

ISP Proposal

Formulation of Research Question

- *Question:* How do the wealthy Nicaraguans who left during the revolution and returned in the 1990s perceive their own impact on Nicaraguan development?
- *Limitations:*
 - o I will be interviewing people through contacts, so I am unlikely to get a large or representative sample. Almost everyone I interview will be in Managua.
 - o My Spanish isn't fantastic, but it's more likely that the wealthy will speak English, especially if they went to the United States in the 1980s, and therefore more able to engage in better conversations with me
- *Justification:*
 - o In a socialist society, the interests of the wealthy shouldn't be considered over the interests of the poor in a nation's development. But based on what I've seen thus far in Nicaragua, a country that claims to be "socialista," the rich seem to be favored over the poor. This is the case especially since the economy is mixed and is becoming increasingly liberalized. Investigating the impact of the wealthy's return to Nicaragua will show how the wealthy as a whole is valued in comparison to the poor, which is important considering the government's claims of "socialista." Investigating why the wealthy returned will also shed some light into how perception of the Nicaraguan government and its stability has changed over time.

Comment [BW1]: You'll want to think about how you're going to measure development. I would ask specific questions regarding health care, education, and income. And then I would ask a general question as well, such as, "Do you think that the return of Nicaraguans who left in the 1980s has contributed to the development of the country? If so, how?" The more specific questions about individual impact on development might go something like, "When you and your family are ill, where do you go for health care? Is the provider private or public?" "Where do your children or grandchildren go to school?" "What is your profession?" These are personal questions that help you gauge the "market participation" of returnees. The more general questions might be, "How do you think return migrants have impacted health care in Nicaragua?" Or "What influence have return migrants had on educational opportunities for Nicaraguans?" Or "Do you think return migrants have contributed to the development of the health care system?" These might not be the exact questions you use but I think you should include global questions regarding perceptions of return migrants' impact on development as well as specific questions regarding the actual individual impact of the return migrant you are speaking to and his/her impact on different areas of development. Does that make sense? You might send me a revised version of your script once you have incorporated these thoughts. Timing of questions and phrasing will matter here.

Research Literature and Incorporating Theory

- *Coffee & Power.* Especially helpful will be the Nicaragua chapter on how wealthy involved in coffee industry have impacted Nicaraguan development and politics. Though written through the lens of the powerful in the coffee industry and not through return migration, it should give me some insight into how the wealthy affect development and politics here, as well as providing a nice history of the Nicaraguan wealthy.
- Madeline Messick and Claire Bergeron, "Temporary Protected Status in the United States: Grant of Humanitarian Relief that Is Less than Permanent". Reviews US asylum policy and how many Nicaraguans benefit from Temporary Protected Status. It only gives recent numbers, but the overview of the policy is helpful, especially since many of the wealthy Nicaraguans who left in the 90s were beneficiaries of this policy.

Comment [BW2]: You should also add, "Scholars have thoroughly researched impact of immigration on migrant-receiving societies. However, researchers have only recently begun to analyze the impact of return migration on migrant-sending societies. That said, a major limitation within this literature is the fact that return migration scholars have focused almost exclusively on working-class return migrants. I address this intellectual lacuna through a qualitative study of wealthy migrants return to Nicaragua in the 1990s following Violeta Chamorro's victory at the polls in 1990. Although preliminary in nature, I believe my research sets the foundation for additional work in this area by _____."

- Benjamin James Waddell and Matías Fontenla, “The Mexican Dream? The effect of return migrants on hometown development”. Argues that return migrants improve regions through higher levels of municipal development, democratic participation, and educational attainment. This will inform my interviews with my subjects and the topics of impact that I explore.
- Joshua Wassink, “New Skills, New Jobs: Return Migration, Skill Transfers, and Business Formation in Mexico”. The article is about how the transfer of informal human capital (social/technical skills) impacts return migrants’ likelihood of starting a business. This should be extremely helpful in providing a context in which to analyze my interviews. I predict that many of the wealthy returnees will be self-employed, and it will be interesting to see if they believe that part of their success, or lack thereof, in Nicaragua is due to skills they learned abroad.
- Stefan Rother, “Changed in Migration? Philippine Return Migrants and (Un)Democratic Remittances”. This article argues that return migrants come home with a more critical view of politics in home country, and possibly less support for the principles of democracy. This is something to explore further, especially since almost all the migrants who left during the revolution were already highly critical of the government. It’ll be interesting to see if they have become more or less critical. I also wonder if the returnees’ political views will be heavily influenced by which country they went to when they left Nicaragua.
- Lisa Chauvet and Mario Mercier, “Migration and Elections in Mali: Does migration promote democratization in Africa?”. This article reinforces a lot of the arguments from other articles, as well as delving further into the idea of a “transfer of norms” when migrants return home.

Conceptual Framework

- In order to successfully argue how the wealthy’s return has impacted development in Nicaragua, I will need to first have a foundational understanding of the Sandinista revolution ideals regarding development and equality in Nicaragua so that I can compare those original designs to their reality of today. I should also have an understanding of what development actually *is*, as in “what is the difference between development and growth?” and how neoliberal development influenced Nicaragua.
- My framework for understanding my question will be the following: What are the different perceptions of migrants post-return in Nicaragua? Within those perceptions, what are the commonalities in terms of the country they went to, social/technical skills, education, languages spoken, politics, and current employment situation? Finding the common threads will help me analyze perceptions and how they were formed.

- Since I will mostly be investigating the wealthy's perception of their own impact in Nicaragua, I will have to engage in "grounded theory" and attempt as much as possible to separate myself from my own biases regarding the wealthy's impact in Nicaragua.

Field Work Approach, Methodology, and ISP Investigation Plan

- *Information to be collected/Types of Questions in Interview:*
 - o Revolutionary ideals regarding development in Nicaragua
 - o When and why the wealthy left Nicaragua in the 80s
 - o When and why the wealthy returned to Nicaragua in the 90s
 - o What the wealthy did while outside the country during those years
 - o What types of industry the wealthy have been involved in here
 - o How wealthy view their own impact
 - o "More objective" view of own impact, if possible to measure through data
- *Where and with whom will field research be conducted*
 - o Information gathered through interviews and own reading
 - o Wealthy Nicaraguan return migrants, through connections
 - o Economist who can speak to impact of wealthy Nicaraguans
 - Adela knows a government economic advisor

Preliminary Outline

- I. Abstract
- II. Introduction
 - a. Brief history of Nicaragua's political climate in last 30 years and migrant flow within it
 - b. Explain my question
 - i. Its importance
 - ii. Research methods
 - c. Briefly touch on findings
- III. Breakdown interviews using conceptual framework
- IV. Analyze interviews
- V. Explain findings
- VI. Conclusion

Feasibility Study

-Budget

- o Homestay
 - \$13 per day * (31 days – 6 days for travel) = \$325
- o Food
 - (Breakfast at \$2 per day + Lunch at \$3 per day) * 31 days + (Dinner at \$5 per day) * 6 days travel) = \$185
- o Internet
 - Claro Modem for personal use at homestay = \$27

- Travel & misc. expenses
 - \$123

-Time Frame

- April 11-April 17, More background research, setting up interviews
- April 17-May 3, Interviews and detailed notes, as well as filling out essay outline
- May 3 – May 10, Writing essay

-Contacts

- Susan Weiss at Frontera Books (by Pan y Vino)
- Marta Cranshaw at Red de Migrantes de Nicaragua
- Lea Montes at Servicios Jesuitas para Migrantes at the UCA
- Jose Luis Rocha at the UCA
- José Luis Medal (famous economist)
 - Jlmedalturbonett.com.ni
 - 88821969
- Carlos Herrera
 - Carlos.herrera@gdevg.net
 - 77548923

-ISP Advisor

- Ben Waddell, Benjamin.waddell@sit.edu; 2231-4093
- I'm also going to be looking into the work of some of my contacts and seeing if any would be good to add as an advisor