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Trends of Migration and Their Effects on Youth in Nicaragua

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Introduction

Migration from Nicaragua has become an increasing trend, dramatically rising in the 1970s due to the Sandinista revolution and continuing to rise because of economic instability (Baumeister et al., 2013). In 2012, about 10% of the Nicaraguan population—roughly 800,000 individuals—consisted of migrants residing outside of the country. Today, this number has remained consistent. As recently as 2017, Nicaragua was the poorest country in Central America and the second poorest in the Western Hemisphere (CIA, 2017). Studies on Nicaraguan migrants concluded that migration out of the country was predominantly driven by economic “push” factors such as structural under- or unemployment and chronic poverty (Yarris, 2014). Nicaraguan migrants are split almost evenly between men and women ranging from age twenty to forty-nine; a large portion of these also identifying as parents (Yarris, 2014). Because these individuals are a major portion of the local work forces, their migration leads to a restructuring of local communities and economies (Baumeister et al., 2013). After a parent migrates, the primary caregivers for children become remaining spouses or other relatives, such as grandparents. While a new primary caregiver may try to fill the role that migrant parents once held, the absence of one or both parents restructures family dynamics and places significant strain on all family members, especially children who require parental guidance and support.

Although many youths feel negatively towards migration, migration as a trend persists. Few studies have been conducted on the effect migration has on family members who stay behind, and the focus in studies that do exist typically centers around migrants and the economic impacts they have on both their home country and country of destination. In this study, I hope to analyze the way migration changes the roles of both grandparents and children, and begin to document the resulting emotional struggles youth experience due to their separation from parents. Ultimately, I hope to reveal the stories and experiences of family members who remain in Nicaragua and demonstrate how they have adapted to cope with the loss of the absent member.

To achieve this, I will first consider migration on a global level and then elaborate on major theories that explain motives for migration as they pertain to this paper. Next, I will expand on the negative side effects experienced by youth due to the absence of one or both parents. Then, I will conduct a more specific examination of migration in Nicaragua and the lasting impacts that have resulted on both a national level and a community level. Finally, I will discuss research methods and design, limitations, intention of research, and stories from the field in order to understand interviews conducted with families of migrants in 2015 and 2016. In concluding this study, I will propose ideas for future research.

Literature Review

Why Do People Migrate?

Researchers have used various theories to explain migration, each of which considers different elements of the situation, such as the economy, the social standing of migrants, and the political climate. For this study, I will apply network theory and New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory to understand Nicaraguan's high rate of outward migration. Network theory argues that a country's continuous pattern of migration systemically shapes the context in which an individual migrates. If individuals who are considering migrating have a preexisting network of family and friends abroad, they are much more likely to decide to move, further perpetuating the flow of migration (De la Garza, 2010). Over time, these networks of migration become embedded in society and, therefore, shift the context in which future decisions to migrate are made. Network theory claims that the existence of these networks cause migration paths to become more defined and subsequently used at higher frequency. This theory argues that policymaking cannot stop emigration or migration because migrant networks become institutionalized after an extended period of time (De la Garza, 2010). NELM theory will also be considered in analysis of this study, particularly as I focus on the role of received remittances. NELM theory became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s; it claims that families, not individuals, are the deciding factor in migration. NELM theory suggests that remittances, sums of money earned in, and sent home from, countries with more stable economies, are the major causes of increased economic stability within the household and are intended to combat home-country market failures (Haas, 2008; De la Garza, 2010). Furthermore, this theory claims that remittances help families diversify their income streams within a relatively unstable economy, allowing a family to mitigate income disparities within their country. However, if migration, according to NELM theory, is meant to promote economic development for families, this paper aims to add an additional element of consideration: the emotional wellbeing of youths.

NELM and network theory both connect migrants' motives back to a community or family. In the case of Nicaragua and in agreement with network theory, both short-term and long-term migratory networks have become deeply embedded into Nicaraguan society. In consideration of the push and pull factors these networks place on Nicaraguans, this paper will also make suggestions for further research regarding the emotional development of children with migrant parents. In addition, analysis of interviews conducted in Nicaragua in 2015 and 2016 will serve to challenge the reliability of NELM theory, questioning the ways remittances sent home are and are not beneficial, specifically in conjunction with youth development.

Emotional Impacts of Parent-Child Separation

Along with the financial aspects of migration, children's emotional challenges caused by separation are an important factor to consider. In a study conducted internationally on trends of migration, it was found that when fathers migrate, caregiving structures remain mostly intact. However, when mothers migrate, fathers are typically already absent and children are then often left in the care of their grandmothers (Cortés, 2007). When children are transitioned into the care of grandparents or close relatives, the familial caregiving structure is substantively reconfigured (Yarris, 2014). While grandmothers aim to maintain household stability, they are often physically unable to provide in all the ways that a younger parent might have, such as working to earn a regular income or performing physically demanding household tasks. This increases the household responsibilities for youths in migrant families. Despite these extended responsibilities, youths still remain under the authority of both their absent parents and their present grandparents, and this creates competing authority structures within families (De la Garza, 2010).

Ambiguity about who is in charge is frequently coupled with migration's promise of money sent home, leaving children in a state of emotional limbo that can be damaging to their development. Ambiguous loss theory helps provide an explanation for the behavior of children with absent parents. This theory applies to children whose parent's length of absence is undetermined for reasons such as incarceration, military leave, or migration. This theory states that families compensate for the uncertainties caused by temporary absence of family members by creating ways to keep the individual both emotionally and psychologically present while also redistributing their previous responsibilities (Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015). As Rodriguez and Margolin concluded in their evaluation of research on youth development, temporary parental absence has been found to result frequently in strained youth adjustment to new situations and high susceptibility to destructive behaviors in an attempt to receive needed attention (Rodriguez & Margolin 2015). Moreover, the sudden absence of parents can significantly contribute to behavioral problems and stunted emotional development (Pillay & Descoins). When parents migrate, there is often a promised date of return or promise of money to be sent so that children may travel and live with their parent. These promises are likely to change due to the difficult nature of migration and of successfully finding a job in a new country. While there is a promise of higher wages in receiving countries, Nicaraguan migrants lack access to workers' rights and earn lower wages for their work in relation to local economies (Baumeister, 2006). Additionally, while parents are abroad, either long-term or short-term, their absence may produce strained communication among family members, inconsistent parenting practices, negotiation of decision-making power, and reconfiguration of family roles (Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015).

In countries where migration is an integrated part of society, communities tend to be

more emotionally supportive of one another because they identify through shared experience. However, this habituation may also cause youth to underperform academically because they plan to follow their parent(s), thus reinforcing migrant networks that have already been formed (Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015). Youths lacking a parental figure have been identified as requiring greater psychological, social, and material support (Pillay & Descoins, 2006). Despite the positive economic gains from remittances, a parent's migration can lead to psychological and emotional stress, a sense of abandonment, and faltering self-esteem for children and adolescents (De la Garza, 2010).

Study Context: Migration out of Nicaragua

In the 1950s, only around a third of the Nicaraguan population resided in cities, but by the end of the decade, large-scale internal migration began to move Nicaraguans into urban areas such as Managua, León, and Chinandega. This movement resulted in pressure to migrate internationally because jobs became scarce within Nicaraguan urban centers (Baumeister et al., 2013). Following this change in Nicaraguan demographics, studies show three major waves of migration out of Nicaragua (Baumeister et al., 2013). The first occurred during the 1970s due to the dictatorial Somoza regime and the onslaught of fighting between the government and revolutionary Sandinistas. After the Sandinistas successfully overthrew the previous military regime and created a governmental shift to communism, the new government forced those who opposed the revolution out of the country. The second wave began during the 1990s when unemployment hit a new high due to expansive privatization and regulations that were implemented by the new communist government and enforced by the International Monetary Fund. The third wave followed in the early 2000s when unemployment spiked again and a large portion of the population migrated in search of work and higher salaries (Baumeister et al., 2013). In 2005, 65% of households reported at least one unemployed adult; within the employed population, underemployment was documented at 46% (McConnell, 2007). Because of political turmoil, economic hardship, and high unemployment over the years, today it is estimated that around 800,000 Nicaraguans (around 10% of the population) have migrated to destinations such as Spain, Panama, the United States, El Salvador, and most commonly, Costa Rica (Baumeister et al., 2013). In 2016, the World Fact Book specified that roughly 300,000 Nicaraguans are now Costa Rican residents, about 75% of the foreign population (CIA, 2017). Within the three waves of migration, there have been both long-term emigrations and short-term migrations that constitute the annual migrant rates in Nicaragua. Those who migrate from Nicaragua and move further north are considered emigrants because they move with the intention of a long-term residency, indicated by the far distance. Those who move from Nicaragua to neighboring Central American countries are considered migrants because they typically move for a temporary period of time (Thinkmap, 2013). What began with a politically

sparked desire to flee a dictatorial regime has now shifted to a more economically motivated pattern of national and international migration. As network theory suggests, these currents of migration have become normalized in Nicaraguan society. A study published in 2013 identified Nicaragua as a country of transit due to these high rates of migration (Baumeister et al., 2013).

Whether family members temporarily or permanently migrate, there is commonly a promise to send back remittances. These remittances not only support the receiving families, but they have also grown to become a large part of the Nicaraguan economy. As cited by the Nicaraguan Central Bank, during the first trimester of 2016, \$302.3 million was sent back to Nicaraguan families, which was about 9.1% of Nicaragua's GDP (Banco Central de Nicaragua, 2016). In 2016, 55.9% of remittances were received from the United States, 21.3% from Costa Rica, 8.0% from Spain, and 6.2% from Panama. The regions of Managua and Chinandega received the largest portions of the remittances: 40.4% was sent to Managua and 11.8% to Chinandega (Baumeister et al., 2013). Drawing from the NELM theorists, we see that remittances counteract the absence of a properly functioning local market and the lack of government programs for familial support, which is often the case in Nicaragua (Sana & Massey, 2005). Depending on family needs, remittances are put towards schooling for children, healthcare, or savings for the future (Cortés, 2007). Remittances can have both negative and positive effects on families, and tension commonly arises when deciding who within the families will receive and manage this money.

Research Design and Methods

The qualitative research for this study was conducted in various neighborhoods in Chinandega, Nicaragua, during June of 2015 and 2016. We chose to perform our research in Chinandega because it has a high annual rate of outward migration. In 2005, the Nicaraguan government estimated that out of all the emigrating Nicaraguans, 26.1% were from Managua (the capitol), 11.5% were from Chinandega, and 10.9% were from León (Baumeister et al., 2013). In 2011, Chinandega had the largest number of migrants to El Salvador and one of the highest rates of migrants to Costa Rica as compared to other departments of Nicaragua (Baumeister et al., 2013).

The interviews that follow are a continuation of prior research conducted by the Universidad Centroamericana (Central American University [UCA]) regarding the effects of migration on Nicaraguan society. Through the Nicaragua Initiative at Seattle University, a small group of Seattle University and UCA students and professors teamed up to conduct semi-structured interviews and collect data. The Nicaraguan non-governmental organization, Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (Jesuit Services for Migrants [SJM]), was also integral to this research process. SJM is a Nicaraguan organization that works with families in communities

where migration rates are high to provide support and advocacy for Nicaraguan families with members abroad (Servicio Jesuita a Migrants). SJM connected this research group with all interviewees and confirmed consent for the interviews prior to meetings. Their support was vital in helping the interviewed families feel comfortable and have agency over whether or not they wanted to share their stories.

A total of fifty interviews were conducted with youths, parents, and grandparents, who all had at least one family member abroad. School administrators were also interviewed. Interviews were organized by SJM, all with individuals whom the organization previously knew and supported. The conversations were conducted in Spanish with small groups of four to six people, consisting of one or two students from Seattle University and the UCA along with a professor from one of the two universities, the interviewee, and an SJM volunteer. Interviews took place in the homes of the interviewees and were recorded with permission. Each session lasted between one and two hours with one or two follow-up visits typical. In addition to individual interviews, in 2015 this study also held focus groups comprised of four to five Nicaraguan students at the Instituto Público de El Viejo (Public Institute of El Viejo), a public school in Chinandega. All interviews were semi-structured and encouraged those interviewed to expand on their experiences as family members of migrants. Questions included:

1. Who currently resides in the household?
2. Who is currently abroad?
3. How long has the family member in question been abroad?
4. How has their absence affected the family?
5. How do children of migrant parents contribute to household needs?
6. What do youths think about the issue of migration in Nicaragua?

While these questions were the basic prompts, follow-up questions encouraged a more general conversation. Furthermore, the questions we asked depended upon the interviewee, and focus was shifted for grandmothers versus children. In all analysis of interviews, aliases will be used in order to protect the anonymity of those interviewed.

The intention of this collaborative research between UCA and Seattle University was to record oral histories in order to study and draw attention to the complexity of each individual's experiences with migration. Qualitative research methods were intentionally chosen to fill gaps where empirical economic statistics surrounding migration fall short in describing how issues related to migration affect families and communities. Furthermore, research and resulting documentation directly benefited SJM by providing more experience-based information about the community members they serve. By focusing on listening to others, this method of research may act as a form of solidarity when studying difficult social

situations such as migration because the stories of family members of migrants often receive limited attention and this research will generate awareness around the issue.

Results: Stories from Chinandega

Our interviews speak to the long-term effects associated with migration out of Nicaragua and the difficult situations each family faces. It is important to consider the motivation behind why a parent chooses to migrate and the challenges a household endures in their absence. Migration is not commonly a parent's first choice, but many decide to leave Nicaragua because they feel it is their only option for a financially stable future. Clara, a grandmother interviewed in 2015, shared, "Our children leave to try to improve themselves because here there isn't work. How many sacrifices have I made to try to give my children a better life?" ("Clara," June 2015). As De la Garza says, "migration is typically brought about by poor economic conditions, the lack of employment opportunities, poverty, and abysmal living conditions" (2010 p.8). Limited economic resources and job opportunities are the push factors and the promise of high income in destination countries is the pull factor.

With the expectation of a higher income, migrant parents typically have tangible goals they wish to achieve with the money that they earn and send home as "migrants remit funds primarily because they are motivated to support the families they leave behind" (De la Garza, 2010, p.8). These goals may include gaining access to health care and education, or being able to afford improvements on their home. One young man that we interviewed, Joseph (age 19), exemplifies this situation. As the new provider of his household, he shared with us his mother's motivations for migrating:

Yes, it's that that was her goal, ever since she left, "I am going to finish the house," she said, because look, this part was the house, the part over there in front was the house . . . Look, and there were times when it rained hard and, well, we got wet . . . that was what motivated her to leave and she said "I will finish the house and I will leave," but it continues like this. ("Joseph," June 2016)

At the time of this interview, the main house had a stable roof, but the addition that had previously been started remained only partially finished for many months. In order to earn enough money to finish the house, Joseph's mother left Nicaragua temporarily, leaving his grandmother as the primary caregiver for three years. His mother's time in Panama has since been extended because she had difficulty finding a stable job and she recently lost her passport. Joseph explained that his mother decided to leave because a friend in Panama had offered her a job: "Well, for her she was motivated [by] one of her friends from work who invited her...[her friend] gave her a loan and, well, told her about how to get there" ("Joseph,"

June 2016). As explained by network theory, a contact abroad can be a major determinant in a migrant's decision to move. Joseph's story and his mother's motivations for leaving illustrate a broader trend; a parent migrates with the intention of quickly returning, but time apart is often prolonged.

Inconsistent distributions of remittances are a common area of instability in households. With preexisting debts, health needs, etc., "despite the dominating motivation to support children left behind and their caretakers, in actuality only a small portion of received remittances is spent explicitly on children" (De la Garza, 2010, p.10). It is also difficult to ensure that money is regularly sent back to Nicaragua, that it is a sufficient sum of money equal to the family's needs, and that the money is allocated and saved for the most effective impact. Another problem can arise when one or both parents are absent and the role of the financial decision-maker in the family becomes unclear. According to NELM theory, remittances mitigate income disparities, but there are many other factors in the receiving family's household that may complicate the received benefit of remittances. Grandmothers who are caregivers are often unconvinced as to the benefits of remittances. Doña Esperanza was interviewed in 2016 and has cared for sixteen grandchildren and great-grandchildren over the years. Doña Esperanza commented in her interview that she is frequently depicted as the "bad guy" in the eyes of her grandchildren because she has to be the disciplinarian. She disagrees with her son's methods of parenting because she says he only sends his children gifts with the money he earns ("Doña Esperanza," June 2015). Alexander (age 18) interviewed in 2016, also shared that classmates who have had parents abroad for long periods of time eventually take remittances for granted. They spend the money quickly and, in Alexander's opinion, have forgotten where the money is coming from ("Alexander," June 2016). In addition to money not sufficiently filling the absence of a migrant parent, emotional and economic needs of a household remain unfulfilled.

In efforts to compensate for a parent's absence abroad, grandmothers often become the leader and provider of the family remaining in Nicaragua. They are strong figures in Nicaraguan society and frequently serve as one or both parents while also coping with the absence of their own child. "Like other Latin American women of the *tercera edad* ("third age"), these are women who experience migration simultaneously as mothers whose daughters leave and as grandmothers who assume care for another generation of children back home" (Yarris, 2014, p.2). Alexander shared the following in regards to his own grandmother:

Thanks to God I have listened to the advice of my grandmother and she has told me "keep studying," and ever since I was in elementary school I have done well and was able to continue to move forward to where I am now. ("Alexander," June 2016)

Unfortunately, despite the emotional strength of grandmothers as the pillar of the restructured family, they are often unable to provide financially for all of their family's needs. In contrast to a common belief that remittances increase familial economic standing, "financial anxieties are often compounded following migration, and grandmothers who assume roles as primary caregivers also assume new burdens as household economic manager" (Yarris, 2014, p.12). In addition to economic responsibilities, grandmothers shoulder emotional responsibilities as they simultaneously work to maintain stable households for youths who have already endured great obstacles in their young lives.

The oldest children are also likely to follow as providers and protectors for families. Alexander went on to share his thoughts about his siblings with us. He lives with only his grandmother and four younger brothers because his father migrated to Mexico when Alexander was only five. It was obvious during the interview that he was proud of his brothers and cared about them.

Enrieth: And do you watch over your little brothers?

Alexander: Oh, yes.

Enrieth: And how is that going?

Alexander: I go out only with my friends yes, but I watch my brothers to see if they are doing anything bad. It is best that I return and I come home. I give them advice, to not do careless things, carelessness is bad and that's how we move forward. ("Alexander," June 2016)

With the absence of both his mother and father, Alexander has assumed the role of protector of his brothers. Similarly, Joseph commented in his interview: "While [my mother] works hard in Panama, I, well, all of us here from the youngest to the oldest, try to do everything we can, because if we just wait, we won't do anything." ("Joseph," June 2016)

In more extreme cases, migration not only leads to family reconfiguration, but also extended separation. This forces those left in Nicaragua to assume roles as both the protector and the provider with little help. Maria (age 18) acts as both for her two young nephews. She shared:

One of my sisters got married and lives close and the other had to leave in order to give a better life to her two sons, she promised me that she would go and that she would send me money so I could study but that didn't happen because she also as a really difficult life and now I am the mother of my nephews and it's a very difficult situation. I had to start working when I was 17 and now I have a lot of responsibility. I can't do everything a normal girl my age would do. ("Maria," June 2016)

While parents feel that their only choice is to migrate in order to be successful, children in families feel that their only choice is to pick up slack in familial life.

Continued economic instability is a prevalent pattern flowing through all stories collected for this study. In addition to becoming the protector or caregiver, many adolescent children choose not to attend school in order to work and earn money for their families. Joseph, the young adult previously mentioned, dropped out of school at age sixteen—right before his high school graduation—to begin work at a nearby construction site. He has become the financial provider for his family while his mother continues to search for a new job abroad. Today, Joseph, now 20, has worked several jobs with the hope of returning to school once his mother returns and can help care for their family. The absence of one or both parents frequently causes children to take on adult responsibilities.

Along with parental absence and increased responsibilities within families, youths are also more inclined to act out in a variety of ways. The shift in a child's demeanor can be seen in their school attendance. In 2015, the vice principal of the Instituto Público de El Viejo in Chinandega was interviewed in order to understand the lives of migrant children outside of the household and in a school setting. The vice principal shared that about 30% of her students had one or both parents abroad. The majority of these students were under the care of a grandparent, an aunt, or an uncle. She also noticed in her students with absent parents that poor academic performance, involvement in drugs, and teen pregnancy were much more common. On average, six girls each year become pregnant and leave the school, the majority having one or both parents abroad. With permission of vice principal, interviews were conducted with groups of students between the ages of 10 and 15. Generally, the students understood the economic need for their parents to leave and that working conditions were often better in other countries. Students listed the pros and cons of migration, agreeing that remittances have since provided them with better education and safer housing. They also noted that their parents were earning better salaries abroad. However, despite their understanding of economic realities, most students feared that their parent(s) would forget about their family back in Nicaragua and not return. Furthermore, a few revealed that they intentionally act out at times to get attention. The observations gathered at El Instituto mirror the findings of Rodríguez's 2015 study regarding child-parent separation and correlate to ambiguous loss theory. Because of the uncertainty regarding their parents' return, youth are more likely to respond to new situations with destructive behaviors in order to gain attention (Rodríguez & Margolin, 2015).

In our study, we identified a paradox; while almost all of the adolescents that were interviewed verbalized an economic understanding of why their parents needed to leave, they all shared their determination to remain in Nicaragua when they have children of their

own. In a study conducted in 2002 regarding migrant flows between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, Morales and Castro write, “when a portion of society migrates, with it the society as a whole also migrates; the laborers, their values, their beliefs, their love and their fears” (p.18). Children of migrants today have lived through the difficulty of having a parent absent for most of their lives. They are conscious of the dangers of migration and how a household and society itself can dramatically change. With a parent abroad, financial remittances sent back to Nicaragua do not compensate for the absence of the parent, a crucial figure in a child’s life. Regarding his ideas towards migration, Alexander shared with us:

I, well, I say that the people who migrate, migrate because they are looking for a new life, well, to continue to carry their family forward, but I remember a professor told me that the person who migrates help [sic] their children here, but do not live well because they have a scary realization that where they migrated to is not the same country . . . he said that if we have a family member in another country that we should appreciate them.” (“Alexander,” June 2016)

As for Joseph, when asked if he ever would leave Chinandega, he firmly responded no. A sister of his grandmother had recently offered him a chance to go and study in Managua, but he decided to stay in Chinandega. He said, “I don’t want to . . . but it’s that . . . here in Chinandega . . . it’s my place. Whatever emergency, I just come to the house, whatever mishap that happens, or if something happens to me, we are all close” (“Joseph,” June 2016). Despite the common thread of youth having negative feelings towards migration, in the long run, many eventually choose to leave because of a lack of opportunity.

Limitations of Research

It is important to acknowledge limitations and challenges interviewers faced in this study. Because multiple student-professor groups were interviewing different individuals simultaneously, data recorded and transcribed differs depending on the group’s research style. However, data collected was then transcribed and analyzed by a smaller group of researchers in order to maintain some fluidity. Furthermore, interviewers and interviewees had no prior relationship before the meetings, potentially limiting the openness of participants’ answers. Interviewers tried to address this issue ahead of time by coordinating with SJM to connect both parties and ensure that those being interviewed were informed and comfortable. While mutual trust took time during the research process, the presence of SJM employees and volunteers helped build bonds between interviewers and participants, revealing new stories and insights over multiple interviews.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

In Nicaragua, migration has contributed to the shaping of society for decades, but research that considers the family members who remain in Nicaragua after members migrates is limited. Since migration is a common and international trend that is catalyzed for a variety of reasons, it is important to conduct extensive research to understand not only the causes, but also the resulting side effects of such a complex and multifaceted issue. The research conducted in Nicaragua in 2015 and 2016 found that (1) grandmothers play a crucial role in Nicaraguan society as parental figures for children of migrants, (2) youth shoulder numerous familial responsibilities their absent parents once held, and (3) a parent's absence affects youth emotionally. These interviews illustrate a common thread that shows children of migrants taking on roles as providers and protectors for their families, greatly surpassing the typical responsibilities expected for youth of their age. While the intention of migration is to help lift families out of poverty and to provide them with more opportunities, as documented in this research, negative side effects experienced by children challenge the perceived benefits of migration and sent home remittances. After parents migrate, all of those within a household must compensate for their absence. Efforts to reconfigure household roles and dynamics can shake the stability of the home environment and leave youth emotionally vulnerable to harmful decisions. While youth continue to struggle with the absence of parents and feel negatively towards the idea of migrating one day themselves, the lack of job opportunity, systemic poverty, and strong international migrant networks continues to perpetuate migration out of Nicaragua.

While the root problem lies in the systemic poverty in Nicaragua and the lack of a diversified economy, research may be conducted in order to find ways to support children of migrants today. Since Nicaragua arguably experiences social- and community-based harm due to mass migration in search of economic stability, it is important to focus on youth and the next generation so that they may have viable options that allow them to stay in their home country. Confirmed by De la Garza, youth grow up in an atmosphere where their opportunities are defined in terms of emigration rather than opportunities in their home country (2010, p.17). This research conducted in Chinandega, Nicaragua, serves to provide more community-based data collection in order to offer future migration policies with more social groundwork rather than economic and statistical information. Moving forward, any kind of policy solution or support for children of migrants must begin with the experiences, thoughts, and opinions of Nicaragua's youth and those who stay behind to care for them.

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