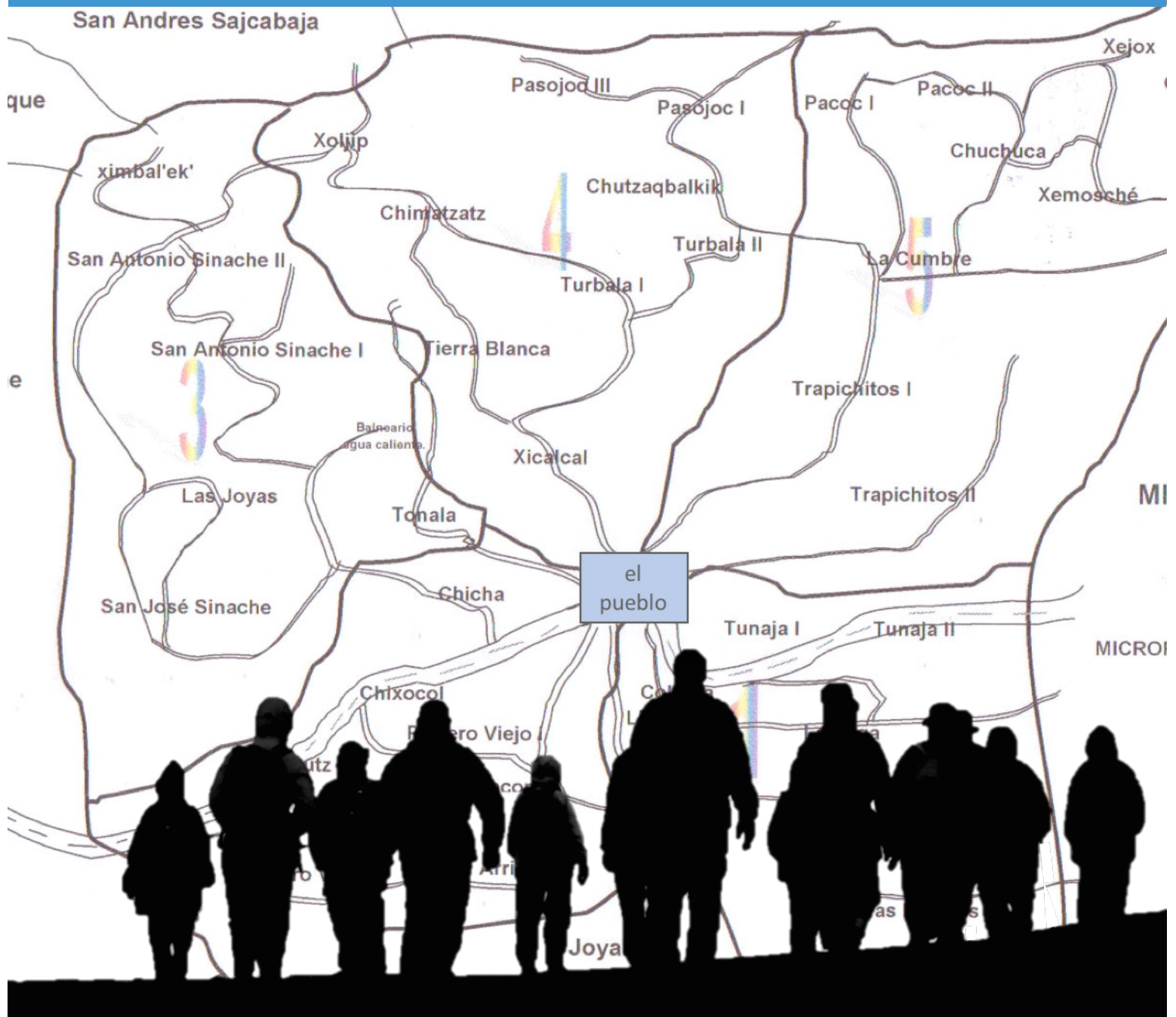


Documenting the lives of 21st Century Mayan families “on the move”

Zacualpa, Guatemala

M. Brinton Lykes, Erin Sibley, Megan Thomas, Ana Maria Álvarez
López, and José Daniel Chich González



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**Proyecto de Investigación y
Promoción de los Derechos
Humanos del Migrante,
Parroquia de Zacualpa.**



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Acknowledgements

First and foremost we thank the families of Zacualpa and the villages of Tablón, Arriquín, and San Antonio Sinaché I. They partnered with the Center for Human Rights & International Justice in 2007 when members of the transnational interdisciplinary participatory and action research team from the Boston College CHRIJ began its collaboration with the Franciscan sisters in the parish of the Holy Spirit in Zacualpa. Many of them and others from other participating villages generously shared their stories and those of family members who had migrated to the United States in search of a better life for their families and communities. That work directly shaped the formation of the Human Rights & Migration Office in Zacualpa, work that continues to accompany migrants and their families in the region as they respond to the effects of migration on family members in Guatemala and the United States who have been directly or indirectly affected by U.S. detention and deportation policies and practices as well as the now highly criminalized network of intermediaries or *coyotes* leveraging migrants' journeys north for their own benefit as well as the daily challenges of living in transnational families. Many of these same Zacualpans agreed to work with us in this next phase of our interdisciplinary transnational research through which we sought to better inform the work of the office as well as the knowledge base of how ongoing international migration is affecting local life in the Southern Quiché of Guatemala. We thank the many youth of Zacualpa who became census takers, working tirelessly to collect the findings that are presented herein. Thanks also to Manrique Díaz in Huehuetenango, who consulted with us on the census design and on the initial analyses. Boston College graduate and undergraduate students including Kaitlin Black, Kevin Ferreira, Jessica Franco, M. Gabriela Távara Vásquez, Irza Torres, Matthew Dolan, and Victoria Torres-Vega collaborated in coding and analyzing the data and in finalizing this report. Local census takers or co-researchers included José Daniel Chich González, Luisa Martina Hernández Simaj, Angelina Morales González, Cristóbal Hernández Toj, Encarnación Simaj Toj, Fidel Castro Sincú, Carlos Morente, Jennifer Estefanie López Vicente, Jaime Luis de la Cruz, José Luis Hernández Toj, Lissie Marilena Gutiérrez G., Manuel Antonio Luis Luis, Manuel Castro Sincú, María García Gutiérrez, Oscar Hernández and Victor Manuel Suar. Finally, thanks to an Anonymous Donor whose support of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice has made this project possible. To our knowledge this is the first community-based census in Guatemala that has sought to document lived experiences of families with one or more family members who had migrated to the United States between 2011 and 2013. We trust that the knowledge gained through this collaborative effort will contribute to the ongoing struggles of families and communities to construct a better life for themselves and their children, to destigmatize unauthorized migrants living within U.S. borders and to enhance understanding of the factors that contribute to their journeys north as well as their dreams for their families' futures. We join these communities in their organizing efforts and activism in Guatemala and the U.S., towards developing a more humane immigration policy that is grounded in universal human rights.

Boston, 31 March 2016

Documenting Migration with Local Communities

The research reported here is part of a larger Migration and Human Rights Project of the Center for Human Rights & International Justice at Boston College. Much of it is transnational, with U.S. university students and staff working with migrants' families "left behind" in Guatemala, as well as migrants dealing with the pervasive stress of being undocumented in the United States. Legal staff at Boston College work on helping to locate individuals who have been detained in the U.S. in order to deliver information to their family members back home. Qualitative interviews with migrants, deportees, and family members in Guatemala have informed the project's work. Additionally, the MHRP has partnered with community organizations in Boston and Providence to engage in participatory and action research projects addressing the needs of undocumented migrants in local communities in the U.S. (Lykes, et.al., 2015).

This report summarizes findings from a community-based census developed collaboratively between the U.S. and Guatemala-based Migration & Human Rights Project (MHRP). This phase of an ongoing participatory and action research process took place between 2010 and 2013, with data analyses completed in 2015. Specifically, it presents background on the context for the study and findings from a census conducted in the town of Zacualpa in the south of El Quiché, one of Guatemala's 22 departments or geographical and political units, and three of its surrounding villages. The Maya K'iche' are the predominant population within the department but also live throughout the country and beyond. K'iche' refers to their ethnic-linguistic group.

The project and its findings are important for a number of reasons. First, the project gathered basic demographics and migration patterns of local communities, information that has not otherwise been available to local residents – or to others who have been working with them to enhance the wellbeing of their communities. Second, the findings report on trends in migration (such as age, destination state, and time of migration), and provide a snapshot of the educational, financial, and demographic correlates of a community deeply affected by multiple generations of migration. Furthermore, the project exemplifies the possibilities for and outcomes from a transnational research collaboration between the U.S. and Guatemala, providing an opportunity to work together and learn from each other. Finally, Guatemalan partners have developed new research skills while U.S. students and staff has deepened its knowledge of push factors contributing to ongoing Mayan migration north.

The Migration and Human Rights Project and the CHRIJ draw on a human rights frame to situate its work. Although considerable U.S.-based research has focused on immigration, the vast majority of it has focused on immigrants in the U.S., with limited work exploring the lived experiences of sending communities in migrants' countries of origin. With this work, we hope to shed light on the communities that migrants leave and the effects of their departures as well as transnational family life on members "left behind".

Setting the Scene: Poverty, migration, and armed conflict

Guatemala has a rich history that includes an ancient Maya civilization. The majority of its more than 15 million inhabitants are descendants of indigenous Maya. When Guatemala gained its independence from Spain in 1821, following nearly 400 years of Spanish colonial rule, it politically functioned as an authoritarian state that was structured to protect the economic interests of a privileged minority. During the 1800s, laws protecting land were abolished and ladinos and criollos began to set up plantations, meaning the rural indigenous were essentially turned into migrant farmers with little or no land of their own (Smith, 2006). Non-Maya controlled the production and wealth of the country, and the state served to protect this elite population.

Migration has a Long History

Migration has long been one popular response to authoritarian governance and state-imposed structural poverty. As the economy changed with increased farming of coffee in the late 19th century, plantation owners recruited labor from primarily indigenous communities. Migrant labor was often coercive and some techniques for recruitment included labor drafts and debt servitude (Swetnam, 1989; Grandin, Levenson, & Oglesby, 2011). During an economic boom in agriculture exports in the 1960s and 70s, over 300,000 indigenous people each year migrated to coastal farmlands for seasonal agricultural work. Salaries were low and working conditions were grueling and unsanitary, but the economic needs of the impoverished K'iche' Maya were so extreme that many either left their families at home or took their children out of school for months at a time to join them on the journey (Davis, 1988). Guatemalans along the Mexican border migrated to Mexico starting in the 1800s to work on coffee plantations there. Typically, the male of the family would go first, establish his work opportunities, and then send for the rest of his family to join him in Mexico. Seasonal migration to Mexico continued, with major growth in the 1980s and 1990s, perhaps because Mexican wages are much higher than those in Guatemala (Smith, 2006). Thus, earlier and more recent transnational economic policies have impoverished Mayan peasants and contributed to migrations within and beyond Guatemala's borders. The U.S. government's role in these migrations and forced displacements included defense of the United Fruit Company's land holdings in Guatemala, contributing to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's 1954 decision to support the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz in response to his land reform program (Grandin et al., 2011).

Armed Conflict and Genocide

Several social movements gained force across Guatemala during the 1960s in response to U.S. supported authoritarian regimes. They organized for political, social, and cultural changes and pressed for economic transformations (Chamarbagwala & Morán, 2011). Between the 1960s and 1980s, poor and middle class Guatemalans organized to address multiple exclusionary processes including state violence, increases in the cost of living, low wages, lack of sufficient land, cultural oppression, and ongoing institutional racism (Grandin, 2011). Others formed an armed insurgency, coordinated by the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG for the Spanish). Many local peasants from Zacualpa and its surrounding villages joined one of these groups, the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), while other civilians supported these efforts to redress social inequalities and press for a more just society.

The Guatemalan military sought to quell civilian support for the insurgency through a “scorched earth policy.” They massacred children, women and elders, burned homes, crops, and clothing and displaced hundreds of thousands of survivors from surrounding villages (CEH, 1999). Additionally, the then head of state, Efraín Ríos Montt, conscripted an armed civil defense patrol (PAC) of male villagers who were between 16 and 65 (Stewart, 2012). These villagers were forced to face off the guerrillas, to spy within their own communities, and to kill neighbors suspected of being in the EGP. PACs controlled many of Zacualpa’s surrounding villages when the town was bombed by military planes and occupied by the Guatemalan army in the early 1980s (CEH, 1999). The military occupied the Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit, partners in this project, using rooms for torture and clandestinely burying those captured in a well at the back of church property. The Maya K’iche’, including multiple waves from Zacualpa, were among the more than one million “internal refugees,” and an additional 150,000 officially recognized refugees beyond Guatemala’s borders, who were displaced by the violence (CEH, 1999). Despite these horrors, only about 2–3% of Guatemalans who sought refuge in the United States during this period were granted political asylum (González, 2000/2011).

In December of 1996 Peace Accords were concluded and signed by the Guatemalan government and the URNG (Remijnse, 2001). That year, the Commission for Historical Clarification (*Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico*, CEH) was charged with the task of investigating the atrocities of the war as part of peace negotiations. The 300-person staff researched for 2 years, collecting over 8,000 testimonies and conducting countless interviews. Their final report estimated that 200,000 people had been murdered or “disappeared” during the conflict, with 93% of the crimes linked to the Guatemalan state. Eighty-three percent of the victims were classified as indigenous Maya. The CEH identified Zacualpa as one of the regions that experienced the majority of human rights violations, so this was one of the four main regions on which their analyses focused (CEH, 2011). The division between the indigenous Maya K’iche’ and ladino populations reflects a marked racism throughout the country. According to the CEH, “racism nourished an attitude toward Indians as different, separate, inferior, almost less than human and outside of the universe of moral obligations, making their elimination less problematic” (2011, p. 390).

Twenty-first century global economic conditions, drug trafficking, ongoing gang violence, and impunity continue to “push” an ever-increasing number of Guatemalans north (Grandin et al., 2011). Increased militarization of the United States–Mexican border and increasingly difficult legal constraints at home, contribute to unauthorized migrants’ decisions to stay in the United States for ever-longer durations (Dreby & Stutz, 2012; Stinchcomb & Hershberg, 2014). It is estimated that over 1 million Guatemalans live in the United States today, many of whom are unauthorized (Smith, 2006).

Immigration Policy in the U.S. Today

Immigration continues to be a politically charged topic of debate in the United States, ever more so as the country faces elections for a president to succeed Barack Obama. Despite his promises of a path to citizenship for the more than 12 million unauthorized migrants living in the U.S. when he took office in January 2009, a divided Congress and economic reversals have limited the scope of change. Moreover, detentions and deportations increased dramatically during his tenure and hotly contested legislation over unauthorized migrants and their U.S. born citizen children have characterized his years in office. According to 2010 American Community Survey estimates, there are approximately 40 million immigrants in the U.S. today, making up about 13% of the nation’s total population. Thirty-five percent of the immigrants in the U.S. today arrived since 2000, indicating that immigration is not a thing of the past but ongoing. Current estimates are that approximately 11 million immigrants reside in the United States without authorization (Baker & Rytine, 2013; Battalova & Lee, 2012; Passel & Cohn, 2014; Rosenblum & Ruiz Soto, 2015).

Deportations have decreased slightly since this study was conducted but continue at record numbers, reflecting ongoing anti-immigrant sentiment also evident in a number of 21st century policy decisions. In 2001, the USA PATRIOT Act was enacted just a few months after the September 11th attacks, allowing authorities to detain and/or deport immigrants deemed to be threats to national security (Hagan, Eschbach, & Rodriguez, 2008). Beginning in 2008, the Department of Homeland Security initiated a program called Secure Communities that identified imprisoned immigrants who are deportable under law. Although this program was ended in 2014 it was replaced by the Priority Enforcement Program, which continues a similar practice of sharing information between local law enforcement and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), aiming to prioritize transfers of immigrants who are potentially deportable who have been convicted of particular crimes or pose a demonstrable risk to national security (Johnson, 2014). During Barack Obama’s first term as president, there were 1.6 million people deported from the U.S.—an average of nearly 33,000 people per month, which is higher than the

nearly 21,000 deported each month under George Bush and the 9,000 per month under Bill Clinton (Hesson, 2013). Deportations peaked in 2012, with the yearly rate dropping to the lowest point since 2006 in 2015 (Caldwell, 2015). Despite the threat of deportation – and reductions in overall numbers of unauthorized migrants from Latin America, the number of unaccompanied minors and mothers and young children entering the United States from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador has grown significantly in 2014 and 2016, posing multiple challenges for these unauthorized migrants and for their wider families (Pierce, 2015).

Legislative proposals have been designed to assist children of undocumented immigrants born in the United States as well as those who came to the U.S. as children. For example, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was introduced numerous times in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Although various versions of the bill included different requirements and aims, it sought to allow undocumented youth whose parents had brought them to the U.S. as young children a route to permanent residency under some conditions. Although some individual states have passed versions of the bill, it has not passed on the national level (Galassi, 2003).

More recent executive actions aimed at these groups include Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which allows undocumented youth who arrived in the U.S. before the age of 16 and had resided continuously in the US since June 1, 2007 up until the time of enactment and were under 31 as of June 2012 and met other criteria to stay in the U.S. for two years without removal action (such as detention or deportation) (Department of Homeland Security, 2012). On November 20, 2014 the Obama administration announced an expansion to the DACA program, broadening eligibility (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2015). A new program, Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA), was created to allow the undocumented parents of a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident who had been in the U.S. since January 1, 2010 to apply for work authorization and protection from deportation. Both the DAPA program and the expanded DACA programs have been subject to a lawsuit that has delayed their implementation; the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case in 2016.



Photos 1-4: Census Taking

Why Zacualpa, and Why this Project?

This work focuses on Zacualpa, a municipality in the department of El Quiché. Although the vast majority of inhabitants of Zacualpa, and thus, those in our census study, are Maya K'iche', some estimates are that ladinos make up 59% of Guatemala's population (CIA, 2012). The latter are of mixed Spanish and indigenous ancestry, and are (on average) socially and economically better positioned than the Maya K'iche'. The ladinos are primarily Spanish speaking, whereas the Maya K'iche' speak their indigenous language (although many, particularly men, also speak Spanish).

The work of the MHRP began with interviews with migrants from Guatemala and El Salvador living in New England at the time of the 2007 Bianco immigration raid in New Bedford. During this time, Ricardo Falla, SJ, was working with youth returning to Zacualpa voluntarily after many years of living in the United States. CHRIJ staff met with him in Zacualpa in 2007 and invited him to Boston to talk about his work and to visit migrants on this side of the border. During his time in Boston Falla invited MHRP research team members to Guatemala to visit with families of migrants towards seeing first hand the realities that they faced on a daily basis and learning about the factors that precipitated the migrants' journeys north. In 2008, with assistance from the Franciscan sisters at the local Catholic parish in Zacualpa, MHRP team members interviewed families in the area to get a better understanding of the deep poverty and the legacy of the armed conflict that had pushed many to journey to the United States (Lykes & Hershberg, 2015). The team returned to Gua-

temala for additional interviews and facilitated participatory workshops in 2010; this relationship with the communities of Zacualpa has been formalized through collaborative support of migrants there and continues today. The MHRP includes over 120 interviews conducted in New England and the Southern Quiché region of Guatemala between 2007 and 2016, and a wide range of community-based actions in both countries (Brabeck, Lykes & Hershberg, 2011; Lykes & Sibley, 2013).

During the process of conducting qualitative interviews with families who had at least one member who had migrated to the U.S., as well as migrants in the U.S., some of whom had left children behind with relatives in Guatemala, it became clear to us that although migration was a significant part of daily life for the people of Guatemala, little was known about migration rates from these villages or about the effects of migration on those “left behind”. Much writing about migration in Guatemala emphasizes the crucial role of remittances in buoying and sustaining local economies in Guatemala and other Central American countries (Acosta, Calderon, Fajnzylber & Lopez, 2008). Yet local interviewees reported ongoing debt, confiscation of their homes by banks, and/or the need to continue to migrate to the Southern Coast for survival despite having sons and daughters in the U.S. (Lykes & Hershberg, 2015). These concerns as well as interest in documenting the effects of remittances for local families whose ongoing economic needs fueled more migration informed the decision to undertake the census. A transnational census research team was organized in 2011 to develop quantitative information that would complement the previously completed in-depth interviews. The project thus sought to document characteristics of migrants from Zacualpa and three of its villages as one small sample of the growing exodus of 21st century migrants from Guatemala to the U.S.

What We Did and Where We Worked

PAR Methodologies

The census project included the development and administration of a door-to-door home survey in four local Zacualpan communities. The qualitative stories of migration and its effects on Maya K'iche' families in the villages surrounding Zacualpa and in the town are crucial for grounding our quantitative work because they include these family members' voices, their stories of how they experience and are coping with poverty, with the effects of one family member having left home for the U.S., often not knowing when they would return again, and in some cases, the humiliation of a migrant deported back to Guatemala. Quotes from family members of migrants interviewed between 2008 and 2015 are included in this report to exemplify or complement findings from the surveys. The stories and the analyses developed from them report on the experiences and lasting effects of multiple generations of Maya migration as well as the massive migrations in the wake of the armed conflict and local massacres and ongoing migrations to the capital city and the South Coast in the wake of ongoing and devastating poverty (Lykes & Hershberg, 2015). Youth's stories confirm the lack of economic opportunities even when they secure high school and, in rare occasions, university degrees, that also push them north (Lykes & Sibley, 2013).

The process of developing, disseminating, and analyzing data for the census project was a collaborative one from beginning to end. To determine the number and location of homes that needed to be surveyed, members of the research team in Guatemala traveled the streets and paths throughout the area, producing maps that visually depicted major landmarks and homes in each of the four communities that elected to participate in the census project. The homes, both those under construction and those that had been abandoned, as well as stores, community centers (e.g., school and church), and wells are represented in the map of Tablón, the first village surveyed (see Figure 1). Similar maps were developed of the other two villages and of the town of Zacualpa and houses whose occupants participated or opted not to participate in the survey are noted.

A local research assistant visited each home to be surveyed. These research assistants were community volunteers trained in data collection processes and in the ethics of research¹. After obtaining consent, the researcher would read each survey question to an adult respondent in the household in their preferred language (Spanish or K'iche') and record the answer by hand on the survey. The survey instrument used in the door-to-door data collection was developed by research team members in the U.S. and Guatemala to respond to the issues raised by local communities and transnational researchers. Sections included background information on the head of household's level of education and gender, as well as information on each individual family member as reported by the respondent who had agreed to be interviewed. Other sections included the family's language and ethnic group, material possessions owned by the family (such as a cell phone, radio, etc.) and information on the quality of the family's home (including type of plumbing, materials used on the walls, roof, and floors, etc.). For each migrant in the family, information was provided on when they migrated, how much they paid for the journey, if they had borrowed money to support the journey and, if so, from whom, and whether or not they still owed funds that had been borrowed, and to what state in the U.S. the family member(s) had migrated. The hard copies of these surveys were sent to Boston College, where a team of graduate and undergraduate researchers associated with the MHRP coded the data and entered it into statistical software.

¹The Boston College Office of Institutional Research approved the census as well as all other research coordinated by the MHRP team.

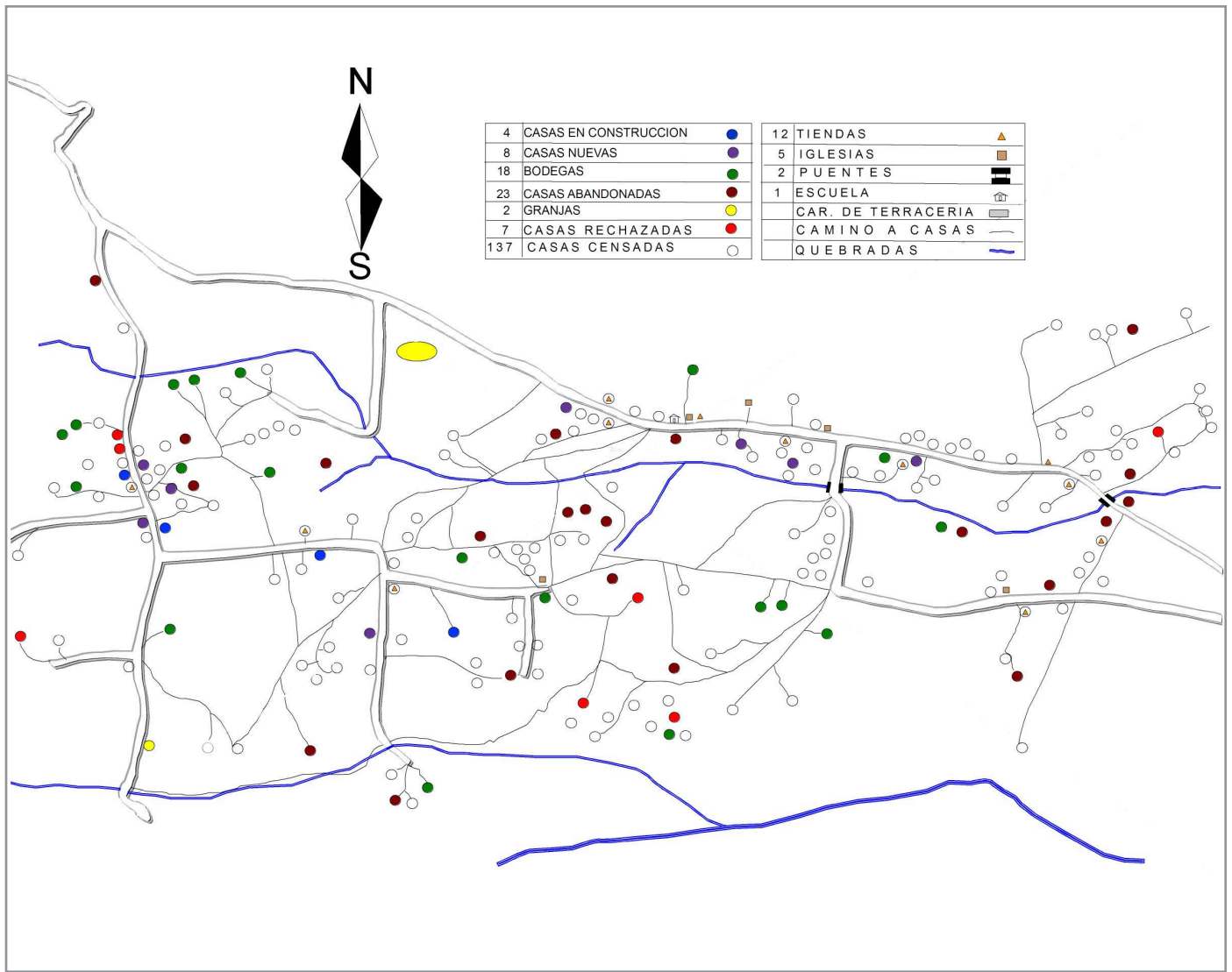


Figure 1: Map of Tablón

Situating the Town and Three of its Villages During the Armed Conflict and Today

Zacualpa includes a town center and 37 villages, extending about 136 sq. mi. (336 sq. km.) (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zacualpa>). The population was estimated in 2012 to number 46,000, although estimates are typically unreliable and a national census is long overdue. Approximately 95% of those living in Zacualpa are indigenous Maya K'iche'. The primary economic activity is farming, with 90% of the population working in agriculture. The primary crops include corn, beans, sugar cane, peanuts, coffee, vegetables, and fruits.

Four communities from among those whose residents had been interviewed in 2008-2009 decided to participate in the census, and some members of each community collaborated with the research process. Surveys were administered between January 2011 and April 2012. The *aldeas* (villages) of Tablón, Arriquín, and San Antonio Sinaché I were surveyed prior to the town. Table 1 displays descriptive statistics of respondents from the four communities who participated in the survey.

Table 1. Basic description of villages and town included in census

	Tablón	Arriquín	San Antonio Sinaché I	El Pueblo
Number of Families	137	62	303	549
Number of People	915	352	1,907	2,708
Average Household Size	6.68 people	5.66 people	6.29 people	4.93 people
Family Ethnicity	100% K'iche'	61.3% K'iche' 35.5% ladino 3.2% Mestizo	100% K'iche'	63% K'iche' 35.5% ladino 0.2% Mam 0.5% Mestizo 0.8% no response
% of Population under 18	49.6%	37.2%	48.6%	39.4%
# (%) of Adults age 18 and up who Migrated to U.S.	112 (24.3%)	53 (24.3%)	128 (13.1%)	230 (14%)
% of Male Migrants	81.4%	85.5%	86.2%	74.8%
% of Families with a Family Member who Migrated to U.S.	43.1%	47%	30.4%	26.4%
Number of Deportees from the U.S.	7	1	17	24
% of Population who was in Home Village at Time of the Census	84.4%	83.8%	89.8%	92.5%
% of Heads of Household Without Formal Education	66.4%	45.2%	75.2%	35.9%

Tablón: The first village surveyed was Tablón, a small community that was difficult to identify due to local politics that influence how community boundaries are drawn and redrawn. During data collection, the team discovered that although the community is formally known as Tablón, household members identified their community by one of six different names including, among others, Tablón and los Cerritos. In discussing this issue with families, we learned that the first division of the community was ordered by the Army during the armed conflict in hopes of breaking down large communities in order to facilitate population control and the men's duties in the civil patrols (PACs). More recently, the mayor instigated a division because community appointed leaders in Tablón did not support him. Despite these complex issues, we refer to the first community surveyed as Tablón throughout the paper. Tablón is less than three miles from the town of Zacualpa, across a steep ravine. Although there is a dirt road suited to four-wheel drive vehicles, there is no public transportation. The CEH report (1999) recorded four incidents where villagers in Tablón were killed. In one example in 1982, a 10-year-old boy was killed because he refused to patrol for the military.

Arriquín: The village of Arriquín, home to both K'iche' and ladino families, was the smallest village in our study and the only one with a significant ladino population. The village has just one major dirt road. The majority of the community works in agriculture, cultivating corn, beans, tomatoes, chili peppers, and sweet potatoes.

There is documentation from the CEH (1999) of political movement within the village and its involvement in the armed conflict. In the 1980s, a number of the indigenous villagers who had formed the *Comité de Unidad Campesina* (Committee of Peasant Unity, CUC) began their local political work. Tension emerged between the ladino and K'iche' villagers at the time and were exacerbated by the presence of another group, the *Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres* (Guerrilla Army of the Poor, EGP) which was also primarily composed of indigenous members of the village, operated clandestinely, and was part of the armed insurgency. According to a witness account in the CEH report, the CUC was often accused of collaborating with the guerilla. In 1981, the Army came through the village, forcing the villagers to give them food, and questioning them about the presence of guerilla there. During this time, they tortured and executed the president of the local cooperative, destroying his home and the cooperative (CEH, 1999, p. 158, 9 C 16201. Octubre, 1981. Zacualpa, Quiché). Many ladinos were reported to have fled the village at this time and to have reported the Maya K'iche' to the military, denouncing them as members of the EGP.

Additional atrocities are detailed in the CEH report (1999). In March of 1982, the Army entered Arriquín after executing 57 people and raping many others during a raid of the village of Estanzuela. Once in Arriquín, soldiers went from door to door, tying up family members before killing them. That day, 83 Maya K'iche' people in Arriquin were killed, and a witness reported to the CEH that the soldiers only stopped killing when all that was left were houses belonging to ladinos. In the following months, the K'iche' population was forced to flee to the mountains while some others migrated to other regions of the country. Many of those who stayed behind were "disappeared".

San Antonio Sinaché I: The largest village surveyed was San Antonio Sinaché I, a village that is divided into three sectors that together constitute San Antonio Sinaché. All inhabitants are indigenous Maya K'iche' although many speak Spanish in addition to the indigenous K'iche' language. Corn and beans are the primary crops, although farming of vegetables, sugar cane, and coffee is also quite common. According to a recent community report, the main school in San Antonio Sinaché I is the largest primary school in the rural area of Zacualpa.

Three massacres in San Antonio Sinaché are detailed in the CEH report (1999). The first was on March 16, 1982. That morning, the men of San Antonio were told to go into the mountains surrounding the village to search for guerrillas, leaving women and children at home. Hours later, 40 soldiers entered the community, killing everyone who was found. Those who testified to the CEH revealed that elderly people were tortured and children were beaten or decapitated. The CEH was able to identify 108 people who died that day, although there were likely many more. A second massacre occurred two months later on May 18th, sending the villagers fleeing to the mountains but killing those who were too old to run or unable to escape the bullets as they fled. Fifty-one victims were identified by the CEH, and survivors who gave testimony described brutal methods of torture of women and children. Those who survived were left with no food, as the military burned fields and corn plantations as they left. On May 30th, the soldiers returned a third time. A number of the villagers were taken to neighboring Las Joyas and tortured, then killed. The CEH identified 40 victims from this third massacre.

El Pueblo: The town was the final and largest community that was surveyed, and is often referred to as "*el pueblo*" (surrounded by the smaller villages such as the three described previously). Known in the K'iche' language as *Pamq'a* ("center of the fire"), this is an area where many people are not farmers. There are storeowners, pharmacists, and hotel and restaurant owners, living in the town center. Some homes are owned by villagers who use them to house their children going to school and/or to store merchandise and dry goods for sale on market days. During the war, the Guatemalan Army occupied the town in 1981 and established their base in the Catholic Church and convent, turning the facilities into a center of command, torture, and assassination. Remains were exhumed in 1999 from an abandoned well at the back of the parish property. Following exhumation of the remains, the site has been converted into a chapel. It also serves as a memory museum for relatives and visitors who come to both pay their respects and to affirm their local *nunca más* (never again) in the wake of these gross violations of human rights. The CEH used Zacualpa as part of the evidence to support their assertion that acts of genocide were committed during the armed conflict. They documented 1,473 fatal victims out of a population of 13,700 which was 11.5% of the population (in 1982), with nearly 99% of the victims being Maya K'iche' during a time when 22% of the population was non-indigenous. Many families left Zacualpa altogether and lived in communities on the south coast until the late 1980s (CEH, 1999).

What we Learned from Local Families about Migrants

As Table 1 indicates, the proportion of families reporting having experienced the migration of a family member to the United States ranged from 30.4% to 43.1% in the three villages, but was slightly lower at 26.4% in the town. In all four communities surveyed, having a larger family was significantly and positively associated with the likelihood of having a family member migrate. One potential interpretation of this is that having more people in the household put a greater strain on the household's resources, requiring that someone migrate in order to earn more money in the U.S. to send back to the family remaining in Guatemala.

Because adults in all 3 villages and the town are far more likely to migrate than children and adolescents (only 9 migrants were under the age of 18 across all four communities surveyed at the time of data collection), we looked specifically at the percentage of people age 18 and up in each village who migrated to the U.S. Tablón and Arriquín each saw nearly a quarter of adults in the village migrate to the United States (24.3%), whereas El Pueblo and San Antonio saw slightly fewer, but still a significant portion of the adult population migrate (14% and 13.1%, respectively) (Figure 2).

Across all villages, the migrants were primarily male, ranging from a low of 74.8% of the migrants from El Pueblo, and a high of 86.2% of the migrants from San Antonio who were male. The vast majority was undocumented in the United States – 92% from Tablón did not have legal status, neither did 88.5% from San Antonio, 76.4% from Arriquín, and at least 79.1% from El Pueblo (although about 10% of respondents from the town did not answer the question on legal status). The lack of documented status in the United States puts these migrants at high risk of detention and deportation and can cause pervasive stress in their daily lives and worry for their family members in Guatemala. Research has found that Latino migrants with concerns about deportation are at heightened risk for negative health and emotional states (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas & Spitznagel, 2007) as are their children (Brabeck, Lykes & Hunter, 2014). Fear of deportation has been found to be a unique predictor of both intrafamilial and extrafamilial acculturative stress (Arbona et al., 2010), and immigrant parents with higher levels of risk for deportation report more negative impact on the family environment through their emotional wellbeing, ability to provide financially for the family, and their relationships with their children (Brabeck & Xu, 2010).

In the two communities with ethnic diversity (Arriquín and El Pueblo), we analyzed whether membership in a certain ethnic group made a family more likely to be affected by migration. We found that in Arriquín, there was not a significant difference in the ethnic group of migrants, but the highest proportion of migrants came from K'iche' families. In El Pueblo, we once again found the highest proportion of migrants came from K'iche' families, and this difference was statistically significant.

We were also particularly interested in examining trends of migration by year. In June 2012 the *New York Times* article publicized a Pew Hispanic Center report showing that migration from Mexico to the United States had slowed. A discussion on whether migration as a whole was slowing ensued in the U.S. (Passel, Cohn, & Gonzales-Barrera, 2012). The report described that after 4 decades of immigration from Mexico into the United States, the net migration flow from Mexico to the United States had stopped and seemed to have reversed (meaning that slightly more Mexicans in the U.S. were returning to Mexico than the number of Mexicans coming to the U.S.). This process was confirmed by more recent statistics (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). Some of the potential reasons could be the high unemployment rate due to the recession in the U.S., a rise in deportations, and stronger border enforcement. However, our data did not reveal the same pattern for Guatemalans migrating out of the town of Zacualpa and these three of its villages. In fact, 81% of all migrants across the four communities surveyed came to the U.S. between 2000 and 2012. Figure 3 displays year of migration across all communities. Year of migration was not reported for 6 migrants from San Antonio and 10 from El Pueblo.

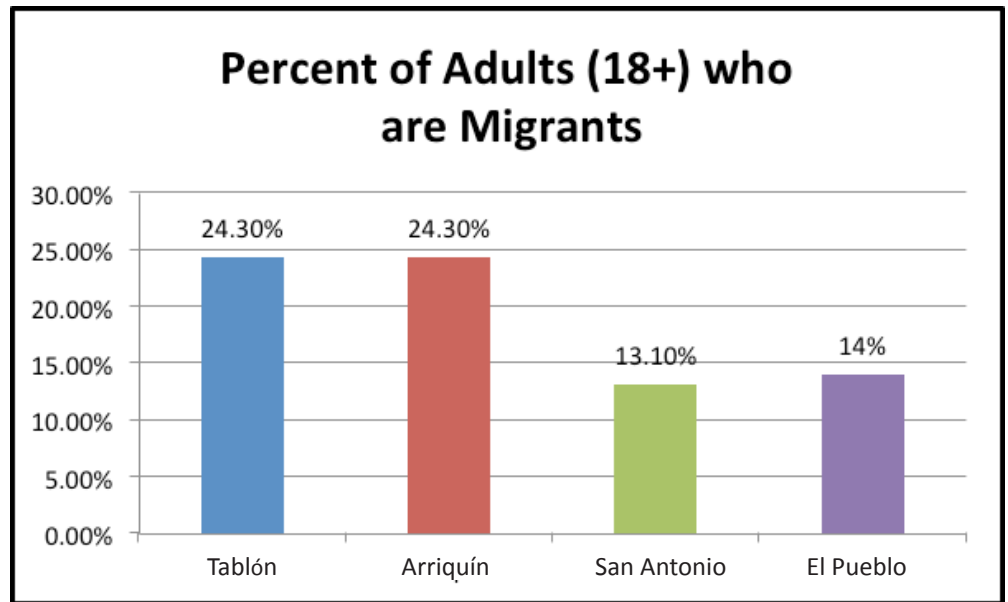


Figure 2. Percent of adults who are migrants across all communities

Year of Migration: All Communities Surveyed

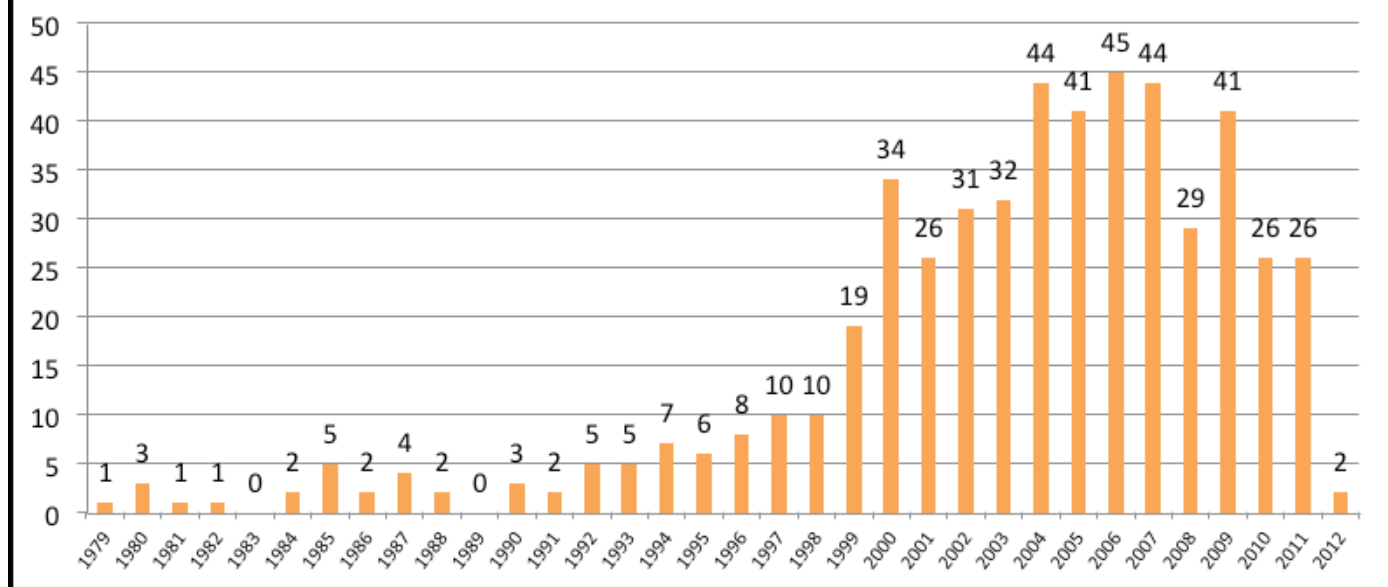


Figure 3. Year of migration across all villages and the town

In terms of destination state, among those who listed a state, Rhode Island was the most common destination for migrants across the four areas surveyed with 21% of migrants journeying there (Figure 4). The second most common destination state was Massachusetts, with 12.8% of migrants. This finding is important both because of the transnational focus of the work of the MHRP, confirming that a significant minority of those leaving Zacualpa and its villages are in the New England area, and to highlight the growing Latino immigrant population in the Northeast, when most popular media and research have focused on immigrants in California and the southwest. In fact, only 4 migrants (less than 1%) went to California.

Scholars and journalists are beginning to write more about new immigrant destinations (Winders, 2012). Although the majority of immigrants from Latin America have typically been concentrated in a small number of states including California, New York, Texas, Florida, and New Jersey (Battalova & Lee, 2012), immigrants are now entering other states in large numbers. For example, between 2000 and 2009, the foreign born population grew by at least 49% in 14 states, including Tennessee, South Dakota, South Carolina, Wyoming, and Indiana (Terrazas, 2011). A more recent analysis by Passel and Cohn (2014) shows increasing growth in 7 states, including Florida, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and decreases in 14 state over a period from 2009 to 2012. Large cities such as Atlanta, Charlotte, and Las Vegas are being called new “gateway cities” to which immigrants flock (Singer, Hardwick, & Brettell, 2008). Unfortunately, many of these new immigrant destinations do not have the infrastructure to assist in integration, and communities that were traditionally white for decades or centuries may struggle to adapt to a new demographic of families in the workforce and children in the schools. We saw this new demographic trend in our own data, with a large proportion of the immigrants living in Kentucky, the Carolinas, and some in the Midwest.

Finally, it is noteworthy that 131 respondents did not share the location of the migrant member of their household. Despite the collaborative nature of this research as well as its being hosted through the local Catholic parish, some respondents may have feared that the presence of U.S. based co-researchers on the team might threaten their U.S.-based undocumented family members by informing authorities of their presence. Early conversations with community leaders in Arriquín confirm the existence of similar local anxieties. Significantly, community-based workshops have also revealed that many local Mayan families do not know where in the U.S. their relatives are living or have pronunciations of the towns that make them challenging to identify or correspond to a half dozen communities in many different states. Thus, based on these research findings, the Migration and Human Rights office in Zacualpa has initiated a series of community-based workshops educating local families on U.S. geography and on how to locate their family members. Such information becomes critical if family members are detained or suffer accidents that require contact from relatives in Guatemala or human services or legal resources in the U.S.

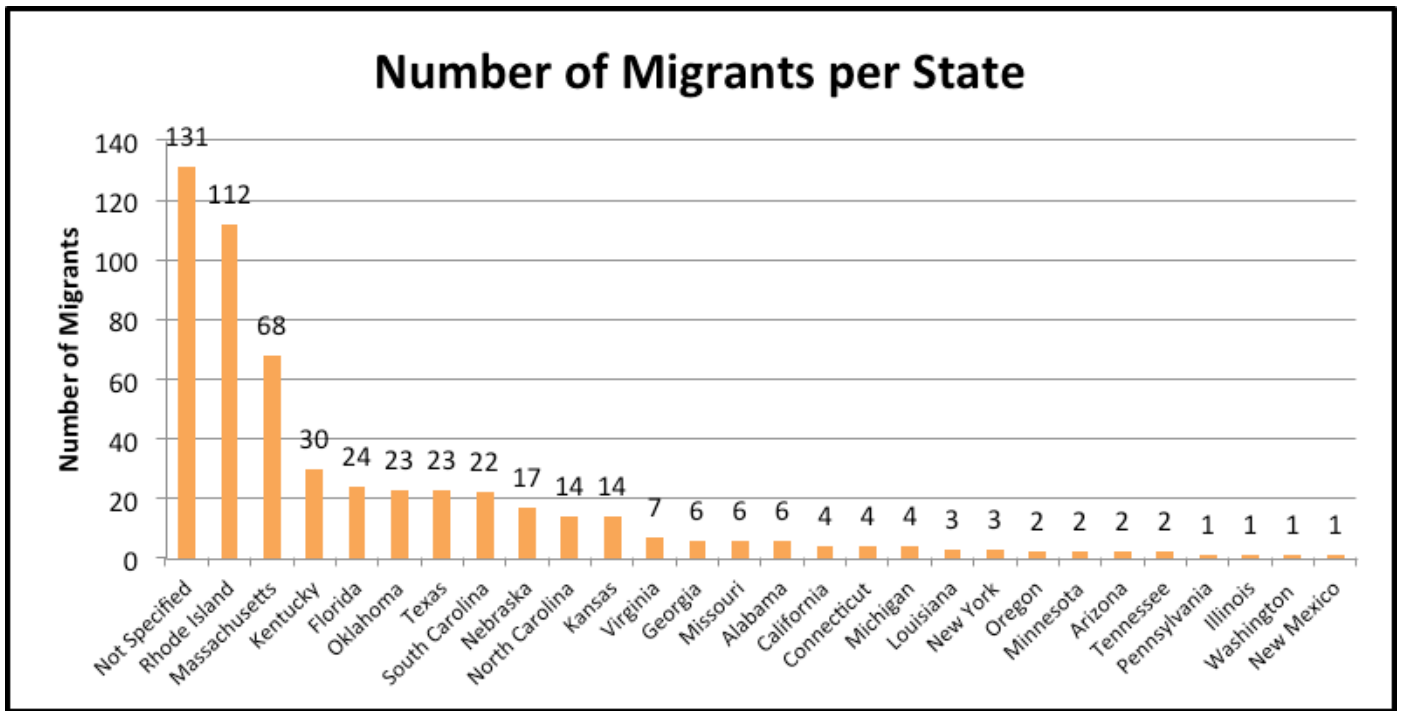


Figure 4. Destination States of Migrants

The family member who responded to the survey was asked to report on the cost of migration for each member who had migrated. We knew from prior interviews in Zacualpa and existing research that migration was often expensive, usually involving the payment to a *coyote*² who would take migrants on the long journey from Guatemala and assist in smuggling them across the Mexico-U.S. border. There has been some research and media-based discussion about what a coyote charges to smuggle someone into the U.S. without legal documents reportedly up to \$2,500 for Mexican smugglers, \$30,000 for Ecuadorian smugglers, and \$60,000 for Chinese smugglers, although these estimates are now nearly a decade old (Gazzar, 2005). Another survey of Mexican migrants between 1993 and 2006 reported an average cost of between \$1,200 to \$2,000, and this cost has been rising due to inflation and/or increased risks along the journey (Roberts, Hanson, Cornwell, & Borger, 2010). Princeton’s Mexican Migration Project recently published data showing that the average cost of border crossings in Mexico was upwards of \$3,000 (Mexican Migration Project, 2015).

Irrespective of cost, crossing the border is a dangerous journey—in fact, over 2,900 migrants have died in their attempt to cross into the United States through the Arizona-Mexico border between 2000 and 2015 (Coalición de Derechos Humanos, 2016). The high number of deaths is in part due to the fact that border control has increased, with additional checkpoints and high-tech security measures that force migrants to journey through untraveled, unsafe stretches of desert instead of on main roads. Women are commonly raped and the most common cause of death is hyperthermia (Rose, 2012). The average cost of migration reported by interviewees from the town as well as the three villages was approximately Q36,000, with the mode (most commonly reported cost) being Q40,000. Using February 2016 conversion rates, this is approximately \$5,200 USD.

Each family was also asked to report how the migrants financed their trip(s). Overwhelmingly across all communities surveyed, loans with accruing interest were the most frequently reported method used to pay for the journey. Other common methods of financing migration included taking mortgages on land or homes, personal resources, and loans that did not accrue interest. Previous research from interviews had revealed that interest rates—whether from banks or from family members or neighbors—were usurious, often 10% accrued monthly and thereby doubling the debt in a single year if no interest could be paid.

What we Learned about Debt and Remittances

The journey to the U.S. is an economically expensive one. As described above, families spend a large amount of money sending a migrant to the U.S., especially considering most recent reports show 53.7% of Guatemalans live in poverty, with the country’s average annual income being \$2,830 per year (World Bank, 2016). This is an especially high cost when considering our finding that most people use interest-accruing loans to pay for their journeys.

²Coyotes are middlemen or women, that is, people who charge migrants varying fees in exchange for transporting them from one site to another. Coyotes who previously accompanied migrants from Zacualpa were known to the community and included people from neighboring villages or towns. Increasingly migrants are passed from one coyote to another as they journey north, with additional fees often attached to these unexpected transfers. Other migrants have been caught up in human trafficking while a small number elect to attempt the journey without these guides.

The average debt, based on individual debt across all migrants (including migrants who reported having no debt anymore) is summarized in Table 2. For these estimates, we decided to exclude people who did not respond about their debt level but did not exclude outliers (very high or very low levels of debt) in order to stay as close to the data as possible, so we acknowledge that there may be some degree of imprecision in the estimates. We report these findings as they portray a snapshot that, arguably, reflects the indebtedness of each community. Table 3 also reports average individual debt, but looks only at those who did have debt, excluding those who reported having no debt. This reflects average individual indebtedness of each family that is carrying debt. These tables also show that although many migrants have paid off their debt, those who still have debt, particularly those in the villages, tend to have extremely high levels of debt. Overall, Tablón and San Antonio Sinaché I had higher average individual levels of debt than Arriquín or El Pueblo.

Table 2. Average individual migrant debt across all communities

Community	Debt in Quetzales	Debt in USD (Feb 2016 conversion)
Tablón	Q13,517.24	\$1,762.24
Arriquín	Q6,892.73	\$898.60
San Antonio Sinaché I	Q17,141.59	\$2,234.74
El Pueblo	Q2,557.52	\$333.42

Table 3. Average individual migrant debt among only migrants who reported having debt

Community	Debt in Quetzales	Debt in USD (Feb 2016 conversion)
Tablón	Q43,555.56	\$5,678.32
Arriquín	Q34,463.64	\$4,493.01
San Antonio Sinaché I	Q38,740.00	\$5,050.52
El Pueblo	Q22,230.77	\$2,898.22

A substantial body of work has focused on remittances, or the money sent back to the home country by the migrant working in the U.S. According to the World Bank’s Migration and Development Brief 20 (2013), India was the top remittance-receiving country in 2012, followed by China and the Philippines. Mexico was the only country of the Americas in the top ten of remittance-receiving countries. Guatemala was tied for 25th on the list, receiving \$5 billion USD in 2012—impressive because of its small size in comparison with many other larger countries on the list (World Bank, 2015). In terms of percentage of GDP in 2009, Guatemala was tied for 14th (with Togo and Nicaragua) on the list, receiving 10% of its GDP from remittances (World Bank, 2011). Local press in 2016, drawing on a report of Inter-American Dialogue, Continued Growth of Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean in 2015, lists Guatemala as receiving 15.2% of GDP, the highest in the region (<http://elperiodico.com.gt/2016/02/18/economia/guatemala-lidera-el-crecimiento-de-remesas-en-latinoamerica/>). The United States was the top remittance-sending country in the world in terms of amount of money sent out of the country.

Because there was no official documentation describing the amount of remittances coming into Zacualpa, we added a question to the survey after Tablón data collection asking families with migrants to indicate how much the migrant sent home the prior month, as well as monthly on average, in USD or quetzales. The vast majority responded in U.S. dollars. There was a small difference in the average monthly remittances across villages (note: this amount represents only those who currently had a family member in the U.S., meaning we did not include migrants who came home either by choice or deportation, as this would have skewed averages). In Arriquín, families with a migrant in the U.S. reported receiving an average of \$185.78 each month, while families in San Antonio reported receiving an average of \$124.66 a month, and families in El Pueblo, \$151.89 (Figure 5). Presumably, at least some of this money went toward paying off the original debt and accruing interest that the migrants had to make their journey north. It is notable that of the three communities for whom we have data on remittances those with higher monthly remittances also reported lower outstanding debt.

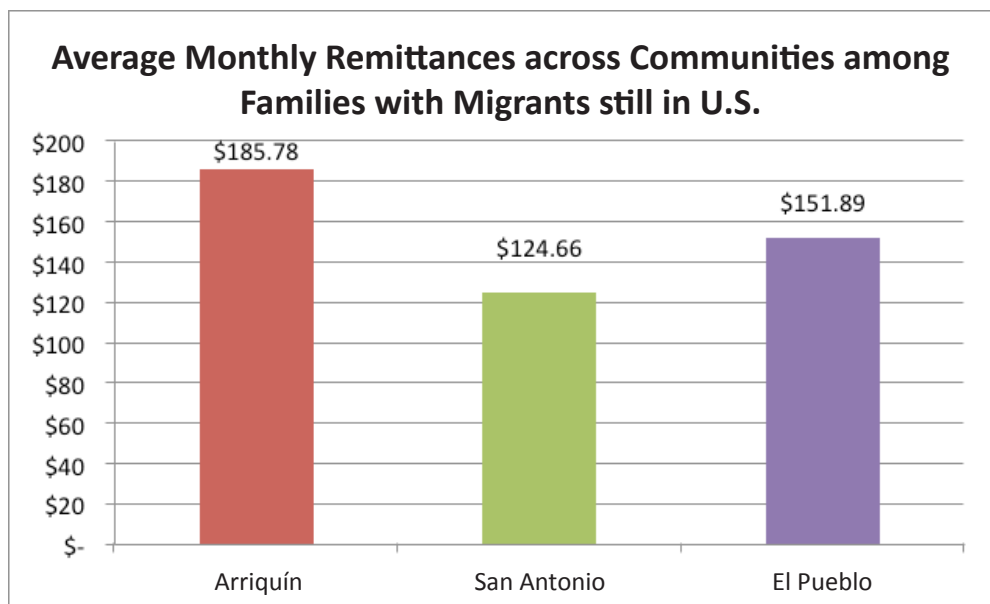


Figure 5. Average Monthly Remittances at community level – Migrants still in U.S.

Village children underscore debt's significance describing their mother's prolonged migration to the U.S. in interviews and workshops. Julia's mother escaped an abusive husband but could not find work to support her children locally or in Guatemala City. Despite Julia and her siblings understanding of why their mother had not yet returned home to them, they described an unresolved longing to be with her. Julia notes that she and her siblings:

“...have been thinking, and always I am saying, that I would like to go with my mother; but she is not able to [earn] money for me to come there, so I'm not going. My sister would like to go also but my mother tells my sister [that] my brothers are too young; they are little and there is no one that can care for them. And so that's what she tells us. She tells us 'I'm going to return soon, I'm coming when I find work and make money, and I'm going to return to my house, when I'm able to pay my debt I am going to be able to return to you all.' This is what she tells us.” (Hershberg & Lykes, 2012).

Additional burdens on local families were evident in homes that has an unauthorized migrant member who had been deported and forcibly returned to the community. With deportations at an all-time high under the Obama administration, we recorded the number of deportations across the participating communities. In Tablón, respondents reported 7 people had been deported, and of these, 3 had already returned to the U.S. at the time of the survey. In Arriquín, only 1 person had been deported and was living in the village during the time of the census. In San Antonio, interviewees reported that 17 people had been deported from the U.S. and 6 of them had already returned at the time of the interview. Finally, in the town there were 24 people reported to have been deported, and 11 of them had returned to the U.S. following their deportation. This substantial proportion of people who were willing to journey to the United States again after having been deported is particularly salient given the many challenges of migration (such as the enormous cost and danger of the journey) and the legal consequences of repeated removal from the U.S. If a person who was previously deported tries to enter the United States again without authorization, the potential legal ramifications are even more severe than the first deportation. In “reinstatement of removal,” an immigrant who was previously deported can be deported again without the opportunity to see a judge (PDHRP, 2011). A USA today article (Bazar, 2008) chronicled the stories of a number of migrants from El Salvador who were deported but wanted to return to the U.S. One man chronicled in the article described feeling like he was more American than Salvadoran, since he came to the U.S. as a thirteen-year-old, and felt he had to return. Another claimed he had to return because his family had grown to rely on the remittances he had been sending. Another woman felt she had to make the journey again (despite her horrific description of the journey through the desert) because her family had taken a second mortgage on their home at a very high interest rate and was now left with crippling debt. A local Zacualpan deportee who worked with the census project reported the shame and humiliation of having been arrested in his home by I.C.E. while asleep – and the further humiliation of being “forced home” before he had repaid his debt and secured sufficient resources to buy a plot of land and build a home to secure his family's future. Despite his joy of being reunited with his children, he found reintegration into the local community so challenging that he returned to the U.S. a year after collaborating in the census.

What we Learned about Children

Around the world, children are experiencing the migration of parents and other family members. For example, in 2000 the estimated number of children “left behind” by migrating parents in rural China was 20 million (Gao, Li, Kim, Congdon, Lau, & Griffiths, 2010), and an estimated 10-20% of Filipino children had parents working overseas in the early 2000s (Bryant, 2005). In Albania, nearly 22% of children had parents who left their children in the home country when migrating from 1990 to 2005 (Gianelli and Mangiavacchi, 2010). In our own data, we found that many youth under the age of 18 lived in families that had experienced the migration of one or more family members. As Figure 6 shows, half of the youth in Arriquín lived in families that had experienced migration, as did nearly half in Tablón. The fact that one quarter to one half of children in all four communities surveyed had experienced the migration of a household member was a striking finding. Experiencing the loss of at least the physical presence of a family member was a somewhat common experience for children in Zacualpa, and schools and other organizations working with youth should be aware of the prevalence. In the wake of these findings and those from earlier collaborations with a local school in Zacualpa the Migration and Human Rights office has increased its collaborations with teachers and administrators in local middle school and high schools. The MHRP has supported several collaborative projects with youth, the results of which have been published (Hershberg & Lykes, 2015; Lykes & Sibley, 2014; Sánchez Ares & Lykes, under review) and disseminated through local presentations and Spanish-language reports.

After the surveys in Tablón had been disseminated, the research team decided to revise the survey instrument for future use, adding questions that specifically asked whether migrants were parents who had left their children behind, and if so, how often they communicated with them and whether the children displayed any types of problems. It is important to note that because we had no pre- or post-migration information about these children, it was not possible to determine whether the parent’s migration contributed to any of problems (or lack thereof) that the child was reported to have. In Arriquín, only 8 informants reported that migrants (13.2%) had left children behind, and 7 of them

(87.5%) reported that the U.S.-based parent communicated with the child or children on a weekly basis. Very few of these migrants reported that their children had problems of any kind, but those problems reported included academic problems (25%), conduct problems (25%), social problems (12.5%), and health problems (12.5%). In San Antonio, 48 migrants (37.5%) were reported to have left children behind. Of these, those interviewed reported that the majority (79.5%) communicated with their children weekly, but 11.4% were said to communicate with their children only on a monthly basis. The most commonly reported problem was health or physical problems (31.25%), and academic problems (10.4%), but fewer than 5% reported social or conduct problems. Finally, in El Pueblo, 78 migrants (33.9%) reported that the migrant family member had left children behind. As in the other areas surveyed, the majority (61.5%) reported that the migrant communicated with their children on a weekly basis. Also similarly to the villages, few problems were reported, with 14.1% reporting health or physical problems, 10.3% reporting academic problems, 6.4% reporting conduct problems, and 2.6% reporting social problems.

MHRP researcher Rachel Hershberg explored Maya K’iche’ Zacualpan parents, caretakers and children’s relationships in 19 transnational families between 2010 and 2012, that is, at the time of this census project (Hershberg, 2012). Among the many findings from her work were that parents sought to maintain their ties with children left behind both through remittances and through what they described as *consejos*, that is, advice shared with the child in weekly phone calls. Despite these efforts Hershberg documented the challenges for all when departures that had been planned to last a year or two extended to a decade or more (Hershberg & Lykes, 2015). Grandparents reported difficulties “controlling” adolescent children and fears that they would die before these children were old enough to survive on their own. Older siblings caring for younger brother and sisters reported that they missed their parents and hoped to migrate themselves in order to reunite the family.

Twenty Maya young adult women represented similar feeling of loss and of missing their mothers, in particular, and represented migration desires or plans in a photovoice project facilitated by MHRP researcher Rocío Sánchez Ares (Sánchez Ares & Lykes, under review). Thus the survey data documents the extent of these separations whereas the in-depth and participatory processes elaborate on the lived experiences in the words of those most directly affected by migrations and deportations.

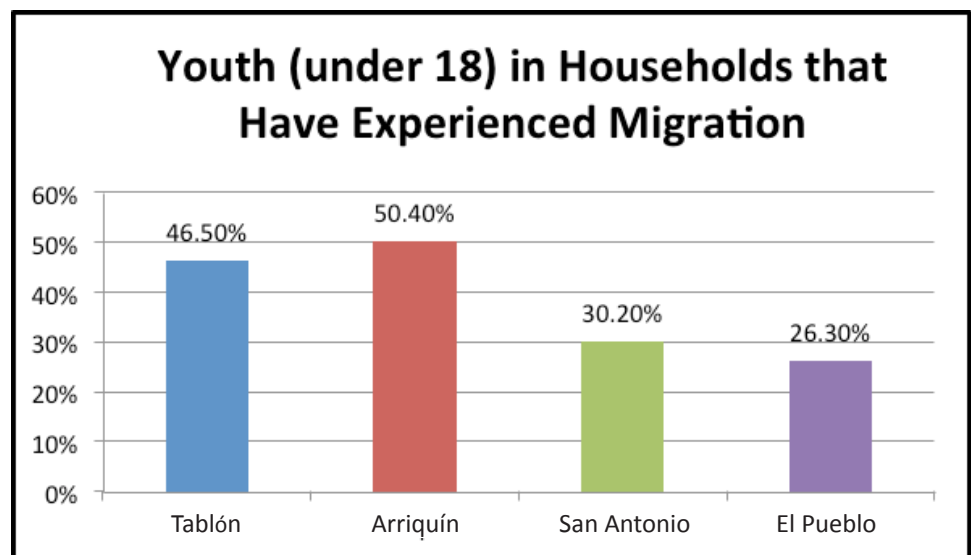


Figure 6. Percentage of Youth in Households with a Migrant across Communities

Sofia described her picture of a young girl following her mother (see Photo 5), reporting that it represents female Mayan girls and women suffering both when they are left behind by their mothers, but also when they risk all to cross these borders: “women suffer a lot when they stay, but also when they leave, and I learned that going to the USA is not everything, being a woman I have to value myself and take care of myself wherever I am.”

Another participant noted how “poverty is the reason [for migration]. Here, in the countryside, there is no work and people cannot bring enough money home to support their families. Many people look for work and cannot find it or they are paid little so they go to the U.S.” Alluding to the difficulty of receiving liveable wages, another young woman spoke to the group about educational options: “youth think that it is not worth it to study here and believe that they have to work to support their families” (see Photo 6).

Another participant, Hilda, described an abusive situation living with her uncles - and her desire to join her parents in the U.S., noting: “if I were there, not with my uncles, I imagine myself free of problems, with my parents, nobody tells me what to do nor hurts me, and I can help my family with money and other things.” (Sánchez Ares & Lykes, in press).

In another workshop facilitated in a school in Zacualpa by the transnational team a group invented a story about a ‘Table’ and ‘Car’ to represent a mother’s migration, highlighting the mother–daughter relationship:

“There was once a woman called ‘Table.’ She left her children because she couldn’t find work, and went to the US to find a job. And she had a daughter named ‘Car.’ The daughter was sad because her mother left her with just her aunts. And every week she called her on the phone, but she said that it’s not the same when she is with her mom as when she is with her aunts (see Lykes & Sibley, 2013, for more details).”

Despite the important recognition of many children—and their teachers and other adults in the community—that parents have migrated to secure a better life for their children, children must negotiate complex social and emotional processes in contexts that do not always include human resources to accompany them in these processes. Thus these collaborations have contributed importantly to developing creative workshops through which teachers and others who work with students can open spaces through which they can express and process the multiple effects of migration on their lives. Recently, the local office staff of the Migration and Human Rights Office in Zacualpa has published a manual summarizing its youth work in a format that can serve as a resource for others working with youth “left behind” (*Herramientas y reflexiones para el trabajo con jóvenes jóvenes [Resources and Reflections for Work with Youth]*, 2015; <http://www.bc.edu/centers/humanrights/resources/zacualpa-reports.html>).



Photo 5: One participant’s photograph of “feelings being separated from my mother”



Photo 6: One participant’s picture describing responsibilities at home & poverty



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Photo 7: Group drawing exercise with children from Tablón

Photo 8: One’s child’s journey through images, Tablón

What we Learned about Education

One of the priorities in the survey research was to understand possible relationships between migration and education – both in terms of those who migrate, that is, whether those who were migrating from Guatemala tended to be more educated people, or less educated than those who did not leave—and vis-à-vis those “left behind”, that is, migrants’ children. As of 2010, U.S.-based Latino immigrants overall were still less educated than non-immigrants: 28% of adult migrants in the U.S. did not have a high school degree, compared to 7% of natives (Camarota, 2012). However, recent data suggests it is not necessarily the poorest and most uneducated that migrate to the United States. American Community Survey Data from 2011 showed that one in six university-educated adults was an immigrant, and 16% of university-educated immigrants were Latino. Interestingly, one third of university-educated immigrants in the U.S. migrated since 2000 (Ji & Batalova, 2012). U.S.-based migrants from Guatemala are often educated—less than half (48.7%) have less than a high school education, and 21% have some university or a university degree (Camarota, 2012). Scholars have examined whether Latin American immigrants are positively or negatively selected in terms of their education level, but results are inconclusive thus far. The findings from Mexico, for example, are quite mixed, with some scholars finding that Mexican migrants to the U.S. tend to be more educated than non-migrants, and others finding they are less educated (McKenzie & Rappaport, 2010).

Our data indicated that in all three villages and the town, adult migrants had higher levels of education than adult non-migrants, and this difference was significant in all communities except El Pueblo. Figure 7 displays these differences. The greatest difference was in Arriquín, where 96.2% of adults who migrated had some formal education, whereas only 62.4% of adults who did not migrate had some formal education. This finding is important to consider, because it could mean that those with the most education and therefore the most human capital are the ones who are leaving the community. These people are probably unable to find jobs with a possibility of any upward mobility, and rather than investing their knowledge into improving the community, they bring this human capital to the U.S. In terms of the education level of the head of household, there were no significant differences in the head of household’s level of education or likelihood of having a formal education if the family had experienced migration in the three villages, but in the town, heads of household were significantly more likely to have a formal education if the family had experienced migration.

In reviewing the data and discussing it with local collaborators, we noted the relatively small group of children irrespective of parental migration who had no formal education compared to what seemed to be a much larger group of adults with no formal education. This demographic shift is likely due to the changes in the availability of public (and parochial) education in these communities. As Figure 8 shows, across the three villages and the town, only a small percentage of children had no formal education. In Arriquín, for example, all children from age 10-17 had at least some schooling, and less than 5% of 6-9 year olds had none. Across all three areas surveyed, it is unsurprising that the 6-9 year old age group had the highest numbers of children without formal education, since a substantial number of six year olds were still too young for school. Rural children enter first grade in the public education system at age 7. Still, the rates of children who had not accessed school to date were surprisingly low when contrasted to the number of adults (age 18 and up) without some formal education (Figure 9). For example, over half of adults age 18 and up in San Antonio had no formal education, and in Arriquín, where the fewest adults had no formal education, still nearly a third of people age 18 and up reported not having been to school.

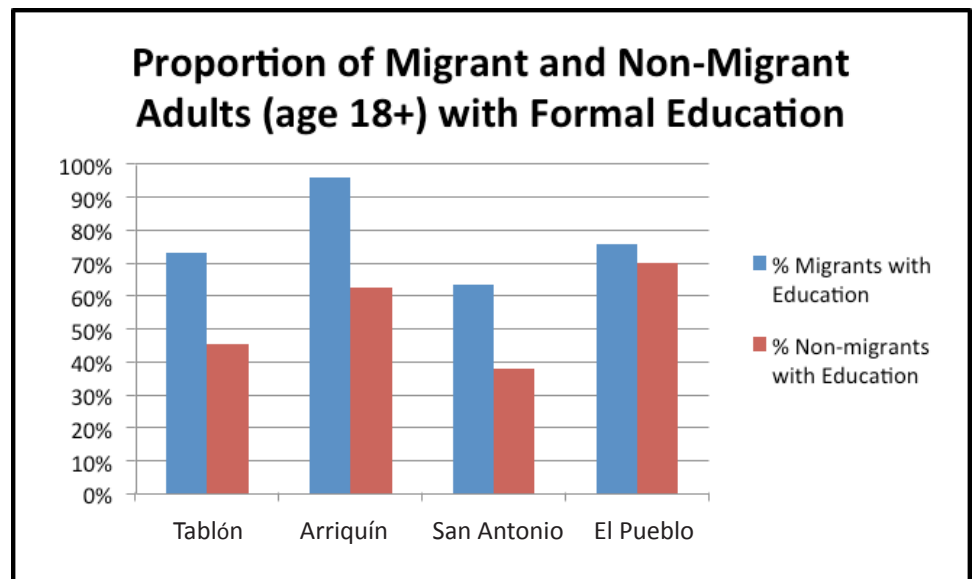


Figure 7. Adult Migrants vs. Non-Migrants with Formal Education

Figure 8. Percentage of Children without Formal Education

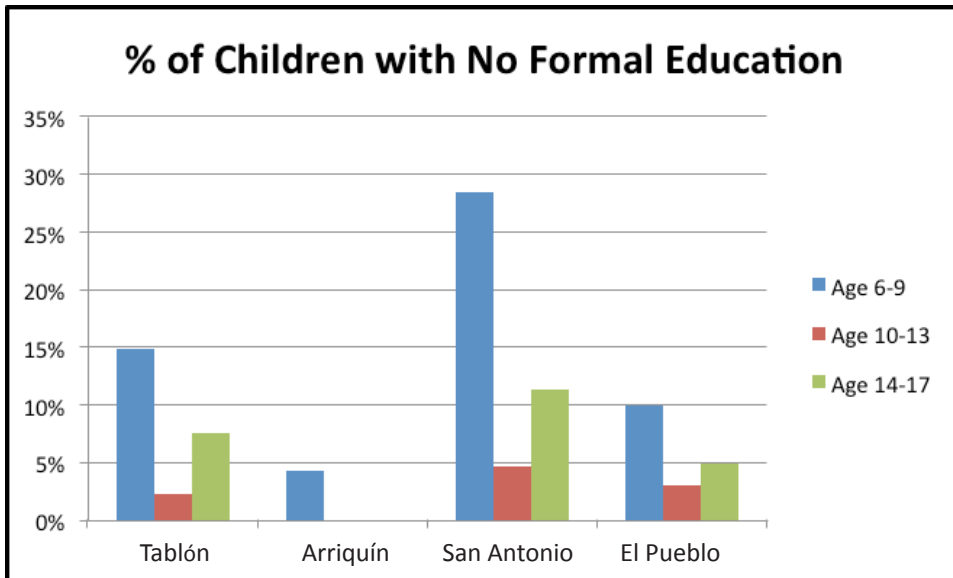
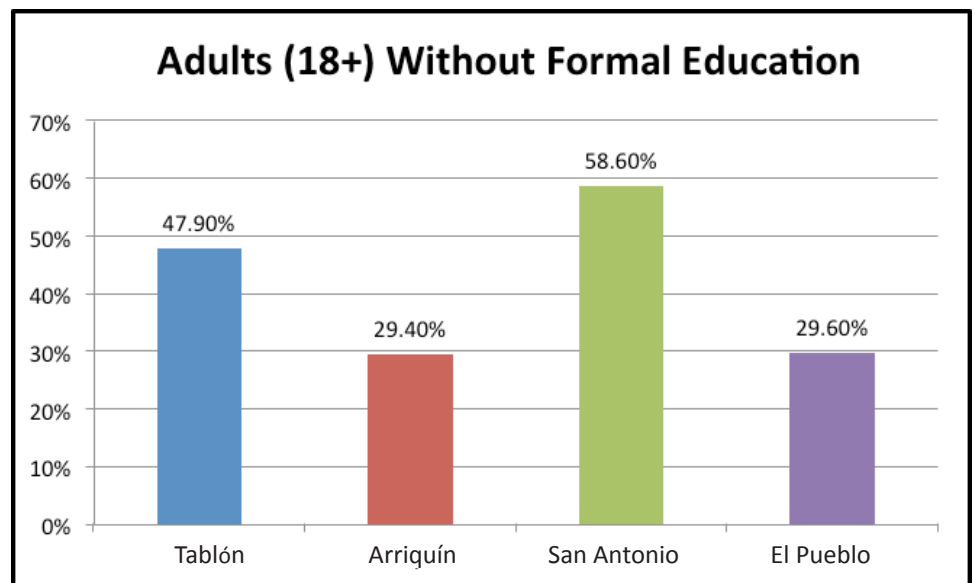


Figure 9. Percent of Adults without Formal Education



An extensive number of analyses were computed to determine whether a child's education level or likelihood of experiencing migration was significantly impacted when the child experienced the migration of a family member to the U.S. The results indicated that for all three age groups, there was no significant difference in the likelihood of having a formal education whether the family had a migrant or not. In terms of level of education, these results were also almost entirely null, except for the finding in the 14-17 year old age group where children who experienced the migration of a family member had slightly lower levels of education than youth in this age group whose families did not have a migrant. There were still no significant differences when all analyses accounted for family debt and whether or not the family received remittances. Overall, these findings may not be surprising for a few reasons. Some prior research would suggest that there may be positive effects on the child when a parent migrates, while other research suggests there may be negative effects. For example, some work in Haiti and El Salvador has found that children are more likely to enter and stay in school when the family receives remittances from a migrant (Amuedo-Dorantes, Georges, & Pozo, 2010; Edwards & Ureta, 2003). On the other hand, some work has found that children do worse academically when a parent migrates (Cortes, 2008) or have more emotional problems (Lahaie, Hayes, Piper, & Heymann, 2009). Therefore, it is possible that the positive and negative consequences of a parent's migration balance each other. As suggested above, overall greater access to education among youth may reflect governmental shifts in greater access to primary school education rather than the effects of remittances.

Since Arriquín and El Pueblo were both diverse in terms of ethnic groups, we were able to examine whether children's education levels differed by ethnicity. In Arriquín, there were no significant differences by ethnicity in the 6-9 or 10-13 age groups, but in the 14-17 age groups, ladino youth had significantly higher education levels than expected, this despite the fact that K'iche' had higher rates of migration than ladinos in this community. In the town, ladinos had significantly higher education levels than expected in all three age groups.

In El Pueblo, 74 adults were attending or had attended university. Nineteen (of these 74) were enrolled in university at the time of the survey. Of these current students, 12 were men and 7 were women, 9 were K'iche' and 10 were ladino. 86.5% of the 74 adults who were either in university or had attended university were in families that had **not** experienced a migration. Only 13.5% came from families that reported that a family member had migrated or was in the U.S. at the time of the interview. This difference confirms that those families in "el pueblo" who had not experienced the migration of a family member were significantly more likely to have a family member who was attending or had attended university.

What we Learned about Homes and Material Possessions

We asked a variety of questions about the housing conditions of families in each village and in the town to get a sense of the resources of each community in hopes of better understanding whether or not having a migrant in the family contributed to enhanced material wellbeing and to secure data that might aid local advocates in improving daily living particularly in the three villages. Families reported on whether they owned their house and it was paid off, whether they owned the house but were still making payments on it, often payments due for money borrowed to migrate, using the house as collateral, and whether it was borrowed, rented, or donated. In three of the communities (Tablón, Arriquín, and El Pueblo), a higher proportion of families that experienced a migration had paid off their homes, but this difference was only statistically significant in El Pueblo. In San Antonio, the percentage of families with or without a migrant who had paid off any loans on their homes was almost equal (80.4% with migration, 80.6% without). Although our data was cross-sectional and therefore could not give us causal estimates, it could be that families who experience a migration put remittances toward paying off their homes.

We were interested in whether a family having a migrant was associated with a higher quality of living as measured by various factors. One such example is housing size and quality. Because it was not feasible to have a detailed idea of the size of each home (such as square footage), each family was asked to report the number of rooms in their house. We determined that this was an appropriate measure of housing size, particularly because in these communities, those who improve their homes when receiving remittances often do so by adding on a room. In the town and all 3 villages, we found that having experienced the migration of a family member was associated with having a larger home in terms of number of rooms, and this difference was significant in two villages (Tablón and San Antonio). Figure 10 shows these differences, and also indicates that the average house is typically very small, often just two or three common rooms. This figure also indicates that houses in the urban area were generally larger than houses in the surrounding villages.

Next, we examined whether families with migrants had significantly higher housing quality. One published study using a dataset representative of the entire nation of Guatemala found that those receiving remittances from the U.S. spend less on food but more on education and housing than they would have spent on these goods without remittances (Adams & Cuenca, 2005). However, this data did not determine whether spending more on education or housing necessarily was related to higher education or higher quality housing. For our study, we used an approximated measure of housing quality based on survey responses on the material of the walls, roof, floor, water source, plumbing (sanitation), and method of cooking (such as electricity, gas, or firewood). Because most of the materials used in Zacualpa were unfamiliar to members of the U.S. research team, our Guatemalan team members helped to rank these materials from lowest to highest quality. These codes were then transformed into standardized scores (because the number of response options varied across questions), and formed into a composite. We found that families that experienced migration had significantly higher housing quality in all three of the villages, but not the town (where housing quality was approximately equal). Although we could not establish whether or not this was due to migration (since the houses could have been of the same quality before the migrant went to the U.S.), these analyses along with the housing size analyses do give us strong correlational evidence that those families who have had a household member migrate to the U.S. have a higher quality of living, at least in terms of the housing quality and size. The data suggest that this may be one reason why migrants are so willing to make a dangerous journey to the U.S. without authorization to enter—and to lead a life under threat due to possible detention and deportation once they arrive.

We also examined whether families that had experienced migration were more likely to have material possessions, such as a radio, television, car, computer, or refrigerator. Once again, in all three of the villages we found that families that had experienced migration had significantly more material possessions than families that had not experienced migration, and in El Pueblo difference was not significant since the number of possessions was approximately equal. Once again, this finding adds to the correlational evidence that families that have experienced migration are able to afford a better quality of life than those that have not.

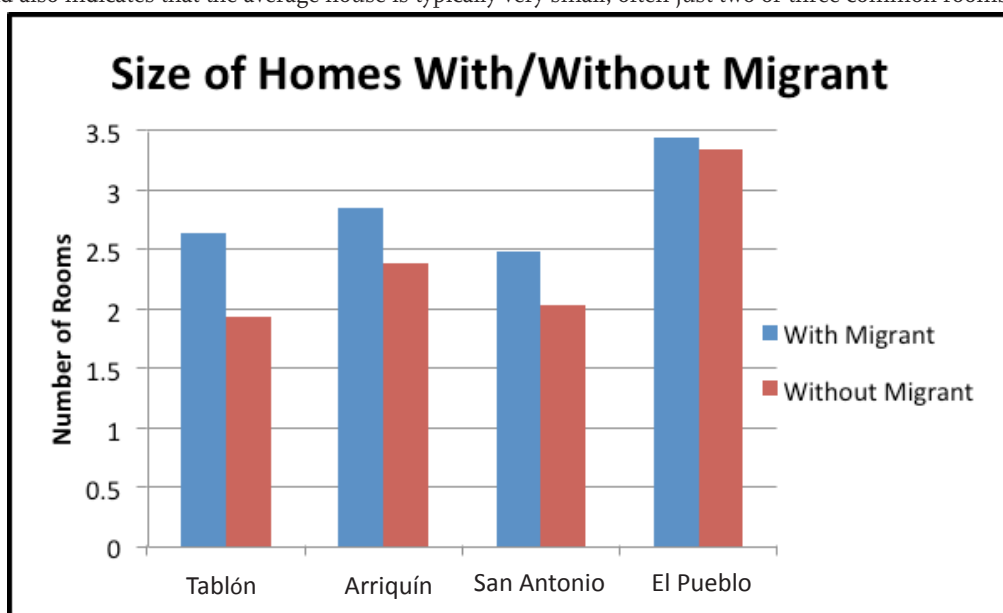


Figure 10. Number of rooms per home across communities

Community Meetings & the Significance of this Work

The work of the MHRP is iterative and participatory, that is, the research is generated with the community and our findings are always disseminated back to them. Sharing the census findings through workshops was a critical aspect of the local work. Descriptive analyses on each of the three villages and the town were completed and compiled into power point presentations. Initial presentations were developed iteratively by team members in Guatemala, who requested specific changes based on information requested by the community, and students in the U.S. Content and style changes were made in response to local staff requests. Once the data was cleaned it was returned to the Guatemalan office in a format that could be manipulated locally and staff in Guatemala designed all future presentations even when U.S. staff or students were present for community discussions. Findings were shared initially in one village with a group of invited community leaders, in order to discern which approach of disseminating the findings might be most useful. Power point presentations were revised and meetings coordinated with local leaders who convened the community to learn from the researchers' analyses of their survey responses and to share their interpretations of the data.

Meetings were interactive. For example, the presentation in Arriquín took place in March of 2012 at the school in the village, beginning with an activity in which community members placed a token on a map of the United States to signify where their migrant family member was. The second part of the presentation included a power point presentation summarizing an overview of the results, with community members being asked to share their opinions about the findings throughout the presentation. For example, one of the research team members asked them why men are more often head of household than women. Their answers included, "The woman cooks and the man works," "The sustainment of the home should be mutual" (said by a woman), and "there are families where the wife is smarter than the husband so they say the woman is the head of the household" (said by a man).

The meeting to present results from San Antonio Sinaché I took place in November of 2012. After reflecting on the earlier meetings, it was decided to present these findings exclusively to community leaders, including *cocodes*³, teachers, members of the Developmental Association of San Antonio, and religious leaders. Convening the meeting was difficult due to local tensions, with some leaders opting not to participate. Despite this 16 people from the Development Association of San Antonio attended the gathering. Attendees were divided into three groups each of which had a theme identified in the data, that is, population, education, or housing and services. One member of the research team facilitated each sub-group discussion, hoping to thereby encourage more discussion and greater feedback about the findings and the team's preliminary interpretations of the data. They discussed various findings, such as the fact that there were fewer migrants in this community compared to others. One attendee said it was because of the lack of safety in Mexico, the excessive cost of migration, and the fact that there were few jobs in the United States and many deportations. Members of the education group said they believed that there were more boys than girls in school in this community because the mentality of families is to give priority to sons rather than daughters—although they tended to believe this was an outdated idea, with one person calling it "the mentality of our grandfathers." In the housing and services group, some people mentioned the problem that most people had to buy their firewood because there are not enough trees, calling it a "loss of time and money," but also discussed how difficult it would be because of the lack of space and irrigation. They also discussed their concern about families living with dirt-floored homes, discussing the possibility that children might be more likely to get sick in these homes because their food



Photo 9: Arriquín community meeting



Photo 10: Cerritos/Tablón Community Meeting



Photo 11: San Antonio Sinaché Church & Memorial Monument

³Community Development Councils (Consejos Comunitarios de Desarrollo), a community level body which publicly administers development projects. These are part of a national system to foster public participation in development, which includes bodies at the municipal, state, regional and national level.

might be more likely to become contaminated. These community meetings afforded survey respondents and other community members an opportunity to engage with and learn from the quantitative data and provided researchers with useful interpretations of the data and additional information about problems confronting the community (e.g., lack of firewood) beyond the scope of the current research but of possible import for future community-based organizing in the wake of this work.

Challenges and Limitations

As a large-scale project across two countries, there were many challenges and limitations throughout the project. For example, there was a major difference in how the door-to-door survey team was received in the villages compared to the town. In the villages, the people collecting data were often met warmly and with interest in the project, and were invited into families' homes. In contrast, people in the town seemed to be less receptive to the team and the project, and would generally not allow the data collectors to enter their homes. As with all survey-based research, it is entirely possible that people did not answer truthfully, or guessed when they did not know an answer. For example, it is entirely possible that a family didn't know the exact amount of debt a family member had, or where in the United States they currently were. Further, many of the topics may have been perceived as intrusive given their sensitive nature (e.g., how much debt a person had, how much they received in remittances, or whether a migrant in the family had been detained or deported), so the respondent reporting on the family to the survey researchers may not have felt comfortable answering.

Additionally, given that all of this data was collected and entered by hand, we recognize the high likelihood of at least some minor human error in recording or entering data. A larger issue for interpretation of results is the fact that the data was purely cross-sectional. Therefore, it was impossible to make causal statements in determining whether certain outcomes (such as education level or housing quality) were a result of or a precursor to immigration. A number of omitted variables could also be at play affecting the economic and social wellbeing of these families, such as depression, connectedness to the community, and household income from farming or other occupations.

Finally, participating communities included those who had initially responded positively to the local Catholic parish's invitation to participate in interviews in the summer of 2008 when the CHRIJ researchers first visited Zacualpa. At that time researchers visited seven of the 37 villages surrounding Zacualpa and, as reported above, conducted more than 100 interviews. When the transnational participatory and action research team decided to conduct the community survey we returned to three of these villages whose members had expressed interest in participating in the survey. Thus this was a sample of convenience and therefore not representative of the overall population of all communities in Zacualpa. In particular overall statistics of migration from the larger Zacualpan community are not available for comparisons.

Despite these limitations the project sheds important light on many of the experiences of sending communities and, coupled with narratives from many other local residents, offers a complex mosaic of Mayan communities facing ongoing legacies of war, structural poverty, violence due to gangs and human and drug trafficking—all factors that continue to push Mayan youth north and constrain the life options of those who are left or stay behind. As importantly, the findings have informed local activists and staff within the Migration and Human Rights office as well as the transnational collaborations of the MHRP. We conclude this report with a brief discussion of some of this work.

Migrant and Human Rights Office

Although census data collection has ended, the work "on the ground" in Zacualpa continues and has expanded into the Southern Quiché region. The local office is open several hours a day and is staffed by two local Maya young adults. They receive families of migrants who need assistance with a variety of issues, including finding the location of a family member who has been detained while crossing the border or while living and working in the U.S. At Boston College, a full-time attorney and a number of law students collaborate in these processes including helping to set up legal services when possible. The Zacualpa office receives cases from local families of migrants who have died in the U.S. and who need assistance in locating and repatriating the body. Local office records as of March 2015 confirm that the staff have assisted in 370 cases since 2010, the majority of which (88.4%) have been focused on locating and providing legal assistance to detained family members.

The office staff has also participated in a number of cultural activities in the town, including an annual Festival of the Migrant (Día del Migrante). Staff developed a village-based literacy group primarily for women, and sponsored a program, CONALFA (Comité Nacional de Alfabetización, or National Literacy Committee). Thirteen women and one man were enrolled in the classes that were taught by office staff. Besides literacy, the women also discuss solidarity of women, inclusion, and practice self-energy exercises for mental health



Photo 12: Community member learning US geography to better understand migration

maintenance. They have also hosted lectures for the women on community development, hygiene, intra-familial violence, and the value of cooperation. In addition to literacy, there are also lessons on basic mathematics. More recently one of the office's staff has facilitated the development of a women's support group in Tablón where women whose husbands or sons have migrated meet regularly to share stories. They have developed a small basket-weaving project and are selling their work in local markets, supplementing family income. The staff hosts a monthly radio program on migration. Office staff have also developed a manual to guide others in the Quiché region and beyond in setting up similar resources to accompany migrant families in their communities (*Manual de Acompañamiento a las Familias que Quedan tras la Migración [Manual for Accompaniment of Families left behind by Migration]*, 2016; <http://www.bc.edu/centers/humanrights/resources/zacualpa-reports.html>). They provide training for those interested in setting up similar services, continue to give leadership to regional gatherings on migration, and to collaborate with MHRP students and staff in transnational projects involving the communities of Zacualpa. Their work has been recognized by several national and international organizations (InterPares; Project Counseling Services) who have supported the office financially over the past several years.

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Front Cover:

The front cover depicts a map of Zacualpa and many of its villages used in the census project. In the foreground is an image illustrating the migration out of the area; this image is a modified version of “Walkers at Tennyson Down” by Auntie P. licensed under Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Back Cover:

The top image depicts a mural in the Parish of the Holy Spirit in Zacualpa, El Quiché, Guatemala. This mural illustrates the history of Zacualpa from the armed conflict to the present day. Moving from left to right, the bottom images depict members of the co-research team collecting data (left); a co-researcher speaking to a household member for the census (middle) and a co-researcher presenting the results back to one of the local communities (right).



Proyecto de Investigación y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos del Migrante, Parroquia de Zacualpa.



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