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**A STUDY OF *BRAIN DRAIN*
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SALVADORANS
LIVING IN PAMPLONA, SPAIN.**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores how 7 Salvadorans make the decision whether or not to go back to El Salvador, once they have had the experience of living in Pamplona, Spain. All of the participants have lived a disruption of their life in El Salvador when moving to Spain. Having experienced a different setting, they reflect on what the new situation offers in terms of quality of life, versus what they find in El Salvador. This interview study explores the factors they consider when making the decision of either becoming a returned migrant, or to be part of the brain drain phenomenon. Discussion is focused on emerging topics that apply specifically to the Salvadoran context, and how it is related to national policy that aims its improvement. The stories and considerations of the participants are important in terms of public policy, as governments of developing countries need to address the socioeconomic and psychological challenges faced by the potential return migrants, so that they become attractive enough to keep the new skilled citizens as part of their working force.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, the world enters a period of unparalleled globalization and economic interconnectedness in which many people, especially the youth, are motivated to migrate. The idea of emigration as a quest for self-realization is more widespread among better-educated younger generation, especially those in urban areas of a country. Migration offers a chance to see the world, gain new experiences, learn new languages, develop intercultural understanding, and by the large broaden people's outlook (King & Vullnetari, 2009).

This broadening of people's outlook may result in two different situations: 1) the new graduates may find new opportunities abroad, and may not return to their country; 2) the young professionals might come back to their country of origin, known as 'return' migration.

The first one is a major consequence of the accelerated international migration of young educated people, principally from developing countries to more developed countries: a phenomenon known as *brain drain* (Akl, et al., 2007; Mullan, 2005). Literature on the *brain drain* phenomenon has examines the factors why people may feel motivated to internationalize their careers. Some have grouped those issues into five major categories: economic, political, cultural, family, and career factors (Carr, et al., 2005); others organize them in four categories: academic, social, economic, and personal factors (Chang, 1992).

Much literature has indicated that migrants are motivated by economic factors, particularly financial disparities (Creehan, 2001). Also, migrants are often motivated by opportunities for improvement of the lives of family members, particularly children and descendants (Carr, et al., 2005). In terms of employment expectations for the new professionals, the low level of commercialization of intangible property leads to the fact that an employer cannot pay high salaries to employees who produce intellectual output which ultimately also leads to *brain drain* (Fakhrutdinova, et al., 2014).

On the other hand, studies have shown that return migration usually involves labor migrants who did not reap the benefits of higher earnings abroad and were therefore regarded as failed migrants (Dako-Gyeke, 2016). A major challenge is that upon return many returnees remain in situations of vulnerability since their dreams of improving themselves in the diaspora were not achieved and as a result could be in worse situations (Kushminder, 2014).

Although there is available data for other countries, indicating that immigrants contribute more money to the economy than they cost (BERL Independent Economic Group, 2002), and even when El Salvador's economy relies on incomes sent by Salvadorans abroad -USD \$4,576 million in 2016- (Banco Central de Reserva, 2017), the purpose of this dissertation is to discover what are the factors that are more important for the Salvadoran participants when deciding to go back to their country or not.

Another aspect considered in this dissertation is that it covers the factors that are important to people who belong to a population that is well-educated and skilled, individuals that in all probability are somewhat culturally familiar with their destination, and consequently, are prone to integrate and to accommodate in their new homes. This people would have a different perspectives from those who belong to less educated sectors or lower-wage earners (Madsen & van Naerssen, 2003).

In any case, whether they decide to come back to their countries or not, there is the need for government and other stakeholders to initiate policies that address the socioeconomic and psychological challenges faced by the potential return migrants, so that the countries of origin become attractive enough to keep the new skilled citizens as part of their working force, as they may become the investors needed to make the country grow.

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand through the experiences of Salvadorans living in Pamplona, what are the factors that affect their decision of going back or building a life abroad. By listening to their stories, I wanted to discover if those factors coincide with the ones found in previous literature, of if new and different dimensions affect to the Salvadoran population.

ANALYTICAL PROCESS

As a Salvadoran living abroad, I had a personal experience of what it means to live in a new context which offered a better quality of life. When studying in Spain, I had such a good experience that I found I had doubts of going back to El Salvador, even when I knew I could make positive personal and professional contributions to the Salvadoran society. I realized there were several factors I took into account when analyzing the decision, and that was when some

questions came to me: how do other Salvadorans, in my same situation, make the decision whether or not to go back to our country? Were they having the same thoughts I was having? Were they considering different factors? In my case, I knew that one of the reasons why I wanted to stay in Spain was because of the safety I felt there, in comparison to the one I felt in El Salvador, but maybe it was just a personal perception, as I went through a violent episode previously; however, I wanted to know if the considerations of all Salvadorans were similar.

For that reason, I first conducted a round of exploratory interviews, to have a better overview of the reasons why Salvadorans were in Spain. From the stories I heard, I decided that making a dissertation about them, would make a new contribution for the creation of national policies to prevent *brain drain*.

Sampling and procedure:

This dissertation uses a small sample the resources available to the researcher, considering the following characteristics that were important for the analysis: 1) to have only people who were born in El Salvador, and who have lived there until they came to Spain, 2) that they were all from similar contexts of origin in terms of socio-economic background, which allowed them a good quality of life in both El Salvador and Spain contexts, 3) that they had all lived a similar magnitude of the change between their lives in El Salvador and their lives in Spain.

Also an important factor was that the participants should have the opportunity of freely going back to El Salvador, and hence, were facing a free decision and considering different factors when deciding where they could have better future perspectives; that was the reason why it was also important to select people with similar backgrounds and migrating experiences. The sample only considered people who lived in Pamplona, because they would have shared migrating experiences in terms of the organization of the city, its dynamics and population they had to live with. This was also an aspect that interested the researcher, as the objective was cover the factors that are important to people who belong to a population that is well-educated and skilled, individuals that in all probability are somewhat culturally familiar with their destination, and consequently, are prone to integrate and to accommodate in their new homes.

The first contacts were made with a couple of students of the University of Navarra, who through a “snowball” technique led me to the totality of the participants. This resulted in a restriction for the findings of this research, as six out of the seven participants of the sample were women. Nevertheless, this also was useful, because by meeting people through the university, I found participants with similar socio-economic background, which was important as stated supra. All of these conditions situate the participants in a socio-economic status higher than the average population in El Salvador.

Description of the participants:

The initial sample size included a total of 8 people. But when the process of face to face interviewing was underway, one man from the initial sample backed out of taking part because he was going back to El Salvador. In the end, a sample size with verbatim interview transcripts of seven women were obtained and used for the dissertation. The final sample consisted of seven Salvadorans, furtherly referred to as Sara, Lucy, Carla, Lynda, Andrea, Sandy and Jose. All of the female participants were from San Salvador (the capital city of the country), while the male came from San Vicente. Three of the participants were between 18-20 years old, one was between 21-30 age group, and three of the participants fell into the 31-40 age-group.

Four out of the seven participants were studying their undergraduate university degrees, even when one was in his second degree. The other three participants attained post-graduate level. Only two of the participants had a job, while the rest of them were only dedicated to their studies. They represent 5 different industries: philosophy (1), medicine (3), business (1), communications (1), and international relations (1).

Only one of the participants was married, and the rest were unmarried. Only one of the participants had children. One interesting fact is that Jose, the only man in the sample, is a priest who is pursuing further studies in philosophy. He has shared his experiences as a normal Salvadoran citizen, but also as a priest.

See Appendix 1 for a description of the participants.

Interviews:

All of the interviews were held in Pamplona, face to face with the participants. In most cases, they were conducted in coffee places, but others were in a university room or in their homes. Each of the participants were given the choices of where they preferred to meet, and they decided, considering where they felt more safe, private and silent for talking about their personal experiences. Each interview lasted about an hour.

Semi-structured interviews were used, as the intention was to get from the participants the factors that were important for them, and not to bias their priorities by establishing a pre-elaborated list of conditions. The broad areas covered in the interview schedule surrounded the ideas on: i) reasons for moving to Spain; ii) perceived differences between their lives in both countries; iii) identity and desire of contributing to their country; iv) future perspectives. Questions were made to get from the interviewees the factors they considered when deciding whether going back to El Salvador or staying abroad; see annexes for the list of the questions used in this study.

Before starting the interviews, the researcher explained to the participants that they were going to be recorded, but that their personal data was going to remain confidential. They signed the release form that allowed the publication of their ideas, and the researcher said pseudonyms were going to be used in the final dissertation. The release form used is also presented in the annexes.

The interviews were conducted in Spanish, as the interviewees were going to feel free to explain their ideas more broadly through their native language. Also, the fact that the researcher was Salvadoran, helped the interviewees to feel more comfortable when explaining their lived experiences; however, this also represented a challenge, as some of their descriptions tended to be short, as they assumed the interviewer already knew about the Salvadoran context they had lived; follow-up questions were asked to fill in the gaps left by those short descriptions.

Analysis:

First of all, the interest of the researcher was to make a qualitative study, as the main concern was to focus on the meanings and experiences of the participants. In El Salvador, experts and policymakers have been promoting the elaboration of qualitative methodologies, as they recognize that a change of informant is required to make diagnosis attached to reality: instead of giving priority to statistics, it is indispensable to go to the human source (United Nations Development Programme, 2014: 8). Thus, the main interest of the researcher was to understand and propose solutions to the problems faced by El Salvador, from the perspective of people who have had the experience of living abroad, and have to make the decision of going back or staying abroad.

Moreover, a phenomenological approach was selected, as it refers to the totality of lived experiences that belong to a single person. Phenomenology, developed by Edmund Husserl, is concerned with attending to the way things appear to individuals in experience (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). It was important for the researcher in this dissertation, to go beyond the objective approach of the situation in El Salvador, to a more subjective one through interviewing. In this sense, the main themes that the participants recall as the main issues for their country, came up by themselves from the interviews, and were not suggested previously by the interviewer.

Phenomenology was also chosen because it leads the researcher to the formation of an interpretation of the participant's subjective lived experience based on their own thoughts and feelings (Smith, 2009). Moreover, it was taken into consideration that community psychologists, as well as psychologist for migration and acculturation, find phenomenology to be handy to examine how migrants perceive phenomena (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

The first step of the process used for the analysis of the interviews was the transcription of the interviews verbatim of the main concerns expressed by the participants in the audio recordings. Then, those were translated into English (it is important to highlight that the translation process was made very cautiously to keep the feelings and intentions behind the words; however, it has to be recognized as a limitation for the exact reflection of some expressions in this final document). Once the interviews verbatim were in English, emergent sub themes were developed, and connected to each other until clustered together to form the main themes.

The questions in the interviews were made in an opened way, which allowed the participants to come up with the factors they were considering in their decisions. This means that they did not refer specifically to any dimension of their lives. That is how, when talking about how their lives had changed and in what way they preferred one over the other, it was found that the themes were recurrent in all of the interviews. That is how their answers were clustered together in the dimensions of the Human Security Approach (United Nations Development Programme, 1994), which were: i) quality of public services, ii) work and education opportunities, iii) citizen security, and iv) identity and cultural aspects.

FINDINGS

The findings presented below include verbatim examples from participant transcripts that best reflect their feelings towards each of the dimensions. As explained above, pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of the participants. From the interviews, the participants talked about all of the factors they considered in their decision-making process of going back to El Salvador or staying abroad, in terms of quality of life offered by the two settings. Considering the similarities between the discourses, four master themes emerged from analysis, organized in the four dimensions mentioned above.

Those factors are reflected in the stories, which transcend to mere descriptions of a the context lived in El Salvador, as the feelings of frustration, lack of personal value in their home countries, and fear, emerge from them. Behind their descriptions of how their lives have changed when living in Spain, there are reflections on some of their behaviors in El Salvador that are not willing to go back to. Considering the important contributions they could make in their own country once they finish their studies abroad, it is important to listen to what they are looking for to decide if they should go back or not.

After the exposure of the findings of the interviews, discussion is made on the relation found between the stories and the policies being implemented in El Salvador, to determine if they respond to the priorities identified by the participants.

I. THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Various opinions on how participants expressed they had a better quality of life in Spain was because of the higher quality of public services. This theme includes testimonies of how “rewarding” their experience in Spain has been, and the elements they consider describing it that way in terms of the services they receive. Some sub-themes included are how they consider a clean and well-organized city as an improvement in their quality of life, how they can rely on local institutions they feel protected with, and how this relates to feeling safer.

When describing the experience of moving to a new culture, participants spoke about the emotions they feel towards their new home. Jose explained:

(The experience in Spain) has so far been a rewarding experience. I have been here for eight months, not even for a year, but it has been a gratifying experience. [I feel] happy, motivated, because I came to learn new things, to reinforce what I already knew, and I have corrected those that were mistaken. It is difficult at the beginning, because of the change of culture, but it is an experience that is worth it.

Carla also explains: *Since my arrival, it has been an odyssey. It has been enriching. I've been almost half of my life here. I have changed a lot, I have learned a lot.*

All the participants spoke about several characteristics of the new city that they felt had a positive effect in their quality of life. From their explanations, there is a first glance on how in Spain “things are the opposite of how things are done in El Salvador”: public services are effective and are evident from how the city looks. They explained how they gained more confidence and freedom from a neat city, and at the same time they reflect the Salvadoran practices that prevent the country from achieving a better urban organization.

Jose refers to specific services and practices he found interesting:

In terms of material, physical and social infrastructure, [Pamplona] is excellent. Excellent. In fact, we have much to learn from it, as for example, we see that the city is neat and clean; we see the cleaning trucks washing the streets and throwing away the garbage; we see that even in the way they build, they are neat, as all of their materials are prefabricated, and they have designed them for that purpose. The cities here are well thought out. Super well organized. In El Salvador residential buildings are built where space is not well organized.

The sub theme of cleanliness arose several times and resonated in many participants. Sara considered: *the city is always clean, flowers change according to the season; there are garbage dumps and people use them.* Lucy also finds impressive that people *do not throw trash in the street.*

Another sub theme was the quality of public transportation. Jose shares he is amazed to see there are no traffic jams, nor smoke by cars or buses. It seems shocking for him that one person can go quietly in the bus, and can even fall asleep or go in the back seat fearlessly because the public transportation system is *safe, fast, tidy and comforting.* Lucy explained this contrast: *In El Salvador I never use public transportation. There are no signs with the information of the route and where the bus stops. People here take care of things, they are respectful, the bus is clean, they respect the driver; you know which bus you have to take and where it is going to stop.*

Also, Jose referred to the quality and access to other important public services they do not receive in El Salvador, such as public healthcare:

Their security and public health systems are excellent. They are distributed by zones, and if there is an emergency, the hospital has a great technology; also, the attention... everyone has an assigned doctor and nurse. Everything is very organized, structured, systematic, and well-thought. In El Salvador, I would like to see a public health system like the one they have here. In terms of medicines, the government here helps with a good percentage of the price and one only pays a misery.

Lynda has a special opinion on this, as one of her daughters has a mental disability: *my younger daughter has a mental disability and she needs attention she does not get in El Salvador.* She explains that in El Salvador she could not afford therapies, but in Spain they are accessible for her daughter, and that is a major improvement for both of them.

Besides, it is a common opinion that public services in El Salvador are not available for everybody, and in some opinions, there is a reflected sense of corruption as one of the barriers that prevent the availability of those services. Jose perceived it as follows: *[In Pamplona] public attention is organized, in public entities such as the Mayor's Office. One enters in order, passes quickly, and receives attention; you know that in El Salvador it is not that way. Over there [in El Salvador], some people get preference over others.*

II. WORK AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

For some of the participants the decision of going back to El Salvador or not was more closely related to the lack of work and educational opportunities in El Salvador. For Lucy, the motivation was to look for new and better perspectives, as she said: *“I had a job where I was not happy (...) at first I did want to study abroad and then go back to help make a better country, but as opportunities opened here, the urge to return has diminished.*

For instance, for Lynda her decision was related to the better quality of education that she has found in Spain, but also about the perspectives it opens up for her daughters. She thought: *at this moment, I'm not going back to El Salvador. My two daughters are fine here. While it is true that I do not have job now, in the future I hope I will get one.*

All the participants reflected on how their opportunities for their development would be affected if going back to El Salvador. Once they get their university degree, they consider several aspects of what the Salvadoran context offers, depending on their personal situations.

For example, Sara reflects that in El Salvador she would not have the same opportunities when studying medicine. She compares herself with her friends who study medicine in El Salvador, and they do not do things she does in her academic life, in terms of practice and specialization. Her mother is a doctor in El Salvador, so she also compares the opportunities she has in Pamplona versus the ones her mother had, and considers she would have a wider set of options if she pursues her life abroad. Sara shared: *I do not want to go back. I will not go back. If I have the option of staying here or going back, I will stay, because the work opportunities and the life opportunities cannot be compared.*

Lucy reflects that as El Salvador is a small country, there are no opportunities, and chances are available only for people *with certain surnames*. She contrasts the fact that in Spain she was selected for an internship at a multinational company, while in El Salvador she had difficulties finding a job. She explained:

They never paid attention to me, and here a multinational company saw my CV and gave me a chance, until they extended the agreement to give him the maximum hours of opportunity. They gave me work without the elitism that exists there. Yes there is a plug, but they are fairer than there. She also explains: there are opportunities to be an Erasmus, to be able to go to all Europe and to be able to move; those are things that I want for my future children: to learn a lot, to do things that are not valued

there, such as music or art. Education in El Salvador does not open the mind. The educational model is different.

In all of the cases, the decision of studying abroad was positively evaluated by their families that still live in El Salvador. José got more deeply on the topic, when he expressed: *My family is proud because in our Latin American countries, coming to study in Europe is something big. It is like an honor, a privilege, and it is considered the greatness of here. My family thinks I'm better here. They say: "you are eating well, you are healthier there, they have better technology and there is a good sanitary system; there you are protected and you are not afraid"*. He explains that even when they see him in pictures or videos, they say: *"look how beautiful you are there"*. As Jose, Sara also shared that her family is happy because they know there are more educational opportunities for her in Spain.

As a mother, Lynda considered that there is not future professional projection for her in El Salvador:

You live day by day. I tell you that as a person, not as a mother. As a person, I have no future projection. Life in El Salvador is just about leaving the house to the workplace, and going back from the workplace to home. Period. That's it. The salary of a doctor is like nothing. Here my projection is to work in my profession, which although here is not considered to be a large salary, but compared to the one there is very good. I could not allow my daughters to live like this.

It was perceptions just as Lucy's and Lynda's that were predominant amongst participants' responses, so when asked directly if they want to go back to El Salvador, six out of the seven participants expressed not wanting to return.

III. CITIZEN SECURITY

Besides the references to economic and educational reasons why participants moved, there was a predominant factor that emerged in all of the interviews. It is important to mention that there was no direct question that covered the topic of violence in El Salvador, as it was on the interest of the researcher to find out if the topic came up from the participants. It was not a surprise to hear that all of them mentioned safety as one of the main differences between countries: Spain is safe while El Salvador is not.

Most of the interviews were centered in this factor, and so is reflected in the following sub themes: i) violence as a characteristic of the country, ii) violence as an obstacle for their daily life activities; iii) lived experiences of violence or crimes; iv) feelings that emerge towards security.

i. Violence as a characteristic of the country

Generally, the participants showed optimistic and positive attitudes towards the country. El Salvador is, according to them, a small country full of colors, with beautiful natural landscapes - especially in its beaches-, with nice weather and delicious food. Other physical attributes like the cheerful traditional dresses, the volcanoes, and its weather, are related to happy memories of the participants. However, it soon appears in their meanings, the sense of transformation of that beautiful landscape into a dangerous context, as Carla said: *It is a country that nobody knows, super small, precious in its natural wealth, but full of violence.* Sandy also concurs: *El Salvador is small, with beautiful beaches but it is the most dangerous country in the world.*

Sara also coincided:

When I think of El Salvador, I think of joy, color, sun, the most cheerful Indian dresses. When I look at it deeper, I realize that it is not really like that. When I went to El Salvador last summer, people were always very tense. San Salvador was more crowded and I think it is because of the insecurity that is outside the capital. So I think of El Salvador as joyful because its landscapes are beautiful and the country itself is beautiful, but insecurity and violence removes all that beauty that El Salvador has (...) I love El Salvador. The beach, the volcano, the people, but the insecurity generates a great psychosis that something (bad) can happen to me.

Salvadorans rapidly relate the situation of violence that the country has been facing in recent years, when talking about it. The raise on crime rates is on top of the mind of Salvadorans who describe it as a “crisis”. Jose stated that as follows:

Without trying to be reductionist, and trying to be as realistic and objective as possible, I would say that (El Salvador is) a country that is going through a deep crisis. Everything seems to be in a crisis: politics, economics, education, values, even in the Church itself there is a generalized crisis. How is El Salvador like? It is a country experiencing a post-war crisis, where some individuals or minority groups try to bring it forward by giving hope. Of course, it has positive things, but unfortunately the negative part is

overshadowing, it is getting darker. Then, there is a crisis, from which specific individuals or minority groups are seeing how they move forward. With sadness, I say that El Salvador is very bad, because it is the truth. The crime situation is quite sad.

In this abstract, the personal view of the Salvadoran situation is mixed with relevant expressions of feelings that are related to that “crisis”: he explains how *unfortunate* it is that the negative issues are overtaking the positive ones; also, there is a clear reflection on the sadness he feels towards the sense of how *bad* the situation is. Moreover, it is interesting that the *bad* situation is related to crime.

This situation is afterwards related to Salvadorans’ personalities. Some of the participants still describe Salvadorans with general terms such as “super happy”, cheerful, hardworking, simple, friendly. However, most of the opinions reflect two sub themes: 1) a separation of “good people” from “bad people” in terms of population; 2) a transition from a “good” population to a “bad” one due to the situation of violence.

Some of the participants expressed the idea of a separation of different types of people among the Salvadoran population. Lynda explained:

Salvadorans are good... we are good-hearted, altruistic, confident... but I speak for my people. It may be that there are Salvadorans who are deviant, but it is up to us, those who are not so devious, to find a way to work with less selfishness. Sara also considered: people of El Salvador speak a lot, they are super open, warm, they embrace you, and they are as part of you. It depends on the people, because there are good people and others as “mareros”, who I would not describe as cheerful and affectionate. Lucy also considered there are two types of people: Salvadoran people... one part of the population is hardworking, but another only lives complaining, which is very selfish. There is a mixture, it is balanced.

Other opinions are related to a breakpoint -either war or the situation of violence-, where Salvadorans went through a transition that affected their personalities. One of the participants reflected that in general, Salvadoran people, despite the postwar period and the current crisis, have not lost their joy, their charm, their kindness, their simplicity, and their spirit of collaboration. Other shares that people today are scared, and have become a bit suspicious and consequently, more closed. Jose recalled a specific time for the transition:

In the 90's I remember that people were not like that. Then, when the “maras” began to emerge, in the 90's, I remember perfectly... in the 80's El Salvador was a marvel, but today, I think people are ambivalent (...) People always show their Salvadoran idiosyncrasy; that is joy, openness, that joviality, relaxation, festivity ... but in the same environment you also find mistrust, a little fear, even also with symptoms of violence. I remember that the war has marked us, and the current situation of the “maras” has also marked us. It is not that I want to make them famous, but it is a reality that weighs, unfortunately. This makes people feel psychologically pressured by violence, and for Self-defense as well. It creates an atmosphere of defense or alarm.

Other negative aspect about the population, expressed in the interviews, is that people are happy with themselves but ungrateful to others, always thinking about ways to avoid the law, to take advantage of others, to be mischievous and rogue. There were also references made to an elitist society, and to a lack of control from the authorities, as it is felt that “nobody controls” the deviant people, and that instead, the authorities use force and power against people.

One final remark was the reaction participants had when talking about the negative facts from their country. Some said that people have to know (what is happening in El Salvador) so they can do something, and that trying to cover it up to the world is like saying it does not exist. On the other hand, Sandy feels that if people already know about the “maras” there is no need to feed the fear people have for the country. Regarding this topic, Andrea argues that denying the problem does not eliminate it, so it is important for people to know what is happening so that they also contribute to its improvement.

ii. Violence as an obstacle for their daily life activities

The participants spoke about a range of dangers they associated with living in El Salvador. Along those threats, they explained their related reactions, practices and expectations. Carla began the interview by saying:

Since high school I knew I did not want to study in El Salvador. I decided to come to Pamplona because it was a village in the north of Spain that could not be dangerous. Also Lynda shared: my daughters and I are in Spain because of the insecurity we have experienced in recent years (...) I could not find peace and tranquility in my country (...) There is a lot of violence, it was like in a prison. It was just going to work and then coming back home by 5:30 p.m. because it is better to return and stay at home;

the weekends are spent at home most of the time; we get out but with fear. In the street, when driving I was always checking if someone was following me... to see if there was a boy with a gun.

When describing their life in Spain, they explain some of the differences they have noticed. Jose recognized that in Pamplona *there are many parks where people can have fun, where they can walk, run, where there are no "maras". There is no violence; there is security.* Also Sandy reflected: *[In Pamplona] one can walk at night, you can walk at dawn and nothing happens. In El Salvador, I could only walk around my neighborhood.*

Sara also had discovered the benefit of having freedom of circulation:

Here, you can walk alone and it's a great thing. Only for the fact of being able to go to the supermarket alone, or to use your cell phone while being in the bus... In El Salvador even if you are going in your own car you have to hide the cell phone from people passing by with their bikes (...) Here you can go out at night, feel safe because you know that nothing is going to happen to you, or if you are with your friends nothing happens. That is the biggest change, security. To feel safe.

The feeling of freedom when walking was constant in the responses. Phrases such as "here we can go to places by walking and not always by car", "you can walk at night, go jogging at night", "you can walk to the supermarket", "I can go out at night", "you go out more calmly", were repeated in various occasions. This reflects the sense of confinement that people in El Salvador live. Thinking that it is important to mention how they are free to go to the supermarket by themselves, expresses how basic everyday activities are restricted by their feelings of fear in their own country.

Once the safety issues had emerged, they started reflecting on some of the practices they used to have in El Salvador as part of their normal lives, but that now they recognized were mere ways of self-protecting themselves, and that they did not have the need to act that way in a safer environment. Some of those practices were being "on alert" all the time, always looking back to see if someone is following them, doing things during daylight -as the darkness of the night is related to more danger-. Facing that situation of powerlessness and uncertainty, Andrea sums her feelings up by explaining: *In El Salvador, even if you go by car at night you go with fear... you go praying for nothing to happen*

The feeling of needing to make some changes in the routine, such as hiding personal belongings, limiting their hours to go out, or hiring private security to feel safer, are some of the mentioned by the participants, such as Lucy mentioned:

In El Salvador you cannot talk to people, or you have to be aware of people who look suspicious and may have to get off the bus. Here I can go to the center of the city peacefully. Here I can use my cell phone or my iPad outside and nothing happens (...) a lot of things are different. For example, when going to the university, I can walk and carry my computer and nothing happens. In El Salvador you can get assault on your way to the university or even inside, and they can steal your computer (...) I can go with my friends to have a drink and come back at night and nothing happens. There you have to go to a place with surveillance.

Behind those descriptive stories, there are feelings and ideas of practices they appreciate having in a foreign country and that they are not able to achieve in their countries of origin: basically, being able to walk in the streets without the fear of becoming a victim of a crime.

This uncertainty is more largely experienced by women, who are also victims of gender-based aggressions motivated by the “machismo” that rules in the country. Lucy also described that situation as follows:

Here, the bus driver will never say anything disrespectful to you. I can wear whatever way I want and no one is going to say anything, they disrespect. In El Salvador, a girl cannot dress as she wants to, because when she walks, men shout dirty things, vulgarities that make girls feel insecure. Just for being a woman they scream things to you, they say disrespectful things to you, and they see you as a sexual object. As a woman, you are not able to walk alone; here you can do that perfectly; I have to be careful, but I can go back home by myself and nothing happens. There, if I stayed at night at a red light when driving, I passed the traffic light. My mom used to say I should carry a mannequin [in the car] so people would not think I was going alone.

More feelings emerge when participants refer to their families that are still living in El Salvador. Although they may have a sense of safety, they know that their relatives are still exposed to danger, so they express fear towards what could happen to them. Lucy shared one recent experience:

Recently, my mom [living in El Salvador] told me that she had to go to San Miguel [a city in the east of the country, around 3 hours from the capital city]. I asked her to let me know when she arrived, but

she did not let me know. I did not receive any cell phone calls, so I was restless, thinking that something had happened. I called many people there, until they called the hotel to verify if she had arrived well. I thought something had happened to her. I get worried, and I just hope nothing happens to them.

iii. Lived experiences of violence or crimes

Until this point, the participants had reflected on how different their lives were in each country, on how violence had become a special factor to take into consideration when giving value to living conditions and quality of life. However, one of my interests as a researcher was to go deep into what caused people to be afraid: was that fear mainly caused by news in the media, by stories shared in social media, or did the participants have any direct experience of violence in the past?

To address the issue, once the participants had explained the fear they felt from the situation of violence, a direct question was made about previous experiences of crime. From the seven participants, three explained their closeness to crime: two had been victims of robbery with a shotgun, and one had listened direct relations with members of the gangs.

For instance, Lucy had witnessed how her mother and sister were attacked at gunpoint, in front of their house, by some men who wanted to steal the car. She explains that after the incident, they felt the necessity of moving to a different house because they were afraid of being assaulted again. That situation forced the family to move out of their own house, and eventually that also became a factor taken into consideration when deciding to move to Spain. Lynda also shared her experience of being robbed with a shotgun while driving her car. She explained how she was assaulted twice when driving, and that in both occasions some men driving motorcycles came next to her car, and forced her to give them the cell phone.

Jose, as explained previously, is a priest who is studying Philosophy. He has had a different experience with violence, as a person and as a priest. He explains the gangs do not get involved with the work being made from the Church. In fact, he describes that he has to visit different territories, and one day he might be visiting a community with from the “Mara Salvatrucha” and the next day he would have the possibility of visiting another community, where he would celebrate Mass, give Catechism, and attend people from the “Mara 18”, and he would not have any negative consequence from that. He explains that the Church is recognized as a neutral

institution, and for that reason, he considers it to be a fundamental social actor for peacebuilding programs, for they are seen as facilitators of peace. When talking about gang members, he shared:

They can be very bad men, but we have their respect. They have respect for the Church, and that gives us the opportunity to have a close dialogue with those who suffer, or with families of gang members, or even with gang members. In fact, I have managed to understand the language they use, because I have had contact with their families, or even because I have had to speak directly with them, not in jail, but in their own community settings. Through the spiritual counselling, I have recognized the suffering of other people who have told me what has happened to them, they say “they have done this to me”, “they have sent me this”, so in that personal contact I can talk about the situations of violence. I have managed to learn about their writings, their language, and their culture.

iv. Feelings that emerge towards security

This sub theme is centered on the feelings and the meanings the participants give to the fact they are living in safer conditions. From the conversations, two basic concepts emerge: freedom and independence.

In the interviews, women seemed to have a broader appreciation of these concepts, and how by being more independent physically, they also became more mentally independent. Andrea and Sandy said that since they lived in Spain, they knew what freedom and independence are. They felt more independent, as in El Salvador they always depended on their families to move from one place to another, or event to make their own decisions. In Pamplona, Sara also accounts that the feeling of physical independence arose a sense of freedom in other spheres when making personal decisions, such as going to a volunteering program in Tanzania for the summer. She feels that in El Salvador she would never have done so. As a result, and as a medicine student, she shares that her vision for the future has changed a lot. In El Salvador, she just aspired to study medicine, but now, she wants to go to Africa or China to help people. She considers that she now has an open mind to realize that there are more possibilities available around the world.

Lucy described how she recently visited El Salvador and her mom had sold her car, so she depended on others taking her everywhere she needed to go. She explains she felt trapped, as she was not free to move anywhere she want to. She considers that this lack of freedom is due

to the situation of violence. Carla coincides in how different her routine is when going to El Salvador, as she depends on others and therefore, she also feels trapped.

Lucy also refers to another type of liberty: mental freedom. She considers that Salvadorans are always thinking that someone is going to steal from them, even in places with proper surveillance. She believes that there is no peace of mind that one will return safely if going out, and that nothing is going to happen; people live in fear all of the time. Other practices related to that sense of “feeling trapped” is the necessity of locking the doors, reporting to the families when going out, or feeling that everybody wants to hurt them. Lynda told that in El Salvador: *I would ask my daughter at what time she would come back home, and if she was running late I would start to get worried. I was always watching the clock, and when she came home, she had to let me know she had returned. Here the perspective changes, because if my daughter is delayed I do not worry as I do in El Salvador.* Lynda emphasized on how people mistrust each other in El Salvador:

One always is always doubting whether people are telling the truth, or whether they are trying to trick by saying something that is not accurate. Little by little you realize that you can trust other people [in Pamplona] (...) there is no freedom there, not for women nor for men (...) I feel free here [in Pamplona] because I am not afraid of being assaulted (...) Here a man once asked me what time it was, and I got scared and grabbed my watch, as if he was going to rob it, but he had only asked me for the time. There you cannot walk wearing a watch. I know that here, if someone talks to me, it is not to rob me; or if I find someone crying, it is not because there is a kidnapper ahead to take me; or if the policeman stops me, it is not because he wants to take advantage of me.

So, having lived in a place where they do not have to be worried about something bad happening to them, they start making some considerations of important issues when deciding whether to stay living abroad or going back to El Salvador. Lucy has realized: *it is not necessary to pay for private surveillance to live safe, or you do not need to live in an exclusive place, and you do not need to buy a car to be safe... or even you do not need to pay the waiter immediately after getting what you asked for, as here nobody leaves without paying (...)*

There are also various references to safety and raising a family in the future. Safety is not something that is wanted at a personal level, but also –and even more- at a family level. Lucy reflected on that:

Here the children play in the park and are not afraid, the children go alone in the bus to school and nothing happens to them. The teenagers are walking alone and nothing is going to happen to them. I see that, and I envy that, and I want that for my future family (...) I want to stop being afraid of someone assaulting or abducting me (...) what I have here is priceless. Sara also considers the familiar situation: If I think about marrying and having children, I do not want to have children there, because they would not have the independence they would have here.

Lynda, as a single mother, also values that peaceful context, in terms of her children. At the moment, she was pursuing studies on genetics but was not able to have a job, which restricts her economical condition; however, she values more the fact that they are safe, over the economical circumstance: *here I do not have the comforts that I had there, but here we have peace and security.*

Participants also reflected on why people, in general, would not go back to El Salvador. Jose revealed: *In El Salvador, what is happening? People are leaving the country, but let's ask ourselves: why do people leave? Poverty has always been spoken of as the major reason, but it is that nothing offers a safer life, a more stable life. Then, as people do nothing ... we go elsewhere. If we only value all of the people in the country...*

Andrea knew that her safety is one of her family's priorities, which is why they support her to stay living abroad: *my parents have always told us that if we study abroad, we have to try to stay abroad, because the violence issue is very bad, and they say that we can help the country from outside.* Similarly, Lynda expressed her family is calm because they know that nothing bad will happen here. Lucy also explains that she misses her mother, but she motivates her to stay in Spain.

All of these testimonies raise several negative sensations about the country. However, even after sharing their personal experiences on violence, there is a glimpse of positivity when talking about El Salvador. The participants believe that the country has a very bad image by the rest of the world. They still think there are things that can be done, despite the violence. Some even consider that people make excuses for violence, but that there are other causes that must be worked too. They believe the gangster become gangsters because they were given no opportunities -which relates to the utopian ideas discussed supra-. They also believe that violence can be a smokescreen for all problems, because politicians blame the gangsters for all the problems the country faces.

IV. CULTURE AND IDENTITY

A final dimension that was taken into consideration by Salvadorans when deciding to stay abroad or go back home was their national culture and identity. Generally, Salvadorans have been seen as a hard-working population, and friendly overall. That has been the general opinion in the country. However, it was an interest for the researcher to know if the sense of belonging and going back to contribute to the Salvadoran population was accurate between Salvadorans abroad, to discuss afterwards on the role the diaspora has in relation to other Salvadorans.

One factor related to returning for the people was related to their own families. Although the participants have made their choice of staying abroad, and even when their relatives support them, they still desire family reunification. Lynda explained she wants her people to be there: *My brother is going to come with his family, and I hope my parents will also come.* Besides Lynda, only Lucy expressed a possibility of going back to El Salvador for the people, but also in terms of raising a family of her own: *I am a conservative, and for that reason I prefer to raise a family in El Salvador.*

However, the interest for this dissertation was to explore how participants see themselves as contributors for the creation of better environments in El Salvador, beyond the personal interest. With their new educational achievements, they could be very useful for the construction of solutions for the problems they have already explained in the previous sections of this document. Yet, Jose was the only one in the group who wants to go back to El Salvador to make contributions for society. He expressed he wants to bring hope to his hometown. He has gathered several ideas on how to motivate people when going back: *(I want) to return to demonstrate that I have learned some things that I will use for the service of others, whatever it costs, no matter what happens. Let's paddle against the current. And even in a context where people do not care, we will try to see how they can be included in our rhythm.*

Jose is one example of Salvadorans who are learning new things in different countries, to take back the best practices and include them in his practices back home. In this sense, he reflected:

Certainly there are things (he has seen in Spain) that I would like to have there, and not for simple copy, but because they work. That's the point, let's copy things not just for copying them... not just to say, "ah how nice it would be to take this (to El Salvador)", but because it works. Those are things that would improve the quality of life.

Nevertheless, Jose considers that even with good ideas, it is not so easy to try to implement something new in his country. He reflected:

Sadly, in El Salvador when one tries to lead something, other people instead of supporting it, they destroy it, put it aside, and lower it. Here they have the vision to say "our people have these talents", "they have these abilities", and "we have got these leaders". While there we have big problems, we have had several cases of people who have tried to do something and have been criticized, destroyed.

He concludes this because of previous experiences, where he has seen new projects being prepared, but are not taken into consideration: *many projects have been established in previous governments and they end up in a pile of papers, as nothing has been done... very little has been done.*

He continues reflecting that one of the biggest problems is that people make it difficult to do new things, with the excuse that “that is how things are done here” or “we do things this ways here”. He analyzes this as a “lack of solid leaderships”. He recognizes that executing his ideas in his country will not be easy: *sometimes, when you try to do something, people call you an individualist, they strike you as a protagonist, or they believe that you are looking for a personal benefit, and the truth is that it is not that way.*

Still, Jose is a very brave person, as he also reflected:

I would like to create more cultural centers, to motivate through art, painting, music... we need to think about concrete solutions with the means we have. Yes, we have to row against the current, not with ideas, not with speech, but to search for strong things. It is a joy to return to my land, with which I identify myself, the one I love (...) People need leaders to motivate them and give them hope ... I have a feeling of joy, and at the same time feelings of struggle ... to say “let's mess with the flow, although we know it will not be easy”. Jose also declares: there is much talk about poverty, but I have always said that it may be poverty of mind, because I believe that we could make better use of the means that we have, even if they are few, even though they are limited resources, but if we took advantage of them, I think we could improve, and people would not leave.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to understand the experiences of Salvadorans living in Pamplona, and how they affect their decision of going back or building a life abroad. By way of the research questions that were generated to elucidate on matters that influence them, their responses led to an identification of four basic conditions: the quality of public services, work and educational opportunities, citizen security and identity.

The findings presented above shed light on the four areas, and the testimonies illustrated the magnitude given to each of them. The participants demonstrated careful thought processes on the differences they found between the qualities of public services in both countries, which correspond to different dimensions of the Human Security Approach: economic, health, political (United Nations Development Programme, 1994). However, unlike other studies previously made about *brain drain*, the dimension that affected their decision the most was not related to economic conditions but to safety issues. This would be what the Human Security Approach would describe as “freedom from fear” (United Nations Development Programme, 1994). The feelings of independency and freedom they had in Spain, which were not able to find in El Salvador, were the major incentives for staying abroad. Another important influence was the fact that their families in El Salvador supported them, and even pushed them, to find ways of staying overseas.

These different dimensions are linked to each other, as good-quality basic services and opportunities of growth will contribute to the reduction of violence. For instance, according to some criminology theories for the prevention of crime, such as the “broken windows” theory, unchecked social and physical disorder are direct antecedents to criminal behavior (Maskaly, 2014). In terms of policing strategies, this means targeting minor offenses, such as panhandling, public drunkenness, and vandalism as a mechanism to reduce more serious offenses (*idem*). In terms of social protection, this could be related to the discussion on whether a crime committed by a child or an adolescent is merely the responsibility of the aggressor, or if the whole society could also be accountable for it, as it did not offer a better alternative to those who get involved in crimes since childhood, and choose crime to survive or as a resistant entity. This comes up from Saint Thomas More’s Utopian thought:

“For if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this, but that you first make thieves and then punish them” (More, 2016: 82).

So, if a person has never felt protected by his own government, has seen some preferential attention to some people over others, or have not had any opportunities of growth, then it is foreseeable that they would not like to go back to their country if they have seen better perspectives elsewhere.

Hence, the fact that safety had more importance over other dimensions in the decision making process, could have implications for national priorities and for educational programs.

i. Implications for national priorities

This represents a big challenge for public policy in El Salvador, when establishing the priorities in the usage of the limited resources. For instance, El Salvador has created a governmental plan to assure its population has better perspectives. This plan starts with the following statement: “El Salvador is a prosperous, equitable, inclusive, solidary and democratic country, with a society that offers good living conditions to all its population”. However, three different plans are created to achieve that objective: one for education, one for productivity, and one for safety. Along those documents, three different councils are created, with independent budgets. This diffusion of resources causes several problems when implanting plans, as the linkage between the three is difficult to achieve.

From the examples given by the participants, and from what they report to see in their new hometown, security may be achieved by guaranteeing the accessibility and good quality of the basic public services. One clear example is the reference made in the interviews to the good quality of public transportation in Pamplona. In El Salvador, the low quality of it is reflected in the fear people feel while using it, and with the fact that according to a national study, the 20.6% of robberies occur in public transportation, and 41.1% of all of the crimes with small arms happened in public bus stations (Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social, 2015).

For those reasons, one recommendation would be the promotion of interinstitutional councils which coordinate national plans, so that the education, productivity and safety are achieved at the same time, without one affecting the other one negatively (specially in terms of budgets).

ii. Implications for educational programs

International cooperation promotes several programs to contribute to the growth of countries through the education of their people. For instance, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) has a policy on “awarding scholarships to fund and support students who can be expected in the future to become key players and top performers in their career fields combined with an awareness for the social responsibility which this involves” (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, 2017).

Although they are interesting programs, one of their requirements for the students is to go back to their countries once they complete their programs. The Chevening Program, supported by the United Kingdom, includes in its scholarship conditions: “You must return home for a period of at least two years following the completion of your Scholarship. The Secretariat is unable to provide any letter of support which might be required to enable a Scholar to stay on to work or study in the UK. If you do not remain at home for two years following completion of your Scholarship, this will be treated as a breach of a Scholarship condition and you will be liable to pay back all monies paid to you during the course of your Scholarship”.

A number of policies exist to encourage return migration, and could be good practices imitated by the Salvadoran government. For instance, the Chinese Ministry of Education has encouraged expatriate scientists to return to China through a variety of programs that supplement salary and/or offer research funding. Also, in Argentina, the Ministry of Science and Technology has established a program that manages a repatriation fund which helps cover moving costs for those who return home permanently (Kahn & MacGarvie, 2013). Although they do not solve the situation of insecurity, they could be considered by the diaspora.

Moreover, while conditions in the countries of origins are improved, an alternative could be the inclusion of provisions in the requirements, for countries with high level of violence. The Chevening Program has included this for some countries: “for scholars from Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, applications to return to third countries may be considered in exceptional

circumstances if returning to the home country is impossible due to conflict”. Yet, this may have negative consequences on the reducing of international cooperation.

A final option could be to admit the possibility of diaspora not coming back to El Salvador, but that could somehow support their country from abroad. In literature, this is described as the process of going from *brain drain* to *brain bank*, which promotes not only the economical contributions of highly skilled individuals abroad, but mostly their influence in terms of innovation and knowledge networks (Agrawal, et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION

In light of the responses to the questions that guided the interviews, it can be seen firstly that the decision to go back to their hometowns or staying overseas can be understood in terms of a multi-factor decision making process. Even when there is a better quality of services and broader perspectives for the future in terms of work and educational opportunities, the condition that pushed them more was the insecurity lived in El Salvador. The constant reference to “feeling trapped” in their own country had a bigger impact, over the sense of belonging, identity and social responsibility of going back to contributing in their country.

For national policies, integrated efforts should be promoted, to work over education, productivity and safety with a common goal, through interinstitutional councils and budgets. Also, international cooperation programs that contribute to the improvement of the country through education could review their return requirements, as the people benefited from them would find it difficult to reinsert themselves in societies with high levels of violence.

Each of the different dimensions that arose in the interviews can be addressed more profoundly in further research, to examine specific situations or recommendations from the diaspora to the national programs. Other potential research could look at the factors considered by people who decided to go back to El Salvador, finding participants who have been reinserted in the Salvadoran society.

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ANNEXES:

1. Demographic profile of sample

Pseudonym	Origin	Age group	Education	Industry	Had a job	Married	Children
Sara	San Salvador	18-20	Undergraduate	Medicine	No	No	0
Lucy	San Salvador	21-30	Post Graduate	Business	Yes	No	0
Carla	San Salvador	31-40	Post Graduate	Communications	Yes	Yes	0
Lynda	San Salvador	31-40	Post Graduate	Medicine	No	No	2
Andrea	San Salvador	18-20	Undergraduate	Medicine	No	No	0
Sandy	San Salvador	18-20	Undergraduate	International Relations	No	No	0
Jose	San Vicente	31-40	Undergraduate	Philosophy	No	No	0

2. Questions used in the interviewing process



PROCESO DE ENTREVISTAS

Nombre preliminar del proyecto: Voces de esperanza. Historias de salvadoreños en el exterior.

Datos de la Investigadora: María José Benítez Chávez.

Máster en Investigación en Ciencias Sociales. Universidad de Navarra. Mayo, 2017.

Correo: mbenitez.2@alumni.unav.es

1. ¿Por qué estás en España?
2. ¿Cómo ha sido tu experiencia en España?
3. ¿Por qué decidiste venir?
 - a. Si el motivo por el que vino no lo podía tener en El Salvador
4. ¿Qué piensas de El Salvador?
5. ¿Cuáles son tus perspectivas al futuro en relación a tu regreso al país?
6. ¿Qué factores podrían cambiar tu decisión?
7. ¿Ha cambiado tu vivencia de la libertad desde que vives en España?
8. ¿Cómo lo vives en relación a tu familia?
9. ¿Cómo lo vives en relación a tu futuro?

3. Release form signed by all the participants



FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO

Nombre preliminar del proyecto: Voces de esperanza. Historias de salvadoreños en el exterior.

Datos de la Investigadora: María José Benítez Chávez.

Máster en Investigación en Ciencias Sociales. Universidad de Navarra. Abril, 2017.

Correo: mbenitez.2@alumni.unav.es

Usted forma parte del Grupo de personas entrevistadas para la elaboración de un estudio sobre salvadoreños en el exterior, y sus perspectivas sobre el país. El objetivo general del estudio es conocer las causas por las que salvadoreños deciden residir en el exterior, y cuáles son sus perspectivas de regreso.

Las entrevistas realizadas en esta sesión serán objeto de análisis del estudio, por lo que sus aportes serán utilizados en el documento final, manteniendo su anonimato.

A lo largo de esta sesión, se le harán una serie de preguntas que se leerán íntegramente al inicio, para luego entrar en cada una de forma separada. Estas preguntas no tienen respuestas correctas o incorrectas, sino que dependen de la experiencia propia. Puede saltar cualquier pregunta si no quiere contestarla.

Sepa que las únicas personas autorizadas para ver sus aportes y respuestas son las que trabajan en el estudio y las que se aseguran de que éste se realice de manera correcta. Recuerde que se tomarán todas las medidas de seguridad de la información para que nadie fuera del estudio sepa que usted participó en él.

La entrevista tomará alrededor de una hora de su tiempo. Usted puede dejar de participar en cualquier momento, sin ninguna penalización. La participación en este proceso no implica ningún tipo de remuneración a quienes participen.



*Si está de acuerdo,
por favor marcar la
casilla*

1. Confirmando que he leído y comprendido la información presentada en este documento, sobre mi participación en esta investigación en proceso
2. He entendido que mi participación es voluntaria y que puedo retirarme de esta consulta cuando considere conveniente
3. Estoy de acuerdo con que esta consulta sea grabada
4. Estoy de acuerdo con que mis aportes sean utilizados en el estudio final
5. Solicito que se mantenga el anonimato de mis aportes en la investigación

Nombre del/la Participante

Fecha

Firma

Nombre de la Investigadora

Fecha

Firma