represents only the shared experiences of those in my research who made it to the United States.

Successful Journey

Successful Script

Characteristic of the narrative by Honduran migrants who reach their destinations are the means of transportation and strategies they use to succeed. After leaving Honduras, they typically gather with others in Guatemala and travel with a coyote. They cross Mexico on buses, hidden in trucks and on foot and when they encounter the police they bribe them or convince them they are Mexican. Once they reach the U.S.-Mexico border, they wait there for some time and cross with a coyote. If they are captured by the U.S. immigration, they pretend they are Mexicans, are returned across the border and cross again, or are given permission to stay in the U.S. for a limited period of time. After the border is successfully crossed, they are taken to safe houses where they are kept until their relatives pay their coyotes. Then they are released and brought to their destinations.

Most of the successful migrants in my research either left Honduras with a coyote or had arranged to meet with one in Guatemala. Those who did not use the services of a coyote, traveled with a group of people in which at least one knew their way north. None of the participants suggested that it was difficult to find a coyote. They all seemed to know one who brought their friends or relatives to the United States before or were recruited by a coyote in Copán Ruinas. Even local, smaller scale coyotes organize groups of migrants for the journey and thus, most of the successful participants left Honduras with a group or joined one in Guatemala, in houses the coyotes use for such purposes. The migrants presented various scenarios of meeting their coyotes, some less straight forward than others as the following example shows:

We were in Jocotan [Guatemala]. It was 5 in the afternoon and the guide or nobody else has showed up. So, we, my friend told me, “Instead of returning, we will continue further.” And we went to the capital of Guatemala. There we got to a hotel. By coincidence it was the hotel where he brings his people... there we were, and later came the woman... So she came there, talked to us, we were like five days in the hotel because they were waiting for a group coming from El Salvador.

This migrant talked about her meeting with the coyote, though prearranged in Honduras, as somewhat accidental and magical. Miraculous happenings were not completely uncommon in the narratives. Some migrants magically found their relatives in the United States after losing their address, others avoided the police just by a miracle and others ran into their coyotes by a coincidence. As the extensive literature on coyotes in chapter 1 suggests, some are part of well-organized transnational networks, while others are local smugglers who operate individually and know the way mostly from their own experience of migrating. My participants traveled with local coyotes as well as ones well-connected transnationally. The migrants typically didn't know the scope of reach or connections of the coyotes until they embarked on the journey with them. The following example illustrates a local contact:

M: I went with a, with a guy who said he took people ... from Santa Rita [a town near Copán Ruinas]. But he was nationalized in Mexico ... well, this was how it was, but he probably did not know the way.

J. He did not know much?

M. He had ways but he liked to drink.

Even though this migrant was ultimately successful, his coyote portrayed above presented quite a few problems to his group along the way. He was arrested by the police on a drunken adventure and the migrants had to bail him out with money from their relatives in the United States. Later on the way, he fell in love with a woman who took them in her house in Mexico and he kept delaying the continuation of the journey so that he could stay with her. Only when the migrants decided to continue without him, did he leave too but at one point he returned to visit her pretending to be getting more information and money. This example shows the humanness of the coyotes, which much of the literature on human smuggling (Chin, 2001; Koslowski, 2001; Kyle 2000; Spener

2001) portrays in negative or abusive ways. Most of my participants talked about them as established links in a business of undocumented migration, some better than others as we have seen in the comments above, but none mentioned them as abusive. In spite of some glitches, the services of coyotes and their connections, even though never overtly stated by the migrants, played a major role in the eventual success of the journey.

Once the migrants left Honduras, they crossed Guatemala and the Mexico-Guatemala border without serious problems. The successful migrants traveled across Mexico mostly hidden inside trucks and luggage compartments of buses and walked some portions of their journey. Many also used the regular bus system and most utilized a combination of those in the very long journey across Mexico. Most significant finding in terms of traversing Mexico was that none of the migrants who ultimately reached their destination used the freight train system, so often used by those who did not succeed. None of the coyotes relied on the trains to advance north.

Even though the trains presented most dangers to the migrants, traveling on a bus or enclosed in a truck was not without problems either. While migrants jumped off the train before check points, bus travels left migrants vulnerable to police checks, unable to escape from the enclosed vehicle. Nevertheless, instead of capturing all suspected undocumented migrants, the corrupt police usually looked for bribes and sometimes got fooled by the migrants who pretended to be Mexican. The migrants were trained by the coyotes to act and look like Mexicans for such encounters with the police. When questioning the migrants, the police asked them questions specific to the region the migrants said they were from, about Mexican history, food, and culture. They used

specific vocabulary distinct for Mexico and looked for any slippage of the tongue. The following example illustrates such coaching:

- F: From there to there we went only in first class bus
 J: On a bus
 F: Yes, first [class], right, because they had everything arranged
 J: Everything
 F: The bad was that they tell one to try to speak like a Mexican, to dress like a Mexican, not to bring bags
 J: Aha
 F: And if there are women or something in the group, to make couples, right, so that the police don't....

While some migrants in my research successfully passed as Mexican most needed to bribe the police to continue as the following example shows and as I will discuss later:

- B: Mexico there is a lot, there is a lot of thievery ... I remember that police elicit money from one
 J: The police?
 B: Yes
 J: Federal
 B: Federal, I mean when we were getting off a bus, so there I remember that they started to poke one, "Give me what you have, give me, give me what you have" and they started to take away the money from all the ...
 J: All the people?
 B: All the undocumented, they knew who they were

Traveling hidden in trucks presented other dangers, such as lack of air in the usually crowded cabins. The police also randomly checked trucks and called into the seemingly empty truck asking if people needed water or food. The migrants were instructed to stay completely quiet in such situations. The example below shows how the coyotes prepared the trucks:

- E: We went in two, in two trucks ... the trucks are pretty big.. But they have it all arranged so in the part for example, they divide it. It's the part behind and then they have like a small room
 J: Yes
 E: And there is the cabin, so they, I to be honest don't know how they do it to arrange everything. When we were going to pass a check point, they took all the people who were in this space and put them in this little... I remember that only in one place, I don't know where because one goes inside, they took us

- J. Hmm, the police
 E. Yes, to see if to see if there are people and they open the door
 J. Open too?
 E. Yes, they open too, the big part they open but because here you cannot see that there is a room, can't see anything, so they see there is nothing and they pass
 J. The truck?
 E. Yes, the truck passes normally, if the driver is calm, not nervous

The example shows that even the truck drivers were active participants in this system of coyotes' networks. Other migrants in the successful category, who encountered the Mexican police, had to bribe their way out. The corruption among the Mexican police seems so wide-spread that bribes were the primary way out of police trouble. Some indicated that on certain bus routes, bribes for bus drivers (to warn them about upcoming check points) and the police were already factored in the coyote's fees. As the following excerpts indicate, migrants were well aware of the corruption of the police:

G. And they steal your money, because it's what immigration does.. it's the police and immigration, for money, they want money .. and with money, one can pass

M:... So, we had to ask our relatives in the United States, to so that he [the coyote] can leave [the prison] and they [police] made him an offer, they told him, "we will charge you this and then take you across two check points and will bring you on a road where you will not have any problems"

J. Uhu

M. They told him, but they confused us and took us to, they took him from there and brought us to another road which he did not know

J. The police?

M. Yes, the police themselves.

J. I can't, how?

M. The police in Mexico are the most corrupt that there are, I mean, from what I know

J. For money they...

M. Yes for money they relent

The participants implicated the police in both making their journeys difficult but also in ultimately facilitating it by allowing them to continue after payments were made, confirming some journalistic accounts reviewed in chapter 1. .

Once the migrants made it all the way to the U.S.-Mexico border they often had to wait on the border and sometimes even change the intended crossing place as the coyotes waited and looked for the best time and place to cross. All successful migrants crossed the U.S.-Mexico border with a coyote, mostly the one that traveled with them all along or with one he or she connected them to. None of them randomly used one of the “pateros or polleros” (Castro, 1998; Spener, 2001) scattered in crossing points along the border. The successful crossings of my participants took place both across the Rio Grande and in the desert areas of Arizona and Texas at Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, Nogales, Ciudad Juarez, Agua Prieta, Piedras Negras, and Monterrey.

To my surprise, five of the ultimately successful migrants were caught during the border crossing. Three of them were able to convince the U.S. immigration officials that they were Mexican and agreed to be “voluntarily” returned across the border to Mexico confirming the findings of Heyman (1995) and Singer & Massey (1998) regarding the common occurrence and inefficiency of this immigration practice. Back in Mexico, they contacted their relatives and their coyotes and tried again until they succeeded. The price the migrants paid coyotes usually guaranteed that in such cases they were taken across the border again until they got to their final destinations. The migrants described these voluntary returns across the border as fairly simple events even though they could have meant the end of their journeys. The ultimate successful result most likely affected the way these episodes were relayed to me:

J: And the immigration what?

L. They caught us, threw us in a car and they made us official notes of deportation for...

J. For Mexico?

L. To Mexico they throw one when they catch one

J. Aha

L. Well, then you need to start over another time

M. The police say when we arrived, “Where are you from?” “I am from Honduras, but the other three are Mexicans,” said the guy, the one who was from San Pedro [in Honduras]

J. Aha

M. With this they did not ask us more questions. They took our data and like at half past 5 they gave us over to another patrol and threw us across the border

In addition to these “voluntary” returns to Mexico, two migrants who were detained during their crossing to the United States told the immigration that they were from Honduras and were given a permit to stay for a short period of time with an order to appear in court. Even though one of them claimed she hired a lawyer, neither eventually attended the court hearing. Technically, according to 1987 Supreme Court decision, anyone who makes an illegal entry has the right to a deportation hearing (Mahler, 95). None of the migrants told me that they claimed refugee or asylum status but one suggested that there was a brief period of time when the U.S. immigration was granting these short entry permits specifically to Hondurans, especially after hurricane Mitch in 1998. This may be the case, or they may have been processed by an immigration officer who actually followed the law to grant the opportunity for a hearing as opposed to “pushing” voluntary return or because there was no detention facility. Currently, the government is trying to detain or deport most apprehended migrants as opposed to ordering them to appear in court at a later time. President Bush claimed at the State of the Union Speech in 2007 that “the administration has effectively ended “catch and release” for illegal aliens apprehended at the borders” (www.whitehouse.gov).

Another notable finding is that none of the migrants spoke about attempting to bribe the U.S. immigration officers, in contrast to bribing officers in Mexico and even Guatemala. This would point to no or less corruption of officers on the American side, even though “a former U.S. border agent who allowed hundreds of illegal immigrants to

cross from Mexico in return for \$120,000 in cash was sentenced to five years in federal prison” (Reuters, 2/15/07). Thus, corruption exists on the U.S. side as well, but in comparison to its widespread existence in Mexico, it is minor and not scripted in the journey at this point.

Once the migrants were beyond the immediate border area, they were taken to so-called safe houses where the coyotes held them captive until their relatives paid them the remainder of the fee. Usually, migrants paid half of the fee before they leave, and the second half (up to \$3,500 for Honduran migrants) when they arrived in the United States. Once the money was received, the migrants were brought to their destinations by cars, on buses, and airplanes. Even though migrants were so close to their goals/destinations in the safe houses, their stays there were not easy as “waiting for the payment to be made so they can be released is always stressful” (Mahler, 95, p. 65). Some migrants reported the house being extremely crowded so that they could not lie down at all or only taking turns and had to share only one bathroom for several days. Another migrant explained that some tried to escape from these houses:

F: In Houston, there we arrived at a house, there they had us for 3 days and already the coyotes communicated, right, with all the relatives of those who were there

J. What for?

F. So that they send the other amount of money. To let us loose. Many people what they do is leave, leave because there they have you locked, right? One cannot leave

J. Cannot leave

F. You can't leave until it's paid, but many people risk not to pay, and because the coyotes cannot follow them on the street, because if they follow them, the police will investigate them and the most persecuted is the coyote

J. Aha

F. So many people go without paying

J. But how if locked?

F. Oh, they manage to leave, break windows or something and go

None of the participants in my study attempted to escape from the safe house and all were ultimately brought to those expecting them in the United States. In addition, none of the migrants faced the Minutemen or any other self-appointed border guards, perhaps because those groups and individuals have only recently become more numerous and active.

Unsuccessful Journey

Though the unsuccessful journeys are similar in many aspects to the successful ones, they do differ in some ways, the most obvious being the outcome.

Unsuccessful Script

In contrast to those who make it to the United States, unsuccessful migrants usually start their journeys alone or with friends or relatives. Once in Mexico, they randomly join other migrants and travel on top of freight trains and on buses. They get attacked by gangs or thieves in Mexico and their encounters with the Mexican police usually lead to detention and deportation. When in trouble, they contact their families in the United States or Honduras asking them for financial help and seek help from “casas del migrante” and Grupo Beta. Those who manage to cross into the United States are captured by the U.S. immigration or turn themselves in voluntarily because they get lost or exhausted in the desert. They are imprisoned by the U.S. immigration authorities before getting deported back to Honduras.

The differences of the journey began in Honduras, as many of the unsuccessful migrants left alone or with a friend or relative, without a coyote. Out of the unsuccessful migrants in my study, only three used a coyote to cross Mexico. Two of them made it all the way to the United States but were captured by the U.S. immigration and deported to Honduras. The third migrant, female, decided not to travel with the other male migrants in an enclosed truck in Mexico because she was afraid she would get raped and traveled by bus instead. Her coyote told her that if she were captured she would be on her own

since she wanted to travel apart from the rest of the group. She was caught and as long as she knew, the rest of the migrants made it all the way. In contrast, as I mentioned in the previous part, all successful migrants I interviewed eventually hired a coyote, at least for part of their journey and most were guided by them the entire time.

Most of the migrants who did not succeed talked about crossing Guatemala in one day usually on a bus, without many problems except for occasional bribes they needed to give to the Guatemalan police. Like the successful migrants, they crossed into Mexico in the jungle-like northern part of the border near El Naranjo, as well as through La Messila, south of El Naranjo and the notorious southern towns of Ciudad Hidalgo and Tecún Umán. See the map in Figure 2 and read some experiences of the crossings below:

Figure 3. Map of Crossings from Guatemala into Mexico



Adopted from <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/guatemala.pdf>

N: Another day at 4 in the morning we took a bus and arrived at a place called El Naranjo

J. Ah, it's on the border, right?

N. Yes, on the border with Mexico, well, we paid for the boat that brought us to El Ceibo which they say is the border between Mexico and Guatemala. From there to there was the hard, was to undergo, already the journey, cross all those mountains, getting hungry, well everything

J. Walking?

N. More or less 12, like 14 hours, without resting, in one stretch

A: Well, it's called Tecún Umán, and one pays 5 Mexican pesos.. and in inner tubes ...

J. Yes, yes

A. With boards, tied, they pass one... 5 pesos

J. One person.. and?

A. One goes in the water, swimming with a rope tied here swimming .. and another goes with a pole and one goes mounted

J. And how ... how did you find them?

A. Simply by sight. There they are. It's their business

J. It's a business? ... are there many?

A. Plenty, and how passes a lot of merchandise-butter, soap, like that from Guatemala they go shopping to Mexico and vice versa

Even though recent journalistic accounts indicate that crossing into Mexico has become more dangerous than crossing into the United States, my participants did not have many difficulties. This may be partially because only two of them crossed at the notoriously dangerous Tecún Umán area. This shifting pattern was confirmed by a catholic priest who runs the Casa del Migrante in Tapachula (on the Mexican side of Tecún Umán) in an email exchange with me. He said that they had fewer and fewer migrants from Honduras as their crossings had moved further north.

Once in Mexico, the unsuccessful migrants continued north mostly on top of freight trains and some on buses. The mode of transportation in Mexico was the other biggest difference between the two groups and likely contributed to success or failure. Six of the unsuccessful migrants in my study utilized the infamous Tren de la Muerte (Nazario, 2006) for at least part of their journey. Recently, the train and its use by migrants have been featured in newspaper articles, documentary films and even a book. Various accounts and statistics indicate that many migrants are injured by the train and some die under its wheels. Still, thousands of migrants continue using this mode of transportation, mostly because it is financially most accessible. None of my participants got injured by the train, nevertheless, many witnessed other migrants getting hurt or

killed by the train, or attacked while traveling on its top. I was interested in more details of how the migrants navigated the trains given that most had never ridden or even seen a train before because Honduras does not currently have a developed train system. I asked migrants how they got on and off the trains, how they stayed on, etc. and below are some of their experiences.

K: The plan is exactly to travel all the way there, it's 5000 kilometers that one travels on the train, a freight train, not the passenger train

J. Aha

K. It's flocks of people. The train looks like an excursion

J. How many people?

K. I am talking a thousand

N. Well, there we got on the train. Already this train was going fast, I thought of catching it, I thought about it a lot. I said here I could lose my life

J. How?

N. Because it was moving, did not stop

J. Ah, was not stopping

N. No, already there one had to run and catch it, and

J. And does it go fast?

N. Yes, it goes very fast, pretty fast, it's to risk one's life

J. And how? How do you get on the train?

D. Yes, when it goes slowly, when passes a train that goes slowly, there is where one gets on

J. Aha

D. Only goes slowly for a little part, here is a piece of iron and here one goes

J. Are there lots of people on the train?

D. Eh, there in this place there we were Hondurans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, like number of 800

J. On one train

D. Yes, in the same moment, we all got on

J. Uh, everyone running, and ...

D. Yes, everyone running and in one moment when it stopped ... so that some women and children get on and the men there collaborating with women, so that they get on quickly, grab them by hands, others pushing

These accounts indicate how common it is for migrants to use the trains as their transportation across Mexico, one migrant even comparing it to an excursion on the example above. The more traumatic situation the participants experienced on the train had to do with another migrants' falling off the train or encountering gangs who attack

migrants on top or near the trains. Below is an example of a migrant witnessing a co-migrant dying under the train.

N: The train sometimes travels 4, 3, 5 days and these days you don't sleep or eat
 J: Well
 N: I was standing well adjusted and well awake. My friends were sleeping and I was guarding them so that they don't fall and so I told the Salvadoran, "Look, go where my friends are," I told him "because you are going to fall from there." He told me he would not fall
 J: Aha
 N: So I watched him nodding off
 J: Sleeping
 N: Nodding off. So I hit him in the face and told him: "Look, wake up or get over there." Then I saw a light that came from behind a hill. Because the gangs they bring lights and illuminate the train. So I saw a light. I looked at the light and then returned to look again where he was, he wasn't there
 J: Wasn't there
 N: I only heard his screams. The train grinded him. Imagine to fall there in the middle, under the wheels

This description illustrates the dangers and horrors of traveling on the train and provides details we are unlikely to read elsewhere in reports on the train's casualties.

In addition to the train itself, many unsuccessful migrants ran into gangs or thieves on the trains or elsewhere in Mexico. The gangs rob migrants of their money, clothing and shoes, threaten their lives, and rape the women. The example in chapter 2 (p. 66) showed one such encounter and next chapter will take us deeper into another one.

Several of the unsuccessful migrants used *casas del migrante*, created by religious organizations in Guatemala and Mexico for migrants to rest, get food, get medication, bathe, and wash their clothes. Most *casas del migrante* host migrants in need for 24 hours and are located along the routes frequently used by undocumented migrants. In addition to these special houses, some migrants reported being helped by Grupo Beta, a governmental organization that helps migrants in need. Most often, Grupo Beta provided

medication and helped migrants get food and water, but one of the participants said the group even confronted the federal police who physically assaulted them:

K: These guys were there, they saw that we came all beaten up, all immediately like 15 Betas who dress in color orange

J. Yes

K. They came where we were. “Guys what happened to you?” “It’s that the federal”... Immediately they went to grab the federals who were beating us up and they put them in front and they asked them: “And you why are you beating up the undocumented?”

J. Aha

K. They immediately arrested them, because Beta is an organization that defends the undocumented. They work with human rights

In this case, Grupo Beta served as a much needed check on the seemingly unlimited authority of the Mexican police over migrants. This scenario was possible because Grupo Beta is a an agency of the immigration service, which is part of the Interior Ministry, and its purpose is to prevent crimes being committed against migrants crossing Mexico to the United States (Instituto Nacional de Migración, Mexico).

All of the unsuccessful migrants encountered the police in one way or another-at check points on train routes, being interrogated by them on buses, or solicited on the streets. In contrast to the successful migrants, their encounters often turned into detention and finally deportation because they were unable to bribe the police or convince them they were from Mexico. When the unsuccessful participants experienced problems on the way, such as being robbed by the police or gangs, they often contacted their relatives in the United States or Honduras and asked them to send them money so that they can continue their journey. In some cases, the relatives they relied on did not come through and contributed to the failure of the journey because they did not provide the finances to continue.

Those who got past the police and gangs in Mexico, reached the U.S.-Mexico border and tried to cross it either alone or with a coyote arbitrarily hired on the border. They were either caught by the U.S. immigration or turned themselves in because they could not continue through the harsh conditions of the desert. One female migrant, quite overweight, said she simply could not keep up with the rest of the group and along with her cousin decided to wait for the immigration on a road in the desert, while others continued. They were both deported to Honduras after spending some time in prison. Another ultimately unsuccessful migrant made it all the way to Houston, where he saw an immigration patrol car approaching and could have easily hidden from them, but because he had heard that they were giving entry permits to Honduran migrants, he did not hide, was captured and deported to Honduras. It illustrates how narratives from prior migrants impact migrants' decisions and actions. I will present his story in more detail in the following chapter. Some migrants did not complain about the treatment by the U.S. immigration officers and some found the experience in U.S. jails traumatic, even described as psychological torture, as I also show in more detail in the next chapter.

Discussion/Significance

One of the main reasons for this study was the lack of social science research dedicated to the journeys of undocumented migrants to the United States. This research is, however, extremely important given the increasing violence and human cost of the journey. While journalists have been paying attention to the drama of the journeys of Central American migrants in Mexico, researchers have not systematically examined what constitutes and influences the journey and how it impacts the migrants' lives. My

data provide a systematic view of the journey from the point of view of people who have attempted it at least once. These data also contribute to the humanizing of the migrants and other actors, so often portrayed void of any humanity and provide details about the journey not found elsewhere.

Mexico as the Main Obstacle

One of the new findings of this research is the importance or weight Mexico has in the journey, illustrated by a participant's comment.

C. The most dangerous part, that makes one go with fear, because since one enters Mexico, already goes with fear

While much has been written and is in the public awareness about the crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border, Mexico has not been factored in as a significant part of the journey. This is mostly due to the fact that the focus of immigration centers on Mexican migrants for whom the border is the biggest obstacle. For migrants coming from further south, the obstacles are many and my participants claimed Mexico to be the hardest part of the journey. This can be explained by several factors: Mexico is the longest/largest part of the journey for Honduran migrants; the climate changes drastically from south to north; Mexico does not have a clear policy toward migrants even though the United States has enlisted the Mexican authorities in the efforts to stop undocumented migrants before they reach the U.S.-Mexico border. These efforts have been intensified in the past ten years, when Operation Global Reach (Koslowski, 2001) began spreading the identification and deportation activities well south of the U.S.-Mexico border.

The official role of the federal police in Mexico in this context is to identify, detain, and deport migrants from Mexico. Nevertheless, as portrayed by my participants, the police seem to view migrants as a source of additional income:

C: Not because they want to help the United States but because they want money, they take advantage of people

Even though problems with police in Guatemala are fewer, several migrants reported the need to bribe the police there as well, indicating the same pattern taking place even further south. Moreover, the analysis of public migration narratives in chapter 3, showed that the U.S. government is trying to involve other countries that may be used by undocumented migrants as transit countries to the United States, moving the detection system further south. Hence, Honduran and Guatemalan migrants' efforts are hindered in Mexico, Nicaraguan in Honduras and El Salvador, Ecuadorian in Costa Rica, etc. The United States is establishing these policing systems even though sectors of the American economy depend on undocumented labor, for which demand has not decreased.

Corruption

These officially prescribed efforts, nevertheless, are stymied by the systemic corruption, possibly inspired by low income of the officers who use migrants to supplement it. The police abuse their authority and power and mistreat the less powerful participants in this equation-the migrants. The corruption has to be to some degree condoned by the Mexican government, which does not systematically persecute those involved in it. Corruption is not limited to the police but reaches to the bus and train operators who take migrants' money in exchange of warning them about upcoming police check-points. But even though in some cases they may actually spare migrants an encounter with the police, they essentially steal the migrants' money all the same. They,

too, abuse their power as transportation operators and some drivers even refuse to take undocumented migrants on the bus without extra money. One migrant spoke of a train engineer who threatened to call the immigration if they did not give him money:

N: Well, we were going without anything, we only had 100 Mexican pesos. The engineer, he was a thief because he robbed us

J. The train engineer? How?

N. I will explain it to you. He told us: “Give me 100” and we said “No, we don’t have absolutely anything,” and he said, “OK, so stay here, here. I will call the immigration and you will stay here.” And one to continue the journey one has to render all one has. With lots of pain we gave him the 100 pesos and he said: “When I see a check-point, I will blow the train whistle three times and you will get off and go around the immigration and wait for the train further down.” But it did not happen like this. We got to the check point and all they had to do was to arrest us there

As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, corruption did not figure anywhere near as prevalent among the U.S. immigration/border patrol officers, but was recorded in Guatemala and Honduras. The Honduran newspaper analysis in previous chapter showed corruption among those issuing identification cards and passports, illegally providing Honduran documents to migrants from other countries using people’s needs and desires to migrate to their financial gain.

Differences btw successful and unsuccessful journeys: Access to Finances

The design of this research, which incorporated both successful and unsuccessful migrants, enabled me to study and compare the journey from these two perspectives. I have already hinted at the main differences between the journeys and the likely causes of the success and failure but Table 5 presents their summary.

Table 5. Differences between successful and unsuccessful journeys

	Successful	Unsuccessful
Travel companions	Leave with a coyote or join one in Guatemala	Travel alone or with a friend or relative
Means of transportation in Mexico	Buses, hidden in trucks, on foot	Freight trains (Tren de la Muerte) and buses
Encounters with Gangs/thieves in Mexico	Uncommon	Common
Encounters with Police/immigration in Mexico	Migrants are able to bribe them or convince them they are Mexican	Often leads to detention and deportation
US-Mexico Border	Wait and look for the right time and place to cross with a “known” coyote	Cross alone or with a coyote they hire randomly on the border
Encounters with Immigration in the United States	If caught, pretend they are Mexican, are returned to Mexico and cross again or get an entry permit	Run out of resources and turn themselves in or get detained and deported to Honduras

Even though the chart indicates several differences in the scripts, the analysis points to one main cause of failure, which is the economic ability of the migrants to hire a coyote for the journey and/or choose their mode of transportation in Mexico. As I indicated before, the majority of the successful migrants either started with a smuggler or joined one in Guatemala or Mexico. None of them traveled on top of the freight trains, the most dangerous and cheapest mode of transportation undocumented migrants use in Mexico. In contrast, most of the unsuccessful migrants did not use the services of a coyote and six of them used the trains. But, using the trains was not really a choice for these migrants. Rather, it was their lack of finances that did not allow them to pay for bus tickets or join a smuggler. One migrant told me about who uses the trains:

A: Those are the poor, I mean, for example who left from there from San Pedro [Sula, Honduras] by hitching a ride

Thus, the poorest within the already poor category of undocumented migrants risk their lives and health on top of the trains, which are said to bring to the northern Mexican border only 3 out of every 100 migrants who ride them (Gutierrez, 2002).

The lack of finances also makes the migrants more vulnerable when they encounter the Mexican police who demand bribes from them. Without the ability to pay, they end up in jails and deported. In addition, because they do not have a smuggler who knows how to avoid gangs and thieves or how to deceive the police, they fall prey to these elements in Mexico, further complicating and endangering their journeys. And those who do make it onto the U.S. territory get caught and perhaps because they are not trained by a coyote, they do not know to or do not know how to convince the U.S. immigration they are Mexican to take advantage of the voluntary return policy. Others may hire a random coyote on the border who may not be a good guide during the crossing.

The literatures in chapter 1 hinted at finances as a major factor in the kind and success of the journey. Mahler (1995) describes different trip options as first class-undocumented style, economy class, and risking your life “sin cinco,” all based on migrants’ financial abilities, confirming my findings. Nevertheless, she only interviewed migrants who made it to the United States, thus missing the details of how the lack of finances plays out along the journey and what consequences it may have on the success. My analysis confirms that it is the dire economic conditions of the migrants that cause them to travel without a coyote or on top of a train and eventually lead to a failure.

The Systematic Nature of the Journey

The script analysis also points to numerous actors and systems that are in place along the journey, starting in Honduras, continuing across Guatemala and Mexico and ending in the United States. I have already described the coyotes, police, bus drivers, and train engineers and some of their roles and participation in the system. Actors actually providing help to the migrants are the governmental organization Grupo Beta and casas del migrante sponsored by the catholic church. Mexican citizens also participate in the system, some assisting the migrants by giving them food, water, and shelter and others by turning them in to the police. According to a recent Mexican law, Mexican citizens can be fined for helping undocumented migrants, which creates a difficult bind for those who want to help.

B: It's prohibited that a Mexican has an emigrant in the house, they charge 20,000 pesos in penalty and I think that 15 years in prison

Many participants were either assaulted themselves or witnessed others being beaten, raped, robbed, and killed by gang members. Thus, gangs have become the newest participants of this system, whose actions are not necessarily sanctioned by the U.S. or Mexican authorities but their presence is linked to the U.S. deportation policies (Conference on Deportations, John Jay College, May 2005). Many of the gang members are previous migrants deported from the United States for criminal activities, who have established their new areas of influence in Central American and Mexico and made migrants their targets. Moreover, the Mexican government does not seem to persecute the gangs and thus implicitly condones their attacks on the migrants.

Krissman (2005), in his critique of Massey's (1987) concept of migrant networks, suggests that immigration research needs to consider more seriously actors in the

receiving country and their role in perpetuating migration. He proposes the “International Migration Network” (p. 26), which considers actors on several levels both in the home country (Mexico-in his research) and the receiving country (United States). Nevertheless, perhaps because his work focuses on Mexican migrants, his International Migration Network does not include actors and systems in transit countries, such as Mexico, for migrants traversing longer distances to the United States. My research supports his claim that we can interpret undocumented migration as a system but with additional participating players and different ways of navigating. Hence, even though each migrant has gone through the journey in his/her particular way, overall, the journey is a shared experience in a broader system in place. I present the system in a theoretical model in a graphic form in chapter 6.

Other researchers rely on theoretical notions of systems to explain certain phenomena. Engestrom (1999), for example, when explaining activity theory claims that

“actions are not fully predictable, rational, and machine-like. The most well-planned and streamlined actions involve failures, disruptions, and unexpected innovations. They are very difficult to explain if one stays at the level of actions. The analysis of the activity system may illuminate the underlying contradictions that give rise to those failures and innovations as if “behind the backs” of the conscious actors” (p. 32).

Similarly, individual migrants’ actions and their consequences are better explained in a system, not leaving them completely random and sole responsibility of the migrants. The system of undocumented migration is flexible and shifts with changing circumstances. This adaptability is illustrated, for example, by data from my participants about crossing from Guatemala into Mexico (Figure 2, p. 117). While, several years ago, the most frequented crossing into Mexico was the southern part of the Guatemala/Mexico border in Tecún Umán and Tapachula, towns which have become dangerous and terrorized by

gangs, most participants in the study who traveled recently crossed in the northern part of the border. This shift has occurred even though its jungle-like conditions make crossing in the north physically a lot harder. Similarly, various U.S. immigration initiatives described in chapter 1 that strengthen certain parts of the U.S.-Mexico border have redirected the migrants into new (and more dangerous) crossing areas rather than stopping them all together. The system adjusts with time.

Summary

The script analysis allowed me to identify shared experiences as well as the differences and similarities between the successful and unsuccessful journeys, which led me to conclude that access to finances is the main root of success or failure. Migrants who can't gather enough money, can't hire a smuggler, which in turn makes them more vulnerable along the way, especially in Mexico, where they travel on top of trains, get attacked by gangs, and don't have money for bribes. The analysis also showed the systematic nature of undocumented migration, with many actors participating along the way. Coyotes were confirmed to be important facilitators of the journey. The Mexican police figure prominently as one of them most active players hindering the journey when adhering to their official role, and as facilitators when they abuse their power, demand bribes, and let migrants continue. Wide-spread corruption of the police and bus and train operators thus in the end plays a facilitating role in the system. Mexico, in general, emerged as the main obstacle along the migrants' journeys and is considered by many as more difficult than crossing the infamous U.S. border.

When I cross-analyzed the public and individual narratives a few points stood out. The narratives of dangers of the journey, especially of the trains in Mexico, so widely present in the community in 2004, found their way into the individual narratives in an interesting way. Migrants who did not use the trains in Mexico spoke about the dangers of the trains and explained they would not risk their lives by traveling on them. Those who did use the trains knew about the dangers before their journey as well but some said that even though they have read and heard about the trains, they couldn't quite imagine what it was like in reality. Only when they actually tried to get on a moving train or not to fall off, they realized how difficult and dangerous it was. Of course, as I just explained, those who used the trains were not able to mobilize enough capital to take buses or hire a coyote, so once they decided to migrate, the trains were their only choice. Thus, for those migrants, it was the narratives of success present in newspapers celebrating Honduran migrants in the United States, in remittances and other material goods in Copán Ruinas, and narratives of plentiful job opportunities in the United States, that were more persuasive than those of the dangers of the journey. The persuasiveness of these positive narratives was true for all migrants I interviewed, even if they did not use the trains.

Nevertheless, the narratives of dangers were persuasive to many people in Copán Ruinas who did not migrate. I saw the interplay of these narratives clearly in interviews I conducted in 2004 with people who for the time being were staying in Honduras. Even though they desired the financial gains migrants can make in the United States, they were persuaded by the various dangers of the journey and decided not to risk their lives. Similarly, in 2006, many people were persuaded not to migrate because of the situation in the United States portrayed negatively by migrants in the U.S. and TV reports. The

immigration debates in the United States, while portrayed in a manner positive for migrants in the newspapers, spread fear in Copán Ruinas as they were linked to wide-spread employer raids related by migrants in the United States and actual increased deportations. These narratives seemed to play major roles in people's decisions not to migrate or at least to postpone their leaving. As I expected, the narratives of the U.S. visa suspensions so prevalent in the newspapers in 2006 did not make it to individual narratives in the Copán Ruinas as those I interviewed did and would migrate again without visas granted mostly to the wealthy.

These findings make me believe that even though some narratives found in the newspaper and TV news are appropriated by migrants or potential migrants in Copán Ruinas, narratives sent by migrants from the United States are more powerful and persuasive. While narratives of available jobs leading to remittances, houses, cars, toys, and dollars persuade many to migrate, narratives of unavailability or instability of those jobs convince many people to stay. In addition, the ever-present TV programs that portray middle and upper class life in the United States contribute to people's motivations to migrate.

While the script analysis has revealed important and new findings, it has not given us enough insight into the details of the experiences and how the migrants perceived and evaluated them. The next chapter will present migrants' stories, the psychological states they experienced, how they narrated them and constructed themselves through the narration.

Chapter 5 – Individual experiences and making of the self through narration

... they suffered much, their skin raw and peeling, with many sores like this, their clothes scratching them. And the shoes hurt them, so they were very bad.

... and one wanted to hit me with a piece of iron like this, and I told him that what they want. They told me: “Your money.” I told them: “I don’t have, what I have is 30 pesos,” and I presented it to them and another one told him: “Don’t hit him. Only that he gives us money,” and the very companion defended me from him.

While the previous chapter illustrated shared experiences of the journeys and the system in which they occur, this chapter presents more details of the migrants’ individual experiences. Here, I analyze the particular stories or high points, which are places in the interviews that stand apart from the rest in their intensity. It is in the high points that the participants communicated the important and psychologically salient events and were interpreting their experiences and (re)constructing their selves.

The two quotes at the beginning of the chapter are taken from high points of two migrants, whose narratives I use in this chapter as case studies to illustrate the particularities of the journey. After presenting the case studies, I look across the high points and compare the events the migrants presented in those instances. This analysis of high points should illuminate what the journeys felt like to the migrants as they reflected on them from distance in space and time and show the very human nature of this experience, so often left out in research on migration. As I explained in chapter 2, I used narrative tools of script/story analysis (Daiute, in press ; Daiute & Nelson, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1997) to determine the most salient points of each of the participant’s interviews. According to Daiute and Nelson (1997), “stories individuate the general script by way of specific noncanonical unexpected happenings and stories evaluate happenings within the narrative from the point of view of the narrator” (pp. 208, 9). Stories focus on diversity in

narrator's unique personal perspectives on scripts they may share with others (Daiute, in press).

Those stories are unitary discrete linguistic components isolatable within the narrative and are sometimes referred to as evaluation (Labov & Waletzky, 1997) and sometimes as high point (Peterson & McCabe, 1983 as cited in Daiute, in press), which is how I refer to them. I identified high points in the long interview transcripts by locating breaks in the flow of the interview with increased and more intense narrative with clusters of evaluative markers such as repetitions, changes in tense, negatives, qualifying adverbs and adjectives, causal connectors, comparisons, and psychological states of feelings, cognition, and reported speech⁹ (Daiute & Nelson, 1997; Daiute, in press).

In addition, I rely on Freeman's (2004) claim that "narratives deal with subjective meanings, they are individuals' perceptions of their past, their interpretive renditions of the past from the standpoint of the present" (p. 69). In this narrative theory, recounting real-life experiences is not about telling it as it was, but "poiesis," a process of articulating meanings that could not possibly emerge except in retrospect, through narration" (Freeman, 2004, p. 74), are involved.

Below, I use two participants' interviews as case studies to illustrate the high points and their role in the whole narrative. I begin each case study with a brief introduction of the participant and the circumstances under which I met them. The introductions come from field notes I took after the interviews and are slightly edited here for the purposes of the chapter.

⁹ Please see chapter 2 (p. 63) for more detailed description of analysis.

Case study: Conchetta, a successful female migrant

I first met Conchetta as I was walking with my friend Maria by her house. Maria suggested we stop to buy Conchetta's mother's famous empañadas (Honduran pancakes stuffed with meat or vegetables). The house was simple, sitting in a hill, and had a large outdoor oven and a few seats up front around plastic tables with Coca Cola umbrellas in their middle. Conchetta welcomed Maria who introduced me and quickly ordered a few empañadas for herself, her daughter Danelis, and me. I was struck by Conchetta's mother's face. She must have been quite old, her face a mixture of native Indian and European features: high cheek bones set in a small angular dark-skinned face, dark eyes shaded by thick eyebrows, strong chin, and long white hair pulled back in braids. She had almost no teeth, I noticed, as she smiled quietly while she prepared the food. I was fascinated by her beauty and had to keep myself from staring at her. I didn't participate in the conversation Maria and Conchetta had and they didn't include me, catching up after some time. So, for the most part I just sat there quietly. But then my interest was peaked as I understood that Conchetta had recently come back from the United States. In my mind I immediately calculated she could be another participant in the successful female category of migrants. Still, I didn't say anything until we were almost ready to go, which was when I very briefly explained my research and asked if I could interview her about her experience. Conchetta said I could and we agreed I would come back in two days around noon. It took over a week to actually interview Conchetta as she kept missing our appointments mostly because of her volunteer work with Children International. By the time I actually did interview her, I was about to leave Copán and was doubtful she'd talk to me. I was glad she did. She was my last interview, a day before I left Copán.

Conchetta is 35 years old and has two sons, 8 and 9 years old. She helps with the empañada business and volunteers at Children International. Her husband has been in the United States for 7 years. Their children barely know him. Conchetta went to the United States in 2003 to be with her husband and to make more money for her family. She left her sons with her mother at that time and returned after 1.5 years.

I present the basic script of Conchetta's journey below. The script, which I focused on in the previous chapter, represents the bare bones of Conchetta's journey identified by the main actions in her narrative and will be helpful to understand Conchetta's high points, which involve details and emotions. It is the high point analysis I present later on that shows Conchetta as an independent, tough yet caring woman, a sharp thinker, and a survivor.

Conchetta left Honduras with a friend and met with her coyote in Guatemala. She crossed into Mexico hidden in a gas cistern with other migrants in the coyote's group. She crossed Mexico mostly hidden in

trucks and in a car. On the U.S. border, she waited in a house to meet a new coyote. She crossed with another group across Rio Bravo in Nuevo Laredo. She walked after crossing the border and then continued in a car arranged by the coyote. The coyote contacted her friends from a safe house. Her friend came to pick her up and pay the fees after a few days of waiting.

Conchetta had a good experience in the United States, working in restaurants right after her arrival, and learned some English. She returned because of her kids. She is resolved to go again with her sons, so that the entire family can be together because her husband is not coming back to Honduras. She would recommend to people who have a spouse or children in the United States to go. Otherwise, if the family is together in Copán, they should stay home.

The script, by definition, provides us with the basic actions and events of Conchetta's journey. She traveled hidden in various vehicles, walked for days and nights in the desert but did not talk about any direct encounters with the police, thieves, or gangs, likely because her journey was orchestrated by well-connected coyotes. Conchetta claimed both before and a few times during the interview that she did not have many difficulties along the way; that she did not struggle in comparison to others. In fact, much of the interview with Conchetta was very straight forward, her narrative instrumental, following the temporal and spatial trajectory of the journey. Conchetta's replies to my questions were efficient, purposeful, generally unemotional, short, and clear. The short excerpt below illustrates how much of the interview (script) proceeded:

J. Is it on the border?

C. No, it is not on the border. We stayed there in this place La Cumbre. We stayed at a nice hotel

J. With those from El Salvador?

C. Yes, we were the whole group

J. Ahhhh

C. Yes, there in the hotel, 5 of us from Honduras got together

J. Aha

C. When we arrived, everything was full

J. Sure

C. Already there was everyone from Guatemala, El Salvador

J. Uhu

C. So, we stayed there one night

J. Uhu
C. In La Cumbre

And yet, the interview with Conchetta has lots of details about the process and the actors who participate in it. At one point of the interview, Conchetta's narrative style changed dramatically and became more intense, longer, full of linguistic markers¹⁰ (underlined in the excerpt below), indicating its importance to me. I identified this part, which depicts the crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border, as her high point:

C. Yes, with the bag here [raising her arm high up] and the clothes, and the water, walking normally... well, there we crossed the river and already we started walking, we walked ... at 12 we woke up, right? We woke up walking, I think that it was like, well I remember that we were going to cross the river, when already we were walking. It was 4th of July because in the United States they were bursting a lot of guns

J: Aha.

C. Yes, and we were watching the little lights. Were watching the little lights, and I think that this was the most difficult, not for me, for my companions

J: Why?

C: Because we only crossed the river and it started to rain, we were walking and it started to rain. To rain, to rain and the whole path was filled with water, mud. And every one ... we were walking but they suffered much, their skin raw and peeling, with many sores like this, their clothes scratching them. And the shoes hurt them, so they were very bad

J: And you?

C: It was very strange because I did not have anything, not on my feet, not on my body, nothing. And also I was tired, always was walking. ... The guy, the guide, was walking ahead and everyone stayed very behind and I walked behind him. I did not leave him. I remember that I told him: "You will not leave me thrown away." And because he did not talk and ... and he only turned to look at me

J: At you....

C: Yes, and I told him, I, "You won't get rid of me," I said to him. And behind him. So, we stopped to wait for the others, who went a little more.... But we walked a day, we crossed the river at night, the following day, the following night, we walked like, I think, 2 days, 2 nights

In this high point, I see Conchetta's determination and vigilance (I walked behind him, I did not leave him), care and compassion for others (they suffered much, their skin raw and peeling, their clothes scratching them) and feel some of the difficulty of the experience (we walked for 2 days, 2 nights). The various evaluative devices Conchetta

¹⁰ Please see chapter 2 for explanation of high point linguistic markers.

used illustrate the hardships of the crossing: always walking, I was tired, the shoes hurt them...very bad, the whole path was filled with water, mud, etc. Her vigilance and determination come through especially near the end of the high point when she talks about staying right behind the coyote and making sure she does not get left behind and asserting herself to the coyote (You will not leave me thrown away; You won't get rid of me). This is even more impressive knowing that the whole group was instructed not to talk during the crossing and never to talk to the coyote. It was perhaps the hardship of the long walk in the rain and stories Conchetta may have heard about the crossing that made her stand up for herself and for others as well, as the coyote stopped after turning back and seeing that many had fallen behind. This example brings to life the complete control coyotes have over the migrants. They tend not to explain anything, only order to follow. Conchetta's talking back was perhaps an act of trying to regain some personal control over the situation.

Even though Conchetta referred to the difficulties of the journey, it was never through her own suffering. In her narrative, she claimed very little struggle or discomfort on her part. Actually, before I started the interview, she asked me if I was only interested in stories of people who suffered on the way because she did not really struggle. I assured her that all stories were important for me. For example, in this crossing story above, she seemed to be the only one without any sores or rash left by wet and scratchy clothes. She claimed a similar situation when she spoke about crossing the Guatemala-Mexico border in a gas cistern with her friend and other migrants:

C. But it's very small and we were going to be 35 there

J. 35 people?

C. Yes, it only had a small door in the part above and through there we all went in

J. People?

C. I think that there it was ... for me not because I did not suffer there because I am small. Perhaps it helped me

J. Yes

C. There in the front was a small window, which is the one we were opening so that air can come in

J. Sure

C. So, we did not suffer much but those who were in the back did, went suffocating. Horrible, and when, every time when they told us to open for the air to come in, we opened

C. We had more but I saw that for the majority it was very hard

J: Aha

C: Because they were suffocating, they did not have oxygen

Here Conchetta talked about the difficulty of traveling in an enclosed vehicle without much air, but only for the other migrants, not for her. She and her friend somehow ended up by the only opening through which air came in to the gas cistern. Conchetta did not explain her fortunate situations and lack of suffering by luck or the guidance of God like many others did. If she explained it at all, she claimed her physical attributes (because I am small) to be her good fortune.

In her narration, she not only did not suffer, but she was also helping others who did. In the cistern, she was opening the window as necessary to provide at least some oxygen to the people inside. On the U.S.-Mexico border, her brave approach of the coyote ultimately made him stop and wait for the rest. Thus, she portrayed herself as determined to succeed but also as a compassionate person, as a helper to those in need. Her narrative indicated that she was someone able to take some charge of a process completely scripted and controlled by coyotes operating in the larger system of the journey.

Conchetta's narrating of other migrants' experiences was not unique within the sample in this study. Other participants also narrated the experiences of their co-migrants, of witnessing their suffering, even death, and of helping when possible. Conchetta'

narrative stood out in that she did not claim any of the struggles she ascribed to others. We can see for sure from her clustering of evaluative devices that she focused on and wanted us to pay attention to others in her narrative. The most intense narrative always evolved around others: because *they* were suffocating, horrible; it was the most difficult for *my companions*; *their* clothes scratching *them*; *they* suffered much; *their* skin raw and peeling, etc. It is possible that she indeed had a journey in which she did not personally have many problems. On the other hand, it is also possible that she was narrating some of her experiences through others. This way she may have been distancing herself from the effects of the hard journey and attributing them to others, yet still communicating the difficulties of the process to me through them.

Fittingly, after she told me about being picked up by her friend in the US, she ended her journey narrative by stating:

C: No more, this is my story. It's not sad. Thank God.

Even though she evoked God here, the only time in her narrative, she did not use it in a religious way, but more as "I am glad it's done and all is well" way. Freeman (2004) explains that

endings determine beginnings and middles; for only when a story has ended- whether the ending in question is temporary, as in life, or permanent, as in death- it is possible to discern the meaning and significance of what has come before (p.65).

It is perhaps because of the success of her journey that Conchetta did not claim any harm or suffering and declared it done and not sad. The reaching of her goal may have determined the tone of her narrative, her reflections on the experience.

Or was Conchetta repressing her emotions and the hardships she went through because she was planning to undergo the journey again, this time with her two sons to

join her husband? Sarbin (2004) claims that “one’s narrative-inspired imaginings can influence belief and action” (p.1). These imaginings are storied sequences of actions in which self and others are involved and are emplotted narratives carrying implications of causality and duration, fashioned among other things from concurrent perceptions of proximal events, from rememberings, and from experiences (Sarbin, 2004). Conchetta may be projecting her previous experience of “not suffering” into her not-far-away future of attempting the journey again. The imagination of her upcoming journey may well have influenced her matter-of-fact narrative of her previous journey. If that were the case, she could hardly admit the difficulties for herself anticipating going with her small children.

The only two other migrants who openly told me they were going to try to go again soon narrated their journeys in similar, quite unemotional, matter-of-fact ways. Though their narratives revealed how hard the journey could be, they did not own the difficulties. It is therefore possible that not only the ending of a past experience but also the projection into the future may have determined the participants’ narratives.

Yet, even the shorter but still intense parts of Conchetta’s narrative provided unique details about the journey. She further illustrated the terrible conditions of traveling in an enclosed truck, a means of transportation popular with coyotes.

C: It was terrible, piled up like this, people went to pee and it was terrible. ... And they say “We are going to pass and no noise, hide inside, and no noise because we are going to pass [a check point]

From Puebla, Conchetta was driven in an Isuzu Trooper with a Mexican couple and was instructed to say she was the woman’s cousin. She was given a name, place of Mexican origin, age:

C: The woman told me: “You are my cousin and your name is”... oh, I don’t know what, “and you come from this place and we are going to that place and

you are 17.” And I told her “17? They won’t believe me, I am 30 and” ... she says “But you are going to say 17.”

Both of these short excerpts further illustrate the little control migrants who travel with coyotes have during the journey. They have little choice but to follow instructions given by their guides (you are going to say 17). And still, Conchetta attempted to show, throughout the interview, that she tried to assume as much initiative and have some say in what happened during the journey. Her attempt to argue with her guide about her age, her talking to the coyote about not leaving her behind, her initiative to make extra money by helping with cooking while waiting for a few days in Puebla, stepping outside of a house she was instructed not to leave to get some extra food for herself and others, portray Conchetta as an independent, tough yet caring woman, a sharp thinker, and a survivor. The ways she told her story indicated that this was how she wanted me to see her, perhaps reflecting on how she may have seen me: an independent woman making her own decisions and caring about others through research. She actually asked me in the end of the interview:

C: So, if one person in the United States asked you for help, would you give it?
... I ask you because sometimes there are people who need help but sometimes are afraid and don’t know what to do

I am not sure whether she wanted to know in case she needed help when she goes to the United States next time or maybe she wanted to see if I was really interested in doing something for migrants or only in talking to them. I will not forget Conchetta and her story and am eager to find out whether she has been able to reunite her family in the United States.

Case study: Paulo, an unsuccessful male migrant

The next case study of Paulo, a migrant who did not make it to the United States, is in direct contrast to Conchetta's interview. His entire interview is very emotional, with several high points, evaluations and explanations of why he would never try again. I will start again with my field notes that describe how I met him, followed by Paulo's script and high point analysis.

Paulo lives in a small community called Los Planes, which is on top of a small mountain within the Copán area. The dirt road to Los Planes meanders up steep hills and it took me about 20-30 minutes of continuous walk to get there. I had a hard time picking what to wear to get there on this occasion because when I interview I want to look somewhat professional and usually wear a simple but nice blouse, skirt, and sandals. But sandals are not suitable for this track and my hiking boots certainly don't match well with a skirt. So, I chose a relatively nice pair of black pants and a new T-shirt before I headed out the door. I had two interviews scheduled in the community for that day, Paulo's first at 8 am before his work. As I started walking up the mountain, a middle-aged looking man passed me on his way down. We smiled and greeted each other. His look lingered on me after I started walking up again and I wondered if he was one of the people I would interview. I got to Paulo's house just at 8, soaked in sweat, thirsty, and tired after the hike. Paulo was not home but his wife knew about me and invited me in their house. Her teenage son, little daughter, and a toddler son were home with her. We sat down on two plastic chairs placed randomly on the dirt floors. I had not seen such poverty this close before. The girl and the small boy were both naked and dirty sitting on the floor as the older son tried to fix something in the kitchen portion of the house, which was not really divided into rooms. A fire under some pots filled the house with smoke we all breathed in as we waited for Paulo. I talked to Paulo's wife and wished I brought more food with me to share. It turned out that they had all together 8 kids, one at work downtown Copán, and the rest at school at the time of my visit. I couldn't imagine where and how they slept in this tiny house. Paulo's wife had no teeth and her skin looked old and wrinkled. And yet. She was only 32 years old. Though I was generally aware of my privilege in Honduras, I felt it extra the 30 minutes I waited for Paulo to get back. When he did come, I realized it was him I passed on my way up. By now, I knew time had a different meaning in Copán, so I was not surprised Paulo did not think of the 8 o'clock appointment literally at 8 o'clock. Because of the kids, we decided to put the plastic chairs in front of the house for the interview. Paulo told me he was very interested in things social and hence in my research and was eager to share his experience with me.

Paulo is 38 years old and he attempted the journey twice, in 2002 and 2005. We talked only about his second attempt. The basic script of Paulo's journey is as follows:

He left Honduras on his own, bribed Guatemalan police to let him continue and crossed into Mexico on a small boat in El Naranjo. He crossed Mexico on top of freight trains usually in company of other migrants he met along the way. He avoided or escaped police in several places in Mexico. He stopped at casa del migrante and was assisted by Grupo Beta shortly before being beaten up and robbed by thieves. His relatives in the U.S. did not help him pay for a coyote to cross into the U.S., so he crossed without a guide, only with a Honduran companion. They reached the United States but were detained by the immigration, jailed, and deported to Honduras.

Paulo is an example of a migrant who did not complete his journey to his destination and who seemed to experience almost all difficulties the journey can present as even his basic script demonstrates. He avoided and bribed the police, traveled on top of trains, used casa del migrante, was attacked and robbed by thieves, and was not supported by his family as he anticipated. Still, he crossed into the U.S. only to be detained because he believed he would be given a permit to stay. Instead, he was deported back to Honduras. In contrast to Conchetta, Paulo expressed lots of emotions and suffering in his narrative reflected in several high points in his interview, which I will present here. One of those high points took place on the U.S.-Mexican border as he was deciding to cross into the U.S. without a coyote because his relatives failed to help him to pay for one.

P. On the border, about 10 km from Rio Grande, I was, well, already I was used to loneliness. I cried every now and then for my children, right? Because I said, “My children need me so that they get fed,” and I was suffering too much, psychologically

P. [talking to his sister about his niece in Honduras on the phone] and I told her, “Already I am desperate too much, nobody helps me, but not even your daughter. I will throw myself alone [meaning across the border] and because of all this.” And she told me, “I don’t know what to tell you. You know, take care of yourself, ask God, because ... but I tell you not to go, wait, maybe I will communicate with my daughter and maybe.” But I already, already had thought about it all, that they are not sincere to help me. I had understood well, well that they did not want to help me. And I, I went then. I had gone to know Rio Bravo, how it was. Everyone told me: “It’s very dangerous, don’t throw yourself. You have to pay someone to cross you.” And I went to see and I said, “No, I don’t see it has much danger.” I saw that yes, it’s possible to cross it alone and we can swim, right?

J. You can?

P. Yes and the other guy who is from the Bay Islands also could swim and we went to see. There we consoled each other, right? Very young, 18 years old
 J. Aha

P. and I advised him, I told him, “If you go with me, you won’t smoke, you won’t go doing any roguery.” He told me: “If hunger tightens us, what will we do? We have to steal.” “No,” I told him. I, and God will give us food and that was it. I always prayed in every moment there, right? And I taught him to pray because he did not know

In this high point, Paulo felt betrayed by his close family who promised to help but ultimately did not come through in the crucial moment (I am desperate too much, nobody helps me; not even your daughter, they are not sincere to help me). He said he was desperate, lonely, and psychologically suffering because he was not helping his children who needed him. Perhaps that was his motivating factor to cross into the United States without a coyote against the advice of others (very dangerous, don’t throw yourself, you have to pay someone). After assessing that he could swim across Rio Bravo (don’t see much danger, I saw it’s possible to cross alone), he decided to do it with his young Honduran companion. In the interaction with the young man, Paulo presented himself as a moral guide, teaching the young fellow not only good behavior (not stealing) and also about God (you won’t smoke, you won’t go doing any roguery; I always prayed in every moment there). Throughout Paulo’s interview, his religiosity, moral values, and reliance on God, came clearly through. Even though he did not know my own values and beliefs, he either treated me as if I shared his own or he may have seen parts of the interview as opportunities to expose me to his (God’s) beliefs.

P. And there I was quite desperate and I took a train mistakenly and came to stop again back to Queretaro

J. Backwards

P. There I got a small job for 4 days. The one who gave me the job did not want to pay me, only that he gave me food, yes, he gave me food and I took care of his sheep

J. Uhu

P. Because he was gay .. you know what is gay?

J. Gay?

P. I mean ... a faggot

J. Aha

P. He did not like conversation with me because I work at church and I told him that it was a sin

J. Aha

P. And he did not like it much, my way of conversing with him, and he did not like me

J. Aha

P. So I left, there and where there was another Mr., I found a job. And this one gave me work and where to sleep, far, like 100 meters because he did not trust me. But when he saw that my conduct was sincere later, he let me in his house. There I ate well. It was only 8 days. I worked for him and he gave me 50 pesos per day

This excerpt shows that Paulo was determined to spread his beliefs even if they cost him a job in Mexico (telling his employer he is a sinner). I did not react (at least verbally) to his religious remarks, likely because of my own discomfort with the topic and because my different set of values, if expressed here, could have created conflict I did not think would have been helpful.

This short narrative also supported the notion that migrants who travel to the United States on their own stop in Mexico to work and to make money for the next leg of the trip (Mahler, 1995; Menjivar, 2000). This excerpt also illustrated how some Mexicans treat migrants, on the one hand giving them work, but on the other hand not trusting them until proven “good” and in the first case possibly exploiting them. Paulo provided no detail about how he found either of those jobs, instead stressing the importance of the interaction with and treatment by the employers.

In addition, the previous excerpt showed part of Paulo’s narrative that I did not consider a high point. It was more emotional than Conchetta’s but considered within its own interview, it was not as intense as the high point I presented before or one that will follow next. Nevertheless, those parts of narrative stood to support the messages and meanings of high points, in this case Paulo’s religiosity.

Another high point in Paulo's narrative centered around his detention and imprisonment in the United States. Interestingly, Paulo portrayed his detention, despite the inhumane name of the jail, as a blessing in the sky:

P. I only said, well, already now already I was... I told you. They threw us in jail, one they call the kennel. That this for us is a very despicable word because like we were dogs. And, he took us, he .. very behaved the Mister that took us, really. P. I here in Honduras, thank God, I never have been to jail. There, I was laughing because I knew that it was only to return us. There some cried and said: "I have never been to jail, nor they have put this on my hands," and, and, and I said: "There isn't why to cry. I am happy because already I will return to my country. Well then, my family despised me and everything. Then I will go to my home. I am poor but I have there my little bed, my food, and my family. The love of my family is the most principal, because us poor, we have this big happiness that we share the love with the family. We are day and night with the family." This is how it was. I was there 9 days, I think. And later they uploaded us in an airplane to Honduras.

The name of this particular jail (the kennel) exemplifies the dehumanization of undocumented immigrants in the worst kind of sense, comparing them to dogs. This did not escape Paulo's notice as he commented on the despicability of the term used in these circumstances. In this excerpt, Paulo's memories may have been sufficed with desires for "the story to have a particular meaning, one that was redemptive, that allowed him some measure of solace and rest" (Freeman, 2004. p. 75). Since his family in the United States rejected his pleas for help (despised him), he claimed it was better for him to be returning home to his poor and loving family (There isn't why to cry, I am happy because already I will return to my country, we have this big happiness, we share the love). Even though his original goal was not achieved, he claimed to be happy and looking forward to returning home after two months on the journey. Instead of complaining about the failure, he focused on the good news of returning to a beloved home and even possibly tried to cheer the other detainees.

Later on in the interview he resolved the contradiction between the need to provide for his family (the reason for his leaving in the first place) and his contentment, even happiness, in being deported in his recommendations to others.

P: Well, how I told you, I am happy now, went through a very big experience. I what I recommend to other people is that they don't do it because ... it's not correct. Sometimes there is someone who has the happiness of luck that helps him and he arrives and makes dollars and makes good money but sometimes loses the love of his wife, puts his marriage in risk, and his children do not have who to educate them, don't have the love of their father and sometimes when the father comes back from there, they don't know how to work, they don't know how to earn a living, they only know to collect money and spent it. So, we have seen here, in this community are enough people there [in the US], many children the same age as mine don't know what to do, only walk around, look, wander from one place to another, sometimes thinking nonsense, grabbing other people's things, with vices of smoking. Many here have lost their wives. They have gone with other men. Their children have taken other paths, vices, the girls of small age walk around there to other houses, and the men when they come back from there sometimes come with bad vices.

Here, Paulo actually assessed going to the United States as a negative behavior because it could put marriage and children in risk. Not once did he mention anything negative about not reaching his goal after the long and arduous journey. It seems to me that Paulo was navigating between two powerful narratives I found present in the community. One narrative is that of a good father going to the United States to provide for his family. The other is of broken families who suffer more than benefit, especially the children who without paternal direction drop out of school and even join gangs. To make his experience meaningful, Paulo, like many in the community who were not leaving for the United States, sided with the second narrative (Sladkova, 2007). Throughout the process of articulating meanings that emerge in retrospect narrative, Freeman's poiesis (2004), Paulo was consistently presenting himself as a caring father and husband even though the means of fulfilling these roles changed from providing from the United States to providing, guiding, and loving at home.

Paulo was very close to reaching his destination even though he traveled alone and without much money for most of the long journey. It is unclear where he was heading after his relatives refused to help him, but he and his young companion came close to San Antonio, where the following happened:

P: The other guy started to hitchhike all cars and they go and go. In one of those, there was a mark on one car and it was the immigration

J: And it stopped?

P: It stopped

J: Ahh

P: And my brother-in-law had been telling me: "United States is giving permits to Hondurans

J: For what?

P: To work, for a period of three or six months, "So you best present yourself to the immigration and that they give you your security and from there you get lost and work."

J: Yes, yes

P: Because of that, I did not flee

Even though a couple of migrants in my sample did report getting a permit to stay and being ordered to appear at court, the majority of detentions in the United States leads to deportation. Instead of either pretending to be Mexican, a tactic used by many Honduran migrants to be sent back across the border, or fleeing, Paulo relied on his brother-in-law's (mis)information that Hondurans were given work permits. Nevertheless, the practices of "capture and release" (www.whitehouse.gov) are less and less common as the charge is to detain and deport as many detected unauthorized border crosses as possible. In fact, temporary detention centers have been set up in tents alongside the Texas side of the border recently, so that they can accommodate more undocumented detainees (NY Times, 2/07). It is likely that had Paulo crossed with a coyote, he would have been advised how to interact with the U.S. immigration and perhaps would have been able to avoid them all together. Moreover, it illustrates the influence of other narratives of migrants' actions.

Overall, Paulo's experience encompasses much of the experiences other migrants and the literature report. He traveled alone and with people he met mostly on trains, begged for food and shelter, worked to make money to continue, fended for his life when attacked by thieves, crosses Rio Bravo without a coyote and was captured all the way near San Antonio. Near the end of the interview he told me:

P: For me, it was important the experience of going to cross. I couldn't make money but here I am, I feel that, that love is everything

Here he tried to stress, once again, that he was glad he had this experience, that it made him realize things he may have taken for granted before, and that perhaps he was a happier and better person for it. He did not want me to pity him in any way. On the contrary, he thanked me for being interested in helping migrants and promised God would bless me since God helps all with good hearts.

The ways Paulo and Conchetta communicated their experiences to me contrasted in that Paulo's narrative was full of emotions throughout the interview (I suffered psychologically, I was desperate, I cried a lot, this is big happiness, etc.) as opposed to Conchetta's narrative, which was more instrumental, matter-of-fact. If we follow Freeman's theory that endings influence how we remember and tell stories (2004), the different endings of Paulo's and Conchetta's journeys would account for the differences. And to some extent they did. Paulo was constructing a redemptive narrative, justifying the journey and the dangers he went through. Conchetta, who reached the U.S., on the other hand, may have constructed her narrative in comparison to those who didn't make it or to those who experienced more hardships than she did. She may have also transferred her suffering onto others in her narration, distancing herself from the horrors and repressing her emotions. Or, in addition to the past, the future may have also impacted

their narratives. Paulo, who said he would not undergo the journey again was able to express and claim the difficulties and suffering, while Conchetta who was planning to go again, with her kids, may have suppressed the dangers in order to set on the long journey one more time. Paulo, who will stay at home, likely without much economic advancement in the near future, claimed much happiness and advantages to being home.

Other high points

Even though the two presented case studies provide incredible details of the everyday experiences of the journey and different ways of narrating them, the spectrum I found in the 21 interviews was much wider. I compared the high points across interviews to see whether they centered around similar events and whether they portrayed turning points in the journeys. Turning points in this context were events that led to a set back in the journey, either temporary such as deportation across the border to Mexico, or permanent such as detention leading to deportation to Honduras. This comparison revealed that high points varied across the interviews describing events of the crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border, of encountering gangs or the police in Mexico, of traveling in a luggage compartment of a bus without much air, a betrayal by a train engineer, etc. They all had in common a certain intensity or urgency to them, necessity to communicate the details of what happened and how. I will present a few other high points to offer a more complete representation and will then compare them across the successful and unsuccessful groups.

Nelson

Encounters with gangs and thieves clearly constituted an important part of the journey for those who experienced them as expressed in high points of several migrants.

Nelson, an unsuccessful migrant, described an episode in which he first witnessed a gang assaulting other migrants and then fought and defeated them along with his co-migrants.

N. We were going, we went, the train was moving. On this train, three guys got on, those who were assailants, got on with sticks

N. And they beat the Guatemalan who went here [on adjacent car], they beat him completely, they raped the wife and the train is moving. They raped the wife, then it was not enough for them and one of them grabbed the girl of 9 years and on top of the train he raped her. And we were watching

J. But you couldn't do anything, right?

N. No, we could not do anything, true? We were watching, so, so when the delinquents because the truth is if a woman that decides to go for adventure this way, either they kill her or she is meat for dogs, meat for dogs and the whole world abuses her so what I want to tell you is that after they beat him and raped the wife and the daughter, they decided to get on our car, the bandits

N. Yes, they wanted to attack us, so one of those who went with me. He was like tall and so every arm [he shows me a thick arm]

J. Yes

N. He was well formed, one of the ones coming with me. He said to one of the bandits: "Listen to me," he said. "After what you did there, now you come here and want us to give you money." You know what he said to him? "If you want us to give you our money right here, you will have to take the money. If you can take, take it." And he without thinking much, the bandit, hit him with the stick. I mean, how he [the co-migrant] was tall and with good body, he managed to grab the stick from one of them. We watched how he was grabbing the stick. We also acted because there you either act or they kill you. And we, then took the sticks from them, we trumped all the bandits

J. Is that right?

N. Yes, the bandits who were there. We trumped them all. It's that the bandits were spreading terror in the whole train

J. Yes

N. Let me tell you that they had been spreading, they had been already assaulting the whole train and they carried a lot of money, and we prevailed. The people who were on the other cars came where we were, where we were, and how I told you ... How would you say that Nelson grabbed a bandit and this and that? And the people, so we started to be friends with almost all the people who went and the people started to ask us questions

At first, Nelson and his companions were witnesses to a horrible scene of beating and rape that took place on top of a train car adjacent to theirs. His switching of tenses was striking here as everything was described in the past tense (the beat him, they raped the wife) except for the present tense in (and the train is moving). The image of a moving

train and a scene happening on top of it underlined the drama of the story and revoked action movies, which was the only reference for me and probably most people, to picture such a scene taking place.

Nelson's second comment in the excerpt was in clear response to my question whether they could have helped or not. Nestor defended himself and his non-action by putting blame on women who choose to travel in these conditions and should expect the worst, to be treated like dogs (who in Honduras are treated terribly). But then he got back to what he really wanted to tell me about ("so what I want to tell you"), namely how the gang decided to attack them and how they prevailed.

Here, Nelson and his co-migrants turned into heroes, standing up to the thugs. He focused on the physical characteristics of one of his friends, who was tall and strong and took away a stick from the assailants. But then Nelson, who was short and slight, fought in self-defense and made sure I appreciated his participation when he asked me "How would you say that Nelson grabbed a bandit and this and that?" all the while stressing his slight built when we talked. This second part of the story of defeating the bandits and saving everyone else on the train from their terror was likely still in reaction and redemption to my previous question, which he likely viewed as accusation of not helping the family before. The dramatic ending of the story when all other migrants came to them and celebrated them, adds to his importance and appreciation by others (the people who were on the other cars came where we were; we started to be friends with almost all the people). He was convincing me and possibly himself that he did good and all he possibly could. This result redeemed the terror of the situation and fate of the Guatemalan family

he witnessed. The horror of this story also illustrated in detail of the dangers migrants are exposed to when they travel on the Train of Death.

Later on, in another high point, Nelson described a turning point in his journey, a point that led to his return back to Honduras when he encountered a Mexican federal policeman on the U.S.-Mexico border at night, just before his attempt to cross:

N. So, being there, a federal [policeman] appeared to us and ... and how one always thinks he can do more, so then I stood up in the darkness. It was about 3:30 in the morning. I stood up in the darkness and wanted to cross Rio Bravo but I could not because the federal showed up

J. Uhu

N. He showed up in front of me, so my friend who was behind me asked me: “And what are we doing?”

J. Yes

N. So, I what I did ... I know it's improper, right?, but I did it. I threw myself at the federal to struggle with him. Then my friend told me, “What do I do?” “And what are you waiting for?” I said. I mean what one does is cross...

J. Yes

N. And we, we Pedro and I, well then Pedro already has years there and I here, and so well I don't like to talk about this topic because sometimes one almost wants to cry because one ... When they were bringing me handcuffed because there they handcuffed me because they said I was a delinquent, so they handcuffed me and I turned to look behind, I turned to see behind, right? And and it made me. ... It gives me chills, and tears started, to know that I was on the border of Mexico and the United States and not be able to cross. I was happy because I even called my family, “I am here on the border.”

j. Aha

K. It is one of the things that one feels fallen already when they catch one. It's 40 and a fraction of hours that one travels only on a bus and another thing is, if you don't have a family in the United States better not to go

This narrative showed Nelson's desperation. He reached the U.S. border and was so happy to get there that he called his family at home and told them he was about to cross, sharing the good news with them (I was happy because I even called my family). But when he was about to cross with his friend, in the last moment, a figure of a policeman showed up in front of him. It was probably too late to hide and he did not attempt to bribe the policeman, but instead threw himself onto the policeman and physically fought with

him. His friend asked Nelson what to do and Nelson told him to go, to cross alone, which his friend did. It was unclear why he did not help Nelson to overpower the policeman.

Again, Nelson, explaining his actions to me, said that he knew it was not a proper behavior to attack a policeman but he did (I know it's improper, right? But I did it. I threw myself at the federal) because he was desperate, getting all the way there after a long and difficult journey only to be caught on the border (tears started .. to know that I was on the border of Mexico and the United States and not be able to cross). He was very emotional at this point and told me how hard it was to think about this turning point because his friend was in the United States, doing well while Nelson was still struggling in Copán Ruins. And then, defeated – fallen (they were bringing me handcuffed) he was deported back to Honduras on the bus of tears (Nazario, 2006) along with other detained migrants. It still gave him chills and tears to think about this moment.

In comparison to Paulo, Nelson focused on the failure of the journey and its negative consequences on his life. He did not have a loving family in Honduras, in fact was separated from his wife and children, and his life perhaps did not have much meaning in comparison to his friend Pedro who got married in the United States and made good living there. Even though Nelson did not say that he was going to go again, he did suggest that should I, as a researcher, want to experience the journey he would be happy to be my guide, likely hoping that my presence would help him succeed.

Selena

Selena, a migrant who reached the United States on her first try with a coyote, returned to Honduras and on her second try was caught at the border with false documents, described her terrible experience in a U.S. prison:

S: I was imprisoned for two months. There are things one sees that sometimes ... maybe the food is not that bad but there are cases that also treat the undocumented badly ... That we are like rare animals, I mean that they treat you badly

J. Mmmm

S. Like any animal and and we were there eating and they have to be monitoring, their duty is to monitor when one is eating and that when one is eating what they do, say bad things, so that one loses appetite or that there are bad people, in the prison, there are also bad people. Are horrible experiences. It was the worst experience of my life, I say

S. They tortured me psychologically. I mean I heard my name spoken Selena Gonzales and already when I came there, there was a man there was a man like this in the prison. He told me, “If you don’t tell me the truth, you will go to another worse prison. They will only give you food through ... this man tortured me psychologically. Better that they hit one .. “And you have to tell me the truth, who brought you.” And he told me a lot of things, and this was ... It happened after. My ear burst I think when I arrived there one ear burst, blood burst, I had a nervous attack from many things. I .. so, this was, every time I heard my name, my God, this man. I thought, he will torture me. They had him there for this, to torture one psychologically, so every time, he spoke to me badly, because the one from immigration recommended me badly for lying, so every time he told me, “We are going to take you there. Already you are going there where you will only be on bread and water and it gives one panic because in these prisons frighten...

J. Yes

S. And in the middle of the night one hears noise because like there are people who kill themselves so they frighten. So this Honduran woman that I told you about I .. they locked her up alone and she killed herself. They had to go rescue her because she hung herself with her bra, because they made her feel really bad and closed her alone

Selena’s use of evaluative devices in this high point showed the bad emotional state she was in and the constant pressure she felt (I had nervous attack; I thought he will torture me; one hears noises because there are people who kill themselves so they frighten, etc.). Selena was imprisoned after being caught in 2004 and the harshness of her treatment was quite probably influenced by stricter policies and enforcement of the border and increased guarding of US security after 9/11. It was also possible that Selena was treated in such way because she was caught crossing the border with fake documents, which signified a higher offense than crossing the border without any documents.

Even though most participants who were held in the U.S. prisons said they were treated fine and complained mainly about the food and the cold created by air conditioning which they are unaccustomed to, Selena labeled her time in the prison the worst experience of her life. Selena's story is an example of mistreatment of undocumented migrants by the U.S. authorities (when one is eating, what they do, they say bad things, so that one loses appetite; they tortured me psychologically; you will go to another worse prison). Recent NY Times article (Swarns, 2/22/07) reports that a study found that most immigrant detention centers "did not provide timely and responsive health care and sometimes failed to comply with the government's standards of disciplining, classifying and housing detainees." Selena and other undocumented migrants were treated as criminals and even driven to suicide by bad treatment by the prison authorities. Still, I cannot help but think of other prisoners in Guantanamo Bay or Iraq and their mistreatment by Americans in disguise of protecting American safety. Since 9/11, immigrants have often been equated with terrorists and new policies reflect this attitude.

Selena said she was tortured psychologically and that she would have preferred to be hit. She was presenting herself as a victim of undeserved bad treatment in an American prison and would never try going again, and neither would she recommend it to anyone else. She narrated the injustice of the distribution of power both on individual level in the prison but also on international level. While listening to her, I felt she was almost accusing me at times and I recalled other such experience with a focus group a year earlier. On that occasion, a group of women asked me point blank: "How is it that you can come here [to Honduras] whenever you want and when we try to go to the

United States we are shot at and imprisoned like criminals?” We discussed imperialism and international relations after this question to reflect on the inequalities between the United States and Honduras.

Like Paulo, Selena portrayed her jail time – the worst experience of her life – in a dramatic and emotion way, constructing it in retrospect after she was not able to reach her goal and also anticipating the future of staying home. How could she even think of going back after such a terrible experience?

Comparison of High Points

The high points in the individual narratives symbolized the salient, important events or moments of the journey for each narrator. They varied widely as I explain here and included very dramatic, even life threatening experiences, as well as less serious quirky ones. All of them offered incredible detail of events, feelings, desires, bravery and disappointments.

Interestingly, even though the majority of migrants referred to Mexico as the hardest part of the journey and the scripts contained the most events and actors in Mexico, my high point analysis across interviews revealed that many of the migrants reported events related to crossing into United States-Mexico border with the most intensity. It is possible that the emphasis on the U.S.-Mexico border crossing in the migrants’ narratives was a result of their expectations of my perception of the journey. In many cases, especially in the United States but also elsewhere, undocumented migration refers to the crossing of the border and is typically portrayed as dangerous, troublesome, or at least dramatic. In 2006, when I was in Copán Ruinas, there were several specials on CNN about the U.S.-Mexico border and undocumented migration. Moreover, by 2006, the narrative of the

longer journey had all but disappeared from Honduran newspapers (see chapter 3 for closer analysis), eliminating a longer script from the public discourse. It is possible that the migrants believed that I, as a researcher studying the journey and coming from the United States, was especially interested in the border crossing and thus gave me lots of detail about it. It is, of course, entirely possible that the U.S. border crossing was the most or one of the most important events of the journey they chose to communicate to me.

Other high points of successful migrants centered on encounters with police and gangs in Mexico or events related to Guatemala-Mexico border. Unsuccessful migrants' high points varied more and included encounters with police and gangs in Mexico, events related to the U.S.-Mexico border and its crossing, betrayal leading to detention, and traveling in inhumane conditions in a bus luggage compartment. Only seven out of all the high points (3 for successful and 4 for unsuccessful migrants) portrayed turning points in their journey, which were events that resulted in their return either all the way to Honduras or at least across the U.S.-Mexican border. Table 6 summarizes high points for the two groups:

Table 6. Summary of High Points

High Points: Successful Migrants	High Points: Unsuccessful Migrants
Crossing the desert into the U.S.	Hearing about person dying on the train; detained by police after train engineer tricked them (TP ¹¹)
Crossing into the U.S.-witnessing the second part of the group die	Traveling hidden on a bus without air and space
Walking into the U.S.; crossing into Mexico hidden in a gas cistern	Hiring a guide on the M-U.S. border; being tired and turning himself in in the U.S. (TP)
Stopped by police on a bus & bribing them; crossing into the U.S.	Being attacked by a gang; deciding to cross into the U.S. alone; in U.S. prison
Getting ready to cross and crossing into U.S.	Witnessing a gang attack on a woman
Joined a coyote on Guatemala-Mex border after being almost lost	Being questioned by M police on a bus
Being abandoned on the U.S.-M border (TP)	Working in Mexico and waiting for coyote (TP)
Being very tired and hungry in Mexico; being captured by the US immigration (TP)	Struggling with a gang on a train; fighting a policemen on the U.S.-M border (TP)
Crossing the desert (TP)	Being in US prison
Being attacked by a gang in M	
Summary	Summary
Events related to U.S.-M border crossing: 8	Events related to US.-M border crossing: 2
Encounters with gangs in M: 1	Being in U.S. prison: 2
Encounter with M police: 1	Encounter with M police: 2
Events related to G-M border: 2	Encounters with gangs in M: 3
Exhaustion on the way in Mexico: 1	Betrayal by train engineer: 1
	Traveling hidden on a bus: 1
	Working in M while waiting for coyote: 1
3 TPs	4 TPs

Throughout their narration, the migrants were creating and presenting certain selves and making sense of the experience for themselves and the audience. Some unsuccessful migrants, like Paulo, were resolving their situation by stressing the positive of being back home with their families where they were most needed. Others, like Nelson, were bitter and sad comparing themselves to others who made it and were in better situations than they were after going through a grueling experience and finding

¹¹ TP=turning point as discussed on p. 151.

themselves back where they started. And yet others presented themselves as victims of the structural forces in the system, the Mexican police, the American border patrol or the prison guards (i.e., Selena). Many of the successful migrants, like Conchetta, minimized their own suffering and explained the journey's hardships through other less fortunate migrants. They focused their narratives on their positive work experiences in the United States and on their contributions to the US employers and their families in Honduras.

Discussion/Significance

The high point analysis of the interviews showed the details of some of the events presented in the script analysis. It provided us with the opportunity to see how the events felt to the migrants, what details they considered important to communicate, what they remembered and how. For example, Conchetta, who traveled with different coyotes hidden in trucks and cars across Mexico, reached the United States after a dramatically portrayed crossing of the US border. From her high points, I could imagine what it felt like in the enclosed truck with one small opening for air and how hard it must have been to walk in constant rain for days and nights in the Arizona.

Nelson's incredibly dramatic description of the encounter with a gang on top of a train illustrated the vulnerability of the migrants and ruthlessness of the gang members. Nelson, who was not able to cross into the United States because of a struggle with a policeman expressed the regret and sorrow of undergoing such gruesome journey only to be returned back. His disappointment was only underscored by his friend's successful crossing and subsequent prosperity in the United States. On the hand Paulo, who was deported all the way from Texas, almost celebrated his failure to reach his original goal even though his high points reflected lots of struggle and emotional suffering along the

way. These opposite reactions to the same result may relate the two migrants' situation at home. While Paulo still has his family, of which is now taking care of at home, Nelson is separated from his wife and children. His situation may contribute to his bitter reflections on the experience.

Before my analysis, I anticipated that most if not all of the high points (at least for those who did not make it all the way) would be related to turning points in the journey. Interestingly, the migrants in the successful group who were returned at some point of their journey did portray these events in one of their high points. On the other hand, only about half of the migrants who were returned gave turning points high importance in their narratives. The rest relayed events such as witnessing other migrants' struggles, encounters with the police or gangs or traveling in an enclosed vehicle as more emotional or dramatic for them. This illustrates the diversity of psychologically salient events the migrants experience and their importance to them. While I, as a researcher and someone who did not experience the journey myself, may have considered turning points as highly charged, they may not have been as intense to the migrants.

I have already theorized that the high concentration of high points around the events of the crossing into the United States may have to do with the migrants' perception that it is what I (coming from the U.S.) am interested in. The crossing is generally considered difficult and dangerous. The reporting about undocumented journeys is often reduced to the crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border and leaves out other parts of the process. In addition, it makes sense psychologically that reaching the American territory is emotional for the migrants and they may thus portray it with more

intensity since getting to the United States is their ultimate goal. Thus, they give much importance to the events that bring them across, so close to their final destinations.

In this process of my analysis, I was able to identify at least one high point in each interview based on clusters of linguistic markers relative to the rest of the interview. In the highly emotional interviews, which had linguistic markers spread out, the high point stood out by their intense clustering and the length of the participant's narrative. Invariably, the language used in high points signaled intensity and some drama important to the narrator, usually marking psychologically salient events in the journey and suggesting how the migrants wanted to be seen within those events and overall.

In Nelson's high point (p. 152) example, I showed how my question prompted a certain reply. A valid question then would be whether my participation in the interview actually created these high points, whether I solicited them by questions or emphasis on certain events. I went through all the interviews and the high points to check just that and found out that my interaction with the participants was no different in those parts. If anything, my participation got minimized often then to "aha," "hmm," and "yes." Nelson introduced this high point with a narrative full of evaluative markers before I had a chance to say anything.

N. We were going, we went, the train was moving. On this train, three guys got on, those who were assailants, got on with sticks. ... And they beat the Guatemalan who went here [on adjacent car], they beat him completely, they raped the wife and the train is moving. They raped the wife, then it was not enough for them and one of them grabbed the girl of 9 years and on top of the train he raped her. And we were watching

That is not to say that I was a passive bystander in creating the interview narrative. No, my questions, especially at the beginning, steered the interview in a particular way and my follow up questions sometimes probed more into instances I didn't understand or was

particularly interested in. The overall narrative was co-created by the participant, me, and the context in which we were situated, and other audiences the participants' may have been addressing implicitly (Bakhtin, 1986). Still, I think that overall, my questions contributed more to the script as I solicited information about events in a certain spatial and time order of the journey than to high points.

In narrating their high points and throughout the interviews, the participants were reflecting on events past and perhaps thinking of events to come and in doing so they were creating a certain selves for me and themselves. For many, but more for those who did not succeed, the experience made them realize the value of their family and that their place was with them in Honduras. This way, they created a meaning in the experience even if they did not attain their original goal. Others showed me their strength and heroism by helping others, standing up to bad elements and prevailing against the odds, and still others tried to teach me about God. The high points showed various psychologically salient events for the migrants and implicated actors participating in the process and system of undocumented migration.

The rich details of the experiences of the journey were revealed through systematic narrative analysis of the in-depth interviews. These details are lost in much immigration research not designed to solicit or analyze narratives produced by migrants or related to or about migration and also because many qualitative researchers do not look closely at language. Questionnaires and census data produce mostly quantitative information about immigrants or more general categories or themes. Participant observation can provide details of behaviors and settings but always from the point of view of the observer/researcher. Even though I am the one analyzing and theorizing about

the interview narratives and I don't assume the narratives described events as they were "stored" in the participants' memory, the in-depth interviews did solicit rich details of personal experiences. A systematic analysis of these narratives, such as one I did in the previous two chapters, can then show some astonishing details of the migrants' experiences and help us understand what was especially important to them and what their feelings about the events were.

In the following and final chapter of the dissertation, I will summarize the research findings and their implications.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions, Significance, and Implications

Emigration has to be controlled by combating hunger in the country (*Tiempo*, 7/21/06)

People suffer, suffer on the journey because I saw with my own eyes dead people along the way and it is terrible to die of hunger, to die of thirst... (individual interview, 7/4/06)

Without the undocumented economy would fall: Bloomberg (*La Prensa*, 7/7/06)

The above quotes and the findings of my research show that Honduran migrants undergo dangers in journeying to the United States as they seek ways out of poverty and into living wage employment opportunities. Attracted by the American labor market, which continues to rely on undocumented labor, large numbers of migrants from Honduras and other Latin American countries participate in this increasingly complex, corrupt, and dangerous transnational migration process. During the entire process, undocumented migrants are abused and discriminated against in Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States. They are treated like criminals and made feel less than human and unworthy of economic conditions in the United States that they help to create through their labor. Solis (2006) claims that undocumented immigration enables these infringements of human and legal rights around the world and these infringements are “violent consequences of economic globalization that are the result of foreign investment from politically dominant countries, such as the United States” (p. 305). These daily violations of thousands of migrants’ basic human rights have been largely ignored by the public, policy makers, and social scientists in the United States. I hope that my research will bring attention to what takes place on a daily basis as undocumented migrants travel to the United States.

I was inspired to do this research by migrants I met in Copán Ruinas and scarce but alarming information I encountered in various journalistic accounts about the dangers of their journeys. Upon completing my research on Honduran migrant motivations and expectations in 2004 (Sladkova, 2007), I reviewed existing literature about the journey and realized that no comprehensive research on the topic existed even though the increased border security and enforcement of U.S. immigration policies in the United States and abroad were likely making the journey more dangerous. Moreover, I believed it was important to study Honduran migrants' experiences as Honduran undocumented migration has increased in the recent years, and yet out of the thousands of people who undergo the journey yearly, only a small percentage actually make it to the United States. Even though I already knew that migrants from Honduras paid about \$5,000 for a coyote to facilitate their journey to the United States, I wanted to know what the human cost, physical and psychological, of the journey may be. In my research I hoped to capture the dynamic complexity of the migration process and bring attention to the individual, subjective experiences while also taking into consideration the historical, social, economic structures and contexts in which migration takes place. Like Solis (2006), I argued that the inclusion of the individual is imperative in migration and especially psychological migration studies.

Systemic narrative design and analysis of individual and public narratives was instrumental in unfolding the complexities of the migration process and the interplay of individual experiences and larger structures. In order to study the individual accounts nested in local and larger contexts, I analyzed both individual migrant and public narratives I observed in Copán Ruinas. I chose to study narratives in this psycho-social study because I

assumed that narrating was a process in which individuals made sense of prior events, identified moments and actors that were worth telling about, reflected on their significance, and in the process created a particular self (i.e., Daiute, in press; Freeman, 2004, Lightfoot, 2004). Thus, I crafted an analysis to identify the details of the process of the journey as well as its participating actors and factors.

The narrative tools of script/story analysis (Daiute, in press; Labov & Waletzky, 1997) helped me identify shared and unique meanings in the individual interviews and led to findings about the immigration process as well as the subjective psychological processes of the journey. Analysis of public narratives in Copán Ruinas provided socio-historical context of the journeys. In addition, analysis of the interaction between individual and public narratives illustrated which ones were persuasive to migrants (Bakhtin, 1986) and guided their future actions (Sarbin, 2004; Sladkova, 2007).

Even though the research in this dissertation relied primarily on data I collected during my stay in Copán Ruinas in the summer of 2006, I would not have been able to do this research or understand the data without the time I spent in Copán Ruinas over the course of four years. My continued presence in Copán Ruinas enabled me to observe changes in the community over time and to develop and maintain relationships and close friendships. Besides enriching my personal life, these friendships ultimately enabled me to recruit participants for this study. Without introductions from people in the community, I would have had a hard time locating people willing to talk to me about their experiences of the journey.

The important research findings I discussed in the previous three chapters have numerous theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. In the rest of this

chapter, I will summarize the findings, their implications, and offer directions for future research.

Summary of Findings

Narration and the Self

In this research, the migrants were presenting certain selves and making sense of the experience for themselves and the audience throughout their narration. According to narrative theory, reflecting back on events within narratives is likely impacted by the ultimate result of the journey (Freeman, 2004) and possible plans for future journeying as well (Sarbin, 2004). Hence, some unsuccessful migrants were resolving their situation by stressing the positive aspects of being back home with their families where they claimed to be most needed. Others were bitter and sad comparing themselves to others who migrated successfully and were in better situations than they were after going through a terrible experience, spending all the money they had, and finding themselves back where they started. And yet others presented themselves as victims of the structural forces in the system, the Mexican police, the American border patrol or the prison guards. They felt wronged and deserving of better treatment and dignity as human beings, not dogs, they were often compared to.

On the other hand, many of those who made it to the United States minimized their own suffering and explained the journey's hardships through narrating experiences of other, less fortunate, migrants. They focused their narratives on their positive work experiences in the United States, on their contributions to U.S. employers and their families in Honduras. And yet, the majority of the migrants, successful and not, conferred that they would not undergo the journey again and would certainly not recommend it to

anyone else. They claimed that the majority of people suffered physical and psychological damage along the way and many died. Their recommendations to President Bush included realizing that undocumented migrants were needed in the United States and should thus be valued, recognized, and hopefully legalized. They claimed that they were not criminals and thus did not deserve to be hunted and treated as such whether in Mexico or in the United States. They also asked President Bush to assist poor countries such as Honduras to improve economically, which would then diminish the migrants' need to go to the United States.

The narratives taught me not only about the journey itself but also about the enacted inequalities and practices driven and reified by the United States and their economic exploitation and political domination of countries such as Honduras. Narrative analysis brought out what was most important to the migrants on the journey and how this experience contributed to shaping their lives and identities after the journey. The analysis revealed psychological states and processes of the migrants as they were reflecting back on their experiences. Such findings are unique to this research and analysis as little other research on migration focuses on individual psychologies of migrants. Yet, migration is a human experience with deep psychological consequences, which need to be researched, beyond the traditional exploration of identity formation in the context of the receiving country.

The System and its Constituents

Major finding from this research include the systemic nature of the process of migration that involves various actors in transnational contexts. Certain interactions of the migrants with the system and the actors lead to success and others to failure of the

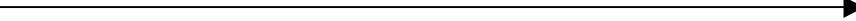
journey. Factors that perpetuate migration are located both in the home and receiving communities. My research illuminates the system's constituents and the way migrants navigate it, who and how they interact with along the way, and what strategies lead to their reaching the United States. Even though the individual and public narratives in this research implicate mostly poverty and crime in Honduras for continuous migration, Krissman (2005) and Solis (2006) believe that the instigation and maintenance of migration lies primarily in the demand for undocumented labor in the United States.

While the need for undocumented labor in the United States gets more evident even in politicians' discourse, Krissman (2005) argues that U.S. immigration policies have been inspired by explanations that put blame and responsibility for "undocumented labor invasion of the United States" (p. 36) on the countries and communities of origin. Ignoring the need and role of the American employers in the perpetuation of undocumented migration, these policies have focused on strategies to stop migration by militarizing international borders and policing migrants on territories of other countries. It is these policies and their enforcement that constitute the current socio-political context for migration and organize the system in which migrants journey to the United States.

My findings demonstrate the complexity of the system and the numerous actors that participate in it and the factors that motivate and influence it. It expands Krissman's (2005) International Migration Network, whose focus was solely on migration from Mexico to the United States in which the process is usually shorter and somewhat simpler. Table 7 offers a summary of the factors and actors that my analysis revealed.

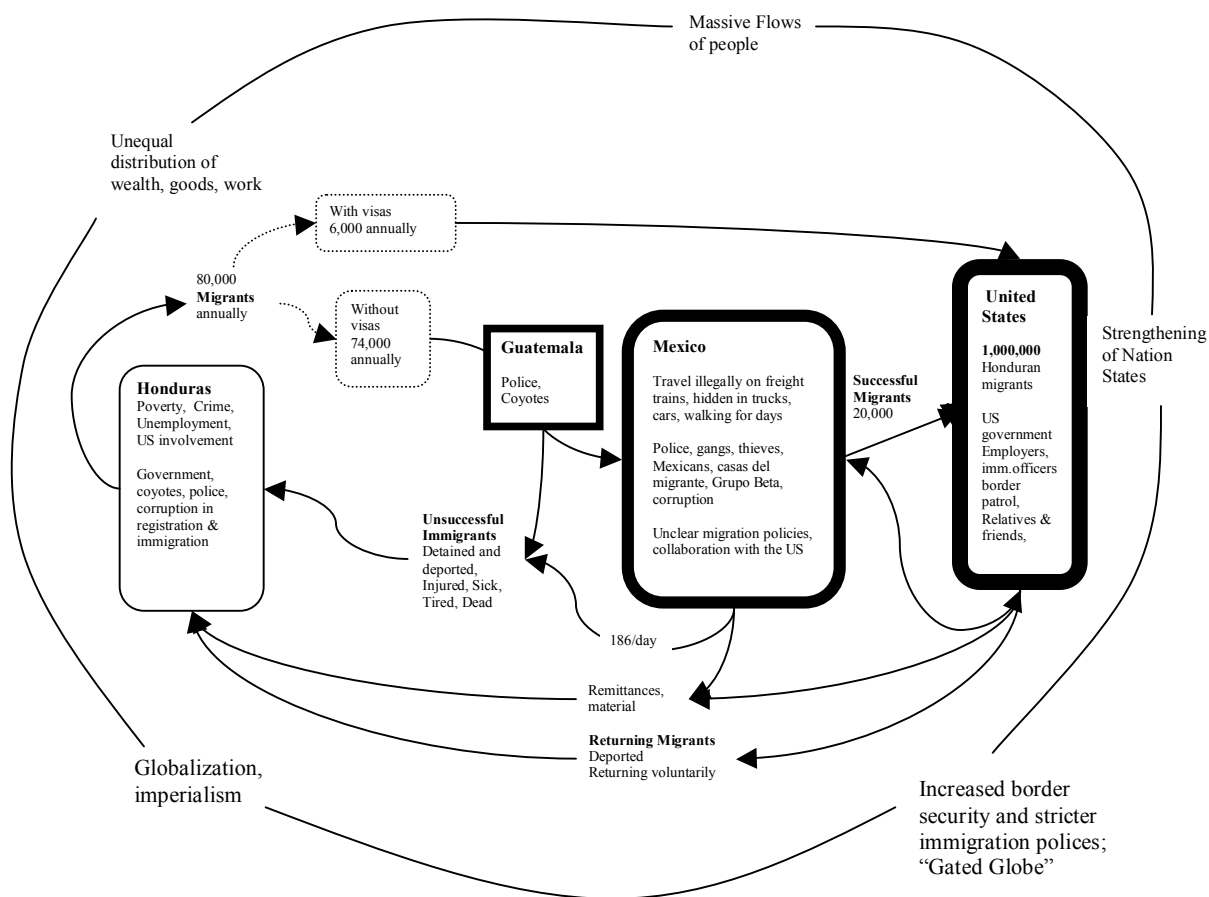
Table 7. Actors and Factors involved in the process of Honduran migration

Honduras	Guatemala	Mexico	United States
<u>Actors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • US Embassy • Coyotes • Coyote Assistants • Document Dealers • National registration and immigration • Money Lenders • Returned Migrants • Honduran Navy 	<u>Actors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Coyotes 	<u>Actors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Police • Immigration Agents • Gangs, thieves • Mexican Citizens • Religious organizations (i.e. Casas del Migrante) • Grupo Beta • Transport drivers • Means of transportation 	<u>Actors</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Immigration and border patrol officers • US employers • Coyotes • Previous migrants (relatives, friends)
<u>Factors</u> <p>Poverty, historical exploitation of Honduras, crime, corruption, success of previous migrants, remittances, exposure to American films, TV, tourists</p>		<u>Factors</u> <p>Inconsistent policies towards migrants, collaboration with the US, corruption</p>	<u>Factors</u> <p>Demand for undocumented labor, Misguided policies</p>

Migrants 

While Table 7 provides a summary of the various system constituents, it does not indicate their interactions and complex relationships, which would be graphically difficult to express. Nevertheless, I hope the previous chapters explained these interactions sufficiently and I further offer a graphic representation of the entire process in Figure 4 on next page. The figure offers a summary of the various flows of people, resources, and narratives between Honduras and the United States.

Figure 4. Migration System/Process



Review and analysis of extant social science literature on global flows of people as well as analysis of Honduran newspapers and U.S. immigration policies led to the widest arch of this model. In it, I suggest that globalization and imperialism produce unequal distribution of wealth, goods, and work, which sets into motion increased flows of people, who despite the wide-spread discourse of free movement run into states strengthening their nationhood by implementing strict immigration policies that focus on increasing border security. Fittingly, Cunningham (2004) refers to the world with heavily guarded borders as Gated Globe.

It is within this global context that the particular Honduran migration I researched in depth takes place. Recent statistics about Honduran migration illuminate that out of the 80,000 people who leave Honduras annually, only approximately 6,000 travel with various visas, as is indicated in the second level upper arch of the figure. The vast majority (74,000) of the migrants leaves Honduras without documents. The individual interviews revealed that they travel through Guatemala where they may encounter and attempt to bribe local police and that some return unsuccessfully from Guatemala. Nevertheless, most continue on to Mexico as indicated in the flow in the middle of the figure. In Mexico, migrants already become undocumented and they travel using various modes of transportation and encounter a myriad of actors summarized in table 7 on page 172. Data from the Instituto Nacional de Migración in Mexico indicate that approximately 186 of these migrants are deported from Mexico on a daily basis.

Those who successfully traverse Mexico have to cross the increasingly militarized U.S. border.¹² Some are detained or turn themselves in and are deported back to Honduras (low-middle reverse flow of the map). Others are detained and deported back to Mexico from where they attempt to cross again, and finally approximately 20,000 migrants a year successfully reach their destinations in the United States. Some migrants remain in the United States but others return either voluntarily or are deported (low reverse flow). In addition to returning migrants, remittances, material goods, and various other narratives are sent back to Honduras from Mexico and the United States and they co-create local narratives or factors that impact further migration. This model, fleshed out in detail in previous chapters, illustrates a particular migration conceived as a continuous,

¹² The width of the border around each country in the figure symbolizes the difficulty of crossing it for Honduran migrants. While getting into Guatemala is easy and legal, the Mexican border is more difficult to cross because they have to do it illegally, and the U.S. border is still the most guarded border.

complex, and dynamic process nested in global context. The following findings as they pertain to various interactions of factors and actors in the process explain parts of Figure 4 further.

It comes down to money

Factors which impact migrants' chances of reaching the United States start in Honduras. The uneven U.S. visa granting process favors wealthy Hondurans who can obtain visas and travel to the United States comfortably, safely, and cheaply. But since most Hondurans belong to lower classes, the majority of those who travel to the United States do so illegally, mostly without documents. Even though a regular airfare from Honduras to the United States is between \$450 and \$650, the successful undocumented journey costs a lot more. According to my research, migrants who were not able to gather enough money to hire a coyote were less likely to reach their destinations because traveling alone made them vulnerable to attacks by gangs and injuries caused by freight trains. Also, since they lacked money for bribes and appropriate coaching by coyotes, their encounters with police and immigration more often resulted in detention and deportation back to Honduras.

On the other hand, participants who were able to gather between \$5,000 and \$6,000 by obtaining loans at home or mostly from relatives in the United States, hired a coyote to facilitate their journey. Even though their success was not guaranteed, they were more likely to reach their destinations. Because the journey was planned and guided either by a local or transnationally networked coyote, the migrants were less likely to encounter gangs and did not travel alone on top of freight trains but rather hidden in trucks, on public buses, and sometimes on foot. The coyote's fees usually included bribes

for bus drivers and the police and for occasions when bribes were not enough, the coyotes coached the migrants on how to persuade the police they were Mexican citizens and thus free to travel.

Coyotes

Coyotes are clearly important and powerful actors in undocumented migration. The cross-analysis of the individual and public narratives points to different views on the roles of coyotes in the migration process. While newspaper and TV coverage and much literature on smugglers (i.e., Andreas, 2001; Castro, 1998; Chin 1999) categorize them as dangerous international criminals from whom the migrants (their victims) need to be saved, migrants themselves see coyotes as facilitators of their goals without whom they are exposed to more dangers. Even though I don't want to diminish the problem of human smuggling, especially when people are trafficked against their wills, my research suggests that while the smugglers used by Honduran migrants are clearly important actors in the migration process, the migrants do not see coyotes as posing danger to them. Yes, the individual narratives show the control coyotes exert over the migrants by holding information about locations, times, and plans secret and thus keeping the migrants completely dependent on them. But the narratives also show the coyotes as human beings falling in love and getting arrested and injured along the way. In fact, it is in the coyotes' interest to deliver migrants to their destinations safely because they get paid half of their fees only once the migrants arrive. Clearly, the coyotes take advantage of ongoing migration as they make their living by facilitating it, and they perpetuate it by actively recruiting migrants and seducing them by their narratives of an easy and comfortable journey (Sladkova, 2007). Their roles are crucial and their importance in successful

passage across the U.S. border and Mexico has been rising with the increased transnational policing.

Mexico

Even though those who use a coyote may have fewer problems along the way, my research shows that the journey is financially, psychologically, and physically taxing for all, whether they reach their American destinations or not. While much of previous research and public awareness about undocumented migration focused on crossing of the U.S.-Mexico border (i.e., Alvarez, 1995; Durand & Massey, 2004; Eschbach, 1999; Heyman, 1995; Spener, 2001), my research expands this literature with the finding that Mexico constitutes the major obstacle on Honduran migrants' journeys. It is because Mexico is the longest part of the journey for Honduran migrants; the climate provides extreme cold and hot weather; and migrants rely on the dangerous Train of Death.

In addition, Mexico does not have a clear official (Koslowski, 2001) policy toward migrants even though the United States has enlisted the Mexican authorities in an effort to stop undocumented migrants before they reach the U.S.-Mexico border. Thus, migrants are fair game to gangs, thieves, the Mexican police, and other actors in Mexico. Central American gangs prey on the most vulnerable migrants as they steal their money and other possessions, as they physically and sexually assault and even kill them. Direct encounters with gangs or witnessing of gang attacks on other migrants were portrayed as highly salient events in high points of many of the migrants' narratives. The gangs who attack migrants mostly on the Mexico-Guatemala border, along the train tracks, and on the trains themselves do not seem to be in any way persecuted in Mexico. In fact, one participant said that they were often better armed than the police who mostly left them

alone. The free reign of the gangs suggests that the government and the police in Mexico actually condone its activities as they unofficially assist them with stopping migrants in Mexico.

More on Policy and Policing in Mexico and elsewhere

The detention and deportation of migrants before they reach the United States has been a transnational strategy of the United States since the 1970s (Andreas, 2001). Operation Global Reach increased the official cooperation between immigration authorities in the U.S., Mexico, and several Central American countries in 1997 (Koslowski, 2001). Greene (2001) from the U.S. INS services claims that “the simultaneous, coordinated efforts between the United States and other countries is key to the INS overseas deterrence strategy, and sends a clear message to those who would traffick in human beings” (p.13). Even though this statement stresses that the operation was designed to target human smugglers, the publication also boasts that “approximately 3,500 migrants destined to the United States were interdicted during operations” (Greene, 2001; p. 14). Clearly, as a result of these transnational collaborations, many more migrants than their smugglers are caught during these operations.

To stop migrants before the U.S. border, the Mexican police have been given a free hand to deal with migrants on their territory (Chasing El Norte, 2005; Ruiz, 2003). As a result, the police themselves abuse the migrants physically and psychologically and steal their money. The migrants’ narratives reveal that even though the police are charged with stopping and deporting them, corruption is wide-spread and migrants are often able to bribe their way out of detentions, making the official role of the police superfluous.

The Mexican police remain the main threat to migrants and their coyotes who organize their journeys in Mexico around numerous police checkpoints.

The analysis of local Honduran newspapers indicates that this policing of undocumented migrants is no longer limited to Mexico, but that migrants are detained as far south as Costa Rica and Honduras. Many migrants from South American and Asian countries who try to cross Honduras on their ways to the United States are detained there. Analyses of newspapers in 2004 and 2006 reveal that attitudes towards migrants in Honduras have changed from ambivalent, even friendly, to hostile, and migrants caught on Honduran territory are now deported after spending time in jails or detention centers. In addition, the newspaper analysis shows that under threats of suspending visas and membership in CAFTA, Honduras is being forced to adopt the U.S. Homeland Security rules in order to protect American and international security. It would be interesting to find out whether the U.S. exerts similar pressure over other Latin American countries.

While the gangs and police present the biggest obstacles for the migrants in Mexico and contribute to making it the most arduous part of their journey, there are a few constituents that help migrants in need.

Assistance to Migrants

Migrants encounter much less help than barriers along the way. Misioneros of San Carlos Scalabrinianos set up several Casas del Migrante along much used migrant routes in Guatemala and Mexico, where migrants can rest, get food and medicine, clean their clothes, and get information about upcoming parts of the journey. Their time in the shelters is usually limited to 24 hours and only migrants in my study who traveled alone used these shelters as coyotes arrange for rest stops in their own facilities.

In addition to Casas del Migrante, a governmental organization called Grupo Beta provides medicine, food and drink, transportation and sometimes legal advice to migrants in need. Several of the migrants in my study who traveled on their own encountered Grupo Beta who helped them negotiate abusive police officers and provided transportation to the next train station. Moreover, some Mexican citizens help the migrants despite high fees and jail time they may face if they provide shelter, employment, or food to undocumented migrants. Otherwise, migrants rely on each other for much needed emotional, financial, and physical support to endure the journey.

The U.S.-Mexico Border

The migrants who make it across Mexico are still faced with crossing the U.S. border. Even though the script analysis of migrants' narratives suggests that Mexico is the most difficult part of the journey, many of those who actually crossed the U.S.-Mexico border narrated this crossing as highly salient to them. Their high points are consistent with previous research findings about the dangers of the crossing (i.e., Conover, 1987; David, 1990; Eschbach, 1999) and provide detailed description of crossing Rio Grande, walking in the Arizona desert, running away or being captured by border patrol, or giving up because of complete exhaustion, hunger, and dehydration.

Several of the migrants in my research, who ultimately reached their destinations, were detained by U.S. immigration on the border but were either returned to Mexico because they identified themselves as Mexican citizens or were released and ordered to appear in court later. Their detention and immediate release or return to Mexico illustrate the ambivalent enforcement and inefficiency of immigration policies (Alvarez, 1995). Nevertheless, recent investment in building more detention centers and President Bush's

claims that “the administration has effectively ended catch and release for illegal aliens apprehended at the borders” (www.whitehouse.gov) may be ending these practices.

Several ultimately unsuccessful migrants who were detained on the border described their experiences in U.S. jails before their deportations. While some did not complain about the jail’s conditions, two migrants described abuses by the jail staff and other generally oppressive prison conditions.

When they catch one they throw one into a room of concrete and they turn on the air conditioning and one feels that one will die because the body is weak ... Weak, weak, what one desires is to have a blanket. I remember that I only took off my shoes and put them as my pillow and I slept on the floor, pure concrete because they turn on the air conditioning until.... It’s part of the punishment so that one does not return...

These terrible conditions and the naming of one detention center *Kennel* (as illustrated in a quote from interview in chapter 5) further shows the dehumanization of migrants. In fact, the jailing of undocumented migrants confirms their treatment as criminals endangering the U.S. security and suggests the need for more work on migrants’ rights on American soil. In the rest of the chapter, I will outline the contributions and implications of this research.

Contributions

While much theoretical work has been done on the stratified flows of people across the world and the role of nation states, borders, and immigration policies in the process (Alvarez, 1995; Appadurai, 2003; Cunningham, 2004, Ong, 2002), my research actually explores how people’s experiences highlight the structural implications of the existing inequality. My research answers Alvarez’ (1995) call for research of the migration process “examined in conjunction with the larger structure controlling the ebb

and flow of commodity (labor) distribution” (p. 458) between Latin American countries and the United States. The research contributes to the understanding of the contested transnational spaces of Mexico and the borders separating Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States. These spaces are associated with social conflicts that engage the previously identified actors whose social positions and interactions are defined by differential control of resources and access to power (Low & Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003). Finally, the research adds a psycho-social/anthropological perspective on the journey in its entirety, from journey conceptualizations through post-journey reflections and impacts on migrants’ lives.

In addition, my research offers a new or different way of studying and theorizing immigration. Much immigration work focuses solely on immigrants in their countries of settlement and their identities (i.e. Deaux, 2006), integration into the host societies (i.e., Alba & Nee, 1997; Berry, 1987; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), or their educational attainment (i.e. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). More recent transnational immigration research explores both the migrants’ incorporation to their new communities and their ties and networks with their home communities (i.e., Guest, 2003; Levitt, 2000; Schmalzbauer, 2005; Smith, 2006).

Moreover, many studies of transnationalization in the United States are divorced from the particularities of individual lives, especially in the form of personal, psychological understanding (Solis, 2006). Nevertheless, there are not many studies that focus on migrant subjectivities (feelings, expectations, motivations) in their home communities and on the processes involved in the complex activity of migration. In addition to the exclusion of the individual from most immigration studies, much of traditional

psychological theory tends to ignore social structures and factors that play central roles in human activities (Solis, 2006).

This innovative research was designed to analyze individual migrant subjectivities alongside structural conditions in which their migration takes place and thus shows how both societal and personal histories become integrated (Solis, 2006). The socio-historical context, in my research explored through the analysis of public narratives over time, represents the wider institutional changes and patterns in immigration and economic policies and the individual dimension presents migration practices unique to the particular population studied. My research thus contributes to immigration studies by analyzing the psycho-social factors involved in the migration process of individuals as well as to the psychological literature by taking into account the cultural and political conditions and processes involved in migration.

As I mentioned earlier, it was the narrative design of this study that helped me understand the complexity of migration. The details revealed through narrative analysis are lost in much immigration research not designed to solicit or analyze migration narratives produced by migrants or related to or about migration and also because many qualitative researchers do not look closely at language. Questionnaires and census data produce mostly quantitative information about immigrants or more general categories or themes. In contrast, my research offered unique information about the nature of contemporary migration along with invaluable insights about the way in which the outcome of life events interacts with the narration of those events (Daiute, in press; Freeman, 2004). Thus, I believe that social science research can benefit from using narrative methods to learn about a wide range of social, political, and cultural issues as

narrative research (especially in psychology) can bring the sociocultural and personal experiences of underrepresented or marginalized populations into inquiry about various phenomena (Daiute, in press).

The high point analysis of the personal narratives highlighted the unique experiences of the migrants and pointed to the important events experienced by each of them. Through analyzing the structure of the language and the clustering of certain linguistic markers, the most intense, dramatic, and thus salient parts of the journey came out. For many migrants who crossed the U.S. border, it was the events of the crossing or the events leading to the crossing that were important. For others, it was the encounters with gangs or with the police in Mexico, or being jailed by immigration authorities in the United States or Mexico that served as important issues. The events were described in vivid details, as if the migrants were reliving them and taking me with them through their narration.

Moreover, the research design, which included individual and public narratives, enabled me to examine their inter-relationship and the impact of public narratives on individuals. Studying public narratives in the sending community proved important to understand and set the context of this migration. The analysis revealed the changing nature and focus of public narratives over time, the increasing influence the United States exerts over Honduras and other Central American countries, or the important role migration and remittances play in Honduran economy. Thus, conducting research in sending communities, practice common for anthropologists, has proven very important for this psycho-social research as well.

Implications for Further Research

Even though my research has contributed to existing theory and literature in ways indicated above, more research is needed to understand the journey and migration processes. I see several components of future research, which I will flesh out below.

Other participants/perspectives

Migrants in the United States

Participants in my study were migrants who either did not make it to the United States or migrants who lived in the U.S. for a certain period of time and then decided to return to Honduras. It would be important to also interview migrants who went through the journey but who remain in the United States, whether long or short-term, to find out how they narrate the journey and what impact the experience may have had on their lives. Since all of them reached their destinations, their narratives would further elaborate on factors that contribute to success of the journey. Their narratives could also indicate whether the experience may be keeping them from returning to Honduras, since my previous research shows that many people in Copán Ruinas plan to go to the United States only for a short period of time in order to accomplish certain financial goals (Sladkova, 2007). In fact, Reyes (2004) and Riosemena (2004) have found that migrants who used to come and go seasonally are staying in the United States longer or indefinitely because of the increased difficulty of the return passage. Thus, further research would illuminate more whether the increasing dangers the migrants have experienced is causing them to prolong their stay in the United States to make sure they would not need to undergo the trip one more time.

Adler (2004) argues that the experience of the journey serves as

community glue that binds migrants together and helps establish community boundaries. ... When migrants arrive, there is much discussion of the detail of the journey. These stories are told and repeated over and over in conversations, phone calls, and in letters” (Adler, 2004, p. 55).

Even though or perhaps because undocumented migrants are excluded from membership in most communities in the United States, the common experience of the journey may be providing a natural community bond. I have anecdotal evidence confirming this claim.

A year ago, my friend Jorge from Copán Ruinas, a long-time U.S. citizen, organized a New Year’s party for his friends and family in his Baltimore house. I was one of the few documented attendees of the party. The rest were mostly people from Copán Ruinas and other parts of Honduras, some of whom I met and some even interviewed before they left for the United States. The morning of New Year’s Eve, a few migrants and I congregated in the kitchen and one of them spontaneously started talking about the journey (at the time he did not know I was interested in conducting research specific to the journey). As he talked, he acted out parts of the journey in a performance, not for me but the other migrants, who quickly started chiming in with their own experiences.

As I was captivated by his description of crossing Rio Grande and seeing crocodiles next to the small raft he was sitting on, his sister jumped in and said she was scared to death of crossing the river because she couldn’t swim and was told about all these dangerous animals in the water. Another migrant witnessed coyotes fighting amongst themselves to get more migrants so that they can claim more money from their relatives upon their arrival. And another migrant got in on the conversation with her story of being locked in a truck where she could not breathe properly and was afraid she would suffocate. This intense conversation went on for over an hour. I thought this was the first

time they shared these experiences with each other, but my friend told me they often talked about the journey, though every time more details come up.

Hence, in further research, I would conduct focus groups and individual interviews with migrants from Copán Ruinas who are in the United States. The group discussion about the journey described above showed me that the group narration was quite different from the individual interviews I conducted with migrants in Copán Ruinas. This is consistent with narrative theory (i.e.; Bakhtin, 1986; Bamberg, 2004; Daiute, in press; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) and research on focus groups (i.e. Wilkinson, 2006), in which narrating depends much on the audience and context of the event and where participants try to find consensus and shared experiences. Conducting group interviews would thus provide interesting data on how migrants narrate the journey to and with others who have undergone a version of it, what selves they create in the process of narrating, and what turns out salient to them. The data could also be analyzed for the impact of the journey on migrants' staying in the United States and for other possible consequences of the journey.

Actors in Mexico

In addition to interviewing migrants in the United States, another important step would be to conduct research with the various actors this study revealed as participating in the migration process. Since Mexico surfaced as the most difficult and complex portion of the journey, I propose a multi-site research project in Mexico integrating field work, observations, and interviews with various participants.

As part of this research, I would work with the entities that actually help migrants along the way, namely the Casas del Migrante and Grupo Beta. There are Casas del

Migrante on the southern border with Guatemala in Tapachula, in Mexico City, and near the U.S. border in Tijuana and Nuevo Laredo. These shelters, set up by Catholic priests, provide much needed help to migrants who travel on their own. Thus, part of the research would be ethnographic participatory work in those shelters over time. Volunteering and interviewing people who run and use the shelters would provide much needed information on the immediate needs of migrants on their journeys and ways these needs are and can be further addressed through these and possibly other organizations.

While Casas del Migrante exist in specific locations in Mexico, members of Grupo Beta, a governmental agency charged with protecting migrants, work mostly along the railroad tracks where migrants run into problems with the police, gangs, or the trains themselves. Thus, establishing contact and working with a unit of Grupo Beta would provide more data on the various problems migrants encounter and ways they can be better helped. This field work would be enriched by interviews with members of Grupo Beta about their mandate, work experiences, and recommendations for other assistance to migrants.

While the previous suggestions focused on actors who help migrants along the way, another important part of the research would be with the Mexican police. The migrants' narratives have already provided lots of information about the role of the Mexican police in their migration and much would likely also be learned from research with Grupo Beta. Still, it would be important to hear directly from the police about their perceived roles, responsibilities, the migrants, immigration policies, and the journey itself. Thus, the research would include in-depth interviews with Mexican police ideally

stationed in different locations such as the southern and northern borders as well as other police check points in Mexico.

Mexicans themselves have different views on migrants traveling through Mexico to the United States. Some feel that any assistance provided to Central American migrants is unjustifiable because their presence causes many problems in Mexico (Kyle, 2001). This is reflected by actions of many Mexicans, especially in the poor state of Chiapas (El Tren de la Muerte, 2005; Nazario, 2006), who refuse to help migrants when asked for assistance and sometimes report them to immigration authorities. Yet, not all Mexicans behave this way and some actually go out of their way to help. In the state of Veracruz (Chasing El Norte, 2005; El Tren de la Muerte, 2005; Nazario, 2006), poor Mexicans share the little food they have with migrants by tossing small packages filled with tortillas, water, and fruit onto the trains in areas where the trains slow down and by providing shelter in times of need. They do this even though they may be fined or jailed for helping undocumented migrants. Hence, interviews with Mexican citizens, especially those who live near migration routes, about migrants, migration policies and the Mexican's state involvement, would further illuminate the migration system.

Female migrants

The gender aspects of the journey need more attention. The literature review at the beginning of this dissertation suggests that the journey is gendered and that women are exposed to more dangers than men along the way. Interestingly, it was from male migrants in my research that I learned of sexual violence against female migrants. While several men narrated witnessing rape and murder of a woman who fought back, female migrants did not talk about such experiences. Only one female migrant who feared sexual

abuse from co-migrants decided to travel on a bus rather than inside a truck filled with male migrants. She was detained on the bus in Mexico and deported back to Honduras, while the rest of the group traveling in the truck made it to the United States. Her narration indicates that she was aware of violence against female migrants in Mexico and acted proactively to prevent it. Nevertheless, her decision to separate from the group ultimately led to her detention.

My sample of female participants, though corresponding to the national Honduran male/female migrant ratio (28% female, 72% male), was small (6 women) to draw any conclusions about gender differences. Thus, I propose that additional research focusing specifically on female migrants be conducted. This research should involve both successful female migrants who returned to Honduras and who remain in the United States and those who did not make it there. This research could provide data on experiences and needs specific to female migrants both during and after their migration. In addition, some journalistic accounts and one of my male participants indicate that many female migrants pause on the border between Guatemala and Mexico and engage in prostitution in order to make money to continue north. Thus, research in those border towns would further illuminate specific female needs and experiences of the journey.

Children

My research so far focused solely on adults, but I believe it would be important to include children and youth in future studies. Recent journalistic accounts indicate that increasing numbers of minors undergo this journey on their own in search of their parents or with a coyote who is supposed to bring them to their families in the United States. Research with these youth would illustrate how these experiences may impact their sociocultural development. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2002), for example, explored how separation of families caused by prior migration of parents, affected youth after they come to the United States and were united with their families. They found out that the separation contributed to lower educational attainment and some psychological difficulties these children encountered. Including the journey would broaden the scope of such studies and possibly complicate the findings with specific impacts of the journey. In addition to doing research with youth in the United States, work in Honduras and Mexico would be important as their experiences and needs may be different depending on the outcome of the journey or where they are in the process of it.

Moreover, to keep larger context alive in further studies, I would include analysis of Mexican media, especially media located near contested spots of the journey, whether along the borders or the train tracks, as well as newspapers published in the United States for research located there.

Further work in Honduras

One Honduran newspaper article mentioned that some deported migrants were offered to participate in a program that would integrate them into the society, help them

build their skills, and find a job so that they wouldn't need to migrate again. In addition to this intervention, the Honduran police are increasingly interested in intercepting alleged gang members deported from the United States, not as much with the goal to integrate them into the society, but to prevent them from engaging in gang activities in Honduras (Conference on Community Policing in Latin America, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 11/8-10, 2006). Locating this organization and the police charged with working with deported migrants/gang member and researching their work would constitute another part of further research. Working with them would help answer questions whether their services and goals adequately serve returned migrants' needs, help identify additional needs, and possibly suggest additional services. Based on my previous understanding, it does not seem that either of these entities focus on any socio-psychological work even though several of my participants who did not reach their destinations indicated they needed such help. One female migrant who crossed all the way to the United States but then gave herself up to American immigration because she was too exhausted in the desert told me:

I wake up at night all cold. I am freezing and think I am back in the desert again. I have these nightmares still.

Still, I am back for 5 months now and when I see police in Copán, I panic and I try to hide, I can't breathe. I am afraid. The whole time in Mexico we worried about the police catching us. It was the most important thing. To avoid the police.

She cried as she told me about her nightmares and thanked me for listening to her. She said she needed someone to talk to, a psychologist or someone who can help her process these experiences. It is likely that other migrants are similarly or otherwise affected by the journey and in need of counseling or other relevant services.

Other Migrations

Even though the Honduran immigration experience is unique, it also invites comparisons to other, especially, Latin American migrations. Limited research exists on Salvadoran migrants' journeys (Mahler, 1995, Menjivar, 2000) and can be expanded by looking at experiences of migrants from other countries. Thus, this research, which illuminates the specific Honduran case, can also offer data generalizable to migrations from other countries, and can serve as a blueprint for similar work elsewhere.

Other Implications

My research confirmed previous findings (CEDOH, 2005, Schmalzbauer, 2005) that people from Honduras in general and Copán Ruinas in particular, continue to view migration to the United States as a strategy for survival, escape from poverty, and for social mobility. Reading Honduran newspapers and spending time in Copán Ruinas does not leave me optimistic that these push factors are likely to change any time soon. Honduran economy is dependent on connections to foreign, mostly U.S., economies and investments. Foreign-owned factories (maquiladoras), whose economic output benefits people in Honduras far less than their foreign owners, keep growing in Honduras. Moreover, President Zelaya's attempts to establish new and more beneficial economic connections with Venezuela and other Latin American countries are not welcomed by the United States, whose interest is to keep Honduran economy linked to U.S. markets. The CIA Fact Book (2007) confirms that Honduran economic growth remains dependent on the economy of the United States, its largest trading partner. The Honduran Presidential Minister underlined the dependency on the United States when he announced that the future of Honduran economy in the next 10 years rests on free trade with the United

States and Central America (CAFTA) and on remittances (*La Prensa*, 6/16/06). Thus, it seems that the Honduran economic plan is actually dependent on the ability of Honduran migrants to get to the U.S., to be able to work there, and to remit their earnings.

Schmalzbauer (2005) suggests that the international community should forgive Honduras its debt and remove “the mandates of structural adjustment to free up money for poverty alleviation programs, infrastructure improvement, and employment generation” (p. 113). This argument was endorsed by several of my participants when they explained what they would tell President Bush should they have an opportunity to talk to him:

I would tell Bush that he looks for ways to help poor countries to stop immigration, opening sources of work and search for better system of life for poor people.

Honduras may actually soon be eligible for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (CIA Fact Book, 2007), but the situation in Honduras would need to improve drastically to lessen the pull of labor demand in the United States (Schmalzbauer (2005).

In addition to Honduran conditions, my analysis underscores the important role of the U.S. employers and their need for undocumented labor. Participants in my research are aware that parts of the U.S. economy rely on their labor as the following quote from an interview illustrates:

I would tell President Bush to think more about us, right? Without immigrants, without the illegals, I think that there would be chaos because of millions of people that went to work. They clean yards, they clean, they take care of cities and I think that in a day without immigrants much would be lost. We are good people, right? We don't go to the United States to ruin it but to enhance it and we also better our lives.

In addition, in 2006, narratives about raids of North American employers who use undocumented labor and subsequent deportations circulated widely in Copán Ruinas. These narratives of instability of undocumented work in the United States made many people postpone or reconsider their plans to migrate in 2006 even though the conditions in Honduras remained grim. Thus, my research indicates that until the economic factors and actors in Honduras and United States that motivate or push people to leave change, Hondurans will likely continue to migrate to the United States.

As talk of immigration reform continues to flow in the U.S. Congress, Senate, and presidential candidates' speeches, I suggest that its focus on further militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border is misguided and also in violation with basic human rights (UNFPA, 2006). While only 15 years ago Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush celebrated the demolition of the Berlin Wall, the current President Bush keeps financing ever longer and taller barriers along the U.S. border. I find this focus on walls topic particularly meaningful because I grew up behind the Berlin Wall unable to freely cross the heavily guarded borders of former Czechoslovakia. Even though it's the flow into, instead of out of the country, the U.S. government, like the former communist regime, limits individuals' rights and freedoms and endangers their lives as it selectively restricts people's movements. Instead of strengthening the border and encouraging more policing in other countries, the United States should revisit its free-trade policies and "investments" in Honduras and other Latin American countries that continue to widen inequalities and displace material and human resources (Krissman, 2005; Solis, 2006). Finally, while Mexico continues to lobby for its own migrants in the United States, its

government should stop pretending to be an innocent bystander and acknowledge and address the abuses that take place against other migrants on its own territory.

Research like this, with words and experiences of individual migrants, should be fundamental in building further migration theory, research, and policies.

Appendix A: Sample interview questions in English

When did you leave?

How did you get from Honduras to the United States?

Did you go alone, with a group, with a coyote?

How much did it cost? Did you get any help getting the finances?

How long did it take?

What did you experience along the way?

What were some things you saw/witnessed?

Who helped you before and during the journey?

What were the main obstacles? What were the most difficult parts? Easiest?

Was it the way you expected it? Did anything surprise?

Do you think the journey is the same for everyone? Or is it different for men, women, or children or if you go with or without a coyote?

Would you do it again? What would you recommend to others who plan on going?

What did you know about the journey before you left? How?

Was it worth it?

What are your plans now?

Apart from you friends and family, did any organization help you when you arrived?

How did you find them or how did they find you?

Is your life in the United States the way you expected it to be? Why?

If you had an opportunity to speak to President Bush, what would you tell him? Anything you want to.

Appendix B: Sample interview questions in Spanish

- ¿Cuándo usted viajo?
- ¿Como llego de Honduras a los Estados Unidos?
- ¿Viajo usted solo, con un grupo, o con un coyote?
- ¿Cuanto le costo? Tuvo alguna ayuda para obtener el dinero?
- ¿Cuanto tiempo duro su viaje?
- ¿Que sucedió durante el viaje?
- ¿Que casas o situaciones vio o tuvo conocimiento?
- ¿Quien le ayudó antes y durante el viaje?
- ¿Cuales fueron los principales obstáculos? ¿Cuales fueron las partes del viaje más difíciles? ¿Más fáciles?
- ¿Que sabia usted sobre el viaje antes de partir? ¿Como? ¿Quien le contó?
- ¿Fue el viaje como lo esperaba? ¿Algo le sorprendió?
- ¿Piensa usted que el viaje es igual para todos? ¿O es diferente para hombres, mujeres, o niños? ¿Es diferente si viaja solo o con coyote?
- ¿Haría el viaje nuevamente? ¿Que trataría hacer diferente la próxima vez?
- ¿Que recomendaría a otros que planean venir?
- ¿Valió la pena venir hasta aquí?
- ¿Su vida aquí es como la imaginaba antes de venir? ¿Porque?
- ¿Cuál son sus planes ahora?
- ¿Aparte de sus amigos o familiares cuando usted llego a los Estados Unidos hubo alguna organización que le ayudo? ¿Como la encontró o como ellos le encontraron a usted?
- ¿Si usted tuviera la oportunidad de decirle algo al presidente Bush que le diría? Lo que tenga ganas.

Appendix C: Informed Consent in English

My name is Jana Sladkova and I am a student in the Social and Personality Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and Principal Investigator of this project, called Honduran Journeys to the United States. The study is expected to contribute to the understanding of the migration process, especially the journey. I want to ask you for permission to talk to you about immigration, to share your stories or stories you know of other migrants.

I will conduct one interview that will last 30 minutes to one hour in Spanish. I am sorry my Spanish is not fluent but I will do my best to understand and communicate. With your permission, I would like to audiotape the interview so that I can record the details accurately. During our interview, as a way to keep your identity confidential, I will not address you by name. The tapes will only be heard by me and my advisor. All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked suitcase, to which only I will have access here at Copán Ruinas. In New York, the audiotapes and transcribed data will be kept in a locked cabinet to which only I and my advisor will have access. The audio tapes will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed. Please be assured I am in no way connected to any government or immigration services.

You can refuse to answer any questions or end this interview any time without any penalty. There are no risks involved in your participation in this study. Your participation could contribute, as I mentioned, to an understanding of the migration process of Hondurans. In the future these results might help to create or improve programs for immigrants in the United States. You can also ask me any questions about my own experiences as an immigrant and permanent resident of the United States. In addition, you will be paid 100 Lempiras after taking part in the interview. If I publish results of the study, names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used.

If you have any questions about this research while I am in Copán Ruinas, you can contact me at (504) 654-4523. I will be here until August 16. Afterwards, in New York, you can call me at (917) 378-0169 or email me at jsladkova@gc.cuny.edu. If you have other questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Kay Powell, an administrator IRB, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu

Do you understand and agree to participate in this research?

Do you agree that I record the interview? Please date the form.

Thank you for your participation in the study.

Date:

Appendix D: Informed Consent in Spanish

Me llamo Jana Sladkova y soy estudiante del Doctorado en Psicología Social en la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York (CUNY). Soy quien encabeza el proyecto de investigación titulado Los Viajes de los Hondureños a los Estados Unidos. El estudio busca contribuir al entendimiento del proceso de migración. Solicito su permiso para entrevistarle acerca de la migración, para compartir sus historias o historias que usted escuchó de otros migrantes.

Realizaré una entrevista en español que durará aproximadamente de treinta minutos a una hora. Me disculpo de antemano ya que mi español no es fluido pero haré todo lo posible para comunicarnos y entendernos. Con su autorización, grabaré esta entrevista en audio-cassette para poder tener los detalles con precisión. Para mantener su identidad confidencial durante la entrevista no usaré su nombre. Los casetes solamente lo escucharán mi consejera (si es necesario) y por supuesto yo. Toda la información se mantendrá confidencial y será guardada en una maleta bajo llave, a los que sólo yo tengo acceso aquí en Copán Ruinas. En Nueva York, los casetes y sus transcripciones se mantendrán y estarán guardados en los archivos, a los que sólo mi consejera y yo tenemos acceso. Quiero asegurarle que no tengo conexión con ningún gobierno o las autoridades de inmigración.

Usted tiene derecho a no contestar las preguntas o dar por terminada la entrevista en cualquier momento sin ningún problema o represalia.

Su participación en el estudio no tiene riesgo alguno. Como le dije, contribuirá al entendimiento del proceso de migración. En un futuro estos resultados nos ayudará a crear o mejorar los programas que existen para ayudar a los inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos. Usted puede preguntarme algunas cosas de mis experiencias como una inmigrante y residente en los Estados Unidos. También, le pagaré 100 Lempiras después de su participación en la entrevista. Si los resultados son publicados, su nombre e identidad nunca serán revelados así como ninguna característica específica que pueda identificarlo.

En caso de tener cualquier pregunta relacionada con esta investigación durante mi visita a Copán Ruinas, puede comunicarse conmigo – Jana Sladkova - al (504) 654-4523. Voy a quedarme en Copán Ruinas hasta el 16 de agosto. Después, en Nueva York, puede comunicarse conmigo al (917) 378-0169 o al email de jsladkova@gc.cuny.edu. Si tiene más preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante, puede contactar a Kay Powell, la administradora de IRB del Centro de Graduados de CUNY, en el (212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

¿Entiende el propósito de este estudio y le gustaría participar?

¿Acepta que grabe esta entrevista? Por favor, ponga la fecha aquí.

Muchas gracias por su participación en este estudio.

Fecha:

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