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BUYING A COLONIAL DREAM: THE ROLE OF LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS IN THE GENTRIFICATION OF THE HISTORIC CENTER OF GRANADA, NICARAGUA

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DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Geography
in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

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Lexington, KY

2014

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

BUYING A COLONIAL DREAM: THE ROLE OF LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS IN THE
GENTRIFICATION OF THE HISTORIC CENTER OF GRANADA, NICARAGUA

This dissertation aims to expand our understanding of how lifestyle migrants from the

Global North impact the urban space of a Global South city, particularly the built environment. In

order to situate the questions posed in this dissertation, I focus on how lifestyle migrants from the

Global North and their foreign capital transform the city of Granada, Nicaragua through processes

of gentrification, and how the social and economic climate of the city and its residents are

impacted. This research allows for empirically informed theoretical critiques to be made about the

economic and social implications of the globalization of gentrification resulting from

heterogeneous lifestyle migration.

The property markets in many Global North locations, most notably the US, have pushed

lifestyle migrants to look abroad; gentrification has gone international, spreading to the Global

South. For reasons such as affordability and proximity to the US and Canada, many Global North

property-buyers are looking to the colonial historic city center of Granada, Nicaragua as a site for

relocation and investment. These migrants are purchasing and remodeling colonial-style homes as

part of a broader transformation of the historic center to cater to international tourism and elite

consumption.

Many lifestyle migrants involved in the gentrification processes occurring in Granada are choosing transnational lifestyles by maintaining citizenship in their home countries, and simultaneously engaging in economic and social relationships in both Nicaragua and their home (or other) countries. The advantages that accompany their positions as migrants from the Global North greatly affect the lifestyle migrants' roles in the transformation of the city, regardless of their own personal social and economic status at home. Many lifestyle migrants embrace a role of economic and social developers, and often enact a racist and neocolonialist understanding of the Nicaraguan people and culture as needing "improvement". Lifestyle migrants are generally able to benefit from capital accumulated in Global North markets and their Global North citizen status enables them to live a mobile, transnational lifestyle. Such economic and mobility opportunities are unavailable for many Nicaraguans, further exacerbating the inequalities between local Nicaraguan residents and privileged lifestyle migrants.

Abigail Foulds

February 8, 2014

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Date

For my wonderful mother
Jane Beveridge Campbell Foulds
June 2, 1948-February 25, 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has been a long labor of love, and would not have come to completion without the support of many wonderful people.

First, I want to thank all the gringos in Granada who willingly offered their time, thoughts, and help to make this research possible. I also want to thank the Granadinos who are always so warm, hospitable, and helpful to me, and who make Granada a wonderful place. Big thanks to Bosco Morales, my translator, ally, and friend. Many thanks to the always helpful, patient, and kind Julio Moncada, who honors my mother with his dedication to the Nicaragua Butterfly Reserve. Thanks, too, to Geno Rooks.

I want to thank Penn Garvin, who not only offered invaluable wisdom about Nicaragua, but also offered her love and encouragement when I needed it most. I also want to thank Elaine Herald for her love and support.

Thanks to Dr. Chris Coggins of Simon's Rock College, who introduced me to geography, a discipline which aligns with how I view the world, and for his continual support and encouragement.

I want to thank Dr. Patricia Documet for helping me get back on track with the dissertation and for welcoming me into my new academic home at the Evaluation Institute at the University of Pittsburgh, along with Todd Bear, Dr. Ed Ricci, and Dr. Beth Nolan.

I want to thank Dr. Sue Roberts for her invaluable insights and patience as my advisor, as well as to my helpful committee members Dr. Patricia Ehrkamp, Dr. Rich Schein, Dr. Susan Larson, and Dr. Michael Samers. Many thanks to all the faculty and staff in the University of Kentucky's Geography Department. Thanks also to Dr. Francine Chassen-Lopez of the History Dept, and Dr. Karen Tice of Gender and Women's Studies and Education.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since the early 2000s, Granada, Nicaragua has attracted Global North lifestyle migrants and tourists. The small Central American city is the primary tourist destination in Nicaragua due to its historic colonial-style architecture, its location on Lake Nicaragua, and its reputed "old-world" charm. Granada has gained popularity in the international media as a desirable destination for lifestyle migration and property investment. Despite the current global economic crisis and the controversial presidential election of Sandinista Daniel Ortega in 2006, the city remains a popular destination for Global Northerners seeking an ideal location to buy a house where they can establish a new, more desirable lifestyle.

When I first came to Granada, Nicaragua in November 2000, the city was becoming popular among foreign tourists and residents from the Global North, yet the foreign presence was minimal, with an estimated several dozen Global North residents and few establishments serving tourists. The 2000s saw great growth of foreigners visiting and living in the city. In 2000, Nicaragua received 142,118 tourists from North America and Europe (INTUR 2000). In 2010, these arrivals more than doubled at 319,729 (INTUR 2010). In 2007-2008, this research finds there were anywhere from 500 full-time Global North foreign residents in Granada to 3000 part-time foreign residents. According to interviews with foreign realtors and government officials, an estimated 20-35% of the approximately 1800 properties in the historic center are now owned by non-Nicaraguans.

Many of the Global North lifestyle migrants were among the first to develop the tourist infrastructure, which primarily served backpackers, who were the most common early tourists. As Granada has become a more popular tourist destination, the tourist infrastructure has grown and diversified, adding many hotels, restaurants, and businesses catering to tourists and lifestyle migrants. Nevertheless, Granada's growing popularity among foreigners must not be overstated;

many Global North "mass" tourists remain reluctant to visit due to Nicaragua's dangerous reputation and relative lack of creature comforts, infrastructure, and amenities.

The tourist and lifestyle migrant populations have evolved concomitantly and Granada's entertainment economy caters to Global North tourists and locally residing lifestyle migrants (as well as the small Nicaraguan elite). One goal of this dissertation is to document a Global South community in the midst of evolving along the tourism destination and gentrification stage models, as well as with the evolution of lifestyle migration. This dissertation provides a case study of the marriage of these three developments as they transform the historic urban center of Granada, Nicaragua.

Figure 1.1, A typical street in Granada's *Centro Histórico*

Granada's real estate economy has also grown together with the foreign population. The city has a compact and well-preserved historic district of Spanish colonial-style buildings (see Figures 1.1. and 1.2). The architecture appeals to foreigners because of its historicity, "exoticness", and opportunities for "outside living" provided by interior open courtyards. Foreign

property owners commonly claim that they came to Granada as tourists, "fell in love" with the city, and subsequently purchased property. Granada's historic center has become a popular site for property investment in large part because of it comparative affordability. In the early 2000s, large colonial homes could be purchased for less than US$50,000. With no established formal real estate law, many foreigners started real estate companies and infamously ushered in an era of real estate speculation and property "flipping." This boom reached its height in about 2007, ending with the global economic crash and the election of Daniel Ortega. Although the "days of flipping" are considered to be over, the foreign-geared real estate economy continues in Granada. This has been aided by international media attention, including three New York Times travel and international real estate articles (Dicum 2006; Hooper 2007; McGuire 2009), and promotion from businesses like International Living (International Living 2013), a company offering how-to guides and tours for moving abroad and purchasing property in Nicaragua (and other international destinations).

Figure 1.2, Another typical street in Granada's Centro Histórico.

As the type of tourists that visit Granada has evolved from "adventurers" to more mainstream mass tourists, so too has the city's real estate economy and the transference of properties evolved. The prices of colonial-style homes in the historic center of Granada have dramatically appreciated in value as a result of foreigner acquisition. Many Global Northerners have purchased these properties for speculative investment.

Global North lifestyle migrants are gentrifying Granada by utilizing their comparative economic, racial, and mobility privilege. Through the acquisition of colonial-style homes and the transformation of the historic urban center's architecture and land usage, lifestyle migrants have come to dominate the historic center, making it a site of elite consumption inaccessible to the comparatively disenfranchised local residents.

<div align="center">THEMES AND CONTRIBUTIONS</div>

This dissertation research contributes to existent gentrification and lifestyle migration scholarship in several regards. First, this research contributes to the growing scholarship on lifestyle migration by providing an in-depth examination of a new and evolving destination in the Global South. Existent scholarship addresses the growing trend of lifestyle migration, especially in established destinations in coastal Spain (O'Reilly 2000; Casado-Diaz 2006; King *et al.* 2000), yet there has been minimal examinations of areas which have only recently drawn new populations of lifestyle migrants, such as Boquete, Panama (McWatters 2009) or Hungary (Bahar *et al.* 2009). Although the number of lifestyle migrants in Granada, Nicaragua remains small, this dissertation argues that their impacts have been substantial. For the small city of Granada, Nicaragua (population approx. 115,000), a few thousand foreign residents and over 400,000 international visitors yearly (INTUR 2010) have had a significant impact on the city.

This dissertation offers an examination of the impacts of Global North lifestyle migration on a Global South destination. Lifestyle migrants often move to sites where their comparative wealth grants them an economic advantage (such as from the UK to Spain), yet there has been

little focus on destinations where lifestyle migrants maintain acute wealth, race, and mobility privileges, as is the case with Global Northerners in Nicaragua. The movement of Global North lifestyle migrants to relatively poor areas is distinct because the pronounced wealth and privilege disparity significantly affects the social and economic dynamics.

The lifestyle migrants' privileged position manifests most clearly in the gentrification of commercialized public spaces and residences of Granada's historic center. This research contributes to existent gentrification scholarship by examining the transformation of a Global South urban core by independent international buyers. Although scholars have declared that gentrification has spread globally (Davidson 2007; Lees *et al.* 2008; Smith 2002), gentrification in Global South destinations has received little examination (although see Walker 2008; Swanson 2007; Atkinson and Bridge 2005; Bloom 2006; Jones and Varley 1999; Visser 2002; Islam 2005). Additionally, the limited research focusing on gentrification processes in the Global South has addressed larger-scale urban transformations primarily resulting from public-private funding partnerships. In Granada, however, the state is less involved in gentrification processes. In their overview of gentrification, Lees, Slater, and Wyly call for more research on the globalization of gentrification: "Despite the recent assertion of links between gentrification and globalization, the analysis of these links has actually been quite limited. It is often conjectural and empirically unsubstantiated" (Lees *et al.* 2008: 132). This research aims to provide empirical evidence of the globalization of gentrification by examining the lifestyle migrant-led gentrification occurring in Granada, Nicaragua. This research adds to gentrification and lifestyle migration scholarship by examining the influence of lifestyle migration in historic urban development, specifically addressing how a transnational status facilitates the gentrification of a small Global South city.

DEFINING LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS IN GRANADA

According to research collected in 2007 and 2008, an estimated 300-2000 Global North foreigners own property in Granada. Based on interviews, participant observation, and the

collected list of known lifestyle migrants, there are approximately 500 lifestyle migrants in Granada. In this research, my working definition of a lifestyle migrant in Granada is broad: it ranges from a Global Northerner who continuously lives there to those who "regularly" spend time in the city. This includes returning for at least one week, several times throughout a year; however, lifestyle migrants commonly stay for periods of one to three months each year. I estimate that approximately 150 lifestyle migrants live in Granada for most of the year, meaning that they are based in Granada, and live there for over 8 months of the year. Although many lifestyle migrants own property, this is not universally the case. For a variety of reasons, including limited capital or uncertainty in Nicaragua's property market, many lifestyle migrants do not own property in Granada.

Lifestyle migrants are predominantly white and usually come from comfortable economic means in their home countries. They usually hail from the United States. Other well-represented Global North countries of origin are Canada, Australia, and European countries. Of the European countries, the Netherlands is disproportionately highly represented; many come from the UK, Spain, France, Italy, and Denmark. Additionally, other European countries are represented, as well as a limited number from Asian countries (Taiwan and Nicaragua have an economic connection). The majority of lifestyle migrants in Granada are over the age of 50, although there is a surprising diversity of ages, and the numbers of younger lifestyle migrants and children are growing.

SITE AND SITUATION

Nicaragua is the largest country in the isthmus of Central America, with Costa Rica to the south and Honduras to the north. There are three broad physical regions of the country, each generally extending north to south: the Pacific lowlands, the central highlands, and the vast lowlands of the east towards the Caribbean, known as the Miskito Coast. The city of Granada is located in the Pacific lowlands in the department of Granada and lies on the northwest shore of

Lake Nicaragua (see Figure 1.3). Granada is located 45 kilometers from the capital city of

Managua. The major highway connecting Granada to the Pan-American Highway near Managua

was recently improved. This development has resulted in much faster access to the international

airport and to shopping centers in Managua, further solidifying the linkage between Granada and

Managua, as well as with the larger city of Masaya, which is en route to Managua. Many workers

and students live in Granada and commute to Managua.

Miami is closer to Managua than it is to New York; the flight is 3 hours, a relatively short

duration compared to many other tropical destinations. Nicaragua's close proximity to the United

States (and Canada) is among its biggest advantages for foreigners who are looking to live

abroad. There are currently six daily flights to Managua from the US.

Figure 1.3, Map of Nicaragua (Source: Richard Gilbreath)

POLITICS AND FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT

Nicaragua has a long history of foreign intervention, in large part because of its geography in relation to the US and international trade routes. It is important to address the long and involved US relationship with Nicaragua in order to highlight how the current foreign interest in Nicaragua is not without precedent. The Spanish built the city of Granada in 1524 on an already existent settlement of indigenous people, although the indigenous population of the central mountains and Western lowlands suffered dramatic declines with the Spanish conquest (Walker 2003). The Spanish built and rebuilt the city of Granada several times until their reign ended in 1822 (although Nicaragua only achieved sovereignty in its current state in 1838) (Walker 2003). The city was burned to the ground several times, most recently by William Walker in 1856 (Reyes 2002). William Walker was a filibuster, seeking to extend the territory of the United States under the paradigm of Manifest Destiny, but without the support of the United States government. Walker was invited by Nicaragua's liberal party based in the city of Leon to conquer the conservative capital Granada during a period national conflict (Walker 2003).

The United States has also considered Nicaragua as a site for trans-continental transport routes. In the 19th century, in order to reach Western areas of the US from the east, one had to either travel slowly overland, or by sea around South America's Cape Horn. A shorter, quicker route was desired by many foreign interests and the thin Central American isthmus became a targeted route. This interest was heightened in the mid-1800s with the discovery of gold in California, and many traveled from the Caribbean via the San Juan River, Lake Nicaragua, and rode 20 km aboard Cornelius Vanderbilt's railroad to the Pacific Ocean in southwest Nicaragua (Walker 2003; Booth and Walker 1999).

Since this time, many have proposed an all-water access route through Nicaragua. In the 19th century, various actors planned dredging the San Juan River and digging a canal across the narrow stretch of land west of Lake Nicaragua. For various reasons, including the opposition by

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Nicaragua's president, this plan, considered to be the most ideal by many, wasn't implemented. Instead, the US helped to foment an independence movement in the Isthmus of Panama. Panama broke away from Colombia in 1903 and the territory of the Panama Canal was ceded to the United States the following year, at which time the Panama Canal began construction (Walker 2003; Booth and Walker 1999). Interest in building a canal through Nicaragua continues. In June 2013, an independent Chinese investor named Wang Jing signed a US$40 billion deal with the Nicaraguan government to build and operate an inter-oceanic canal (Rogers 2013, July 24). As of August 2013, this project is being heavily scrutinized in Nicaragua, not least because of environmental concerns.

The US has interjected itself into Nicaraguan politics frequently. To quell socialist uprisings, the US Marines were stationed in Nicaragua from 1912-1925 and returned a few months later, staying from 1925-1933. The US Marines helped establish the Nicaraguan National Guard, of which US-friendly Anastasio Somoza Garcia became the director in 1933. After overthrowing the government, he was "elected" as the Nicaraguan President in 1937, and he and his sons ruled the country as a dictatorship until the Sandinista Revolution in 1979.

The *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN) began in 1961 as a resistance movement to the Somoza dictatorship. Daniel Ortega led the Sandinista party as it revolutionized the Nicaraguan government, establishing a socialist system after it ousted Somoza in 1979. One Sandinista governmental change was the confiscation of the Somoza family's and allies' (*Somocistas*) property, which covered over two-thirds of the land (Mathey 1990; Walker 2003). The Sandinistas also confiscated properties owned by foreigners, as well as any property deemed "abandoned" for six months or longer. This property confiscation incensed the US government and continues to be a concern for foreign property owners in Nicaragua, as addressed in Chapter 2. The US waged an illegal war against the Sandinista government by aiding opposing Contra

resistance fighters. The Contra war and the US embargo helped to end the Sandinista government, when they lost a democratic election in 1990.

After 16 years of neoliberal leaders, Daniel Ortega and the Sandinistas won the presidency again in 2006. Ortega won a third election in 2011, after the Nicaraguan Supreme Court changed Nicaraguan law to allow a third term. Although Ortega is considered to be a leftist populist and frequently declares his opposition to US imperialism, his government has arguably shifted away from the social justice priorities of the 1980s era. For example, all abortions are currently banned in Nicaragua and the government encourages international investment (Babb 2010).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS OVERVIEW

The dissertation study is focused on three interrelated questions: (a) What is the role of lifestyle migrants in the gentrification occurring in Granada, Nicaragua's city center?; (b) How do lifestyle migrants utilize an expatriate status to undertake gentrification?; and (c) What are the perceived effects of lifestyle migration on both the local real estate economy, and on the broader social, cultural, and economic relations of Granada?

This research is based on data collected through semi-structured interviews with Global North "gentrifiers", real estate agents from the Global North, and Nicaraguan officials; participant observation; a survey of current lifestyle migrants; and photographic documentation of Granada's historic center. These methods helped identify and analyze: how lifestyle migrants are buying and remodeling properties in the Granada's city center; the means and legal strategies through which they use their international status in gentrification efforts; and how lifestyle migrant gentrifiers are affecting the real estate economy in Granada's historic city center.

TERMS USED IN THIS DISSERTATION

To describe the global northerners living and buying property in Granada, in this dissertation, I utilize the term "lifestyle migrant", which refers to relatively privileged migrants

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whose move is primarily motivated to attain a desired lifestyle (Benson and O'Reilly 2009). Many lifestyle migrants in Granada often refer to themselves and others like them as "expatriates" or "expats". Although the term "expatriate" simply means to live abroad, it carries certain colonialist connotations: expatriates are often seen as white Global Northerners living in former colonial territories (Thompson and Tambyah 1999: 217; Fechter and Walsh 2010). In Nicaragua, the term "gringo" is commonly used to refer to people from the Global North, including Europeans and Australians. Although whiteness is usually associated with the term gringo, any Global Northerner may be called a gringo. "The word *gringo* is usually a harmless moniker for foreigners" (Wood and Berman 2010: 24, italics in original) and lifestyle migrants often refer to themselves as gringos.

Nicaraguans are frequently called "Nicas" by both foreigners and Nicaraguans, regardless of gender. Likewise, both genders of Costa Ricans are called "Ticos". Nicaraguan residents of Granada are "Granadinos" or "Granadinas" (depending on gender).

<u>ORGANIZATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION</u>

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters following the introduction. In Chapter 2, I provide a detailed overview of the current foreign intervention occurring in Granada, Nicaragua. I discuss the various actors involved in the gentrification of the city's historic center, including the array of foreign buyers, foreign realtors, and Nicaraguans. I discuss why Global Northerners move to Nicaragua, including the various push and pull factors influencing why lifestyle migrants buy in Granada. Further, I provide a detailed account of the colonial-style architecture and the transformations conducted by foreign owners as they substantially redesign the house layout whereby reconfiguring the way the house is used by residents.

Chapter 3 outlines my research questions and methods used, as well as provides a discussion about feminist methodological concerns, including positionality and issues related to representation.

In Chapter 4, I review existent relevant scholarship, including stage models of tourism destination development in juxtaposition with gentrification stage models and I relate how these applies to the current situation in Granada, Nicaragua. I discuss how a place and involved actors transform as the destination becomes more popular. I also address the conspicuous lacuna of research regarding Global South destinations in both gentrification and lifestyle migration scholarship. This dissertation aims to contribute to these discussions because lifestyle migration and gentrification operationalize distinctly when carried out by privileged Global Northerners in Global South sites.

Chapter 5 addresses this transformation in terms of how houses and spaces in the historic city center are utilized. Granada's historic center is transforming into a space geared towards elite and foreign consumption, with the influx of Global North foreigners. This chapter addresses the urban impacts of the foreign-led gentrification, as well as governmental tax, immigration, and other policies which have facilitated this transformation.

Chapter 6 investigates the relationships between lifestyle migrants and local Nicaraguans according to the perspectives of the foreigners. Many lifestyle migrants gain cultural capital by demonstrating that they live in an antique, colonial-style house in Granada surrounded by Nicaraguans. Although many embrace a cosmopolitan lifestyle by appreciating difference, most foreigners have limited interactions with Nicaraguans. Among the lifestyle migrants, there is a deep ambivalence about Nicaragua and its people. This chapter explores how many lifestyle migrants embody a racist and neocolonialist understanding of their role in the community and actively work to "improve" the country.

Chapter 7 addresses the various social and economic dynamics among the foreign population in Granada, including their interdependence, as well as their reluctance to be grouped together. In this chapter, I also discuss the development of the multiplier businesses that have recently opened to facilitate the reproduction of the lifestyle migrants' livelihoods. There are now

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foreign-run businesses which help other lifestyle migrants live and exist in Granada, such as providing assistance when applying for Nicaraguan residency. This sort of lifestyle migrant-geared and lifestyle migrant-led economy has yet to be explored in tourist and lifestyle migration literature.

The conclusion in Chapter 8 summarizes the dissertation's findings about the lifestyle migrant-led gentrification of Granada. I highlight how this specific site of global gentrification is dependent upon the economic and racial privilege of global northerners. This chapter also addresses the links between gentrification, tourism, and lifestyle migration, specifically their similar stage models of development. Finally, I discuss future research matters resulting from this case study, specifically related to the ramifications resulting from gentrification and lifestyle migration development in Global South sites.

CHAPTER 2: SITUATING LIFESTYLE MIGRANT GENTRIFICATION IN GRANADA, NICARAGUA

In this chapter, I describe Granada's current situation in regards to foreign-led gentrification by outlining the city's attractions for Global Northerners. I also describe different aesthetic preferences of Nicaraguans and foreigners. Finally, I detail the colonial-style houses and ways in which foreigners transform them.

Granada is the tourist center of Nicaragua. According to Granada's National Tourism Institute (INTUR) director, 80% of Nicaragua's foreign tourists visit Granada. The city began growing in popularity around 2000 and although the 2007 election of Daniel Ortega and the onset of the recession caused a short lull in foreigner interest, the popularity of Granada with Global North tourists has slowly and steadily increased. Although the city is currently receiving more international tourists and investment, Granada, Nicaragua remains relatively "undeveloped." The small lifestyle migrant community currently consists of residents who are surprisingly diverse in age, wealth status, nationality, and former or current occupations.

RECENT FOREIGN POPULARITY: THE APPEAL OF GRANADA, NICARAGUA TO GLOBAL NORTHERNERS

This section describes the most popular reasons cited by foreigners (both tourists and lifestyle migrants) for spending time in the city, including the low cost of living and a tropical climate, which are commonly cited motivations for lifestyle migrants in various destinations, such as Mexico or coastal Spain (Truly 2002; King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000; Banks 2004). Lifestyle migrants are also drawn to Granada for retirement, entrepreneurial opportunities, affordable health care, and because of the established tourist infrastructure. Additionally, many lifestyle migrants also come to Granada to purchase property, or to pursue sexual or romantic relations with local Nicaraguans, which are motivations not commonly addressed in existent lifestyle migrant scholarship.

ESTABLISHED TOURIST CENTER

Global Northerners in Granada are a mix of tourists and foreign residents and there is significant overlap between the two, especially since many lifestyle migrants first came to the city as tourists (O'Reilly 2000; King *et al.* 2000; Hall and Muller 2004). Granada has unequivocally developed into the tourist capital of Nicaragua and it serves as the home base for most travelers visiting various sites in Nicaragua. Granada is centrally located and is popularly seen as a safe, compact, and walkable city with beautiful architecture. It has the most extensive tourist economy with a wide selection of hotels, bars, restaurants, and tour guides. Since the early 2000s, the city's tourist economy has grown to include more internet cafes, coffee shops, and souvenir shops filled with locally made handcrafts, such as pottery and cigars. One man in his 50s who has been in Nicaragua since 2001 mentioned that much of this development has been foreigner-led:

> When I got here there was almost nowhere to eat, and now there's a lot of restaurants … Most of the restaurants are owned by foreigners. I think most of the hotels, or not most of them, but a lot of hotels are owned by foreigners. Maybe some of the tourist type stuff that's popped up is directly related to the foreigners starting them.

As the city has become more popular with foreigners, there are increasing numbers of businesses and activities catering specifically to the new lifestyle migrant population, as will be discussed further in Chapter 7. For example, there is now a specialty foods store selling the expensive, quality food goods demanded by foreigners, such as olives and British biscuits (O'Reilly 2000; Ryan and Trauer 2005).

TROPICAL CLIMATE

Similar to lifestyle migrants examined in other destinations, the climate is cited as one of the primary attractions for foreigners settling in Granada (King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000; Truly 2002; Casado-Diaz 1999, 2006). Granada is located in a tropical wet-dry climate ("Aw" in Koppen Climate Classification System), and the most popular time to visit is during the dry season between November and March, when temperatures are slightly cooler. This season

coincides with the winters of the Northern hemisphere and many "snow birds" come during this period to escape the cold weather.

Granada's average daily high temperature is between 27-33 degrees Celsius (80-91 degrees Fahrenheit) and although many of the foreigners in Granada say they enjoy the weather, others complain about the excessive heat, humidity, and sunlight. The nearby Lake Nicaragua provides a constant breeze, helping to alleviate the heat, and is emphatically lauded by foreign residents and is advertised in foreigner-geared media.

<div align="center">INEXPENSIVE LIVING</div>

Nicaragua is commonly cited as the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, after Haiti (CIA World Factbook 2013). The estimated 2012 GDP Per Capita PPP in Nicaragua is US$4,500 per year. By comparison, the US is US$50,700 (CIA World Factbook 2012). For Global North foreigners, Nicaragua is very inexpensive. The low costs are a significant draw of the country for obvious reasons: foreigners' money goes farther than in many other destinations, even within Latin America.

The low cost of living in Nicaragua cannot be overestimated in importance to Global North foreigners. Many of the other reasons why foreigners choose to spend time in Nicaragua are predicated on the relatively low cost of living. Many retirees with fixed incomes pick Nicaragua as a destination because they believe that they can live a better life there than in their home countries, where they would be unable to live on their savings or pensions (Bushnell and Bushnell 2013). The low cost of living grants the lifestyle migrants more disposable income than they would have in their home countries, and they use it to enhance their lifestyles, including employing maids, enjoying restaurant meals, or traveling.

<div align="center">RETIREMENT</div>

There are many lifestyle migrants who are retirees in Granada and their numbers are increasing. For these *pensionados* (pensioners) seeking to live on a limited pension and/or social

security income, the low cost of living in Nicaragua is a primary appeal. Ten or fifteen years ago, many Global North retirees who would have chosen Costa Rica have instead moved to Nicaragua. In addition to garnering a trendy reputation, Nicaragua is now seen as more economically and physically safe (Wood and Berman 2010; International Living 2013). Further, the cost of living in Costa Rica has risen greatly in recent years (Janoschka 2009); and the Costa Rican government has increased the monthly income required of foreign resident pensioners (Babb 2010). Nicaragua has recently made efforts to attract Global North pensioners and their money through Resident Pensioner Law 628, which allows foreigners who are over the age of 45 and who earn a monthly income of at least US$400 to become permanent residents of Nicaragua. This and another governmental foreign investment incentive are discussed further in Chapter 5.

In the past decade or so, the number of foreigners spending time in Granada who are non-working retirees has increased dramatically. When I first lived in Granada in 2001, only a handful of lifestyle migrants were not completely occupied with running their tourist businesses, and now there are many more full-time retirees. Table 2.1 documents the employment status of the 44 lifestyle migrant gentrifiers interviewed in 2007 according to age. All but one person under 50 is currently employed. Although 44 respondents is only a fraction of the 500 lifestyle migrants in Granada, I am confident that this breakdown of work status is fairly representative. Of the 44 lifestyle migrants, only 8 people were not currently working, which is notable because 61% are older than 50 years old.

ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Many lifestyle migrants open businesses in Granada. According to interviewees, the entrepreneurial opportunities in Nicaragua are perceived to be vast for several reasons, especially compared to home countries (Wood and Berman 2010): start-up costs are relatively minimal; the general business climate, particularly the tourist infrastructure, is undeveloped but growing; and

many lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs believe the country to be akin to the 'Wild West':

government regulations are commonly ignored or bypassed, sometimes through bribery.

Table 2.1, Ages and Work Status of Interviewees in 2007 Research

Age Range	*Number of Interviewees*	*Employed*	*Retired*
20-29	5	5	0
30-39	3	3	0
40-49	9	8	1
50-59	16	14	2
60-69	9	6	3
Over 70	3	1	2
Total	44	36	8

Many of Granada's lifestyle migrant entrepreneurs can be characterized as consumption-

led entrepreneurial migrants (Williams and Hall 2002), meaning that they have established a work

situation to accommodate their primary goal of living in the city. For example, many foreigners

who want to live in Nicaragua work in new occupations as the opportunities arise. In the late

1990s and early 2000s, many foreigners came to Granada with plans to retire but they, perhaps

unexpectedly, ended up engaged in a business venture. My 2004-2005 Master's research

examined such actors whom I labeled "entrepreneurial expatriates". Many were of retirement age,

had sufficient savings and/or income, and had anticipated retiring in Granada, but were motivated

to start businesses and services which were desired by the growing population of tourists and

lifestyle migrants. One American lifestyle migrant explained in the current research in 2007:

> It's interesting what's happened. When we first came here, there were no restaurants.
> One of the reasons I opened a restaurant is because I couldn't find any place I liked
> to eat. And going back to the same restaurant time after time after time became
> boring. I thought okay, I'll open a restaurant. And I'll serve what no one else is
> serving…[including] American style soups [and] quiche, nobody served quiche…
> And now over the last 3 months, there's been 12 or more restaurants opening. So you
> see that…everybody is opening a restaurant.

Some lifestyle migrants have chosen to move to Granada solely to open a business. Several interviewees had traveled throughout Latin America, searching for the perfect location to start a business (Brenner and Fricke 2007). Although foreigners of all ages are engaged in running businesses, most of the younger expatriates (under age 50) run some sort of business in Granada, sometimes because they don't have enough capital to invest in a business in the Global North.

For some lifestyle migrants, creating new lives for themselves involves becoming one's own boss (McMinn and Cater 1998; O'Reilly 2000; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Benson 2010). Many of the entrepreneurial foreigners in Granada can be described as non-conformists. (Or, as one American told me, "There are too many 'type-A personalities' among us.") Several interviewees told me that they opened a business because they wanted to determine their own schedules and lifestyles, and they could do that more easily in Nicaragua. As one young entrepreneur said about the advantages of having a business in Granada: "Did I nap today? Yes. Did I commute? No. Did I have a fruit smoothie? Yes."

As the growing number of lifestyle migrants (and tourists) has increased demand for entertainment and service businesses (such as coffee shops and yoga classes), entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants have stepped in to satisfy the needs of this population with relative ease. A British man in his 40s told me:

> There is a sense of possibility here and if one has an idea to do something than one can go ahead and do it. Generally these things are to do with, perhaps with property, perhaps with businesses. And in fact because you can't be employed here generally, there aren't employment opportunities for Westerners, unless you become specifically a part of an NGO or something like that. But generally people who are moving here have to be entrepreneurial. There is no choice. If you are going to try and earn some money, you've got to set up your own business… It's split between, half of the expat community here is entrepreneurial and half of it are retires, effectively. But I like the fact that a lot of the people I know here are pursuing interesting projects of one way or another or have interesting businesses, jobs. Because…it's cheap here, it opens up possibilities so you can buy a large chunk of land in a beautiful place here just outside of town and think oh, what am I gonna do with this? Am I going to have a farm? Am I going to have a butterfly farm? Am I going to have a cabin for tourists? Am I going to build a hotel? You couldn't do that

in the UK, unless you're a millionaire. Here you could do it with having a fairly modest investment.

Entrepreneurial lifestyle migrants are often able to capitalize their businesses using Global North resources, including savings, pensions, investments, property rentals, or businesses that continue to earn money in their home countries. Many still own homes in their countries of origin and can borrow against these properties to access capital. This is a notable advantage that is not widely available to Nicaraguans, whom generally do not have similar access to funds, to credit lines, or to Global North employment sources (Wood and Berman 2010). In other words, many Global Northerners are able to accumulate earnings and capital in their home countries and invest it in Nicaragua, where it significantly increases in relative value due to cost of living disparities.

Several interviewees pointed out to me that even though the bars and restaurants in Granada are seemingly oriented to tourism and foreigners, the bulk of their clientele is actually the small numbers of elite Nicaraguans. It can be argued that the appeal and success of these businesses is that they are international and supposedly a place geared towards foreigners. Nicaraguans can gain cultural capital by patronizing such cosmopolitan establishments.

One of the noteworthy findings from this research is the development of businesses geared specifically towards lifestyle migrants. Lifestyle migrants are providing services geared exclusively towards other lifestyle migrants, including businesses that manage and rent properties for lifestyle migrants – especially popular among investors who seldom return to Granada. These property management businesses advertise and facilitate vacation rentals, pay utilities and employees, ensure the property's security, and will even furnish the house. There are also lifestyle migrants who provide assistance services: translations, assistance in applying for Nicaraguan residency, and help in navigating local bureaucracies. I argue that this development

demonstrates the evolution of the lifestyle migration community in Nicaragua, as discussed

further in Chapter 7.

<p style="text-align:center">BUYING PROPERTY</p>

Not least important among the reasons why Global Northerners come to Granada is to

buy property. Figure 2.1 shows the exterior of a home owned by a lifestyle migrant. According to

the lifestyle migrants who live in Granada, buying property can be an expression of their

commitment to and love of the city, a chance to give back life to a noble old house. An added

bonus is that it functions as a strategic site for investing their money – tax-free in their home

countries, since Granada proprieties are bought in cash. One realtor described the lifestyle

migrants buying property in Granada:

> Well, there's two kinds. There's investors and there's people that romantically fall in
> love with the idea of Granada and living in a foreign country, at least part of the year.
> And some of those, they cross over the line. People who are smart investors may
> think of living here forever. But they always want to know that they've made a good
> investment with their money, they're not going to lose money, they think to the
> future. If they didn't want to be here anymore, if they couldn't liquidate and make
> their money back and make some money on top of it [they wouldn't buy it]. So that's
> what they're thinking about. And that's how it is with any big purchase that anyone
> makes, whether it's a car – does it have a good resale value? Even though you know
> you lose money, you like the car that's going to retain its value.

As this realtor points out, even though many lifestyle migrants buy property in Granada based on

an emotional appeal, they are also usually conscious of retaining the property's investment value.

Some property-buying lifestyle migrants are highly driven to renovate and decorate a

home in Granada. One return migrant said:

> So there's an excitement to [buying a colonial home], there's an adventure to it. A lot
> of people, I think, buy a house with just this fantasy of like, 'Ooh, it's my dream to
> decorate a colonial home.' And [they] don't consider the costs, [like], okay, if I
> invest a hundred thousand, am I going to get that back? I think some do, but I think
> some don't. I think some people are just living out this little fantasy by buying a
> house in a foreign country and fixing it up.

Figure 2.1, The remodeled house on the left, owned by a lifestyle migrant, visibly differs from neighboring houses.

While there have always been some people who have been interested in such endeavors, there is a marked trend in the US and Canada to fixate on one's home. The current and widespread trend to define one's identity and demonstrate cultural, economic, and social capital through one's home must be placed in the context of the current popularity of this middle class obsession. In his pop culture book *House Lust* (2008), Daniel McGinn discusses this phenomenon in context of the US, but I posit that Global Northerners have taken this obsession with detailed and elaborate home remodeling and directed it toward properties in Granada. For example, Figure 2.2 shows the extravagant renovations of the interior of a house owned by a lifestyle migrant. Such endeavors provide a new frontier and manner to demonstrate one's cultural and economic capital, as described by Bridge: "The unrenovated property allows the purchaser to 'make their mark.' This relates to the personalization of a home, but also to its function as aesthetic display" (2001: 99).

Others have come to buy property primarily as an investment and do not plan to spend any more time in Nicaragua than necessary. Speculation hit its height in the mid 2000s, and by 2007, the frenzied boom was ending. While conducting my research in 2007, the much-hyped property boom of Granada had embittered some lifestyle migrants. According to many lifestyle migrants, speculators who purchase property as an investment opportunity do not care about Granada in any regards except in terms of property values. One young lifestyle migrant talked about how speculators are not interested in participating in Granada's community: "If they're looking for total anonymity, they'll go somewhere else. [However] the speculators don't care, I mean, they don't live here for the most part. Or if they do live here, they don't have any sense of community."

Figure 2.2, House remodeled by a lifestyle migrant

The speculators looking for a place to invest their money are a prime example of the international rent gap described by scholars such as Smith (1996, 2002), Lees *et al.* (2008), and Atkinson and Bridge (2005). Many speculators have recently found Granada's real estate to be a suitable site for investment due to its low purchasing cost with potential to provide a profitable return. According to many interviewees, such speculators are not emotionally invested in the property or Granada except in terms of providing a suitable environment to facilitate value growth, as will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

SEX TOURISM OR "TRADITIONAL" GENDER ROLES

Some foreigners are drawn to Nicaragua because of opportunities for sex tourism; however, few would admit this. Many foreign residents in Granada speak of sexual tourists with vitriol. For obvious reasons, it is difficult to assess how widespread sex tourism is in Granada, but foreigners claim it is not uncommon. The topic usually was raised among interviewees when discussing ways that foreigners harm Nicaraguans and the city of Granada. Many expatriates claim that there are pedophiles and sexual deviants who come to Nicaragua to take advantage of the desperation of poor Nicaraguans, who may turn a blind eye towards pedophilia and prostitution.

More pervasive are the sexual and/or romantic relationships between Nicaraguan women (and men) with Global North men (Babb 2010). Although there are many variations of these relationships, the most visibly noted and discussed among lifestyle migrants are those between older foreign men and much younger Nicaraguan women. Many lifestyle migrants condemned these relationships and blamed the foreign men who take advantage of the lack of economic opportunities for the young women (and men). Some interviewees claimed that lifestyle migrant men come to Nicaragua in order to start sexual relationships with young Nicaraguan women who, they expect, will happily perform "traditional" gender roles, such as cooking and cleaning. There are also foreign women in Granada who become sexually involved with Nicaraguan men, but,

according to many lifestyle migrants, these women are not considered to be "cut of the same cloth" as the lifestyle migrant men. The romantic and/or sexual relationships between lifestyle migrants and Nicaraguans are addressed further in Chapter 6.

HEALTH CARE

Access to affordable and competent health care was repeated as an important issue to lifestyle migrants. Because a majority of the lifestyle migrants in Granada are over the age of 50, access to affordable and reliable health care is a constant and growing concern for these elderly foreigners. Although Nicaragua has a public health care system established during the Sandinista era, most foreigners don't utilize it. Instead, lifestyle migrants more commonly utilize various private health facilities and although service costs vary, health care costs are consistently less expensive than in the United States (Rogers 2005). Dental work is widely cited as a bargain in Nicaragua. Pharmaceuticals are easy to obtain (no physician prescription is needed) and generally significantly cheaper in Nicaragua than in the US, although availability is inconsistent. One American female who was among the first lifestyle migrants in Granada said:

> It's starting to be an easy city to live in. A big issue before was health care for retirees because they have health problems. But now they have this brand new hospital, but it's in Managua, Metropolitano, a very American type hospital, a very good hospital. And they have a house plan; you can buy health insurance there.

The Hospital Metropolitano Vivian Pellas in Managua was built in 2004 by one of the country's wealthiest families. The new facility is billed as one of the best private hospitals in Central America (Rogers 2005) and was widely touted by lifestyle migrants I interviewed, providing medical care that satisfies the demanding lifestyle migrants. Vivian Pellas has a "Health Club" plan which offers service discounts for monthly fees at "Silver" or "Gold" levels. In collaboration with Nicaragua's tourism department (INTUR), the hospital is also promoting medical tourism with services such as plastic and orthopedic surgery (Hutt 2013).

This section has addressed the various reasons why lifestyle migrants and tourists decide to spend time in Nicaragua. In addition to the common reasons motivating lifestyle migrants to live (and retire) in a new destination in various locations, including inexpensive living with a favorable climate in an established tourist community (King *et al.* 2000; Casado-Diaz 1999; Truly 2002; O'Reilly 2000), foreigners come to Granada because they want to buy property, start businesses, find sexual partners, and access inexpensive medical facilities.

FOREIGNERS IN GRANADA

In this section, I describe the common characteristics of Global Northern tourists and lifestyle migrants who spend time in Granada. Because Nicaragua's political upheaval in the 1980s generated a lingering dangerous reputation, only alternative tourists, non-conformists, and volunteers visited the city until recently. However, as Granada has garnered international media attention as an "up and coming" destination, this research has found that there are increasing number of "mass tourists" and new types of lifestyle migrants, such as young couples and families, single women, gays, and "mainstream" Global Northerners whose presence can be linked to a next phase of a destination's "development" (McWatters 2009; Truly 2002; Butler 1980).

INDEPENDENT TOURISTS: BACKPACKERS AND OTHER "ALTERNATIVE" TOURISTS

The majority of tourists who come to Nicaragua can be considered "independent tourists." Tourism scholars position "new" or "alternative tourism" (e.g., backpacking and eco-tourism) against "mass tourism" (e.g., all-inclusive resorts and cruise ships). The traditional, packaged tourists are commonly understood to engage in tourism to get away from their mundane lives and to experience the "three s's" – sun, sand, and sea (Mowforth and Munt 2003). Many alternative tourists, on the other hand, travel to *experience* new cultures and to see the unique and unusual – they want to experience the "authentic". Alternative tourists often seek extraordinary

experiences and they frequently aim to be among the first to a new destination and interact with peoples who haven't already been "ruined" by mass tourism.

Although it is increasingly hard to theoretically distinguish mass and alternative tourists, the majority of tourists in Granada can be considered alternative because life and travel in Nicaragua is generally perceived to be difficult. For Global Northerners accustomed to certain comforts, Nicaragua can be unpleasant (e.g., the electricity periodically goes out in Granada). Nicaragua is hot, humid, and "buggy", and one is frequently confronted by abject poverty. In general, Nicaragua is not a preferred destination for Global North tourists seeking a comfortable, effortless vacation.

There are a variety of types of independent tourists in Granada. Backpackers are among the most common types of independent tourists in the city, and they are certainly the most visible due to the eponymous large backpacks they typically carry. Backpackers are usually under age 30 and share the common trait of focusing on budget travel to prolong their travels by staying in low-cost accommodations, eating in cheap establishments, and generally not spending much money. Many of the other tourists in Granada are former backpackers, and they continue to travel independently and often personally arrange all travel arrangements and accommodations.

CRUISE SHIP TOURISTS AND OTHER MASS TOURISTS

Mass tourists are increasingly visiting Nicaragua and most visit Granada. There is an increasing number of cruise ships calling in at the country's premier beach town of San Juan del Sur, which is located on the Pacific Ocean in the southwest of the country, close to the Costa Rican border. As of 2010, San Juan del Sur received 60 cruise ships during the tourist high season of October-June (Brass 2010) and some of the cruise ships offer a day trip excursion to sightsee in Granada.

Other mass tourists are slowly trickling into the city as Granada receives more favorable press among mass media sources. Most tourists seeking easy recreation in Central America

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usually opt for Costa Rica, where there is a more developed tourism and ecotourism

infrastructure. Nicaragua, however, is beginning to garner attention among mainstream

international tourists. The October 2013 *National Geographic Traveler Magazine* asks "The Big

Question: Which Emerging Places are Keeping it Real?" They answer:

> Nicaragua's been getting increasing attention, with an apparent yen to become the
> new Costa Rica…The destinations to watch are ones where there's a group effort by
> the tourism industry, government, conservation groups, and locals to attract tourism
> that sustains the place's geographical character (Stone 2013: 90).

According to such international media sources, Nicaragua is poised to become such a destination.

"WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE WE'RE NOT ALL THERE": NON-CONFORMISTS AND OUTLAWS, AND FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS AND MISSIONARIES

Considering its small size, the foreign population of Granada is surprisingly

heterogeneous, and has continued to evolve as it has grown. Among the first group of foreigners

from the Global North is a group that can be deemed non-conformists or outlaws. Although the

perception of danger is fading, until recently, many Global Northerners were unsure about the

safety of Nicaragua due to the war dangers from the 1980s. During the 1990s, it can be argued

that most Global Northerners in Nicaragua were non-conformists and outlaws (or "do-gooder"

volunteers). These are people who are attracted to the unexplored wild "frontier" of Nicaragua,

which has enabled them to have a spontaneous lifestyle. When I asked a woman in her 50s how

often she returns to the US, she exclaimed:

> B:[1] When I want to! Maybe I want five times a year next year! I have no idea! I have
> no plans! Maybe next year is going to be really good financially and I go ten times! I
> don't know! I don't know.
> A: Is it important to you to have that opportunity to go back?
> B: No! Otherwise I would have gone more often in the past. No. I have no plans. I
> live day to day. Always have, always will.

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[1] In order to ensure anonymity in quotations including more than one speaker, throughout the dissertation, I uniformly identify myself as "A", the first interviewee as "B", and the second interviewee, if applicable, as "C".

Non-conformists can be described as individualistic, non-mainstream, and willing to live in places and situations deemed too risky or dangerous for "typical" Global Northerners. Lifestyle migrants in Granada widely and emphatically take pride in their non-conformity. Referring to their supposed eccentricity, a common refrain repeated with delight among the Granada's lifestyle migrants is: "We're all here because we're not all there." Lifestyle migrants in Granada are drawn, in part, to an appeal of exclusivity based on finding a destination on the precipice of being "discovered". This research finds that the appeal of being among the first to a place and being "in the know" about emerging, "authentic", and risky destinations is a powerful motivating factor. In fact, it helps to mitigate many of the frustrations and annoyances that many expatriates complain about. The appeal of the "authentic" is examined further in Chapter 7.

Some lifestyle migrants have literally been considered to be outlaws in their home countries. Another popular refrain among expatriates in Granada claims that "we are the wanted or the unwanted." In other words, Granada attracts foreigners who are either criminals or so bizarre and anti-social that they don't belong elsewhere. One example is Eric Toth, who was on the US FBI's 10 most-wanted list for child pornography, and was arrested in Nicaragua (although not in Granada) in April 2013 (Rogers 2013, April 23).

One lifestyle migrant who is very active in the expatriate community summed up the foreign population on his website (Bushnell and Bushnell 2012):

> Think of Nicaragua as California in the late 1800s. The mountain men first arrived and survived by brute strength and determination followed closely by the priests driven to save those native souls then streams of people began coming by covered wagon. Of course, many of them came to find the gold. It is the same for the expats here…
> Anyway, these tumultous [sic] times have attracted different people to Nicaragua. Since the cost of living is lower here we have our share of people looking to live better on a small income such as the pensions that would barely suffice in the states or Europe. We have a lot of people that are associated with non-profits or volunteer groups trying to help Nicaragua. We still have a lot of developers trying to sell land. We do have some men (and women) coming to meet and possibly marry young women (men) since there is little age discimination [sic] here.

Based on my years of research in Granada, it seems that the discussions have increased over time of how odd and outlandish the foreigners are. This appears to correspond with the change in population: as the more dangerous and criminal elements leave town because Granada has become too settled and orderly for them, the more the remaining lifestyle migrants seem to brag about how crazy their group is. In other words, as the city becomes more acceptable and attractive to more "mainstream" Global Northerners (e.g., middle-class people who worked 9-5 office jobs and belonged to social clubs), the truly criminal and antisocial lifestyle migrant vacate to more remote, less scrutinized places, like Colombia or Nicaragua's Miskito Coast. However, in the past 5-7 years, the popularity of declaring themselves to be so wild and weird has increased – it becomes a more popular refrain as it becomes less true.

In addition to outlaws and non-conformists, Nicaragua has a healthy network of NGOs and volunteer organizations due to its political history and, more recently, because of its poverty and lack of development. Throughout the country, there are many Global North volunteers working as religious missionaries, or in the Peace Corps or various other volunteer organizations, including political rights and empowerment, human and women's rights, and economic development, among others, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

NEWER GROUPS: YOUNGER COUPLES, FAMILIES, SINGLE WOMEN, GAYS

In recent years, Granada has increasingly attracted Global Northerners of varying demographics, including more younger couples, families with children, single women, and gay women and men. A lifestyle migrant couple in Granada with a blog agree:

> In the last few years we are seeing younger people coming, many with families. We seem to be at a turning point in the type of people coming. Several of the developments have reached the point where there are enough people to support community activities which lead to area restaurants and stores becoming viable (Bushnell and Bushnell 2012).

In recent years, in addition to many heterosexual couples over age 50, there are more young couples who are seeking to make a new life in a new cosmopolitan setting. Oftentimes, they have

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met on the road and together they decided to start a business in Nicaragua. Among the increasing

numbers of families with children, many are Christian missionaries or religious workers. Many

parents, especially from Europe, reported in interviews that they appreciated Nicaraguans'

kindness toward children and chose to live in Nicaragua because of its child-friendly environment

where kids can run outside without requiring careful supervision. As a property manager told me:

> [Lifestyle migrants are] wanting to get away from the big cities and to have the kids
> be able to play outside. And I think that's one of the things that I'm so amazed with.
> We were in the States, and you didn't see kids outside. When I was growing up, you
> go down a neighborhood at 5:30, 6 o'clock at night and there's kids everywhere.
> [Now, there's] not any kids playing outside. You know and it's because this fear that
> the parents have. And that's sad. So people are wanting to get away from that. They
> want to bring their kids to a place that they don't have to worry about all of that.

Lifestyle migrants claim that there are increasing numbers of gay foreigners moving to

Granada. Although many early foreigners in Granada were rumored to be clandestine homosexual

(and heterosexual) pedophiles or predators taking advantage of the "Wild West" atmosphere of

Nicaragua, lifestyle migrants note that the foreign gays in the city are now seen as more

"normalized" and more public in their lifestyles. Based on my observations, there has been a

transformation of more public acceptance toward gays in Granada. This is especially true for gay

Nicaraguan men, who are arguably more publicly visible than a decade before. For example,

there is now a gay pride festival in Granada. The city has also attracted an increase in lesbian

foreigners. One foreign lesbian couple operated a bar which was famous for its karaoke and

attracted many people, gays and straights, Nicaraguans and foreigners. Of course, it raises the

question of whether there are more gays in Granada – Nicaraguan or foreign – because the city is

now seen as gay-friendly, or if residents feel more comfortable expressing their homosexuality in

public. This and other topics of social change are addressed further in Chapter 6.

<u>GRANADA'S REAL ESTATE MARKET AND GENTRIFICATION</u>

Two of the primary reasons for Granada, Nicaragua's popularity, the tropical climate and

inexpensive living, do not pinpoint why exactly this destination is popular. After all, many

destinations are tropical and cheap. What is it about Granada that attracts Global North

foreigners? The colonial-style architecture helps to create a certain ambiance that many foreigners

are drawn to, yet find difficult to pinpoint and describe. There is something about it here, lifestyle

migrants insist, that is greatly appealing. The central historic district in Granada contains old

structures made of earthen materials, which helps to create an antique ambiance. In addition to

wanting to own a beautiful, historic building, lifestyle migrants also insist on investing in a

profitable, desirable market. Granada has it all. As one investor said: "The people are looking for

something that's charming that has in it value or the potential for increased value, and is centrally

located to services."

The historic center of Granada, Nicaragua has indisputably experienced gentrification in

the past 15 years, as manifested in the escalation of property prices, and concurrently, in the

increase of Global Northerners present in the city. Although anyone familiar with Granada can

confidently speak of the expatriate-led gentrification of the city (especially occurring in the 2000s

decade), official governmental records stating property value increases are unavailable and

unreliable. This is a result of several factors. First, as researchers have found in Global South

sites, specifically in Latin America, gaining access to government data is notoriously difficult

(Kingsbury and Klak 2005; Sundberg 2003). In Sundberg's discussion of the politics of fieldwork

in Latin America, she writes of researchers' difficulties in gathering data, specifically the

obstacles of obtaining public records from suspicious and hesitant government agencies (2003:

184). My experiences in trying to obtain data from public offices in Nicaragua were similar.

Despite returning multiple times with and without a local Granada resident, as well as sending

another Granada resident alone on other occasions, I was often unable to elicit answers from

several governmental offices. Second, official records of property sale prices and values are

widely understood to be unreliable. Multiple sources have said that any official data compiled

would not accurately represent home values because property-buyers officially register their

property at a substantially lower value. One realtor explained to me:

> It is the norm to put arbitrarily low prices on your deeds when you buy a house, even
> going back 100 years. Since the value sets up a tax structure for the future, you don't
> really want the government to know what you truly paid for the house. On a
> $100,000 home, the deed and sales doc[ument] might say $15,000-$20,000. The
> house might appraise through the city offices for $45,000 and the tax is then based on
> that number and the legit number you actually paid (personal communication, 2013).

He added that, "This is common and we learned it from the Nicas themselves!!" A property

owner and former realtor told me that although he purchased his home for US$189,000 in 2005,

he registered the sales price at US$30,000 with the city cadastral office. (As of October 2013, the

house has been for sale for over one year, with a current asking price of US$239,000.) Despite

these obstacles, evidence of the gentrification occurring in Granada is provided in several ways

(as discussed in further detail in Chapter 3), including several examples of sale prices, and rich

qualitative documentation through interviews and participant observation.

Real estate trends in Nicaragua were summarized by the authors of *Living Abroad in*

Nicaragua (Wood and Berman 2010: 120):

> Prices for housing and land rose exorbitantly from 1995-2005, then roller-coastered
> for a few years, finally settling back to more-or-less 2005 prices. This is a simplistic
> history, but one that shows the volatility of the market nevertheless. The housing
> bubble essentially popped in 2008-2009 and left a strong buyer's market. For the
> potential investor, things are much saner than they were during the housing market's
> buildup to 2008.

Another difficulty with describing price inflation is the wide variation of home values, based on

size, location, and condition. Realtors in Granada generally divide properties into either a

"turnkey" (meaning the house is in move-in condition) or a "fixer-upper". To describe the price

inflation another way, in 2001, houses prices in Granada were often valued under US$60,000. A

realtor continues:

> From 2005-2008, nobody batted an eye at buying a fixer-upper for $85,000- 180,000
> and dumping another $125,000-$200,000 or more in the remodel. The mean price
> range for fixed up turnkey homes back then was an easy $250,000. Now it is under

$200,000. The magic number today [in 2013] is much lower than it was 5 years ago (personal communication, 2013).

Several property-owning lifestyle migrants provided me with examples of home sale prices within Granada's *Centro Histórico*. Listed in Table 2.2 are the actual sales and investment prices given by interviewees. The significant increase in sale prices demonstrates the inflation of property prices in the historic center.

Table 2.2, Reported Lifestyle Migrant Property Purchase Data

Purchase Year	*Price Paid*	*Amount Invested*	*Year Sold*	*Price Sold*
2001	$35,000	$70,000	**2005**	$165,000
2001	$23,000	$55,000	**2005**	$450,000
~2001	$22,000	$18,000	**~2005**	$65,000
2003	$40,000	$0	**2003**	$130,000
2004	$22,000	$70,000	**For Sale (2007)**	$250,000 (Sale Price listed)

ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE FOREIGNER ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY IN GRANADA

Many foreign tourists and lifestyle migrants feel compelled to own a part of this charming city. As stated earlier, a common anecdote in Granada is that tourists come, fall in love with the city, and end up purchasing property, oftentimes on a whim. The fact that this happens is not an accident. Since the early 2000s, there has been a strong presence of foreign realtors actively selling colonial properties to foreigners. It can be argued, in fact, that Granada has garnered international attention as a site for property investment as a result of the efforts of foreign realtors, in part through their web sites (ReMax Colonial Properties 2013; Coldwell Banker 2013a; Casa Granada Properties 2008). In this section, I discuss the actors involved in the

gentrification of Granada, which includes foreign realtors and speculators, as well as Nicaraguan actors.

It is important to note that the majority of speculation in Nicaragua has always been focused on land adjacent to the Pacific Ocean, specifically in the country's southwest, centered on the surf town of San Juan del Sur. While there has been property speculation in Granada, it has not been on the scale existent on the Pacific Coast. One thesis of this research is that Granada attracts a different type of lifestyle migrant than those who want a beach house. I posit that those who are interested in Granada buy into the notion of pursuing a cosmopolitan lifestyle through living among locals in an "authentic" Global South city. Lifestyle migrant speculators drawn to all parts of Nicaragua, however, are participating in the current global rent gap facilitated by the internationalization of real estate markets. As discussed further in Chapter 5, many lifestyle migrants buy property in Nicaragua as a strategic move to optimize economic and lifestyle choices. They are lured to invest in a devalued market for profit, but, in Granada, also to pursue a specific lifestyle.

REALTORS AND SPECULATORS

When foreigners purchase a colonial property in Granada, they almost always use a foreign realtor. Among the lifestyle migrant community, realtors (and speculators) are viewed very negatively. They are blamed for creating a short-term property boom which raised the prices for both Nicaraguans and foreigners. Without a long-standing interest in Granada except as a site for speculation, realtors and speculators are seen by many lifestyle migrants to embrace the greed of the Global North, which some lifestyle migrants say they came to Nicaragua to avoid.

Many foreigners, especially early on (before 2003 or 2004), saw a business opportunity in the beautiful colonial-style buildings of Granada and acted upon it. There were a handful of white men from the US who are famously known as being the initiators of the foreign property boom. These men (most of whom have since moved on to other opportunities) are spoken about

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with envy and reverential disgust. One American woman who has been in Granada since the early

2000s said:

> [This man] was an early developer – I don't think he's here anymore…he has a terrible reputation… He was here to make money, there's no question about that. But when he went and did [fixed up] a colonial, you could tell he did have some passion for it and he wanted an aesthetic product and he wanted to restore the colonials. And he made a billion, zillion bucks while he did it, but he did some nice work.

During the earlier years, the foreign realtors, speculators, and other buyers would brag about

being able to buy the properties for a "steal", and remodel them however they chose, despite the

city's regulations concerning renovations in the historic center. One interviewee who bought

property early told me that he could continue his renovations even if they appeared on the radar

of government officials because he could just pay a fee. Although the city's historic district office

is currently more actively involved in city renovations, interviewees report that evasions of the

laws continue, albeit to a lesser degree.

Anyone can become a realtor in Nicaragua; there is no formal process to sell real estate –

no test to pass, no license to pay. It is not uncommon for a new arrival to Granada with no real

estate experience to join up with a realty such as ReMax or Coldwell Banker and soon start

selling property. On the website Luxury Latin America, they offer "insider information" about

Granada:

> "Remember, anything goes. There are no rules," says Darrell Bushnell, a straight shooting American expat and real estate agent with Casa Granada Properties. He's joking, but there is truth to his tongue-in-cheek advice. Technically, anyone can be a real estate agent in Nicaragua. There are no licensing requirements, no standard set of best practices, and no legal code of conduct. By foreign standards, purchasing Nicaragua property can be bit of a crapshoot. And in this mostly cash market (mortgages are not commonly used in Nicaragua) the wise investor is a wary one (Barone n.d.: ¶ 13).

Because it is so easy to start selling property, there are many realtors. Additionally, there is tight

competition because any realtor can attempt to sell any property, due to an absence of a multiple

listing service (MLS). Real estate offices are situated prominently in the city: Coldwell Banker

and ReMax are both located right on the city's main square (see Figure 2.3). Real estate is closely

tied to the tourist economy in Granada, as will be further discussed in Chapter 5. Realtors in Granada act aggressively toward new arrivals because they are aware that tourists provide a steady flow of new, prospective buyers.

Figure 2.3, ReMax and Coldwell Banker real estate offices located along Granada's central plaza.

During the earlier years, realtors would promote buying property because of the promise of the quick, enormous profitability of "flipping" the homes. After the market cooled in 2007, the spiel was revised to promote earning a great return by renting a newly purchased home. The days of pure property speculation and the potential of making exorbitant profits ended by 2005, according to lifestyle migrants. Although speculators were reported to be less common in 2007, they continued to be a popular scapegoat akin to foreign realtors. Speculators are widely charged with creating an outlandish real estate bubble that drove prices up astronomically, without seemingly contributing anything to either the Nicaraguan or lifestyle migrant communities.

Further, many would "flip" properties by quickly reselling it without improving it with renovations.

Since I began formally researching Granada's foreign-led urban transformation in 2005, many lifestyle migrants have claimed that most realtors act only in self-interest, and do not care about how they are affecting the residents of Granada. In 2005, I found that, "the realtors are seen to approach it with the 'use it or lose it' mentality, viewing property as a resource to exploit for their own benefit" (Foulds 2005: 46). Eschewing their negative reputation, realtors interviewed in 2005 and 2007 insisted that the increased economic opportunities initiated by the property transfers and resultant renovations have significantly helped Granada. In 2005, one realtor said:

> You hear beefing. The foreigners buy beach property and when it becomes exclusive, the Nicaraguans say 'they took our beaches!' But they never used to use them; they were deserted. Now there's employment, etc. There are always people who squawk and there is always jealousy. We have cars, Nicaraguans don't. We have great looking girls because we're wealthy, not because we're great. So there is jealousy, but overall, we help. We put in a housing development on [Volcan] Mombacho and we brought in a water connection. Now the whole neighborhood has water; they used to have to carry it.

In their estimation, the realtors I interviewed believe that the increase in foreign homeowners in Granada has brought more benefits than harm.

NICARAGUAN ACTORS

While there are Nicaraguan realtors in Granada, the city's real estate industry has become dominated by foreign realtors. Foreigners have hyped up Granada in international media sources, as well as among foreign tourists and residents. According to interviewees and participant observation, Nicaraguan realtors are more low-key (i.e., they don't operate out of high profile store fronts) and a great deal of the property transfers between Nicaraguans is done through word-of-mouth by the sellers and buyers. I asked one realtor if Nicaraguans ever buy from him and he said that one time he dealt with "extremely ethical" Nicaraguans:

> No one has many Nicaraguans buying through them. I get a star. I sold [to] a Nicaraguan down the street here a building. And everybody was amazed… Cause a broker never sells to a Nicaraguan. They all go through cousins. If you take a

Nicaraguan – I won't even show them property – if I take a Nicaraguan and show them a house, they're gonna smile very nice. As soon as they're out of my sight, they're gonna drive around and talk to the neighbors, "Who owns that house?" And no matter who it is, everybody knows everybody in this country. They're gonna go direct to the owner and pass me up. So why show someone a property when they're gonna back-door you?

The Nicaraguans most likely to use a foreign realtor are return migrants from the US or Costa Rica. My earlier research pointed to the return of Nicaraguans as a growing trend, especially since so many had left during the Sandinista period (Foulds 2005). Once Ortega was elected again in 2006, however, this potential trend seems to have dampened. After all, the current president is the very one these Nicaraguans and their families had fled from decades ago. Nonetheless, there are some Nicaraguans returning to their homeland and some renovate old homes in the historic district.

Although foreigners usually use foreign realtors to complete property transfers, Nicaraguan "runners" are essential to the process and often remain invisible to the foreign buyers. "Runner" is the term used for the Nicaraguans who find properties and refer them to realtors and potential buyers. They are an important piece of the property puzzle in Granada. Because foreign realtors come and go in Granada, runners are vital because of their local and up-to-date knowledge of the property market. It is the runners who know who is selling or talking about selling their homes. This is especially important in Nicaragua's largely informal economy. Moreover, the population of Granada is small, the housing market even smaller, and runners are among the first to hear about so-and-so's cousin or aunt putting a house up for sale. While there are a few notable runners in Granada who make a living doing so, there are others who don't primarily work as a "runner", but who occasionally refer properties.

Nicaraguans are often involved in the various stages of property buying and especially in renovating. Realtors often use or recommend Nicaraguan lawyers to handle paperwork related to property transfers. There are many lifestyle migrant renovation "experts" who help buyers

redesign and renovate properties, and sometimes, especially in the early days, they designed the renovations without the help of an architect or an engineer. It is now more common for a Nicaraguan architect to become involved with the process, although a lifestyle migrant construction "expert" often inserts him or herself into the process. Sometimes the foreign construction expert is necessary to act as a cultural or language liaison between the foreign buyer and the Nicaraguan construction manager, especially if the buyer is not present in the country during construction.

The construction manager (*maestro de obra*) is usually Nicaraguan. He hires Nicaraguan workers and manages the day-to-day construction site. Construction workers are almost always Nicaraguan men and are paid much less than comparable workers in the Global North. Skilled Nicaraguan artisans' handiwork, on the other hand, is currently in demand as lifestyle migrants seek to fill their newly renovated homes with traditional workmanship.

The people selling property in Granada are predominantly Nicaraguan, of course. As the property market has evolved, however, there is now more turnover among foreigners buying and selling properties. In 2007, the *Centro Histórico* director confirmed that some houses have turned over foreign owners multiple times. By and large, however, as of 2007, the sellers continue to be Nicaraguan. The properties which are most in demand by foreign buyers are large, old, colonial houses, often owned by upper-class Nicaraguans. By now, most owners willing to sell have already sold and the currently available houses for sale by Nicaraguans are generally more modest homes. These homes are sold by Nicaraguans who are not poor, but perhaps not as well-off as owners of the larger homes. In general, it is commonly understood that Nicaraguans who own homes in the historic city center of Granada are wealthier than the poorer residents who live on the outskirts of town. A house has greater appeal the closer it is to the city center. Sometimes there are other large, old homes that lie outside of the official historic district border lines and further from the city center (although still quite close and walkable). These are now becoming

more in demand among foreigners as the available housing stock in the historic center is limited – especially properties that have not yet remodeled.

LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS BUYING AND TRANSFORMING PROPERTIES IN GRANADA'S HISTORIC DISTRICT

There are lots of general risks associated with buying property in a foreign country, especially for those unfamiliar with the local language or laws. Regardless of the known risks, however, many Global Northerners are determined to invest in property around the world. Despite risky markets, many potential buyers desire to purchase real estate in a rising market before being priced out. The Nicaraguan economy is considered relatively unstable, yet the ability to buy properties flat out in cash can, in some ways, mitigate these risks. Real estate web sites showcasing properties for sale in Nicaragua (and other places) tend to use a language of urgency, pushing Global Northerners to "buy now", before real estate markets become too popular and prices rise even more (International Living 2013; ReMax Real Estate 2013).

When Ortega was elected in 2006, there was a frantic fire-sale of properties among some property-owning foreigners. Regardless of political opinions, most foreigners note that Ortega and the US are not friends and that Ortega's coming to office most likely has meant a cooling of economic interests and development in Nicaragua by the US and allies. One of the main concerns with Ortega among foreigners of all political orientations is that foreign property will be seized. During the Sandinista rule in the 1980s, property that was owned by foreigners or owned by Nicaraguans but which was deemed abandoned for more than 6 months was confiscated by the government and distributed among the Nicaraguan people (although much was kept among the ruling elite). This time around, Ortega has declared a policy to not confiscate foreign property (Alvarez 2007) and, so far, he has kept his promise (see Figure 2.4). Foreigners tend to characterize Ortega as too power hungry (as well as more neoliberal) to discourage foreign investment. Most lifestyle migrants think the foreigners who sold for a loss to get out of

Nicaragua around 2006-2007 were foolish and many are happy that such short-sighted people are gone, for they are believed to have been drawn for speculative purposes only. In fact, many lifestyle migrants say that among the best results of Ortega's election is that it dampened the harried and harmful property speculation frenzy.

Figure 2.4, Daniel Ortega's presidential campaign sign declares that "Daniel…Respects Property" and "United, Nicaragua Triumphs!"

Lifestyle migrant property-buyers are usually encouraged by their realtors to buy title insurance, especially because of the contentious history of property in Nicaragua. There have continued to be disputes between property owners about land which was confiscated during the Sandinista period. One issue is that the Sandinista government never got around to issuing proper titles to land which was redistributed. One result of this is that some Nicaraguans who may want to sell their property cannot sell because they do not have an official title to their property. One interviewee told me: "A lot of the property outlying the historic center, they turned into public works projects. So the guy who works for us actually has lived in his house for twenty-something years and they still don't have the title for their house because it was part of that public works project."

Little property was confiscated within the city of Granada, so problems with obtaining clear titles have been less of a problem with lifestyle migrants than I had anticipated (Wood and Berman 2010: 121). Land title problems have been a much larger concern for those buying Pacific coastal property.

<div align="center">SPANISH COLONIAL HOUSES IN GRANADA</div>

According to the publication *Executive Summary of the Revitalization Plan of the Historic Center of Granada* put out by the Office of the Preservation of the Historic Center (Membreño *et al*. 2002), there are 1762 parcels in this 70-manzana[2] area (see Figure 2.5). Granada's historic center comprises most of the urban area, as can be seen in Figure 2.6. As mentioned earlier, 20-35% of the approximately 1800 properties in the historic center are estimated to be owned by non-Nicaraguans. The architecture in Granada's historic district is Spanish colonial-style. There remain only a handful of structures in the city that predate 1856. The architecture in Granada is commonly referred to as Spanish colonial, but technically it is Spanish colonial-style since most buildings in Granada were built after the Spanish vacated the city in the 1820s. The year 1856 marks an important date for the city because in that year William Walker burned the city to the ground. The majority of the structures in the historic center designated by the city's *Centro Histórico* office were thus originally constructed between 1857 and 1893 (Ramirez and Reyes 2006).

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[2] 1 *manzana* (mz.) = 1.725 acres
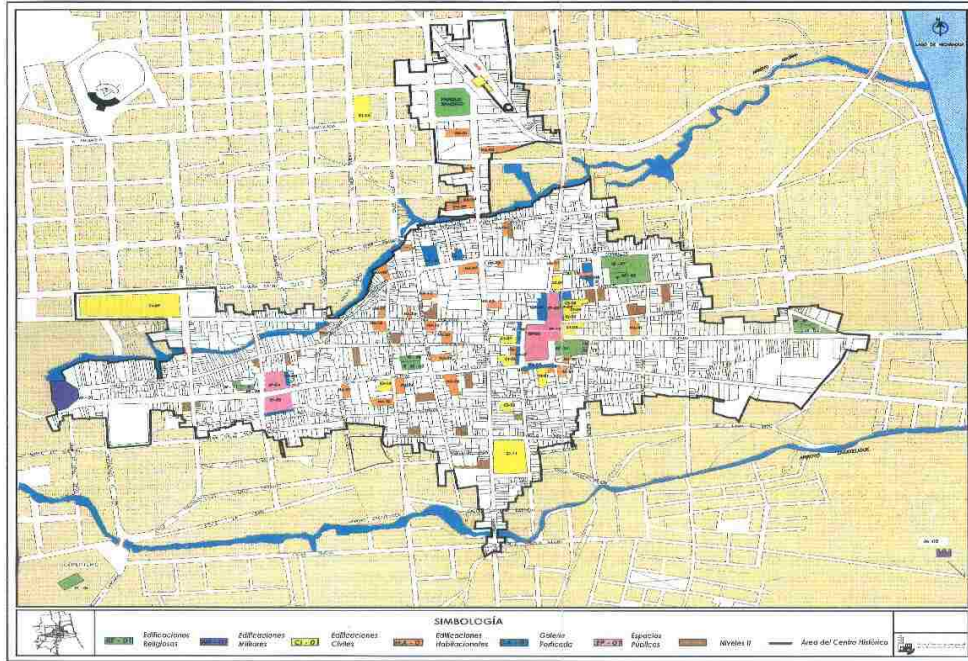
Figure 2.5, "*Mapa del Catálogo de Bienes Patrimoniales: Granada, Nicaragua*." (Translation: Map of the Historic Properties Catalogue: Granada, Nicaragua.) (Map by Reyes 2002.)
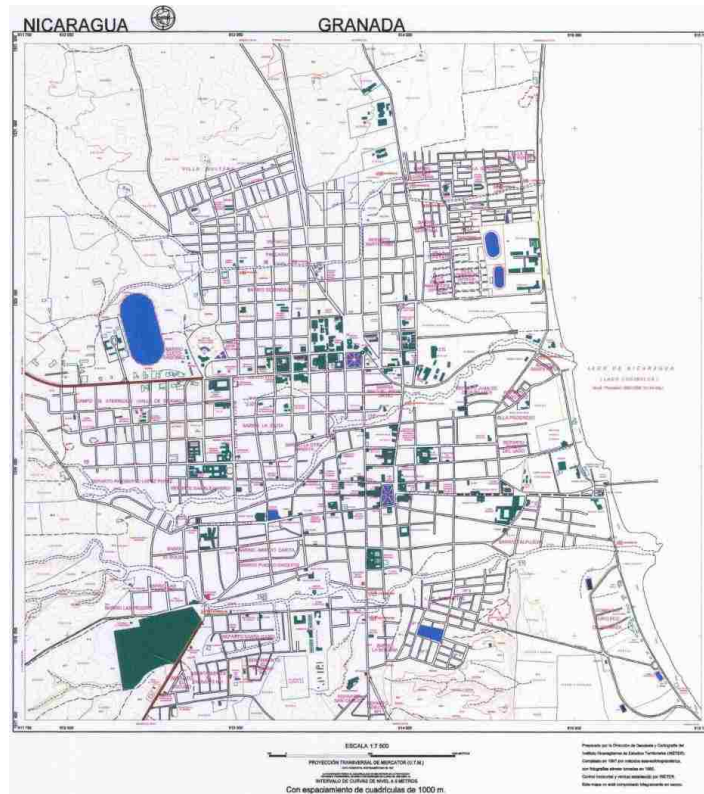
Figure 2.6, Map of Granada's urban area (Source: INETER Nicaragua).

The traditional colonial-style Granada house is all one-level. From the street, one enters the house into either a *sala* (living room) or, in larger homes, an entryway called a *zaguan*. Next lies the *patio*, or central courtyard, and the several bedrooms surround this courtyard. The kitchen is usually tucked away in the back of the house and is small, simple, and utilitarian. Larger homes have an additional courtyard behind the first one, also surrounded by bedrooms. Older homes typically have one bathroom tucked away in the back of the house.

Colonial-style houses in the historic district of Granada are made from *adobe* or *taquezal*, which is also known as "wattle and daub". Both are made from earth materials: *adobe* is a construction of earthen bricks and *taquezal* is a wooden structure surrounded by an earthen covering (Uremia 2005). Most modern structures in Nicaragua are built with cement block and cement because it is inexpensive, requires little labor, and works better for air-conditioned rooms. Although *adobe* and *taquezal* are made of very inexpensive earthen materials, there are several problems associated with it, especially to foreigners who are unfamiliar with it. First, constructing proper *adobe* blocks is expensive because it is no longer common, therefore requiring experts to make the *adobe* and build with it. It is becoming a lost art. Further, it is labor intensive and takes longer to dry. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, because it is made of earthen materials, it is susceptible to destruction due to water. If the roof leaks and water gets on any part of the *adobe* which is not treated with paint, the wall quickly starts to crumble (Urrutia 2005; Tour Casas Antiguas de Granada n.d.).

GRANADA'S HISTORIC CENTER OFFICE

Granada's Historic Center Office (*Oficina del Centro Histórico de Granada*) is the government office in charge of overseeing the preservation of the historic district. In 2003, the city and its natural environment applied to be a UNESCO World Heritage site, but have yet to be recognized by the agency. Several of the government officials interviewed said that gaining a UNESCO World Heritage site status would help promote tourism and investment in the city, as

well as help preserve the city's historic structures by providing plans for conservation and opportunities for financial assistance.

The Historic Preservation Office of Granada has regulations regarding building restoration. Despite repeated requests for documentation of these rules, I was only ever able to obtain an unofficial version from an anonymous Spanish-language website (Tour Casas Antiguas de Granada n.d.). Various employees of the *Centro Histórico* office, including the director, told me that they prefer to discuss property changes with owners on a case-by-case basis. From the Tour Casas Antiguas de Granada website (n.d.), and from multiple interviews with government officials, realtors and foreign property owners, I was able to learn about general remodeling requirements, which will be discussed in subsequent sections. All property owners must adhere to these historic property rules, but many lifestyle migrant property-owners discussed confusion, conflicts, and annoyances with understanding and implementing the requirements. It is also reported that during the first years of foreign entry into the central city property market – the late 1990s until around 2004 – the rules weren't popularly known by foreign purchasers and they weren't broadly enforced.

In an interview with the current director of the Historic Preservation Office, she said that the office is greatly concerned that many foreigners who buy and renovate properties in the historic district do not abide by the rules. She said that many foreigners believe that there are no regulations to follow, consistent with the common mentality among foreigners that Nicaragua is akin to the "Wild West" where few laws exist and that existent laws may be disregarded. The historic district director also said that many foreigners may not be averse to building in accordance with regulations, yet most gatekeepers to the buying and building processes (such as foreign realtors and foreign and Nicaraguan contractors) are both foreigners and Nicaraguans who themselves may not be aware of, or wish to acknowledge, the established regulations.

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Many foreign property buyers assign power of attorney (*apoderado*) to Nicaraguan lawyers, architects, or contractors (or to foreign realtors, architects, or contractors) to deal with official matters because they are told that it is necessary, and because they are oftentimes out of the country. The current director said that one problem occurs when the foreign property owner agrees to renovations designed by architects or contractors before the *Centro Histórico* office has approved them. Oftentimes, these designs are rejected by the Historic Center office because they do not adhere to regulations. At that time, the *apoderado* back-peddles and builds without permission since the plans had already been approved by the foreign property owner. She said that oftentimes the foreign owner may not even know that any problems occurred.

Several lifestyle migrants told me that another common problem is that the foreign realtors and (foreign and Nicaraguan) builders believe that these rules can be bypassed with a bribe or simply by ignoring them. This was highlighted in an interview with one elderly couple who had recently purchased a property:

> B: It's a nice colonial city. It's really got a lot of colonial charm. And in spite of the fact that everyone that we talk to say that they want to maintain that colonial façade, we could go out there and repaint this anything we wanted to. There's no building permits or any kind of architectural permits required here at all. You can build anything you want.
> A: That's not true.
> B: That's what I heard… That's what the architect told us.
> A: Yeah, it's not true. There's rules. In the *alcaldia* [city hall] right there, there's a whole office full of people with the rules.
> B: And what do they do?
> A: They have to yay or nay them.
> B: Really? Well we better find out about that.

This couple's lack of awareness of the *Centro Histórico* rules, or even that any regulating agency exists, is not uncommon. This highlights the deep disconnect and lack of understanding and communication between many lifestyle migrants and government officials. Although many property owners want to abide by preservation rules because they agree that it is vital to maintain the city's historic integrity, many interviewees told me that they avoid dealing with any

government officials because such interactions are cumbersome, confusing, and rarely result in swift or decisive outcomes. One American man, fluent in Spanish, described his experiences dealing with the *Centro Histórico* office, saying that they "couldn't get their shit together":

> They kept dragging their feet and I'd go in and talk to one person and they'd tell me to come back in two weeks. And I'd go back in two weeks, that person wouldn't be there, it'd be someone else and I'd have to start over. There's absolutely no coordination, no communication within the office. It's basically five people in there who don't talk to each other, so you have to talk to all five of them.

From my research, I find that lifestyle migrants, including realtors and business owners, rarely directly interact with any Nicaraguan government officials. Further, based on my interviews with government workers, and from the *Centro Histórico's* limited printed informational materials (which focus primarily on cataloguing the oldest and most prominent buildings), it appears that Granada officials similarly do not prioritize developing a working relationship with foreigners to maintain the integrity of the historic architecture. For example, workers in the city offices of Tax Rental and Property Registration voiced their personal opinions for the need to enact laws to enable Nicaraguans to be able to afford purchasing property in Granada. A worker in the Rental office said that he knew of no official development of any such measures, but:

> Maybe later there should be, but not now. The government needs to defend the locals. Not to intrude in the market, but there has to be some kind of regulations. But here only the gringos or people who have capital are benefiting. A Nicaraguan cannot compete with a gringo. Realtors will come up with a few houses but a Nica cannot compete. First of all, the market prices that they established they have money to invest, we cannot compete. Let's say I like a house. Where am I going to come up with US$250-350,000 to buy it?

NICARAGUAN VS. LIFESTYLE MIGRANT AESTHETICS

Gentrification often entails a change in preferred aesthetics, which has occurred in Granada. In this section, I discuss the ways in which Nicaraguans and lifestyle migrants in Granada often have visibly different preferred home aesthetics. Earlier examinations of gentrification noted that one important question was rarely answered: Why did gentrification

occur in some areas and not others? (Beauregard 1986). One reason that gentrification is occurring in the historic center of Granada is because of the particular colonial aesthetic of the housing stock. For the new foreign buyers, such interest in consuming specific aesthetics is used to demonstrate a global identity by those of the cosmopolitan class. Jager (1986) refers to such increasing aesthetization as the "stylization of life". The lifestyle migrants gentrifying Granada enact such a stylization of life through buying and renovating colonial-style homes to demonstrate their appreciation for the "authentic".

For certain groups which extol cosmopolitan virtues, cultural capital can be gained by experiencing and consuming particular aesthetics. Among most gentrifiers, including most cosmopolitan gentrifiers, the preferred aesthetic is a specific balance between the old and the new (Bridge 2001; Jager 1986). The exterior aesthetic is preserved but internal renovations are required to facilitate a modern usage of the house, which involves showcasing it to demonstrate style and thus gain social capital (Bridge 2001). This is seen in the refurbishment of specific architectural styles, which are conceived to be stylish and constructed with high quality materials. These particular styles are site specific: in 1986, Jager wrote of Victoriana homes in Melbourne, Australia, and today in Central America, these are Spanish colonial-style homes. Ley (2003) writes that gentrification will likely occur in places rich in cultural capital and low in economic capital. Most lifestyle migrants renovate the properties they purchase in Granada. Although they claim to like the idea of living in a historic house, they are quick to change them in ways they consider to be more comfortable and practical. It is common for lifestyle migrants to completely reconfigure the layout of their newly bought properties. Only a few of the foreigners interviewed did not completely renovate their houses from top to bottom. Most foreigners who come to buy, renovate, and live (or rent out for investment purposes) are buying a dream and they bring enough money to subsidize it. The amounts available vary, but even lifestyle migrants under age 50 commonly spend thousands of dollars renovating their properties. Considering the low purchasing

costs of houses, this is generally affordable even to those without ample income to spend. One young woman married to a Nicaraguan man was one such foreigner who lived on a tight budget, admitting that: "We haven't fixed things, for the most part. If something works and it's not hideous, we leave it because we don't have endless amounts of money."

Many lifestyle migrants complexly renovate their newly bought properties because they only want the shell of a house. Most old properties are sold as "fixer-uppers" and many are deemed by Global Northerners to be uninhabitable, despite the fact that Nicaraguan families recently resided in them. As one realtor told me:

> The other thing you deal with [which] is hard, [is that] Nicaraguans, their style is different than North Americans. North Americans want more bathrooms. One bathroom for a whole house is fine for most Nicaraguans. Foreigners want a colonial look most of the time. They want things all clean and tidy. They want a proper kitchen.

Some lifestyle migrant gentrifiers have discussed that part of the allure of the colonial-style homes in Granada is their "exoticness". Houses in Granada allow "outside living", and are usually built and furnished with natural materials. They compare this to their homes in the US, which several lifestyle migrants disparagingly described as "hermetically-sealed". One interviewee admitted that while natural materials are often desired by home owners and builders in the Global North, they are generally too expensive for many people in his homeland of England. In Nicaragua, however, lifestyle migrants can afford such preferred materials.

Many foreigners find that the open courtyards of colonial homes in Granada enable them to be more connected to the elements. One important factor in creating the "authentic", natural ambiance is with having lots of wood, especially local, tropical wood. These woods are valued to Global Northerners because of their exoticness, beauty, and "authenticity" (see Figure 2.7). These woods are perhaps even more valued by foreigners in Nicaragua because they are "local" and "traditional", having been used for centuries. The colonial-style homes also seem to be more "authentically" Nicaraguan to foreigners, making them more attractive.

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Figure 2.7, Wooden furniture in a lifestyle migrant's house.

In order to refurbish their colonial houses, many lifestyle migrants insist on utilizing artisans skilled in traditional building styles and materials. By comparison, many foreigners claim that Nicaraguans are not as intent on recreating colonial houses using predominantly traditional methods and materials. Although Granadinos take great pride in their colonial architecture and the historic center has always remained the most desirable area to live for Nicaraguans (i.e., there has never been disinvestment of the city center), according to interviewees, many Nicaraguans do not prioritize re-investing their limited money into their homes. As one realtor told me:

> Foreigners are going to be looking at materials in the old colonial-style. Nicaraguans, when they have money to remodel, they want something modern. They lived with old all their life. They want something modern, like they saw in a magazine. We have everything modern in the US if we want it, so we want something colonial, something like a dream that we could have here. So we would almost always keep the old traditional kind of floor. We'll use as many of the artisan products that we can here, you know, fine woodworking, ceramics, pottery. We'll use all of the craftsmanship that Nicaragua has to offer to make a house special.

According to Bridge (2001), gentrification occurred in one Sydney neighborhood in part because of a different aesthetic appreciation. He wrote that the older style of an inner city

neighborhood was viewed as antiquated and undesirable by working-class people who inherited their childhood homes as their parents' generation passed away. They sold these homes for preferred newer suburban homes. Such old styles, however, were desired by outsiders who prioritized their historicity.

Just as the colonial-style *adobe* homes are desirable for Global Northerners in part because they are so different from what they are accustomed to, many Nicaraguans desire newer, modern architecture because it is new and different for them. For many Nicaraguans, the musty, mildew-y natural materials are deemed old-fashioned and they desire new, modern, sleek, Miami-style homes, a term used by one European realtor, which she described as "super modern, nothing colonial, colors." I would add that this includes air-conditioning, new tile floors, and walls made with cement. A European man who lives in Granada with his family explained:

> I mean, when I bought this house. I have partners, Nicaraguan partners in Managua. They thought I was crazy because… They loved the house, but to live in a house like this [shakes head no]. They want a fixed, finished house, you know, new style. So it's a completely different taste. I guess because they were brought up in a very simple environment as opposed to Americans and Europeans. We were brought up and everything worked, you know water taps, the whole thing, everything worked. So we kind of seek the opposite and they seek the modern world, they seek the modern things.

An important point, however, is that although many Nicaraguans would choose a new, modern house over an old colonial house if given the choice, very few have that choice. Until the foreigners became interested in the colonial properties around 2000, very few Nicaraguans sold their colonial homes to move to newer houses. This is because few Nicaraguans have money to buy a house, and moreover, there were few new houses being built to buy, since there was (and still is) very little economic activity in Nicaragua. It must be highlighted that in most cases of property transfer between migrants and locals, the wealth disparity between the buyers (Global Northerners) and sellers (Nicaraguans) is substantial.

MATERIAL DETAILS: WAYS THAT FOREIGNERS CHANGE PROPERTIES

In the following sections, I describe the layouts and materials in Granada houses, and how foreigners change them, including comparisons with "typical" Nicaraguan houses, as well as the conflicts related to *Centro Histórico's* regulations.

SUBDIVIDED PROPERTIES

Colonial-style houses in Granada are relatively uniform from the outside. From the street, one sees one continuous outside wall throughout the block. The delineations of the properties are usually visible by different paint colors, and sometimes from other distinctions, such as door styles or light fixtures. Many city blocks consist of one (or a few) large homes which have been subdivided several times over the last hundred years (see Figure 2.8). (There are still a few blocks where it is still one, large home with many interior courtyards.)

Figure 2.8, Partitioned walls do not completely separate living spaces (Source: ReMax).

This subdivision means that many decent sized homes have a half-courtyard (or *patio*). The adjoining property has the other half of the *patio*. These two properties were once one large property that was split down the middle. A house that has one half of a complete courtyard is

today considered not a small home. Many properties were further divided with sometimes awkward spaces and limited *patio* space. Some homes built more recently may bear little resemblance to traditional colonial-style homes and these often have a very small *patio*. Many subdivided homes and most newer homes do not have walls dividing rooms that extend all the way to the ceiling. I understand that this is done as to not constrict air flow. Many foreigners, however, find this to be extremely uncomfortable. This is most evident in regards to bathrooms. Many Nicaraguans live with a bathroom with short walls, but most foreigners find this situation awkward. Of course, the lack of full walls results in lack of privacy in other ways too. Some houses were subdivided without fully walling off the separate homes. A realtor told me: "A lot of times Nicaraguans are fine to build their wall halfway up, not all the way to the ceiling with their neighbors. And North Americans look at that and go, 'Is that the house next door?' Well, yeah, I'm not used to seeing that." Such a configuration does not provide sufficient privacy for most foreigners, and they immediately construct a wall if they purchase such a house.

EXTERIOR CHANGES

Maintaining a consistent colonial streetscape is of utmost importance to the historic preservation office because the exterior of homes is what is visible to all. Therefore, there are many regulations regarding the transformation of the façade. One Historic Preservation Office rule concerning the façade is that changes must conform to the other properties on the block. One also cannot change the nature of the property's exterior. If there were porches, columns, or roofs before, they must remain there and, if not, they cannot be added. One couple described a battle they'd had with the historic office. They bought a property that had been partly remodeled in the mid-20th century in a style which, they asserted, was certainly not colonial-style. The adjacent sidewalk was raised a meter or so above the street (as some blocks are). When they bought the house, they put a roof over the sidewalk and installed supporting colonial-style columns. This was similar to the Nicaraguan-owned property next door. They said that after the renovations were

done, the historic preservation office told them that they needed to take out the columns because they were not there before. They protested because they believed they were enhancing their property for themselves and their neighbors. Before their remodel, the house had had an ugly, 50s modernist style, they claimed, but they renovated the property back to a more colonial-style aesthetic, with a new colonial-style roof and columns which kept pedestrians dry. They refused to tear up their renovations simply to meet the demands of the historic office. After all, they exclaimed, it's not as if the house had actually been colonial to begin with, and it was certainly not in a colonial-style when it was purchased. Eventually, they were granted permission by approaching a different government employee.

SECOND STORY

For foreign buyers, one major issue concerning the façade and the street view is a second story. The vast majority of houses in Granada have only one story. Many foreigners desire and intend to build another story in their property for several reasons. First and foremost, this add more space, especially more bedrooms. Also, the second floor is desirable because it will offer a scenic view (of Lake Nicaragua, Volcan Mombacho, and/or the city views of tile rooftops and churches). Some foreigners put rooftop patios here, occasionally with Jacuzzis or pools.

Second stories were almost non-existent when most homes were first built, and they may be allowed to be added to buildings only if they are not visible from the street. Most foreigners agree that this is a reasonable request and few flaunt this rule. Another rule about the second story structures is even more important and impacts the surrounding properties: one cannot build a second story where you can see into the *patio* (interior courtyard) of another property. Most foreign property owners say they respect this rule, especially because they claim that they want to appreciate the Granada way of life enabled by the architecture. Seeing into a neighbor's intimate space of course invites possible contestation and trouble, so many lifestyle migrants say they are happy to oblige this rule.

Another issue about the second story is that it can disrupt the airflow to neighboring houses. This is a concern that many lifestyle migrants never think to take into perspective. The colonial-style layout is designed to work with the heat, humidity, and air flow. The more acculturated lifestyle migrants point out how oblivious most other foreigners are to these delicate balances. Further, they complain that most foreigners don't care, especially since they understand other lifestyle migrants to have a bullish attitude in which they do not consider how their actions will impact others, especially Nicaraguans.

Figure 2.9, A lifestyle migrant's view of Mombacho Volcano from the bathtub.

My research findings show that, if possible, most foreigners install a second story in the back of the structure, away from the street. This area is more likely to be built in a design differing from the original colonial-style because the second story is newly-built and not part of the original design. The second story usually includes at least one bedroom and is almost always air conditioned. This usually means that more "regular" American-style, single-paned windows are installed, often to afford a view. One particularly opulent house I toured had a grand second-

story built in the back of the property. From the bathtub (which is uncommon in most Nicaraguan houses) in the master bathroom, one could sit and enjoy a majestic view of the looming Mombacho volcano, as shown in Figure 2.9.

<center>*SALA* **PROBLEM**</center>

Along the street full of Nicaraguan-owned homes, passersby are able to peer into the front door of the house into the *sala* (front living room) or *zaguan* (entryway). If residents are home (which is likely because Granadinos try to never leave their homes unattended), the doors are usually open with the metal gates closed. This is a practice in large part to allow for air-flow, but it also speaks to the public-ness of the front *salas* for Nicaraguan culture. The front *sala* and the sidewalk in front of Granada homes are traditionally a social space. After the sun goes down, Granadinos famously spend evenings sitting in their rocking chairs on their front sidewalk, as shown in Figure 2.10. This is a social time to be in the presence of neighbors and to see and be seen. Likewise, it can be argued that having the front door routinely open invites community members into the lives of their neighbors.

Figure 2.10, Nicaraguans commonly socialize in their rocking chairs.

Many lifestyle migrants find the *sala* to present a puzzling space. They don't want to be open to the street, which is noisy and dirty. This is not the area where they want to entertain and many do not want to see what's going on in the street. This represents a major change in the perspective which highlights the difference in values between the foreigners and the Nicaraguans. The foreigners don't want to live as Nicaraguans do. And because foreigners don't want to use the *sala* as the primary social and public space as do Nicaraguans, yet they cannot alter the space in many ways, they do not know what to do with the *sala*. The *sala* has high ceilings and is usually the largest room in the home and, according to the historic district rules, it cannot be altered. This includes absolutely no installation of windows in the front wall to the street. While other rules are often broken or negotiated to find a suitable solution, this one is not. Interrupting the continuous colonial façade of the streetscape is not an option. Generally, a property owner also cannot alter the interior of the *sala*. Although they are not supposed to build a bathroom or a loft area in the *sala*, some lifestyle migrants do so.

After they redesign the layout of their houses, some foreigners use the *sala* space for a bedroom. This is unusual, however, because they are easily aggravated by the dirt and noise of being so close to the street. Several foreigners note that this is an ideal space for a business and indeed, many Nicaraguans (and some foreigners) use the *sala* area for businesses. Nicaraguans often use the spaces for a *pulperia*, which is a small neighborhood store selling candy, basic groceries, cigarettes, etc., akin to *bodegas* in New York City. Others use the *sala* for a business office spaces, such as a lawyer's office. One foreigner summed up some of the main issues concerning repurposing the layout of the colonial home:

> [It's] always a bit tricky to think what you're going to do with a *sala* cause they are slightly strange, beautiful but strange rooms in terms of utility…because they're very tall. They're at the front of the house. And traditionally what they are used for is a kind of a sitting room come display of wealth and social space for outsiders to come to visit. Whereas the kitchen…would be tucked away cause that is where servants in larger houses would be. And even in a small house, generally the kitchen would be tucked away. Whereas a Western lifestyle is different so the kitchen becomes a social

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hub and you invite your guests much more into the house, maybe in the kitchen maybe around the table by the kitchen, maybe by the pool. So it slightly undercuts the traditional use of the *sala*. And the *salas* have been heavily protected in terms of regulation use. So, generally, the council won't allow you to build too much in the *sala*. Usually, these things are flexible, [but] generally you can't build a bathroom in a *sala*. So it does slightly beg the question of what you use them for. They make very good business places. My *sala* here is my office. And sometimes I can open it and I can use it as an office. And eventually I think it'll be a commercial site. There will be some kind of business here. But in a house, it presents a little bit of a challenge to think what the *sala* is going to be used for.

The different usage of the *sala* space demonstrates one of the primary changes in how lifestyle migrants transform how they use colonial houses. Figures 2.11 and 2.12 show common Nicaraguan *salas*. Both photographs were taken from the street; Figure 2.11 shows a typical Nicaraguan *sala* in a small, subdivided house and Figure 2.12, exhibits a *sala* in a larger, wealthier home. Figure 2.13 and 2.14 show two *salas* in homes owned by lifestyle migrants which are closed off from the street and are not used as the primary living space. Instead of using the *sala*, which is directed outward toward the public street, foreigners choose to reconfigure their living space toward the interior, around the kitchen and courtyard patio area. This demonstrates lifestyle migrants' new configuration towards social spaces, whereby the foreigners close themselves off to the public.

KITCHENS

Many of the foreigners told me that the concept of kitchen usage is one of the main differences between what Nicaraguans and foreigners desire a home layout. Typical Nicaraguan kitchens are in the back of the house, not spacious, and generally are not well-lit. The foreigners said that for Nicaraguans, the kitchen is the site of the hired help who prepare the meals and that due to cultural and economic reasons, for many years, many families, including not particularly wealthy ones, could traditionally afford to employ a young woman to help around the house.

The foreigners usually completely redesign the kitchen and most move it to a different part of the home. In recent decades, the kitchen has recently become the central gathering place in
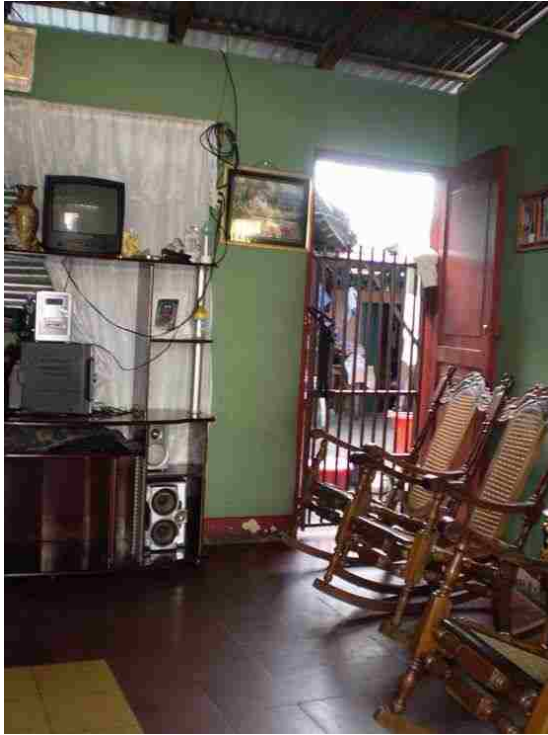
Figure 2.11, (on left) A typical Nicaraguan *sala*. Figure 2.12, (on right) A typical wealthy Nicaraguan *sala*.

Figures 2.13, (left) and 2.14, (right) Lifestyle migrant *salas*.

the home for foreigners, especially Americans, interviewees told me. From a dark corner of the

property, the kitchen is moved to a more prominent area, usually in the middle of the home,

alongside the courtyard and the open-air sitting area. One realtor summed up the kitchen issues:

> Most Nicaraguans feel the kitchen is the most unused room of the house. Where most
> North Americans, most Europeans feel the kitchen is the heart of the house. So first
> couple houses that I built, I invited people to the open house and my Nicaraguan
> friends pulled me aside and they said, 'Why did you put the kitchen in the middle of
> the house? It's supposed to be in the back where the servants are so you never hear
> them and you never see them.' I said, 'Well, in our culture, you go to a party,
> everybody hangs out in the kitchen'… The kitchen is the heart of the house, as
> opposed to an ugly appendage hanging out from the back. Big difference.

Most lifestyle migrants place utmost importance on having an up-to-date, attractive kitchen. It

seems that this is almost universal, regardless of the amount of time and energy the residents put

into actually cooking meals in the kitchen. I found lifestyle migrant kitchens to be surprisingly

extravagant. To highlight how much investment and importance is placed on the kitchens, these

lifestyle migrant kitchens must be juxtaposed against typical Nicaraguan kitchens. Figure 2.15

shows a typical Nicaraguan kitchen and Figure 2.16 shows a typical foreigner-remodeled kitchen.

Figure 2.17 shows one of the most extravagant kitchens I've seen in Granada, which is owned by

lifestyle migrants.

Figure 2.15, A typical Nicaraguan kitchen sink.

Figure 2.16, A typical lifestyle migrant kitchen in Granada.

Figure 2.17, An opulent lifestyle migrant kitchen in Granada.

Nicaraguan kitchens usually have a refrigerator that is about half the size of a typical North American-style refrigerator. Most households cook using a table-top double-burner hooked up to a replaceable natural gas canister; there is usually no oven or microwave. Instead of cabinets, there is often a small amount of shelving. Most Nicaraguans have fewer possessions,

including dishes, utensils, and cookware. It is unusual for Nicaraguan homes to have hot water.

The former Peace Corps volunteers who wrote *Living Abroad in Nicaragua* said:

> Instead of a countertop, cabinets, and a sink under which the dishwasher is tucked, you might find a long wooden counter Nicaraguans use to prepare food, along with a freestanding concrete basin and washboard under a water spigot. This type of sink, which if often outdoors, is called a *pila* or sometimes a *lavandero* and is used not only for washing dishes but for laundry. The rugged ridged part is for scrubbing, and the deep basin stores a couple of gallons of water, which you scoop out as necessary for your cleaning chores (Wood and Berman 2010: 114).

Having a sink filled with water may seem like a breeding ground for mosquitoes and disease, yet maintaining stores of water is often necessary (see Figure 2.18). In recent years especially, the electricity supply can be intermittent and this impacts the water supply, as it is pumped using electricity.

Figure 2.18, A Nicaraguan *pila*, or sink, used for washing clothes, or sometimes as a kitchen sink.

Although unsightly to most lifestyle migrants, Nicaraguan kitchens can understood to be logically utilitarian in Granada. The humidity makes cabinets warp and their hidden, damp spaces can harbor mold and/or animals. The limited existent food items (like bananas) are often hung up to deter animals. Rather than keeping a stocked pantry, most Nicaraguans buy food every day for

many reasons: storage in the tropical climate is difficult, fresh food is generally better, and perhaps more importantly, many Nicaraguans can only afford to purchase one day's worth of food at a time.

Most foreigners find typical Nicaraguan kitchens unsatisfactory and they change them almost completely. They install appliances they are accustomed to finding in North American kitchens including microwaves, small ovens with four-top burners, larger refrigerators, and sometimes dishwashers. Foreigners usually eliminate the traditional *pila* system and install a North American-style two-bowl sink – with hot water. They also often purchase washing machines, although many don't buy dryers. Some choose to have their (almost ubiquitous) housemaid hand wash clothes in a *pila* in a back room, although it is less common to keep any *pila*.

BATHROOMS

Foreigners also tend to immediately change the bathrooms in Nicaraguan colonial homes. The colonial Granada homes were built before it was common to have many bathrooms – in fact, many homes originally had a latrine in the back patio. Oftentimes, there is only one bathroom in a Nicaraguan home and it is tucked away in the corner of the home. There is commonly a Western toilet, but many of these toilets don't flush. One must pour water into the bowl in order for it to flush. Because of the inadequate sewage system, Nicaraguans do not throw toilet paper into the bowl; they throw it into a wastebasket next to the toilet.

Foreigners usually add more bathrooms to their properties. When a second story is added, it often includes a bedroom with an en-suite bathroom. Foreigners will also often try to put a half bathroom for guests in the front *sala* or near the front of the house. They usually upgrade the sinks, toilets, showers and fixtures and they also often install hot water heaters. These are either a small unit for the shower, or a larger unit for the entire house's water system.

One major source of contestation between lifestyle migrants and the historic district office is the rule that a swimming pool cannot be built in the first courtyard in the home. If a second courtyard exists, which is uncommon in most houses, a swimming pool is permitted to be built there. Even though there are strict rules about not having the swimming pool in the first courtyard, I saw many pools in this supposed taboo location in the homes that I gained access to. One European realtor who has been in Granada since 2000 said: "Everybody puts a pool in… It's still a rule. Well, if you find your way, you can go through it, but yeah. But it's true, this climate is so hot, you need at least a dipping pool" (see Figures 2.19 and 2.20).

Figure 2.19, A swimming pool in a lifestyle migrant's Granada house.

Figure 2.20, A swimming pool in the second patio of a lifestyle migrant's Granada house.

Another way that foreigners aim to escape the heat of Granada is through installing air-conditioning in parts of the homes. Not surprisingly, the traditional Spanish colonial home does not originally include air conditioning, nor does the architecture easily lend itself to conversion. Because most homes are open-air around a courtyard, very few houses have single-pane windows anywhere in the structure. The windows that do exist are most frequently in bedrooms, for example, and often are multiple panes that can be opened for ventilation (a.k.a. glass plantation shutters). As it is impractical to make a colonial-style home completely air-conditioned – as well as it goes against the desired open-air living – foreigners often choose to install air conditioning in only a few rooms. Air conditioning is most commonly put in bedrooms, and sometimes other rooms, such as the front sala, are closed off and air conditioning is installed.

BUILDING MATERIALS

There are various building materials which are important for lifestyle migrants purchasing colonial-style homes. Woods are used in many different part of the structure of the

house. The prominent pillars holding up the exposed roofs are usually made of wood, and some foreigners showcase their home's pillars if they are from a certain wood (e.g., mahogany), or are very old and original to the house.[3] In original old doorways, lintels are made of one large wooden beam. Most doors in old homes are usually tall, made of beautiful wood, and are highly prized by lifestyle migrant property owners. Wood is the preferred material for kitchen cabinets, shelves, and almost all other finishes, such as railings. Wood is also a desired material for furniture, such as armoires, rocking chairs, and beds. There are wooden antiques to be found in Nicaragua, although many lifestyle migrants commission custom-made pieces.

Wicker is another classic material of which to make furniture, especially couches. Traditionally, Nicaraguans use rocking chairs instead of stuffed couches. Due to the hot and very humid weather, this makes great sense, since stuffed couch cushions welcome various bugs and molds. (The heat and humidity also make carpet impractical.) Another popular natural material in foreigner owned colonial homes is iron, commonly used for banisters, bed frames, and light fixtures.

I interviewed one woman who was born and raised in Granada, fled to the United States with her family during the Sandinista years, and returned because she missed the city she loved as a child. She referred to the elegance and beauty of the clay tiled roofs (*tejas*) and she noted that among Nicaraguans, the famously elegant landscape of Granada is remembered for its sea of tiled roofs. The foreign property buyers in Granada also like the tile roofs, but most did not specifically include the tile roofs as one of their favorite design elements of the colonial houses. Most do continue to reconstruct their roofs in the proper colonial fashion when they renovate their

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[3] In fact, in old homes, the large support columns or roof beams made of one piece of wood are highly valued. Several foreigners told me that it is not uncommon for thieves to break into homes under construction and steal these ceiling beams and wooden posts.

properties. This involves several steps. First, numerous poles of varnished *caña* (cane) are put down. This forms the ceiling and this is what is visible when you look up inside the colonial houses. On top of that, to stabilize everything, sheets of "zinc" (sheet metal) are put down. Finally, the heavy clay tiles are laid out on top. People who cannot afford the clay tiles often only have zinc roofs, usually without the *caña*. Not only are the metal-only roofs extremely loud when it rains, but the thin metal absorbs the heat from the tropical sun and cooks the inside of the house. Adding clay tiles still allows some heat to transfer from the clay tiles to the metal roofs, but homes with clay tiles are significantly cooler than metal-only roofs.[4]

Ceramic floor tiles are considered to be a vital element for a traditional and authentic Nicaraguan colonial home. In Granada, there is special emphasis on having tiles from the local tile manufacturers, Favelli. Foreigners gain cachet for having them, especially if their home has kept its original tile floors, but having other Favelli tiles is also highly desired. Tile floors cover the entirety of almost all homes in Granada. Some of the poorer homes on the outskirts of town have dirt floors, but in general, all houses in the city have ceramic tile floors. Figure 2.21 shows a *sala* with old tiles in a currently unused Nicaraguan home.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided a summary of the current foreigner interest and involvement in Granada. Further, this chapter has described the typical houses in Granada and discussed the changes that the foreigners have made to the houses. The detailed descriptions of transformations made by foreign gentrifiers demonstrate how they are reconfiguring the way that private home spaces are utilized. In addition to raising housing prices in Granada, lifestyle migrants are

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[4] For efficiency, some foreigners have laid insulation between the metal and the clay tiles in order to block the heat transfer. This results in cooler, more comfortable temperatures in the houses. For those with air conditioning, this also helps to cut down on energy-use.

changing how home spaces are used. This offers a study of the often-overlooked manifestation of gentrification.

Figure 2.21, Prized ceramic tile floors in a currently unused building.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss my research design, including methods and methodology. I outline my research objective and questions, and I discuss the conducted field research. Finally, I address methodological issues related to my experience in the field, including issues of my debatable "insider" position, interviewing elites, and the ethics of representation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DESIGN

This research project asks three interrelated questions: (a) What is the role of lifestyle migrants in the gentrification processes occurring in Granada, Nicaragua's city center?; (b) How do lifestyle migrants utilize their expatriate status to undertake gentrification?; and (c) What are the perceived effects of lifestyle migration on the local real estate economy, as well as on broader social, cultural, and economic relations of Granada? These questions have been answered with data from: semi-structured interviews with lifestyle migrant "gentrifiers", real estate agents, and Nicaraguan officials; a list of lifestyle migrants compiled with the help of lifestyle migrant community members; participant observation; a photographic survey of the city's historic center; and with follow-up research.

This research has aimed to capture the gentrification of a Global South city conducted by Global North lifestyle migrants. I employ the simple, broad definition of gentrification offered by Clark, which describes gentrification as "a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital" (2005: 258). Much gentrification research uses quantitative methods, specifically census and housing records (Lees *et al.* 2008). Statistics such as incomes, education, and house prices are collected in order to document demographic changes in home ownership, and such data has been used as indicators of gentrification (Lees 2000; Slater 2006; Atkinson 2003; Smith 1996; Ley 1996; Butler and Lees 2006). Scholars such as Lees *et al.* (2008), Brown-Saracino (2009), Wilson

and Grammemos (2005) have made calls for more empirical and qualitative research, as there is currently minimal gentrification scholarship involving actual individuals who are participating in the process (either as gentrifiers or the "local" residents).

This research project has attempted to answer the call for a qualitative, empirical study of gentrification processes. In addition to seeking to understand Granada's gentrification through qualitative methods, such as how gentrifying Global North actors understand their own roles in the process, I have encountered barriers to collecting quantitative data, specifically from governmental sources. At the onset of this research project, I attempted to utilize mixed methods to document Granada's gentrification. From early on, I was aware that census records would prove useless. Counting expatriates is especially problematic, as addressed by researchers of international retirement and second-home tourism scholars (O'Reilly 2000; King *et al.* 2000; Dixon *et al.* 2006; Casado-Diaz 2006). Foreign non-citizens are often absent in censuses for many reasons, most notably because they are often not official residents. Even counting those lifestyle migrants who officially register their temporary residency in Nicaragua is problematic because of the concerns about how to classify them due to their peripatetic mobility patterns (e.g., how do you count someone who only spends 5 months in country?). Additionally, as of October 2013, Nicaragua's census data website has been "down" or unavailable for at least ten months. This highlights the substantial barriers I encountered in attempting to collect various official records from Nicaraguan government officials, as will be discussed below.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Preliminary research was conducted December 2004-January 2005 for my Master's degree in Geography at the University of Kentucky (received December 2005). The unpublished Master's paper ("Harbingers of Modernization: Entrepreneurial Expatriates in (Tourism) Development in Granada, Nicaragua") examined the developmental intentions of expatriates from the Global North in the tourism industry in Granada, Nicaragua. This research included eighteen

semi-structured interviews with foreign owners of tourism-related businesses and examined why expatriates move to Granada, start a business, and how they engaged with the local and expatriate community (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2). In addition, I lived in Granada, Nicaragua for one year in 2001 and have returned repeatedly since. These experiences in the field site facilitated an extensive network of contacts, a high intermediate command of Spanish, and a breadth of local knowledge. Further, many of the current themes addressed in the doctoral research were initially identified during the 2004-2005 Master's research. The MA research has provided a building block on which I further explored and developed issues related to lifestyle migrants' impacts on Granada's built environment and social landscape.

Table 3.1, Interviewees' Country of Citizenship from 2004-2005 Master's Research

Country	*Number of Interviewees*
US	11
Canada	2
Europe (UK, Germany, Holland, Denmark)	4
Costa Rica	1

Table 3.2, Interviewees' Ages from 2004-2005 Master's Research

Age Range	*Number of Interviewees*
30-39	6
40-49	2
50-59	5
60-69	4
70-79	1

DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Dissertation field research was conducted in Nicaragua from September 2007 through December 2007. The majority of my research involved interviewing fluent English-speakers, both native and non-native. Because of my own positionality as a Global North researcher, I worked with a local bilingual translator for the semi-structured interviews with native Spanish speakers to ensure accuracy. The schedules for interviews with Nicaraguan officials were originally written in English, and were translated into vernacular Nicaraguan Spanish with the aid of the local bilingual translator (see Appendices A-C).

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS, REALTORS, AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

Semi-structured interviews served as the principal method to answer my research questions. While the property owning lifestyle migrants serve as the central population I interviewed, the research questions were sufficiently addressed only by interviewing other actors participating in the gentrification of Granada's city center, including foreign real estate agents, and a limited number of Nicaraguan government officials.

I discuss details of each of the interview subject population in their respective sections below, but to summarize: 39 interviews were conducted with 44 lifestyle migrants; all but one (a realtor) owned property in Granada's historic center. 6 of the 44 lifestyle migrants were realtors. I conducted 6 interviews with governmental officials who worked in offices related to property transfers or renovations.

Interviews can be defined as a conversation with a purpose (Berg 2007; Valentine 2005; Kvale and Brinkman 2009). I choose to use interviews in order to ascertain what is relevant to the research subjects and to elicit personal opinions and perceptions of gentrification processes occurring in conjunction with the influx of lifestyle migrants (Dunn 2005; Valentine 2005; Berg 2007). The property owning lifestyle migrants were my primary research population, but I also

interviewed realtors and government officials for the purpose of understanding perspectives from different structural positions regarding the same issues (Dunn 2005).

As Dunn says, interviews can provide diverse opinions and understandings of an experience and allow me to "investigate complex behaviors and motivations" (2005: 80). Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewees to discuss particular subjects which I consider to be helpful in understanding the processes of gentrification, as well as allowing "respondents to raise issues that the interviewer may not have anticipated" (Valentine 2005: 111). Further, listening to the personal perspectives of gentrifiers was helpful in considering the individual understandings of the gentrification processes often analyzed at a structural level (Smith 1996), or removed from the personal level (Ley 1996; Lees *et al.* 2008).

The interviews were conducted and digitally recorded at a place of the respondent's choosing. They were transcribed and coded according to predetermined and discovered domains. For my confidential records, I have assigned each interviewee a number. In the text, however, interviewees are instead identified by their various attributes which I alternate throughout, in order to ensure anonymity in such a small subject population. For example, I have identified an interviewee in text once by his or her age, and later by his or her country of origin and/or his or her occupation. In the quotations with lifestyle migrants where more than one person is speaking, throughout the dissertation, I have consistently assigned the letter "A" to refer to me, the researcher. "B" refers to the first interviewee; "C" refers to the second interviewee, if applicable.

All three of the interview subject groups (property-owning lifestyle migrants, foreign realtors, government officials) added insights from their respective positions about the physical changes occurring in the built environment in Granada's city center, why it was happening, and the broader implications of such transformations, including property ownership opportunities and accessibility for locals, place-making by foreigners (which could be interpreted as neighborhood appropriation), and global identity-formation. These interviews complement and expand on

information gathered from the photo survey and participant observation to address of how lifestyle migrants have transformed the built environment of Granada, Nicaragua through gentrification.

These interviews also helped to answer the research question (b) How do lifestyle migrants utilize an expatriate status to undertake gentrification? Lifestyle migrant interview subjects elicited responses regarding how their foreign status affected their role in changing the built environment. For example, four lifestyle migrants said that they chose to move to Nicaragua from among other countries, in part, because they could benefit from receiving the pensioner residency status (Law 628).

In addition, interviews with lifestyle migrants, realtors, and officials have helped to answer research question (c) What are the perceived effects of transnational immigration on both the local real estate economy, and on the broader social, cultural, and economic relations of Granada? The lifestyle migrants and foreign realtors provided insight into their perceptions of how they and other lifestyle migrants have affected the local community in terms of changing the property market (e.g., pricing out Nicaraguans renting and/or buying); how they have changed the local economy to become more oriented toward providing services geared to elite patrons (e.g., more (expensive) bars and restaurants); and how they have affected the local community socially and culturally (e.g., more international relationships). Further, several of the interviewed Nicaraguan officials pointed out that they personally have been affected by foreign-led gentrification, stating, for example, that they could not afford to buy a house in the historic center.

PROPERTY-OWNING LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS

The interview subjects represented a segment of the larger lifestyle migrant population, which was assessed at numbering approximately 150 people in December 2004-Janaury 2005 (Foulds 2005). Between September and December 2007, I conducted 39 interviews with 44 lifestyle migrants (four interviews were with couples, one was with two friends who each owned

property). Of the 44 people interviewed, six were realtors and five realtors were property owners. Only one realtor did not own any property. Two property owners engaged in work managing properties, which will be discussed more below in the section about realtors.

I aimed to conduct in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 50 people who were not Nicaraguan citizens by birth and have purchased property in the Granada city center within the last 10 years. I attempted to interview lifestyle migrants from a diversity of nations, but also I wanted to be inclusive of the existent population. Lifestyle migrants are disproportionately from the US, but many other Global North states are represented, including Canada, the UK, Holland, and other countries (see Table 3.3). Table 3.4 lists interviewees' country of current residence and Table 3.5 lists interviewees' ages.

Table 3.3, Interviewees' Country of Citizenship from 2007 Dissertation Research

Country	*Number of Interviewees*
United States	31
United Kingdom	4
United States/Nicaragua	3
Denmark	2
Holland	2
Canada	1
Canada and France	1

Of the 44 interview participants, five had been among the 18 expatriates who own tourist-related businesses whom I interviewed in December 2004-January 2005. Based on their longevity in the city, they provided particular insight regarding the changes in the built environment and trends in foreign resident and visitor populations. Table 3.6 shows the year in which interviewees began spending time in Granada.

Table 3.4, Country of Residency from 2007 Dissertation Research

Country	Number of Interviewees
Nicaragua	15
United States	12
Nicaragua/United States	5
Undisclosed	3
United Kingdom	2
Costa Rica	1
Denmark	1
Denmark/Costa Rica	1
Holland	1
Holland/Costa Rica	1
Mexico	1

Table 3.5, Ages of Interviewees from 2007 Dissertation Research

Age Range	Number of Interviewees
Under 30	5
30-39	3
40-49	9
50-59	16
60-69	9
Over 70	3
Total	44

Table 3.6, Reported Year Interviewees Began Regularly Spending Time in Granada from 2007 Dissertation Research

Year	Number of Interviewees
Before 2000	4
2000	2
2001	4
2002	3
2003	6
2004	3
2005	8
2006	10
2007	4

Almost one-half of lifestyle migrants interviewed were women (21/44), which was more than the one-third I had planned for. I thought it important to include women's voices because of their possibly distinct experiences, though I certainly do not intend to essentialize a women's collective experience or assume I will share any sort of "sameness" due to our shared gender (McDowell 1998), which, as Valentine (2002) writes can be a presumption which can obscure other influencing factors. In fact, I believe that I was able to gain access to such a large number of women because of my gender.

Interview subjects were selected through a snowball sampling procedure (Valentine 2005), from information collected during prior research in December 2004-January 2005, and from approaching foreigners as part of participant observation. Because of my familiarity with the lifestyle migrant community and having existent relationships with many lifestyle migrants, especially US people, long-term residents, and younger lifestyle migrants, I was conscious about ensuring a diversity of research perspectives, and contacted a broad array of lifestyle migrants. For example, one lifestyle migrant interviewee was met when I took a picture of his house from the street.

The lifestyle migrant community is small and, as I predicted based on my experience with my preliminary research, word of my research quickly spread. As a participant observer, I spent time in lifestyle migrant hangouts, specifically at a breakfast restaurant and a coffee shop popular with lifestyle migrants. Each provided free wireless internet service and served as a headquarters for lifestyle migrant knowledge transmission.

In order to ensure a broad, diverse perspective of lifestyle migrant life, one important factor I considered was the lifestyle migrant's length of time in Granada (and length of time of ownership). This research shows that the length of time living and/or owning in Granada understandably greatly affects the perspectives of lifestyle migrants. The newer residents predictably were generally eager, naïve, and less knowledgeable about living in Granada than

those who have been there longer. It was very useful to hear the varying viewpoints of those who have lived and/or owned property in Granada for varying lengths of time. Some had only recently purchased; others had been in the country for a long time and I interviewed most of the longest-residing lifestyle migrants. I considered several interview participants who had been in Granada for over five years and usually spoke Spanish to be key informants based on their widely accepted knowledge among the lifestyle migrant community.

Subjects discussed in the semi-structured interviews included: (a) the purchasing history of the Granada property (such as when and why they bought the said property, from whom, how they were introduced to the said property, the relationship with the seller and, if different, former owner); (b) the transformations of property induced by the owner after purchase (such as changes to the interior and exterior of the structure, who executed the changes, motivation for changes); (c) the appeal of buying property and living in Granada, particularly in regard to the desired aesthetics and lifestyle in a small Spanish-colonial historic city center in the Global South; (d) issues and concerns of both purchasing and transforming properties related to the owner's status as a lifestyle migrant, such as how motivation to transform his or her property related to such factors/motivations such as: tax incentives for foreigners (e.g., Law 306, Decree 628), and insecurities about the government stability related to non-citizens' rights (dating to Sandinista land confiscation in the 1980s), and (e) the effects of lifestyle migration on both the local real estate economy, and on the broader social, cultural, and economic relations of Granada.

Interviews were conducted in participants' homes or businesses, and in restaurants and coffee shops. The interview schedule covered many subjects (see Appendix A), but as interviews were semi-structured, I did not ask every question listed with every participant. As I had anticipated based on preliminary research, most lifestyle migrants were eager to talk and most interviews averaged over one hour in length; several lasted even longer. One interview with a very busy and reluctant lifestyle migrant lasted ten minutes. Generally, as time went on,

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interviews became shorter, as much of the basic questions I had regarding processes and explanations of materials had already been adequately answered.

REALTORS AND PROPERTY MANAGERS

There are few formal native Nicaraguan realtors in Granada and most foreigners who buy property in the city do so with the help of lifestyle migrant realtors. Foreign realtors were invaluable contributors for my understanding of the foreign-led gentrification of Granada and I considered two realtors to be key informants based on their long tenure in the city and their widespread knowledge of the development of foreigner property ownership. The realtors were able to offer valuable information regarding key players and trends, as well as identifying common foreigner concerns related to property. They did not, however, offer detailed information about foreign property purchases as I had hoped they might.

The lifestyle migrant realtors often serve as important "cultural intermediaries" (Gotham 2005; Ley 2003; Zukin 1991: 202) to prospective buyers by providing informal insider knowledge regarding the social and cultural lay of the land. Because of this, their perspective of the foreign-led gentrification was vital because their views are widely disseminated among new and prospective lifestyle migrant property owners. The real estate agents did provide me with contact with some lifestyle migrants who have purchased property.

As five of the six realtors also owned property, I asked realtors many of the same questions asked to other property owners (see Appendix B). Additionally, I asked realtors about the processes for identifying available properties for sale and how steps buyers must take to purchase properties. I also asked realtors to identify Granada's real estate history, as well as notable trends among foreign buyers and Nicaraguan sellers.

I interviewed six foreign realtors. Four were from the US, one from Canada, and one was from Holland. One of them was a young man new to the industry, who has since quit working in realty and opened a bar/restaurant. Only one realtor came to Nicaragua with the intention of

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selling property; the rest came for a variety of reasons and later began selling real estate. Two came looking for more opportunities in Nicaragua after living in Costa Rica for several years.

Additionally, through the course of my research, I learned about property managers. These are lifestyle migrants who manage properties predominantly owned by lifestyle migrants. Property managers are responsible for maintaining the upkeep of houses, and often manage their rental. They are usually hired by lifestyle migrants who do not spend much time in Nicaragua, or sometimes by lifestyle migrants who live in Granada, but own several properties.

The two property managers I interviewed link their respective management companies with a real estate company, and many of the questions overlapped with those asked of realtors. I also informally interviewed one non-property owning lifestyle migrant property manager. Commonly, a foreign buyer will visit Granada, purchase a property as an investment, and then hire a property manager to handle all aspects of their property, with the clear purpose of renting out the properties (usually to short-term tourists). I discuss property management in more detail in Chapter 7.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

In order to have a more complete understanding of the gentrification of Granada, I interviewed several Nicaraguan government officials. I met with six different government employees (see Table 3.7). These included: the head of Granada's INTUR (Nicaraguan Tourism Institute – *Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo*), the head of Granada's Central Historic District office, a worker in the Property Registry office, and a worker in the Department of Revenue office. I also interviewed a young city lawyer who spoke English. Finally, I also interviewed Granada's city architect, who is also a member of the city's Cultural Board. He spoke English and has personally designed many lifestyle migrants' home renovations. As the only government worker I interviewed who mentioned that he socializes with lifestyle migrants, his interview provided a unique Nicaraguan perspective of lifestyle migrant-led gentrification.

The focus of the interviews with the various officials varied slightly according to their positions, but with each, I asked about how lifestyle migrants are affecting the city of Granada, and how Nicaraguans perceive and react to this (see Appendix C). We discussed how the city and national governments (and respective offices) are dealing with foreigners, specifically in regards to the tourism incentive law (Law 306) and the "Law of Resident Pensioners and Retirees" (Decree No. 628).

Table 3.7, Government Officials Interviewed from 2007 Dissertation Research

Agency of Interviewee	Translation (if Applicable)	Relationship to Foreign Gentrification
Oficina de Centro Histórico	Historic Center Office	Ensures property renovations align with historic codes
Granada City Architect		Contracts architectural services to many foreigners renovating properties
Dirección General de Ingresos (**DGI**)	Department of Revenue	Collects Property Transfer Taxes
Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo	Nicaraguan Tourism Institute	Promotes foreign investment in tourism
Registros Públicos de la Propiedad Inmueble y Mercantil	Office of Public and Commercial Property Records	Owners register property transfers with this organization
City Lawyer		Contracts attorney services to many foreign property owners

LIST OF PROPERTY-OWNING LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS

Counting the number of lifestyle migrants in a host country is problematic because, as noted above, they are not always official residents and they often maintain multiple residences (O'Reilly 2000; King *et al.* 2000; Dixon *et al.* 2006; Casado-Diaz 2006). I could find no official, governmental documentations of the numbers of foreigners living in the city and if there were, how any number was attained would undoubtedly be problematic. It is commonly understood that there has been an increase in foreigners buying property and living in Granada, based on my own longitudinal participant observation and from the general opinions of lifestyle migrants, local Nicaraguans, including government officials interviewed. In order to ascertain an idea of the

number of Global North lifestyle migrants living and buying property in Granada, I enlisted many lifestyle migrants to assist me in the compilation of a master list of all known property owning foreigners in Granada city.

This list was compiled through snowball sampling during the month I returned to Granada in June-July 2008. I asked every lifestyle migrant I knew to help me compile the list and to suggest others who might assist me. I entreated every lifestyle migrant I encountered to list known foreigners owning and renting in Granada, with approximately twenty-five lifestyle migrants helping me. Because of the snowball nature of the sampling, by design, this is not a complete list. However, a significant number of the lifestyle migrant community contributed. Moreover, I received input from key informants from different social circles, including lifestyle migrants of varying ages, nationalities, employment status, and length of time in Granada. Considering the number of lifestyle migrants in Granada and that I spoke to a wide range of social circles, I am confident that I have compiled a reasonably complete list of lifestyle migrants in Granada.

According to the compiled list, I estimate that there are approximately 500 lifestyle migrants who spend time in Granada. Altogether, I collected a list of 226 "households", many of whom were couples, and some included other "family" members, such as children, adult siblings, and other combinations of households. From this list of 226 households, I determined that there were approximately 350-400 individuals. I have concluded that there are possibly an additional 100 individuals who remained off of my radar for various reasons (e.g., they don't associate with lifestyle migrants who I spoke with, or perhaps any other foreigners).

I gathered that 138 households own property in the historic center, 38 households own property in the vicinity of Granada (which includes city residents outside of the historic district, and lifestyle migrants who live in the nearby countryside, including Volcan Mombacho and near Laguna Apoyo), and that 50 households rent property. Also from this list, as well as from other

sources, I concluded that there are approximately 150 lifestyle migrants who spend "most" of the year in Granada, meaning that they are based in Granada and spend more than 8 months in Granada on average. Most are permanent residents of Nicaragua and most of their personal property, including real estate, is in Nicaragua.

<div align="center">PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY</div>

Inspired by Scarpaci's research method of coding doorways in colonial urban centers in Latin American to document urban change (2005), in my initial research design, I proposed recording signs of gentrification for each property in Granada. After obtaining a map outlining all properties in the historic center, I walked the entire district, photographing every property. After assessing each property both in the field and in a photograph, however, I realized that this method would not accurately document gentrification.

First and foremost, Spanish colonial-style homes consist of remarkably similar facades viewed from the street. Because of the architectural style, there is minimal opportunity for residents to decorate and differentiate the exteriors of their homes. Despite these limitations, I had anticipated that foreigner gentrification would be visible according to several features, including: any usage of expensive woods; new doors or new paint that appears expensive or professionally installed or applied; elaborate metal window or door gates; any new glass windows because this implies air conditioning, which most Granadinos cannot afford and do not use; structural changes that appear to use high quality, expensive materials such as roof refurbishments using new clay tiles or wall refurbishments reconstructing the classic *adobe* style; any signs in English; on-site presence of "foreigners" located on site.

Such signs of gentrification were frequently visible, as shown in Figure 3.1. The blue house on the right exhibits signs of gentrification, such as a new paint job, iron door grates made in a specific new style favored by foreign home-owners, and hanging lights. The yellow house on the left does not show signs of gentrification, based on the older, damaged paint, the typical, not-

new doors, and the open doorway (common among Nicaraguans but not foreigners, as discussed in Chapter 2).

Figure 3.1, Examples of non-gentrified (left) and gentrified (right) properties in Granada.

However, upon further inspection of housing exteriors, I concluded that I would be unable to definitively conclude the extent of foreigner-led gentrification based on these criteria. I was occasionally able to compare house facades with the known resident, and I determined that I could not rely on a positive correlation. For example, many houses that were "fixed up" with a new coat of paint were not necessarily owned by foreigners. Further, many of the properties known to be owned by foreigners did not demonstrate any outside signs of gentrification. To demonstrate this, Figures 3.2 and 3.3 each contain one (known) house owned by a foreign lifestyle migrant. I found that it was unreliable to determine foreign ownership and gentrification as demonstrated by these examples. In Figure 3.2, the yellow house with peeling paint is owned by British retirees. In Figure 3.3, the green house is owned by an American man in his 20s. Without prior knowledge of who owns these houses, I would be unable to determine whether a

house was owned by a Nicaraguan or foreigner, as there are not distinguishable signs of

gentrification.

Figure 3.2, An example of indistinguishable gentrification (the yellow house is owned by a lifestyle migrant).

Figure 3.2, Another example of indistinguishable gentrification (the green house is owned by a lifestyle migrant).

The conducted photographic survey has proved useful, however, in triangulating information obtained in interviews about urban changes and home ownership. For example, interviewees would reference a specific house that they formerly owned, or knew to be for sale by the Nicaraguan owner. Such added information, together with my photographic collection of each property within the historic district, has contributed to my knowledge of the history and current status of foreign-owned properties in Granada. Further, I find it significant that the gentrification occurring in Granada is not consistently visible, despite the sharp contrasts (in wealth and cultural history) between Nicaraguans and most lifestyle migrants.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE INTERIOR OF LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS' HOUSES

Because the visible, aesthetic examples of gentrification in Granada primarily occurred in home interiors, the exterior photographic inventory did not fully capture the extent of foreigner gentrification. As discussed in Chapter 2 and above, the exterior façade of colonial homes in Granada are only minimally altered. Instead, foreign gentrification is best documented by the extensive transformations of the inside of the homes, as many lifestyle migrants reconfigure the house layout, and also fully redesign the interiors. In other words, the changes in the built environment resulting from gentrification are probably best seen in the interiors of the properties. In order to access the lifestyle migrants' home interiors, I convinced lifestyle migrant gentrifiers to allow me into their homes whenever possible, or at least to extensively discuss the renovations they have conducted in the interviews.

Many interviews with lifestyle migrants took place in their homes and at least six interviewees permitted me to take photographs of the inside of their houses. Getting access to the inside of lifestyle migrants' homes confirmed the gentrification processes: it offered a chance to see the extent of the renovations and remodelings inside lifestyle migrants' homes. In 2011, I was also able to view the interiors of several other gentrified homes owned by lifestyle migrants,

when I went on a charity house tour which showcased homes managed by a property management company.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

While in Granada, I also conducted participant observation and informal conversations. Because of my positionality as a (sometimes) member of Granada's lifestyle migrant population, once in the field, I could not help but be a participating observer. "The best participant observation is generally done by those who have been involved in and tried to do and/or be a part of the things they are observing" (Laurier 2003: 135). One of the strengths of this research is my extensive familiarity with the research matter, including the landscape, the foreign and local people, and intercultural dynamics. Each time I was in Granada, I focused my observations on how the city, the tourist economy, the lifestyle migrants, and the Nicaraguan residents were changing and reacting to changes. During the fieldwork (and in follow-up fieldwork), I recorded notes of meetings, conservations, and observations in a notebook.

Included in the participant observation were the conversations and informal interviews I had with people who did not fit into one of my predetermined categories to be interviewed. These included Nicaraguans who live or work in the city, as well as lifestyle migrants who do not own property. In fact, I considered one lifestyle migrant who did not own property to be a key informant, providing me with valuable observations. I had interviewed this woman for my master's thesis research in 2005. This woman has owned several businesses, particularly a coffee/shop bookstore which was popular among women lifestyle migrants, and she is fluent in Spanish, which affords her a privileged position among the generally Spanish-deficient foreign population.

CONTINUING ONLINE PARTICIPATION WITH GRANADA'S LIFESTYLE MIGRANT POPULATION

I have continued observing the ongoing news and developments in Granada by participating in the lifestyle migrant community via various electronic formats. For example,

Granada-based lifestyle migrants maintain several informative websites, including an English language news site about Nicaraguan current events (Nicaragua Dispatch 2013), and a weekly community newsletter (Nica Nuggets 2013). Further, I follow many of the activities and perspectives of lifestyle migrants and businesses in Granada via Facebook. Because of the peripatetic movements of lifestyle, following such online community activity has provided surprising access to lifestyle migrants in Granada. Of course, this is of limited capacity, and includes a specific and limited segment of the population. Yet, from this online activity, I have interacted with lifestyle migrants, so that I have virtually maintained a position as an active (online) member of Granada's lifestyle migrant community.

FOLLOW-UP OBSERVATIONS

After the primary period of field research during September-December 2007, I returned to Granada three times, including one month in June-July 2008, two weeks in January 2009, and two weeks in February 2011. During these periods, I followed-up with interviewees about their properties, as well as their perspectives of how the city's economy, property market, and lifestyle migrant community had been faring and changing since last we talked. I took photographs and noted my observations regarding changes related to the lifestyle migrant population (who had moved away, etc.), and also in the built environment related to gentrification, such as new businesses and new construction work.

POSITIONALITY: ELITE INSIDER AND REPRESENTATION

The research conducted was influenced by my feminist epistemology. This was manifested through acknowledgement of my own positionality as an educated white woman from the US and I aimed to be self-reflexive when I engaged with the research subjects and data (Moss 2002; Dowling 2005; Howitt and Stevens 2005). As my research was conducted in Nicaragua, I aimed to be sensitive to cross-cultural issues regarding behaviors and opinions, and I informed subjects of their right to not answer questions or to elect to not participate entirely in the research

project (Skelton 2001; Howitt and Stevens 2005). Another power dynamic which I was sensitive to was my own position as both insider and outsider, especially in regard to my relationships to both long-residing lifestyle migrants and to native Granadinos (Mohammad 2001). In this section, I examine this insider-outsider research position, as well as issues surrounding interviewing elites, and finally about research subject representation.

It is important to note here the instructive words of Rose who warns of researchers assuming they can understand power relations and their own status in situations, in the dubious process of "transparent reflexivity" (1997: 311). She writes of earlier feminist scholars who stress the importance of being reflexive to disrupt the impossible goals of objectivity and the supposed neutrality of the researcher. Although the goal of reflexivity is important and should remain a constant consideration, it is often based on the assumption of an uneven power field wherein the researcher holds a privileged position and that should shift power back to the researched. Rose writes that this is bound to fail because it assumes the researcher is central and has agency and has the ability to shift power. The researcher and researched are thought to exist in the same landscape of power, but there are other factors external to the research that the researcher will never comprehend. In my fieldwork, I attempted to be cognizant of my positionality vis-à-vis the research subjects.

INSIDER POSITION?

I have been influenced by Rose's (1997) essay concerning research, power and positionality. Rose advocates using a Foucauldian notion of relational power and that the researcher, researched and research all constitute each other, as Katz (1994) also highlights. This concept of the mutual constitution of all three is important to my research because I am so close to the research subject. My parents have property in Granada, I have lived there and have relationships with many lifestyle migrants, and I am married to a Granadino whose family struggles to find an affordable house to rent in the historic center (where his family has lived for

generations). Having these multiple positions (as a researcher, as a person related to gentrifiers, as a person related to Nicaraguans affected by foreign-led gentrification) impacts my research and affects me as a researcher, as a I have a personal stake into the subject matter. These multiple positions have allowed me to be conscious of the different perspectives of and impacts on the various actors involved in the foreign-led gentrification of Granada. For example, several lifestyle migrants, particularly foreign realtors, have downplayed the importance of Nicaraguans looking for house rentals in the city center, saying that most Nicaraguans own property and that Nicaraguans have different property-seeking networks or that they can simply look outside of city center for places to live. Relying on these confident truths of the foreign realtors and without personally knowing Nicaraguans who rent, I would not know of the passionate significance that many Nicaraguans feel about living in the historic center, the stress they have about finding an affordable place to live, and the anxiety they feel about losing a place-based connection to their old neighborhoods.

This leads into the issues of insider/outsider in research. Much of the recent feminist research that discusses insider/outsider issues highlights that the notion of who or what is inside or outside a research domain is conditional, relational, and unstable (Mullings 1999; Valentine 2002; Mohammed 2001). Valentine writes that focusing on the insider/outsider debate can obscure other axes of power that might be as, or more, influential in understanding the dynamics in research, such as race and gender. The researcher's position as an insider or outsider is unstable and shifting, as I found in my research: among some lifestyle migrants and Nicaraguans, I was understood as an insider, but to others, I was an outsider. Such statuses may have been based on any number of attributes, such as race, citizenship, gender, age, language abilities, knowledge of and/or time spent in Granada, among others.

Ward and Jones see "the interview *process* as a game of positionalities" (1999: 304, italics in original). Skelton writes of her cross-cultural research: "Each interview was a

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negotiation, and complex facets of positionality and power (both mine and those of the person who might or might not be interviewed) came to play at different points" (2001: 93). When interviewing lifestyle migrants, I anticipated having wide access due to my insider status based on my whiteness, experience as an occasional resident in the city, and perhaps most importantly, because my parents were considered to be among the older and well-established lifestyle migrants in Granada. I anticipated that lifestyle migrants might be eager to talk to me to learn about my parents' and my experiences in the city, or they might be reluctant to say no to an interview because they don't want to socially snub my parents. For these reasons, I could be considered an insider, which I did indeed often find to be the case during my field research.

I could also be an outsider because I haven't personally experienced the property acquisition and because I haven't lived in the city for more than a few months since 2007. There is also the possibility that I could be considered to be both insider or outsider, or neither (Mullings 1999). Additionally, there could have been other reasons I am unaware of affecting how I was perceived. I understood my position in the community to be widely known and there was a possibility that because of this, lifestyle migrants didn't want to talk to me.

Another result of the insider/outsider issues is how I emphasized one or the other during my research. Most commonly, I found that I would highlight my insider status to some interviewees (much to my embarrassment later while I was transcribing and reviewing the transcripts). To some knowledgeable lifestyle migrants, I felt the need to demonstrate that I too was an informed foreigner. I would also sometimes correct interviewees who were new to Granada and stated a fact which I knew to be false. For example, one couple said that there were no building requirements in the historic city center, as was told to them by their realtor. I used my insider status and informed them about the correct rules. Upon review, I think this changed the dynamic of the interview, as they afterwards deferred to my experienced position by asking

questions, rather than making proclamations. On the other hand, perhaps they were inspired to learn more about the building rules which they were violating.

I did find that many of the older foreign men were reluctant to talk to me. This is one situation where I think my familiarity and presence in the lifestyle migrant community helped me – several lifestyle migrants talked to me only after being persuaded by mutual friends. Some interviews and conversations were not as fruitful as I would have liked. One person was curt and did not elaborate on any answers. More than one lifestyle migrant treated me suspiciously and gave me guarded answers.

Sometimes, I would feign ignorance about Nicaraguan culture when lifestyle migrants would describe life and people in Nicaragua. Mullings (1999) writes about the questions that researchers must ask themselves regarding how much of one's own perspectives a researcher should reveal to subjects. In my case, lifestyle migrant interviewees would sometimes make racist and blanket statements about "the way Nicaraguans are" and I would keep silent. Although I thought it best to let the interviewee continue and reveal their perspectives, I sometimes feared that they thought that I agreed with their generalizations. When they were simply declaring racist assumptions, I usually let it go. However, I did occasionally voice my opinion if I thought they were open to discussing interpretations of Nicaraguan culture. Fortunately, this was often the case because, as I discussed above, the lifestyle migrant community in Granada is awash with misinformation. Lifestyle migrants repeat statements which are often unfounded. For example, one person told me that customarily Nicaraguans pass on the family house to the oldest male son. While this may often be true, this is not a "custom" and there is no one person to whom a house is passed. The interviewee and I discussed this and had an engaging conversation about gender, obligation, and in heritance in Nicaragua. This issue of how I interacted and responded to lifestyle migrant interviewees is discussed more in the next section about interviewing elites.

Realtors and lifestyle migrants can both be considered elites in the Granada context and so the recent literature examining interviewing elites has been useful to my research (Desmond 2004; Ward and Jones 1999; England 2002; Smith 2006; McDowell 1998). Scholars (Desmond 2004; Smith 2006) have made an effort to problematize the often overly simplistic definition of elites, choosing instead to employ a relational understanding of elites. A person may be regarded as an elite in one context, but not so in another. This understanding of elites is most fitting to my research population because, as I have written, the lifestyle migrants in Granada are elite in the general context of the city due to their status as mostly white seniors with access to foreign economies, and because they own property. In another context, however, such as in their home countries, not all lifestyle migrants possess an elite status, so it is not a position which many are fully comfortable with.

Although lifestyle migrants maintain an unquestionably elite status in Granada, it is important to remember the relational understanding of power and that regardless of the supposed elite status of a person, there is room for vulnerability and uncertainty (Smith 2006). Global North lifestyle migrants absolutely have economic and social power in Granada, yet their power can be lessened in some interpersonal relations. For example, some interviewed lifestyle migrants felt that they were taken advantage of in situations in Granada due to their lack of understanding of local politics, regulations, culture, and especially the Spanish language. They often complained about being "used" to pay for things. Many do live on a limited budget and they say that Nicaraguans assume that all lifestyle migrants are very rich. Of course, most are very rich compared to most Nicaraguans, but they may not have much expendable income (for example, some may have many financial obligations). Lifestyle migrants absolutely possess a privileged position in Granada, yet it is important to not dismiss their own feelings of vulnerability, as such feelings affects how they relate to Granada and its residents.

Access to elites is listed as a concern in methods scholarship (England 2002). In my research, however, access to elite lifestyle migrants was not much of a problem, because of my relatively "insider" status discussed above. Because of my position as a researcher and as a relative long-timer in the community, I was unsure about access to the foreign realtors. I feared that many realtors might not want to divulge their "tricks of the trade", such as from where they get their properties, the amounts paid and profits received from transactions, and general information passed along. Although I did have successful interviews with six realtors, I found them to be generally guarded with me and they were reluctant to offer any specific data, specifically property prices paid. One reason for this could be due to a sensitivity about working in such an unpopular profession; after all, foreign realtors are often accredited with being "responsible" for artificially raising property prices and bringing too much unwanted attention to the city.

Because of the rising popularity of the city among tourists, and the increasing marketing of the city as a place to buy property, I think that realtors were more "in their element" and seemingly "open" (or at least more talkative and descriptive) when dealing with newcomers who do not know much and, therefore, could be indoctrinated into the local real estate scene under their personal tutelages. Each realtor provides a very specific point of view about Granada's state of housing costs and conditions, the impacts on locals, and gossip about other realtors and expatriates. Realtors might have been reticent to talk to me because I already had my own understanding of the progression of lifestyle migration and properties in the city.

Prior to beginning the research, I was unsure of how the Nicaraguan officials would engage with me. Gaining access was not difficult, but did require several returns to try to catch them at good times. As I was a woman in my twenties, I believe that my affiliation with a university helped grant me access because I might be considered a representative from a formal organization. I did have slightly more trouble ascertaining which officials would provide the most

beneficial information. It was difficult to decipher the structure and roles of the national and local government and how they relate to each other. Further, it was unclear which agencies the lifestyle migrants knew about and dealt with because, although I asked about their interactions with government agencies, most responded that they had little involvement with the government in any capacity.

I had limited success with obtaining information with government officials. While some were forthcoming with their personal opinions, others (e.g., the *registro* employee) were not particularly communicative. Most problematically, however, was the difficulty in obtaining official data. As described in Chapter 2, I was unable to get any official statistical information regarding how many lifestyle migrants bought properties, or information regarding property purchase prices or tax amounts. This could be attributed to any number of factors (Kingsbury and Klak 2005): they did not possess the information, they didn't want to say anything definitive on record (regarding opinions of processes), they did not trust me and/or my young male Nicaraguan translator for any number of reasons (e.g., they knew him, we were both young, I seemed ignorant, I was foreign).

Regarding power dynamics between both realtors and officials, I took into consideration shifting power dynamics, including my education, race, gender, and age and tried to be malleable depending on the situation. Generally, because of my relative youthfulness, I found it most helpful when I positioned myself as an eager student, willing and enthusiastic to soak up the official's bountiful knowledge. I can only know my own interpretation of the existent power dynamics, especially because of the unknown ways that research subjects position and interpret me (Mullings 1999: 344; Mohammad 2001), but I think this role I performed aligned as a suitable expectation of me by the Nicaraguan officials. I found Mullings' observation useful: she found that she gained access to information when she was considered non-threatening to the interviewee, regardless of whether she was considered an insider or an outsider (1999: 341).

REPRESENTATION

The final issues concerning my research methods and methodology are ethics and representation. These are important issues among scholars, including feminist scholars who question any unproblematized authority of the researcher (Rose 1997). Although power is relational and shifting, the researcher has a great deal of power in the final representation of the research data (Smith 2006; Mullings 1999). Smith (2006) writes of the assumption by some researchers that elites don't deserve the same ethical consideration of ensuring accuracy and participation in the final product of research. If a researcher operationalizes a relational understanding of power, it is unfair to assume the static, unproblematized position of an elite. They can be just as vulnerable and must be treated with the same ethical standards as all research subjects. No matter how uncomfortable, the researcher is obliged to respectfully pursue the perspectives of the participants (Smith 2006; Falconer Al-Hindi and Kawabata 2002).

Several feminists (Alcoff 1991; Lugones and Spelman 1996) offer suggestions to feminists on how to represent their research findings. These include being unobtrusive and self-critical of one's own positionality. Lugones and Spelman (1996) write of some of the dangers involved with attempts for white feminists to get close to a disenfranchised group. They mention the very real threat of researchers using their access to these groups for domination. Other pernicious self-interested motives involve self-betterment. Although my research population is not particularly vulnerable, the entire research experience involves questionable power dynamics and I think it's important that I not exploit my participants' willingness to offer themselves for my project for my own occupational rewards without giving them anything. This is difficult to negotiate, as I have nothing to give them except an honest representation.

All of these factors must be taken into consideration as I take into account representation. Feminist methodologies address the need to respectfully represent their research subjects, whom

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are often women and other disenfranchised peoples. For all of the reasons listed above, the lifestyle migrants hold a privileged position in Granada and so they can be considered to be elites. So do they deserve the same kind of sensitivity as marginalized or disenfranchised groups? What if they are taking advantage of an unjust power dynamic, consciously or not? How should I balance representing the multiple positionalities of the expatriates with their structural positions as elites and neocolonizers?

These questions do not have easy answers, but I think that representing an elite population does not require quite the same sensitivity as that of a marginalized group. The main difference is that lifestyle migrants' privilege affords them access to representation. From my research among the lifestyle migrants, I have found that they are quite conscious of their powerful positions in the city. Some are self-conscious about it and attempt to give back to the community, others simply do not care, and there are many positions in-between. I think of most importance is that I properly discuss the surprising multiplicity of the group. There are lifestyle migrants of all ages, sexualities, nationalities, and intentions, so I have aimed to fairly represent the various positionalities of the group, even if, as a group, they all share a powerful structural position.

The lifestyle migrants situate themselves as authentic insiders against tourists and newer, mal-intentioned lifestyle migrants, all the while raising housing prices and the cost of living for those in the culture they supposedly esteem. Many lifestyle migrants also make judgments about other cultures – not unlike accusations of white Western feminists making claims about non-Western feminists and cultures (Lugones and Spelman 1996). They often state that they are the visitors in another country and so they experience all the good and bad of living in a place. They make judgments, but because most locals do not have that same opportunity to live in the Global North, they are unable to make proper comparisons. Further, lifestyle migrants have consciously chosen to live in Nicaragua. They don't have to be there, yet many are full of criticisms and opinions of the way of life in Granada. And, importantly, they almost always can return "home".

The important question I have struggled with is how to represent my research subjects this with fairness, accuracy, and consistency. I think that my methodology was appropriate – it is fitting to research the lifestyle migrants who are gentrifying the city and publish the findings regarding this population. It would be unfair to make conclusions about the Nicaraguan population based on the research gathered from the lifestyle migrants' opinions, so I must be sensitive about making false claims made about Nicaraguans.

CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW

As contemporary cities increasingly turn to tourism as a means of economic development, and as gentrification expands in many cities, we need more critical accounts of the nexus of tourism and gentrification (Gotham 2005: 1115).

Overall we need a much deeper and better understanding of the links between gentrification and globalization…authors have glossed over the causal links between globalization and gentrification. They link the two by discussing neoliberal urban policy regimes, the hypermobility of global capital and workers, the expansion and increased wealth of the cosmopolitan class, etc. But they provide little to no empirical or conceptual detail in their discussions (Lees *et al*. 2008: 230).

This chapter addresses the theoretical backgrounds of this dissertation about lifestyle migrant-led gentrification. The literatures informing this research are those focused on gentrification, lifestyle migration, and tourism. In this chapter, I discuss relevant themes in each of these literatures and relate the processes identified in each of them to work on development cycles. Further, I will discuss the issues of authenticity and cosmopolitanism that are important key terms for this dissertation.

LIFESTYLE MIGRATION

LIFESTYLE MIGRATION AND SYNONYMS: EVOLUTION OF THE TERMINOLOGY AND WHERE TO FIT IN LITERATURE

Among the various terms describing the process of people moving for specific amenities and life choices, lifestyle migration is increasingly used. Lifestyle migrants have variations of movements (residential tourists), connections to the community, and times in life when it occurs (retirement migration), but what they all have in common is their pursuit of a lifestyle. The term "lifestyle migration" refers to the movement of people to spend a significant amount of time in a place which is motivated primarily because of "quality of life" factors. I utilize Benson's (2011: 224) definition:

> Broadly speaking, 'lifestyle migrants' are relatively affluent individuals, moving to places that, for various reasons, signify something loosely defined as a quality of life. In this respect, while their life chances and opportunities are different, lifestyle migrants hold in common with other migrants this desire for a better way of life.

This definition is noteworthy because Benson juxtaposes lifestyle migration with other more commonly addressed forms of migration, such as migrations related to labor concerns, refugees, or asylum-seekers. Lifestyle migration usually is addressed in relation to tourism as well, due to the typical pattern of visiting a destination as a tourist first, and later becoming a lifestyle migrant.

Lifestyle migration has only very recently begun to receive academic attention. In fact, when I first began studying the foreign influx in Granada in the early-2000s, there wasn't yet an accurately succinct term for the phenomenon. Although the term lifestyle migration has recently gained traction as the preferred term for this temporary to full time touristic migration, some scholars have used residential tourism (McWatters 2009; Noorloos 2011; Mantecon and Huete 2009), retirement migration (Bozic 2006; Gustafson 2001, 2002; Rodriguez 2001; Sunil *et al.*2007; Truly 2002), or second home tourism (Hall and Muller 2004; Halfacree 2012). While each of these terms usefully addresses different specific movements and motivations, I believe that the focus on lifestyles best collectively describes the actions of Global Northerners moving to Granada.

Residential tourism was a term that was used when the topic first began to be discussed, because at that time it was often analyzed in relation to tourism. As has been addressed, there is a connection between tourism and lifestyle migration, especially in regards to how destinations first open up. However, residential tourism, like retirement migration, fails to adequately describe the broad processes and actors involved in lifestyle migration. Not everyone is a retiree and not all lifestyle migrants engage in touristic practices. A former Peace Corps worker or a religious worker who settles into a foreign destination often knows a great deal about the cultures, speaks the local language, and interacts with local peoples perhaps more than with other foreigners and cannot accurately be described as residential tourists.

The issue with the term amenity migration is that this has evolved to describe migrations specifically motivated by natural amenities. The term has now been fully embraced by those

studying urban to rural movements, most specifically mountain resorts, but also about other rural locations in relatively pristine natural habitats. Although my research focuses on lifestyle migration in an urban setting, this branch of the subject matter (amenity migration) offers useful discussions, specifically regarding how amenity migrants are seeking to live in what they consider to be a more "authentic", pristine environment (Osbaldiston 2011). For example, authors discuss the "rural idyll", which amenity migrants search for by moving to rural France (Benson 2010; Buller and Hoggart 1994).

While in many ways second home tourism characterizes situations like in Granada, it does not fully encompass the situation in Granada, since some foreigners live in the city year-round. Second home tourism does offer some useful concepts, specifically in regards to property acquisition. For example, scholars describe how second homes are frequently purchased when the buyer is middle-aged. In addition to providing a vacation destination, this purchase also serves as an investment for a future retirement home (Hall and Muller 2004; Halfacre 2012). Realtors in Granada tell me that many tourists buy homes several years before they intend to retire.

Before the specific notion of lifestyle migration coalesced within the last few years, there was not yet one body of literature which addressed all of the concerns existent in my case study. The issues concerning what to label the phenomena of lifestyle migration is rooted in the fact that the subject matter can be situated in a number of different literatures and lines of thought. Lifestyle migration can be examined in terms of migration, tourism, and gerontology, among others.

Scholars of gerontology and migration were among the first to study the phenomenon, specifically focusing on retirement migration. Longino (1992), Litwak and Longino (1987), Cuba (1989) examined the impact of an influx of domestic retirees into communities. Authors such as Buller and Hoggart (1994), Otero (1997), King *et al.* (2000), and O'Reilly (2000) were among the first social scientists to focus on the phenomenon of international retiree lifestyle migration.

Authors have described how older people have been moving in greater numbers because of the Global North aging population's increased vitality, wealth, and mobility (King *et al.*2000; Williams and Hall 2000, 2002; Casado-Diaz 2006). For people in the US, there are longstanding flows of retirement migration (e.g. New Yorkers to Florida). The recent growth of US citizens engaging in international movements is striking, considering that many Americans travel internationally much less than other Global Northerners. Because of the close proximity of the European states, as well as for other reasons, Europeans have traditionally been a more internationally mobile population than those from the US. There have been recent increases in the numbers of older people moving internationally, including migrants from Northern and Western Europe and those from the US and Canada (King *et al.*2000; Buller and Hoggart 1994; O'Reilly 2000; Casado-Diaz 2006). Scholars have written about the importance of one's lifecycle impacting migration decisions (Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Waters 2002; Ong 1999; Gustafson 2002; Benson 2010; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; McHugh and Mings 1996). As they have had more time to accumulate capital than younger people, the elderly are more likely to have the financial resources to be able to purchase a second home abroad and to be able to sustain lives and homes in multiple locations. Further, the elderly generally do not have to care for children, who require an (ideally steady) income to support them. Children also must attend school and parents often choose to limit moving so as not to disrupt the steadiness in their children's lives.

<u>COMPARED TO MIGRATION STUDIES</u>

The focus of the research in the fledgling literature of lifestyle migration is often on understanding the types of people involved, how they live and interact in their newfound communities, and to a lesser extent, their relationship with the local populations. Even when the relationships with local populations are addressed, the studies are often focused on the perspectives of the more privileged mobile actors (Truly 2002; O'Reilly 2000).

Migration scholars have recently focused on expatriates and professional elites (Beaverstock 2002, 2007; Ley and Waters 2004; Coles and Walsh 2010; Fechter 2010). Sklair (2001) identified internationally-moving people whose primary interest is for reproducing global capital, which he labeled the transnational capitalist class. In her book *Flexible Citizenship*, Ong (1999) discussed the time-space strategies of Pacific Asians who use migrations and citizenships throughout their family's life course to offer an optimal position for work and education opportunities. She described how transnational migrants strategically move in order to learn how to maneuver in a variety of global settings and pursue international economic and cultural competence (Ong 1999: 95). Lifestyle migrants in Granada similarly pursue a cosmopolitan identity and corresponding skills through their move to a Global South frontier.

In the 2010 special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* concerning migrations of more privileged migrants, Fechter and Walsh noted that the:

> Work on mobile professionals promises to be a genuinely exciting field of research and represents a valuable complement to the mainstream of migration studies. However, since the articles here address a relatively neglected kind of migration, their subject matter does not necessarily resonate with the empirical and theoretical orthodoxy (2010: 1209).

While the research regarding professional elites has informed my research, it has done so primarily in a comparative manner. The lifestyle migrants in Granada do not neatly fit under the professional elites heading. These are not corporate, jet-setting elites who are motivated to live abroad due to job opportunities and responsibilities, and they are generally not as wealthy (Smiley 2010; Ong 1999; Coles and Walsh 2010; Fechter 2010). The lifestyle migrants in Granada are different; they espouse quality-of-life aspects such as having a relaxed schedule, enjoying natural amenities, and interacting with an "authentic" culture.

Another difference is that the corporate elite are reported to prefer spatial separation, with homes in enclaves, often in gated communities (Smiley 2010; Beaverstock 2002; Walsh 2007). While many lifestyle migrants arguably exist in social enclaves in Granada, my research finds

that some have mixed feelings about this, and do not wish to be so separated. They value residing among locals and engaging with locals in their everyday lives, however much this does not actually occur.

MOVEMENTS: PERMANENT RESIDENCE, BUT MOST OFTEN SEASONAL, CIRCULAR, AND PERIPATETIC MOVEMENTS

Lifestyle migration has in large part evolved out of tourism studies and, in fact, most of the scholarship has been published in tourism journals. Williams and Hall (2002) dissect the relationships between tourism, migration, and mobilities by focusing on production- and consumption-led movements.

> This brief review underlines one of the starting points for this paper: the largely discrete literatures on tourism and migration have, at best, marked out the core areas of their research concerns. The failure to conceptualize adequately and define their fields of enquiry has left a significant area of overlap where there are blurred motivations, types of mobility and duration of stay. *It is a zone which is epitomized by the semi-retired, consumption-oriented migrant who leads a peripatetic life style, shifting between two or more homes. This form of mobility constitutes 'circulation' as opposed to migration* (Williams and Hall 2000: 7, emphasis added).

One reason why pinpointing lifestyle migration in relation to migration has been difficult is because of the lack of uni-directional, fixed nature of the movement patterns of most lifestyle migrants, as Williams and Hall note above. Many lifestyle migrants are "snow birds," meaning that their more permanent dwelling may be in a colder climate, and they spend winters in a warmer climate (McHugh and Mings 1996; Onyx and Leonard 2005; Smith and House 2006). Many lifestyle migrants similarly move back and forth between places (Litwak and Longino 1987; Gustafson 2002; Bozic 2006; Hui 2009), which McHugh and Mings refer to as a "circle of migration" (1996). Others move post-retirement to a new destination and never return to their home land, or perhaps end up returning at the end of their lives. In other words, there are myriad mobilities existent among lifestyle migrants.

Williams and Hall (2002) describe how some migrations related to tourism are production-led, such as entrepreneurial migration, where foreigners are motivated to start businesses in foreign locations because they can serve the high concentration of their compatriots.

> In many ways, the high proportion of migrant entrepreneurs in many tourist regions is hardly surprising. This is favoured by high rates of tourism expansion creating new opening in an industry with notoriously low barriers to entry, as well as the existence of niche markets for particular national groups of tourists (Williams and Hall 2002: 32).

Williams and Hall also discuss consumption-led migrations, which generally is more applicable to the lifestyle migrants in Granada. The authors note that there are economically-active consumption-led migrants who "are defined by their motivations but it must be recognised that these too constitute a continuum, where consumption and production motives may blur and be combined" (2002: 34). They make a nod to the importance of property and also address retirement migration, although they write about how it is "part of a generalised counter-urbanisation tendency" (Williams and Hall 2002: 36), which is indicative of the predominance of rural places in scholarship of lifestyle migration.

SITES OF LIFESTYLE MIGRATION

Global South

Most of the research concerning issues of lifestyle migration has been conducted in the Global North, specifically the coastal Spain. There has been less research conducted about lifestyle migration in the Global South. Recently, scholars have broadened the geographical scope of lifestyle migration by providing case studies of the phenomenon in Global South places, such as Mexico (Banks 2004; Otero 1997; Sunil *et al.* 2007; Truly 2002), Costa Rica (Coffey 1993; Janoschka 2009; Noorloos 2011), Panama (McWatters 2009), Turkey (Bahar *et al.* 2009), Hungary (Illes and Michalko 2008), Tanzania (Smiley 2010), Dubai (Coles and Walsh 2010; Walsh 2006, 2007), and India (D'Andrea 2007; Korpela 2009, 2010). This scholarship reflects the tendency for people in the Global North to look to cheaper and more desirable locations in the

Global South to achieve their desired lifestyles, and it also demonstrates how lifestyle migration communities develop in tandem with tourism (Truly 2002).

Although there are many similarities among all international lifestyle migrations, there are some distinct characteristics of those in the Global South, most notably because of extreme wealth disparities. The cost of living is significantly lower in most Global South destinations, allowing Global Northerners to enjoy a lifestyle they would be unable to afford in their home countries (Smiley 2010). Some lifestyle migrants are lifted in class in destinations like Nicaragua, where they can afford to live in a nice house, buy their medicine, and drink in bars every day (Torres and Momsen 2005).

Climate/Nature and the Rural Idyll

Most of the literature concerning lifestyle migration has been in locations which are chosen first and foremost due to their beautiful and comfortable natural amenities. Although many lifestyle migrants often claim that they are drawn because of an appealing culture, they usually emphasize the qualities of the physical, non-urban environment (King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000; Rodriguez 2001; Casado-Diaz 2006; McWatters 2009). The local people and culture are typically treated as an "added bonus" or a quaint background for a new lifestyle. In Costa Rica (Coffey 1993; Noorloos 2011) and Panama (McWatters 2009), lifestyle migrants usually choose to live at the beach or an interior rural center. In Spain, they choose the coast (King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000); in France, the countryside (Benson 2010).

A central concern of lifestyle migration is the natural landscape of the chosen location. As O'Reilly (2000) writes, although many of the British expatriates say that they choose to spend time in Spain because they love the culture, of foremost importance is the sunny environment, near to the sea. While there are many reasons why a destination is chosen, O'Reilly writes that ultimately, in the Costa del Sol, the main draw is the weather. This is also shown by the fact that most of the foreign residents first came to visit the area as mass tourists. The Costa del Sol region

has been a popular destination for British for decades because it is the nearest site which offers

the all-important amenities: sun, sand, and sea (O'Reilly 2000; Casado-Diaz 2006; King *et al.*

2000).

The "rural idyll" has been described to be a dominant motivation for amenity or lifestyle

migration (Halfacree 2012; Stone and Stubbs 2007; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Obaldiston

2011). Many lifestyle migrants desire to live in rural settings drawn by a romantic notion of rural

life.

> Rural locations are imagined to offer lifestyle migrants a sense of stepping back in
> time, getting back to the land, the simple or good life, as well as a sense of
> community spirit. While it is often the case in lifestyle migration that destinations are
> depicted as having the characteristics of rurality, the narratives of these who move to
> the countryside, whether at home or abroad, additionally stress the unique and
> embodied relationship that they have with the landscape (Benson and O'Reilly 2009:
> 612).

Compared to their former lives, often in an urban environment, lifestyle migrants have

been found to position the rural environment to be the antidote to their troubles. Analogous to

Benson and O'Reilly's observation, Obaldiston writes that lifestyle migrants want to live in an

"authentic" place reminiscent of an idealized past, among a friendly community, and where they

can maintain a creative life.

> The past here stands in opposition to the present and that the desire to live amid
> cultural heritage involves a longing for a simpler values. Following this, I contend
> that aesthetics of authenticity are actively pursued through the protection of once
> mundane infrastructures that reflect the locales' history and the governance of other
> new developments to suit a symbolism of the past (2011: 223).

Urban

Because lifestyle migrants are frequently seeking an escape from their hectic, often urban

lifestyles, many believe a more "simple" and "authentic" new life is possible in the countryside.

Although scholarship demonstrates that most lifestyle migration does indeed occur in more rural

places, there are other lifestyle migrants choosing a more urban life. There has not yet been much

examination of places like Antigua, Guatemala or Granada, Nicaragua, chosen for their urban

aesthetic, although the exceptions to this are Korpela's research on young lifestyle migrants in Varanasi, India (2009) and Truly's study of retirees in the Lake Chapala area (2002). I believe that there is a notable distinction of the types of lifestyle migrants who choose an urban environment amidst a local population with cultural attributes compared to a small town or rural area chosen primarily for its environmental characteristics.

Although scholars point out the appeal of the local Spanish culture in the abundant research of lifestyle migrants in coastal Spain, existent literature emphasizes that the natural amenities (the sea) and existent lifestyle migrant community are the principal draws for lifestyle migrants (King *et al.*2000; O'Reilly 2000; Casado-Diaz 1999; Rodriguez 2001). Despite the urbanization occurring in many parts of coastal Spain, scholars do not mention that lifestyle migrants choose to live there because of urban amenities. For example, the architectural appeal is never mentioned as a motivating factor (not least because there are currently high-rises along the coasts). This is in stark contrast to urban places like Varanesi, India, chosen for its cultural resources (e.g., opportunities for traditional music study) (Korpela 2009) or Granada, Nicaragua, with its colonial architecture and city amenities. Most lifestyle migrants anywhere go where there is a warmer climate and low cost of living, but foreigners settle in Granada because of its urban ambiance, not the nearby natural attractions.

STAGE MODELS FOR THE EVOLUTION OF SITES AND ACTORS

Stage models are useful in a limited sense and I discuss the stage models of tourism site development (and of gentrification) because they have been used widely (Butler 1980; Brenner and Fricke 2007; Foster and Murphy 1991). Although stage models are problematic because they are teleological, leaving little room for agency and divergence, they can be used as a descriptive heuristic and can be informative in places which are beginning to transform, where there is much debate and concern about how the site will evolve. This is certainly the case in Granada, Nicaragua, where there is great anxiety about a beloved place changing. Of course, for some

scholars, and especially for businesspeople, a major motivation is to try to predict trends in order to capitalize on them. In this study, I am interested in how Granada has evolved and been transformed as a result of the recent foreign influence, as well as its future impacts.

Gentrification and tourism have each have been significantly informed by life cycle or stage models. Tourism has life cycle models addressing the development of a destination, which chart the growth and development of the tourist population and infrastructure (Butler 1980). Some of the models look at the types of tourists who are drawn to the destination. Gentrification has stage models concerning the types of people and the types of capital used to transform properties and spaces, as well as how they evolve over time (Lees *et al.* 2008).

The stage models from these two literatures share many similarities, and seem relevant to the case of Granada. The two processes I have witnessed evolving in Granada over the past decade can be related to life cycle models. For example, each model has a pioneering type of actor who is drawn to risky places. The fact that both of the literatures have stage models provided me with an entrance into drawing connections between the two processes. They provide a starting point from which to compare similarities between the processes of gentrification and the development of tourism and lifestyle migrations affecting Granada. Throughout this dissertation, the term "pioneer" is used to describe many lifestyle migrants in Granada, particularly the first Global Northerners to spend time in the city. The term "pioneer" can be associated with expansionist, colonialist projects, especially for people from the United States, and I use this term precisely because many lifestyle migrants in Granada proudly, and usually unproblematically, see themselves as pioneers.

TOURIST DESTINATION STAGE MODELS

There has been extensive study of the stages of tourism destination development (Butler 1980), as well as the various types of tourists who help to develop new destinations (Cohen 1972; Truly 2002; Gladstone 2005). In this section, I focus on how stage models depict the evolution of

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tourist destinations and their corresponding actors. For example, many tourist destinations are first "opened up" by backpacker tourists. These are "pioneering" tourists looking for new, "authentic" destinations where they can engage with a local population and/or environment (e.g., an unspoiled beach with limited tourist infrastructure).

This resonates with the case of Granada because this pattern has occurred here. The first people to arrive from the Global North were perceived to be roguish, pioneering tourists and lifestyle migrants. But while there have been examinations of the evolution of tourist destinations (Butler 1980), there has not yet been a similar study of the life cycle of lifestyle migration. As tourism concerns largely inform and relate to lifestyle migration, I posit here that there are similarities which must be investigated.

Butler's model shows that destinations evolve through stages. In the "exploration" stage, "pioneers" (Butler 1980) or backpackers (Brenner and Fricke 2007) open up a new destination, where there are very limited tourist businesses. In the "involvement" stage, more tourists start to come and a tourist season is created. Locals start small businesses catering to tourists, and contact between locals and tourists remains high. In the "development" stage, tourist visitation grows and commonly, local control of the infrastructure is ceded to national or international companies. In the "consolidation" stage, there are more total visitors that residents and much of the local economy will be tied to tourism. In the "stagnation" stage, the location is no longer trendy, and becomes dependent upon repeat visitors, including more organized, mass tourists. As the destination has reached its capacity, there are corresponding "environmental, social, and economic problems" (1980: 8). Finally, in the "decline" stage, the destination attracts fewer visitors and there is increased property turnover, and many hotels become "condominiums, convalescent or retirement homes" since the site now is attractive for permanent residents. The destination may experience rejuvenation, however, but this requires rehauling the site's focus. Butler gives the example of spa towns in Europe becoming winter sports destinations (1980: 9).

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Butler's model (and others) conceptualizes destinations as following a linear progression with a starting point and an ending point. Similar to some development discourses (e.g., modernization theories), these models suggest that some places are not "developed" and that it is only a matter of time before they follow the "natural" development progression of more developed places, in this case a mass tourist destination.

Some problems with Butler's TALC model include: that it is based on a resort model, not an urban area (Gale and Botterill 2005); the shape of the "s" curve is debatable (i.e., some stages might be skipped or the time spent in each stage is not predetermined); the unit of measurement (tourist numbers) may not be the most effective unit for measurement, because "the critical incidents that mark the transition from one stage to the next are poorly defined, and often difficult to substantiate empirically" (Gale and Botterill 2005: 159).

Brenner and Fricke (2007) write that in the tourism destination models, there is an assumption that the destination will develop further and be abandoned by backpackers or other early pioneers. Although this is indeed often the case, they agree with Oppermann (1993) and Foster and Murphy (1991) that more than one kind of international tourist can inhabit a tourist space, albeit in separate establishments. The tourist destination of Zipolite, Mexico has maintained a backpacker-friendly tourist climate ("lower circuit"), as well as an infrastructure serving a more upscale clientele ("upper circuit"). Although the more formal, often more top-down upper circuit tourist establishments often are what are studied in tourism scholarship (Oppermann 1993), Brenner and Fricke focus on the development of the lower circuit infrastructure. Unlike in Butler's model, oftentimes newer destinations are developed by the foreign tourists who see the potential and want to live in the backpacker destination and decide to buy and/or start tourist businesses. These are the "developer-tourists" described by McMinn and Cater (1998), and I described such "entrepreneurial expatriates" in my Master's research (Foulds 2005), who helped to establish the tourist infrastructure of Granada, Nicaragua.

After new tourist markets in ever-more-remote areas are opened up by backpackers, they often later evolve into a mass tourist destination, or at least one that grows beyond the control of the local population into foreign (or non-local) hands (Brenner and Fricke 2007). This can be considered synonymous with the "exploration" stage of Butler's resort life cycle model, which is only the beginning of mass tourism development (Mowford and Munt 2003: 85). Hampton looks at the fledging tourism industry on the island of Gili Trawangan off the coast of Lombok and believes that the current tourism economy geared towards backpackers is mutually beneficial to all. But, he wonders: "Does backpacker tourism need to be just one stage in the somewhat unseemly rush towards international mass tourism, or, is it possible to stop at this point?" (1998: 654).

Brenner and Fricke (2007) suggest that evolutionary models of destination developments need to be reexamined. They studied the evolution of the destination of Zipolite beach in Mexico which became popular because of backpacker tourists. They write that backpackers don't always move on. There are developer tourists akin to the ones described by McMinn and Cater in Belize, who become attached to a destination and decide to stay and open a business to support their lifestyles. A destination does not necessarily have to "progress" to develop mass tourist infrastructures owned by international corporations. Further, backpackers and other alternative tourists are an increasingly diverse population and there are usually enough new backpackers or other backpackers who desire visiting smaller-scale, "lower circuit" destinations.

Gale and Botterill utilize a realist perspective and mention the problems with the uncritical positivist assumptions of the TALC: "it is based on objective facts, not subjective values" (2005: 160), for example, the building of a few resorts means that the destination has reached a certain stage, "it presumes a constant conjunction between tourist numbers and time, both quantifiable variable" (Gale and Botterill 2005: 160), and that it is predictive. The model has been positioned on so many places, that some argue it has become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Life cycle models such as Butler's have been heavily criticized (Milne and Ateljevic 2001), due to their positivist, deterministic evolution. These progressions are positioned as teleological and they are dictated by global processes of business and tourism. The local populations are characterized as without agency and at the mercy of the global events affecting them.

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TOURIST STAGE MODELS

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Although backpackers have been linked to patterns established by "drifters" of the 1960s and 1970s (Cohen 1972), who were characterized as young and broke, alternative travel – which means independent of formal tour operators – is now much more diversified. Young, educated professionals today often share a form of travel similar to long term backpackers (Brenner and Fricke 2007; Uriely *et al.* 2002). Backpackers are often seen as the poster children of alternative tourism, as young people trying to experience the world. I argue that people of differing ages and with various motivations currently choose to travel in an "alternative" manner, meaning they design their own travel plans.

Uriely *et al.* (2002) bring into question the common assumption that backpackers are all vagrants and hippies who are wandering the world searching for enlightenment. The culture of backpackers has its roots in the 1970s when the "third world" was travelled by "drifters" who were seeking an alternative to what they perceived to be their soul-less, war-torn Western civilizations. Much has changed since those days, but budget-conscious youth have maintained the tradition of traveling cheaply and lightly, and have retained the image of anti-establishment soul-searchers.

Uriely *et al.* (2002) describe tourist types derived from Cohen's (1972) tourist groupings of "institutionalized" and "non-institutionalized" tourism. There are organized and independent group "institutionalized" tourists, and "non-institutionalized explorers and drifters". The "organized-group mass tourists" are the least exploratory, while the "drifters" are the most

spontaneous group. Cohen defines five distinct types of tourist experiences that are based on the quest for meaningful experiences, as well as on the drive for pleasure. The quest for meaning is based around a spiritual "center" – where the tourist finds meaning (in his/her own or in a foreign culture). The five modes range from the "recreational mode" when the tourists are strongly pursuing pleasure and finds center in their own culture. The other extreme is the "existential" mode where the tourists are committed to an elected center that is external to their native culture (1972). Uriely *et al.* (2002) apply this typology to their research of Israeli backpackers (and add two new groups – humanists – for tourists who connect to two or more spiritual centers). They found that that this typology was useful in demonstrating that tourists with very different types of expectations found the backpacker tourist form favorable. Moreover, they found that backpackers were often fluid in their type, even within the same trip while maintaining backpacker form. For example, a backpacker might go to an ashram in India to explore another religion and feel connected to religious centers in both their native and adopted lands. This could immediately be followed by a trip to Goa where the backpacker engaged solely in hedonistic "Western" activities, with no connection to the local community.

Cohen developed another typology in 1979, focusing on the traveler's orientation or "life center". These modes are: "recreational", "diversionary", "experiential", "experimental", and "existential". Most Western tourists choose travel experiences which aim to provide simple recreation or to provide diversion from everyday life. They are most interested in having experiences which do not challenge their usual worldviews, but instead allow them to return to their lives and feel refreshed and refocused on their usual lives. "Experiential", "experimental", and "existential" tourists are in many ways dissatisfied with their home cultures and look to new places and culture to learn from and gain new meanings. "Experiential" tourists are interested in learning about new cultures and appreciate how others live, yet remain uncommitted. "A traveler in the experimental mode engages in that authentic life, but refuses to commit himself to it; rather

he samples and compares the different alternative, hoping eventually to discover one which will suit his particular needs and desires" (Cohen 1979: 189).

Plog offers a typology based on psychological dispositions. On one end of the continuum are allocentric tourists: "The first people to 'discover' a new area are the Allocentrics. They enjoy the sense of discovery and like to immerse themselves in new activities while there is still a sense of naturalness about them" (1974: 57). They then tell their friends about it and the destination becomes more popular, and correspondingly new tourist businesses open, such as restaurants and hotels. As the "mid-centric" audience increases, "the Allocentrics are turned off by the destination because it has lost its sense of naturalness" (Plog 1974: 57). Eventually, "Psychocentrics" dominate the destination. They like television, familiar atmospheres and prefer to drive to their tourist destinations.

LIFESTYLE MIGRATION STAGE MODELS

There has been little examination of the evolution of lifestyle migration destinations and the actors involved. Perhaps this is due to the fact that much of the existent lifestyle migration scholarship focused on well-established communities at the height of their life cycle. Early authors such as King *et al.* (2000), O'Reilly (2000), Buller and Hoggart (1994), as well as more recent scholarship (Benson 2009, 2010; Benson and O'Reilly 2009), have concentrated on documenting ongoing lifestyle migration patterns. There had not been significant recent transformations of the population or of the built environment and its usage. In newer lifestyle migrant destinations, such as Granada, however, the foreign presence is relatively recent, creating interest and concern about the progressing impact of the growing population.

Truly (2002) is one of the only authors to examine stage models of the lifestyle migration process. He has written that when lifestyle migrants first started to come to the Lake Chapala region, they were drawn by the artistic and accepting local Mexican culture. As the destination grew in popularity, the area evolved and began offering amenities desirable to a new group of

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lifestyle migrants primarily seeking American-style comfort in a tropical setting. Truly characterized the new inhabitants as "importing a lifestyle", as they have little desire to integrate into the local culture. Truly offered a model of international retirement behavior intended to help analyze other destination's development (2002: 278).

McWatters (2009: 155-6) applied Cohen's and Butler's tourist destination models to his research population of "residential tourists" in Boquete, Panama, arguing that the foreigners are moving away from explorer and drifter types to more mass tourists. Although scholars have not established a stage model specifically for lifestyle migration, authors in the Costa del Sol in Spain have written about the site's historical evolution with a change in types of lifestyle migrants and tourists. King *et al.* (2000) has discussed how early British to Spain and other areas of southern Europe were more independent and interested in the culture. Although many lifestyle migrants continue to claim to care deeply about the local culture and people and cite it as a reason why they have chosen to spend time in the destination, research shows that they don't speak the local languages and levels of integration with local populations are minimal (King *et al.*2000; O'Reilly 2000; Rodriguez 2001; Sunil *et al.* 2007). The earlier British migrants, however, were drawn by the local people and culture, as well as the environment. Benson and O'Reilly 2009 write about "bourgeois bohemians", who are "migrants who seek alternative lifestyles in spaces that signify what we might define as bohemian ideals. These destinations are characterised by certain spiritual, artistic, or creative aspirations and unique 'cultural experience'" (612-613). Additionally, D'Andrea (2007) has studied the hypermobile "global nomads" who reject the social and cultural norms of their home countries and instead seek fulfillment through travel and alternative lifestyles, particularly the Techno and New Age subcultures. D'Andrea writes that global nomads are often the first visitors to new destination, and other tourists follow their lead. In other words, although there isn't an outline of the evolution of lifestyle migrant populations, research in multiple places shows that backpackers and other alternative travelers "are

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disproportionably influential upon the cultural sphere of mainstream societies" (D'Andrea 2007: 10) and are among the first to establish the tourist/foreign destination (McWatters 2009; Truly 2002; King *et al.*2000; D'Andrea 2007).

<div align="center">THEORIES OF GENTRIFICATION</div>

In this section, I examine theories of gentrification in relation to the impacts of lifestyle migrants on the urban spaces of Granada, Nicaragua. The term gentrification was first used in the early 1960s by Ruth Glass (1964) to describe the middle-class invasion of working class neighborhoods, causing the displacement of residents. Since this time, the term has been used to describe a variety of urban transformations, amidst continuous debates surrounding the definition. There are varying definitions of gentrification, as the term is contentious (Lees 2000, Slater *et al.* 2004). I utilize the definition put forth by Clark (2005: 258), which notes both the social and physical transformations created by an incoming population: gentrification is "a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital."

One of the most influential concepts in gentrification scholarship is the idea of the "rent gap", which was first put forth by Smith in 1979, which describes the constant shift of capital, geographically, in pursuit of profits. Smith posits that after World War II, land rents in North American cities became too costly for many businesses, resulting in the exodus to cheaper suburban locations. The fallout of this large-scale shift was urban decline and a reduction of land rents in the inner city. In ever pursuit of profit, capital moves back to the city where great gains can be had. Thus, according to Smith (1996), gentrification is structurally motivated by capital's need for mobility to ensure a cheap supply of land-rents.

Gentrification scholars have debated whether focus should be on the actors or the processes (Slater *et al.* 2004; Lees 2000). The predominant structural process of gentrification

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(e.g., the rent gap) is unquestionably important, but others, such as Rose (1984), Ley (1996), and Beauregard (1986) noted that gentrification requires real people, with their myriad motivations, to actually buy properties. Though there has been some exasperation about the continued debates between supply-side and demand-side causes of gentrification (Slater 2006), because much of the work has offered a more nuanced understanding than is commonly understood, taking into consideration both consumption and production arguments.

During the 1970s and 1980s (the "second wave" of gentrification according to Smith 2002 and Gotham 2005), many debates centered around the divide between "production-side" which argued that gentrification resulted from the structural economic "rent gap" (Smith 1979, 1996) and "consumption-side" (Ley 1996; Rose 1984), which posited that individual motivations were the primary causal factors for gentrification. For example, even in Ley's famous "consumption-side" study, he examined "production" factors of gentrification. He devoted a chapter of his 1996 book (Chapter 4) to describing changes in the Canadian labor force, which includes the feminization of work and the growth of the services sector (also addressed in Bondi 1991). Ley (1996, 2003) also explained gentrification as a result of changes in social values including the youthful resistance to the suburban norm and a desire to live the authentic artistic lifestyle. These resulted in a new middle class living in the city center as a quality of life choice in response to labor reproduction changes. Indeed, since the late 1990s, many authors have sought to move beyond such debates as they collapsed the binary and showed how both production and consumption motivations were integral factors contributing to gentrification (Slater 2006; Lees 2000, 2008).

The concept of the "frontier" has been a central theme in gentrification literature. Smith (1996) highlights how the economic profit possibilities of penetrating frontier real estate territory prove to be a major motivation for investors. Ley (1996, 2003) writes about the prestige and cultural capital that artists and other "pioneers" gain with a lifestyle on the "frontier." Since the

late 1990s, many authors have been expanding the concept of the "frontier", in spatial terms, as well as in pushing the boundaries of what is considered to be "gentrification." Commonly applied only to urban contexts, gentrification has recently been examined in rural locations (Phillips 2004). The term gentrification is also now being applied to multiple-succession gentrification; "supergentrifiers" are gentrifying already-gentrified areas, such as Brooklyn Heights, New York and Barnsbury, London (Lees 2003; Butler and Lees 2006).

Another useful understanding of lifestyle migrant gentrification in Granada concerns the actors themselves, who can be partially understood as independent "organic entrepreneurs" (Ley 1996) with a cosmopolitan identity (Rofe 2003; Binnie *et al.* 2006). Ley (1996) and others (Lees *et al.* 2008) discuss the famous stage model in the processional development of different actors conducting gentrification in a neighborhood. Ley (1996) discusses the organic entrepreneurs who are the first to penetrate a neighborhood and transform houses using their own sweat equity. Ley describes how the organic entrepreneurs are the first to invest because they act upon specialized knowledges in niche markets considered too risky for more conservative actors. These initial pioneers are commonly artists or non-conformists in lifestyles or politics (Ley 1996, 2003). "Part of the allure of gentrification is such a claim to a position, culturally and politically, on the edge" (Ley 2003: 2541). The risk factor of investing in property in the unstable market of Granada is necessary to understand the development of expatriate gentrification because such a risk is both an appeal to a pioneer and cosmopolitan sensibility and a necessity for many who would not have the capital to invest in property in other markets.

As Atkinson and Bridge proclaim, "gentrification is now global" (2005: 1). Many authors have begun to address gentrification occurring in cities around the world (Atkinson and Bridge 2005; Krase 2005; Rubino 2005). Smith writes of the "generalization of gentrification as a global urban strategy" (2002: 437). According to Atkinson and Bridge (2005), global gentrification can be thought of as a new urban colonialism because of the infiltration of foreign capital into the rent

gaps of cities around the globe. In many locations, the present third-wave gentrification is based

on using real estate as an investment strategy (Smith 2002; Gotham 2005). This often involves the

urban regeneration strategies of public-private initiatives promoting gentrification to attract

international investment (Smith 2002; Lees 2000; Atkinson 2003) and promoting tourism

economies (Gotham 2005; Smith 2002).

Locales are being transformed into spaces of consumption (Binnie *et al.* 2006; Hubbard

and Hall 1998; Kearns and Philo 1993; Hannigan 1998; Judd and Fainstein 1999) to be used by

international travelers and investors. Sanitizing the local "color" is an important element of this

strategy to ensure a relatively risk-averse location for capital investment (Wilson and Grammenos

2005; Wyly and Hammel 2005; Fotsch 2004).

GENTRIFICATION STAGE MODELS

> The insight that the stage model gives us of gentrification's progression should not
> be abandoned along with its evidently flawed prediction that all gentrifying areas will
> ultimately have reached the same end-state. The stage model – or gentrification
> continuum – need not imply that gentrification always does progress, nor that all
> cities will move through all stages, nor indeed that there is any 'end' to the process.
> Is this conception chaotic? No: it simply reminds us that gentrifying cities have
> common causal elements (disinvestment in the city, cheap housing close to the inner-
> city scene and the prospect of significant revalorization), similar effects
> (displacement and reduction in social diversity, if conditions for reinvestment are
> right) and, critically, the same policy alternatives (K Shaw 2005: 172).

Although stage models are inherently problematic in that they assume a process will

unfold similarly in different places and contexts, as Kate Shaw notes, they can be useful for

understanding similar processes of gentrification occurring throughout many cities. As Shaw later

declares, "The proposition that all gentrifying cities will inevitably go through all stages must be

done away with. Furthermore, the boundaries between stages need to be blurred: it is not helpful

to adhere to the original, rather mechanistic transitions between each closely defined stage"

(Shaw 2008: 1712).

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Stage models of gentrification were developed in the 1970s. Clay (1979) focused primarily on the early stages of gentrification in several different US cities, in part because the process hadn't yet evolved into such diverse processes (such as new build gentrification or super gentrification). In Clay's model, gentrification begins with sweat equity and private capital almost exclusively and it is concentrated in a few small blocks in a neighborhood. Stage 2 brings more investment by similar pioneer types of gentrifiers and increasing promotion by realtors and the media. Gentrifiers seek easily-obtained properties, such as those owned by absentee landlords and loans become more easily obtained. Displacement starts to occur as vacant houses become utilized. Stage 3 results in more displacement. "The arrivals in this third stage include increasing numbers of people who see the housing as an investment in addition to being a place to live" (Lees *et al.*2008: 32). The newcomers organize their community to make demands regarding safety and public resources. The area is recognized as a safe area for young professionals. A neighborhood is gentrified in Stage 4 when the area attracts the managerial middle class. Sale and rent prices increase and old renters and even early gentrifiers are displaced. Buildings that had been held for speculation are put on the market and the gentrifier organization lobbies for historical recognition and increased public safety controls.

"Risk is center stage in these models, for in the first stage or pioneer stage, risk-oblivious households are seen to move into risky neighborhoods. The pioneer gentrifier works in the cultural professions, is risk oblivious, wants to pursue a nonconformist lifestyle, wants a socially mixed environment, and rehabilitates his or her property using sweat equity" (Lees *et al.*2008: 34). The site transitions into a more stable environment and becomes a less risky investment opportunity for middle classes.

The above model focuses on the evolution of the types of people and the process of gentrifying a specific community. Hackworth and Smith (2001) have examined the stage models of gentrification more broadly by describing the waves of gentrification in the Global North. The

first wave occurred in the 1960s and 1970s and "was sporadic and confined to small neighborhoods within the major cities" (Shaw 2008: 1709) in Western Europe, northeast US, and SW Australia. There were relatively few government incentives given to gentrifiers. "In its early stages, gentrification's positive effects seem to outweigh the negatives; in its advanced stages, this relationship is reversed" (K Shaw 2005: 171).

The second wave of gentrification occurred during the late 1970s and 1980s in a more substantial and widespread trend (Hackworth and Smith 2001). "New neighborhoods were converted into real estate 'frontiers', and cities that had not previously experienced gentrification implemented far-reaching strategies to attract this form of investment. Most local state efforts, however, focused on prodding the private market rather than directly orchestrating gentrification" (Hackworth and Smith 2001: 466). There was also substantial resistance to gentrification in many communities.

The third wave began in the late 1990s and is different from the two earlier waves in four ways: "it is expanding within partially gentrified neighborhoods and outwards in a much more comprehensive way; it involves larger-scale developers; resistance is declining as 'the working class is continually displaced from the inner city' (Hackworth and Smith 2001: 468); and finally, the state is more systematically involved" (K Shaw 2005: 1710). The third wave, with more public-private large scale implementations, has also spread worldwide, in redevelopment schemes such as in central Mexico City (Walker 2008).

Many recent examinations of gentrification focus on the marriage between public and private investment strategies and reconfiguring spaces for consumption, which is one facet of neoliberal urban policies. This has been occurring even in Global South cities, as David Walker (2008) demonstrates. Because such large scale and/or state-led gentrification is currently so dominant and geographically widespread, this is where the focus of research has been recently. However, several authors note that different places experience gentrification differently. Some

city neighborhoods may still be experiencing only the first or second wave or it may currently be stalled (Van Criekingen and Decroly 2003; Lees *et al.* 2008; Shaw 2008). This is relevant to the situation in Granada. It is currently in the early period of the second wave, as they city has been promoted by realtors and other private interests and there is widespread acknowledgement of the gentrification/housing opportunities of the city. The lifestyle migrants who gentrify Granada are still predominantly motivated by personal interests, be they primarily for living in the city or as an international investment opportunity, but they are generally not motivated by or given government incentives. That being said, the city has belatedly awakened to the opportunities associated with promoting the city to foreigners – both property owners and tourists – and has begun to reach out to them, although this remains minimal.

GENTRIFIERS

As noted, not all global gentrification is presently being conducted by large-scale public-private measures. As Ley describes:

> Until revitalizing neighbourhoods have been tested by commercial success, larger companies are frequently too skeptical to enter, and a market niche may well appear for small and innovative entrepreneurs… Far from a top-down model of corporate capital rushing in to fill rent gaps, a more accurate picture may well be that of small *organic entrepreneurs* rising form below to initiate revalorization of depreciated landscapes (Ley 1996: 45, italics in original).

The notion of risk is still a central concept in the development of gentrification, according to Ley (1996). The individual, "sweat equity" pioneers are still needed to push the frontier (Hamnett 1991; Bridge 2007). These artistic pioneers are the forerunners in the stage model of gentrification who enter into housing markets considered too risky for most investors (Ley 1996; Butler and Robson 2003). Rofe (2003) writes that many individual gentrifiers now claim a global identity that is predicated on maintaining contact with both the global and local frontiers. Initiating gentrifiers face the dilemma of "getting what they wished for"; the ambiance that originally attracts gentrifiers to a community faces the risk of being too appealing, causing further

gentrification and becoming another trendy, homogenous locale (Binnie *et al.* 2006; Gotham 2005; Butler and Lees 2006; Fotsch 2004).

Brown-Saracino (2009) writes that, although in the 1980s and 1990s, there were debates about gentrification and supply-side versus demand-side, in which there was much discussion about the gentrifying actors, since that time, there has not been sufficient examination of those gentrifiers. She writes that there are different kinds of gentrifiers, with different motivations and different ways of perceiving their new homelands, affecting how they engage with their new homes. Brown-Saracino outlines the categories of "social preservationists", "social homesteaders", and "pioneers". Pioneers are the epitome of gentrifiers, who aggressively approach a space with the intention of transforming their property (and the area) into something "better". On the other end of the spectrum, social preservationists are self-reflexive in their engagement with the local community and wish to tread lightly. With this group being the focus of her study, she writes about how they actively work to lessen the impact of newcomers' changes to spaces and the culture of the place which they earnestly love and want to help maintain. The middle category is the social homesteader, who is self-aware of their role as a newcomer. They want to maintain much of what drew them to the new place, but they also have few qualms about changing the landscape and culture of their new home for the sake of improving.

While there are all of these types of gentrifiers in most places, as is the argument of Brown-Saracino (2009), I would argue that most in Granada fit the middle position of social homesteaders, although, there are some true "pioneers" who want to come into Granada and take over the city. Most lifestyle migrant property owners in Granada, I think, are social homesteaders because they are drawn to the city specifically because of the character of the town, yet they see much room for improvement. Although there are surely some who could be described as social

preservationists, most lifestyle migrants cannot escape their Global North values of "progress" and "development" and they want to see economic growth in the city.

GLOBALIZATION OF GENTRIFICATION

Although there has been more research recently on the global context of gentrification, there remains little examination of gentrification in the Global South (with the exception of Jones and Varley 1999; Visser 2002; Rubino 2005; Islam 2005). Gentrification scholars have called for discussions of several topics which my research addresses. Lees (2000, 2008) writes of the need to focus on relationships between migration and gentrification, and I examine lifestyle migrants from the Global North in Granada.

The thesis of the rent gap put forth by Smith (1979, 1996) several decades ago is historically contingent upon a North American and (to a lesser extent) Britain model and is not comparable to the Global South in terms of historic development. In Smith's 1996 book, the projection of the development of the rent gap process were based on specific sites in industrialized nations, as also noted by Walker (2008). For example, the land rent gap in the North American inner cities was predicated on the first disinvestment of these neighborhoods and the flight of capital investment to cheaper locations on the outskirts of the cities.

While this has happened in many cities around the world, this is not the case in Granada, Nicaragua. Granada does not have comparable North American (or even European) suburbs. The historic central district of Granada is filled with grand, colonial-style homes which have consistently been the preferred locations for elites. The wealthy have historically resided in the city center in Latin America (Scarpaci 2005) and they continue to do so. There has never been any form of systematic exodus from the city to the suburbs thereby creating property disinvestment and deterioration and lower actual land rents compared to potential land rents: the "rent gap". The historic city center in Granada is and has always been the most desirable place to live. However, even though the material geography of gentrification has unfolded differently in

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places not in the Global North, the spatial expansion of late capitalism has begun to affect

housing markets in the Global South, in part because the limited property market has been

tightened worldwide.

Smith later developed his conception of the rent gap to include the globalization of

capital investment as a global urban strategy (2002). Smith (2002) and Harvey (1989) discuss

neoliberal urbanism which can be understood as the remaking of cities in late capitalism toward

entrepreneurialship. This includes inter-city competition to try to lure flighty capital by offering

cities as spectacles and sites of consumption, often through public-private investment strategies.

Smith argues that gentrification is a key element of the new global urban strategy under

neoliberal urbanism.

Gentrification has been generalized, although it takes different forms. "Elsewhere, where

cities were not governed by liberal urban policy during much of the twentieth century, the

trajectory of change has been different, yet the embrace of a broadly conceived gentrification of

old centers as a competitive urban strategy in the global market leads in a similar direction"

(Smith 2002: 441). Other scholars have also acknowledged the various manifestations of

gentrification which have been influenced by divergent processes, histories, and spatialities (Lees

2000; Atkinson and Bridge 2005).

Taking into consideration spatial and historical contingencies, the central tenet of the rent

gap is still broadly applicable, perhaps even more so today: capital needs to find and create

disparate markets to move between to ensure movement and growth to facilitate accumulation.

One of my major contributions to the gentrification debates builds upon this understanding of the

rent gap and its internationalization to create a current understanding of a global rent gap. Smith

spells out the global movement of capital to maximize accumulation in an understanding of a

global rent gap, but as Atkinson and Bridge (2005: 10) detail, much of this conceptualization

concerns corporate transnational capital. This research concerns how non-corporate actors utilize

the possibilities of starkly contrasting housing prices in different nation-states (i.e. the global rent gap) to facilitate lifestyle migration and gentrification. They do this by investing in housing stock and physically moving internationally.

Although he nods to independent transnational movement, Smith's study of global gentrification is framed primarily in political and economic global structuralism. This highlights how Smith's (2002) framework is helpful for understanding the global movement of capital to facilitate gentrification, yet needs to be elaborated upon to further understand the agency of the actors in site who manifest the urban transformations. In other words, Smith's theories provide a useful macro framework for global gentrification and concern macro actors, such as city or national governments and corporate capital. My research concerns the independent actors who are, perhaps unwittingly, engaging with governments and corporate capital, yet cannot be fully understood in such a framework without the additional examination of the more human scale of actions. This harks back to the decades-old debates concerning the supply- vs. demand-side conceptualizations of the causes of gentrification, as most famously put forth by Smith (1996) and Ley (1996), respectively.

Gentrification in Granada is also a part of the global rent gap as a means of flexible accumulation. Mills (1993: 155) writes:

> Districts such as Fairview slopes comprise a new arena for capital accumulation. The aesthetics of redevelopment – predominantly postmodern – has been described as the 'cultural clothing' of flexible accumulation (Harvey 1987: 279), the 'cultural logic' of late capitalism (Jameson 1984). In retrospect, indeed, these distinctive dwellings for the moderately affluent may be interpreted as capital's rational response to economic conditions in the 1970s. However, viewed as a contemplated act, gentrification appears as a more complex practice demanding a different kind of interpretation. The form of redevelopment is open to negotiation as actors with different skills and ambitions haggle over the outcome.

In 2002, Smith writes that the most prominent sites for global production will be in large global cities in the third world, and gentrification is occurring more frequently there (2002). Clark (2005) and Lees *et al.* (2008) discuss, however, that gentrification isn't more widespread today

than in other times; it has always occurred throughout the world. The difference is that the concept of gentrification is now globally generalized.

Atkinson and Bridge's (2005) collection of essays provides case studies of current gentrification occurring across the globe with an emphasis of how changes in a globalized world occur at the neighborhood scale. Most of the essays in Atkinson and Bridges volume concern the globalization of gentrification and by this they mean the gentrification processes in a city involving internal national actors. While these may often include the utilization of transnational capital, there is not much discussion in present scholarship concerning the impact of global movements of people on gentrification. The limited research includes Krase's examination of Polish immigrants' aesthetic remakings of a Brooklyn neighborhood (2005).

TOURISM GENTRIFICATION: RECONFIGURING THE CITY FOR TOURIST CONSUMPTION

The intersection between tourism and gentrification has recently been highlighted. Tourism promotion has been one vehicle through which global urban strategies have been mobilized. Smith (2002), Gotham, and Jones and Varley (1999) have all discussed the connection between tourism and gentrification. Harvey (1989) and Smith (2002) discuss the transformations of cities as sites of consumption and spectacles and this has been facilitated in part through the development of tourist spaces. One aspect of the marriage between tourism and gentrification is the remaking of public spaces for elite consumption. Gotham discusses the transformation of services provided in the tourist/gentrified communities, such as the establishment of souvenir shops instead of grocery stores. These public spaces can become privatized and geared toward the tourists and new elite property owners, whereby excluding local usage. This has occurred in several city parks in the popular tourist and lifestyle migrant city of San Jose, Costa Rica (Low 2000).

In cities throughout Latin America, much tourism and gentrification focus has centered on the prized historic colonial city centers. Cities often focus on promoting the historic center even if the rest of the city is falling down (Scarpaci 2005). The disproportionate promotion of a singular district can lead to even greater disparities of wealth and access (Harvey 1989; Robinson 2003). These developments of exclusive areas, however, are often celebrated as a good for all, as they induce foreign investment through tourist consumption and real estate investment and all the services which accompany them and procure jobs and taxes.

Many cities in Latin America have embraced neoliberal practices to promote their spaces of consumption against other Latin American spaces of consumption. Cities such as Granada have established spaces for elites, tourists, and gentrifiers (with significant overlap), and neglecting other less profitable areas of the city. Urban governments utilize a concept of the city as a product which can be packaged, marketed and consumed. Cities are unstable, however, Harvey states (1989: 6); they are always transforming and being remade, which leaves open the possibility for resistance, however small.

Neoliberalism often involves a restructuring of economic systems. Robinson (2003) writes of the new economic policies currently existent in Central America that have moved away from the more traditional agricultural exports which have been the economic basis for over a century. The four new economic activities outlined by Robinson include: *maquiladora* manufacturing, non-traditional agricultural exports (either new products – broccoli, or traditional products to new markets – bananas to Eastern Europe (2003: 175)), export of labor and remittances, and tourism and hospitality. Granada has especially been experiencing the new development of tourism and hospitality services, as it is has risen as the tourist destination in the country.

In a zero-sum understanding of a global economy, governments need to compete to secure capital investment (Harvey 1989: 5). This is best managed through smaller entities,

whereby power and resources can be localized and controlled. In order to compete, many cities have moved in recent years toward marketing themselves as specific sites of consumption. In the case of Central American and especially Nicaraguan cities, the targeted consumers are local elite (in Managua) and tourists and lifestyle migrants (in Granada).

The transformation of neighborhoods and public spaces for tourist consumption is a strategy of global urbanism. Gotham (2005), Jones and Varley (1999), and Scarpaci (2005) highlight how governments are investing in tourist spaces. These often include the refurbishment of specific architectural-style buildings in the historic centers and the renovation of museums and other cultural destinations. These also can involve setting stricter zoning policies, including ordering property owners to use only specific colors on houses and limiting how the properties can be used (Scarpaci 2005; Jones and Varley 1999; Swanson 2007). While these policies can be masked as neutral, they often can have damaging effects, as some long-time residents would be unable to comply with the rules due to financial constraints. The effect might be the pressure for owners to sell to those who would be able to aid in the supposed reconstitution of the city. This might be applicable in Granada, where gentrification across the historic center is far from complete, and the city has recently applied to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The discourse of gentrification is commonly discussed in the present third wave research as invoking urban regeneration and the saving of corrupted areas (Wilson and Grammenos 2005). In the historic colonial cities in Latin America, the language has shifted to references to restoring colonial properties and returning to earlier, glorified days as the calls for gentrification investment are wrapped up with tourism. These nostalgic references to a colonial past are pervasive in tourism promotion and manifest in the built environment by actively restoring antiquated styles (Gotham 2005; Jones and Varley 1999; Scarpaci 2005), such as changing practical street names back to colonial-era names.

Jones and Varley (1999) report how the public users are being written out of city development. Tourist gentrification research describes an increased policing of the areas to ensure the public spaces are properly being used – which means the usage by tourists and other elites and not by street vendors or other unsightly characters. Granada has a tourist police department whose job it is to protect the tourists and their money.

CONCLUSION: THE INTERSECTION OF GENTRIFICATION, LIFESTYLE MIGRATION, AND TOURISM PROCESSES IN GRANADA, NICARAGUA

There has been relatively little connection between gentrification as a result of lifestyle migration. Many authors have alluded to it (McWatters 2009; King *et al.* 2000) but few have directly addressed the issue. McWatters (2009) examines this in Panama and Visser (2002) also looks at this issue in South Africa. There have been discussions about gated communities in the Global South which have been relevant. Also relevant is the literature examining the enclaves created by transnational elites (Beaverstock 2002, 2011; Pow 2011; Willis and Yeoh 2002). Second home literature has looked at the topic because it is specifically focused on housing (Hall and Muller 2004), although there is often not such an explicit nod to gentrification, but rather in the creation of "elite landscapes" (Halseth 2004).

The development of a tourist destination site has tended to follow general sequences of tourist popularity and investment of tourist infrastructure, which Butler (1980) deems the Tourist Area Life Cycle Model (TALC). Lifestyle migration is directly linked with tourism and therefore can readily be combined together in this discussion. Gentrification has also been widely acknowledged to evolve over a general course with corresponding changes among the actors conducting the gentrification of a landscape.

In the chapter, I have aimed to provide a linkage between the development of lifestyle migration sites, tourist destinations, and corresponding actors with the development of gentrification sites and actors. Such linkages have not explicitly been made in existent literatures.

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"Tourism gentrification", is described as "as a heuristic device to explain the transformation of a middle-class neighbourhood into a relatively affluent and exclusive enclave marked by a proliferation of corporate entertainment and tourism venues" (Gotham 2005: 1102). Gotham's discussion focuses on third wave gentrification, which often examines how the state has become involved in creating a tourist space. I will discuss this public-private implementation of the tourism-gentrification nexus in the following chapter.

This chapter, however, focuses on the similarities of the development of a destination that is experiencing an increase in tourism and gentrification. Sites where tourism and gentrification are occurring have each often accredited the initiators of tourism and gentrification to people who can be described as explorers or pioneer-types. This has been noted in earlier models of gentrification (Hackworth and Smith 2001) and although more recent discussions have highlighted the current trends of public-private coalitions initiating gentrification, in the case of Granada (and in other locations), I posit that gentrification is being conducted by Global Northerners who are motivated to purchase and renovate property (predominantly) unrelated to governmental initiatives; these are sweat-equity, pioneering lifestyle migrant gentrifiers.

CHAPTER 5: THE GENTRIFICATION OF GRANADA'S *CENTRO HISTÓRICO*

> [The] property market – the prices have been driven up. People with money coming in. Supply and demand. The center of town prices has risen very much. The center of town is where generally foreigners want to live so you [have] a foreign gentrification of the center of town. Locals can't afford the type of price that a European or American is going to pay for it. So the grand colonial houses are generally in the center of town so they are being bought up by foreigners (interview with long-time European resident in his 40s).

In this chapter, I focus on the transformation of Granada's urban space as a result of lifestyle migration. As the quote above suggests, the city is undergoing gentrification, which is materially manifest in the purchasing and remodeling of colonial houses by foreigners, as well as in the redesign of public and commercial spaces to accommodate elite and foreign consumption. In this chapter I discuss ways in which foreigners redefine the city center's landscape and land usage. I discuss how focusing on tourism and attracting foreigners has become a means for development, resulting in a type of gentrification related to Gotham's notion of tourism gentrification (2005). I discuss how Granada's historic district office has attempted to deal with new foreign gentrification and I address how Nicaragua has attempted to lure retirees from abroad to live and invest in Nicaragua. This chapter also discusses how gentrification in Granada is a part of a global process of globalization. The gentrification by foreigners is occurring through transnational practices and is made possible because of heightened wealth disparities between Nicaraguans and Global Northerners. This chapter also addresses how Nicaraguans are affected by the rising property prices. Finally, I discuss lifestyle migrant understandings of where Nicaraguans go after they sell their houses.

GLOBAL GENTRIFICATION

Granada has become a part of a global system which involves processes including gentrification, the international property market, and tourism promotion. Global Northerners are drawn to Granada because they have desires to gain cultural capital by consuming an "authentic" aesthetic. In this section, I discuss the international trend of consumption-led gentrification

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occurring, oftentimes in accordance with lifestyle migration. I also discuss how there is a global popular media campaign to promote international consumption-led gentrification. Cities are investing in tourism and developing entertainment districts and events to help support urban infrastructure and economies. This is a strategy of capital based on the global rent gap: new, relatively de-valued markets are sought where capital can accumulate.

IN PURSUIT OF CULTURAL CAPITAL (CONSUMING GENTRIFICATION)

Lifestyle migrant gentrification is made possible through global structures allowing transnational living. But why a colonial city like Granada has attracted international attention is in large part related to aesthetics desired by consumption-oriented gentrifiers. As Ley states, "the origins of gentrification included the establishment of an urbane *habitus* that drew its identity from a perspective rich in cultural capital but (initially) weak in economic capital" (2004: 2536).

In this section, I outline the demand-side processes of Global North lifestyle migrant-led gentrification in Granada, which includes the pursuit of cultural capital achieved through property ownership in an "authentic", exotic location. The details of the consumption motivations of gentrification will be explored in further detail in the next few chapters.

Although many lifestyle migrants are motivated to invest in property in Granada, many others are primarily interested in consuming and reproducing a specific cultural landscape and community. While property and investment speculators have been important gentrifiers, especially in the initial period, the majority of lifestyle migrants are currently seeking a desired lifestyle with the added bonus that Granada's real estate can serve as a good investment. This is not guaranteed, however, and some lifestyle migrants engage in gentrification knowing that they may not get a positive return on their investment. Although pursuing a meaningful lifestyle is the primary goal, and many lifestyle migrants do not expect to make much profit, if any, from their Granada homes, most lifestyle migrants would likewise find it unacceptable if their property investments suffered great losses.

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Gentrification scholars have addressed the lifestyle connections between the pursuits of specific lifestyles with gentrification (Gotham 2005; Bridge 2007; Rofe 2003; Ley 1996; Lees *et al.* 2008; Rose 1984). Similar to pioneer gentrifiers, lifestyle migrants have been widely been cited to be motivated by a desire for a more "authentic" and meaningful lifestyle (Osbaldiston 2011; Gustafson 2002; Benson and O'Reilly 2009; Korpela 2010). Lifestyle migrants in Granada gain cultural capital by engaging in an "authentic" lifestyle amidst the local Nicaraguan people (Butler and Robson 2003). The initiators of gentrification, according to demand-side theories put forth by Ley (1996) and Rose (1984), are often motivated by a desire to live a meaningful, "authentic" life. Douglas (2012: 3586) writes that earlier phases of gentrification are "tied to the search for a pre-hip authenticity and edginess that is central to bohemian and 'hipster' sub-cultures." (See also Jager 1986; W. Shaw 2005). Bridge notes that, "The gentrified inner urban neighborhood stands apart from the suburbs and symbolizes particularity and authenticity" (2001: 98). While not distinguishing their residential choice from the suburbs per se, gentrifying lifestyle migrants in Granada report that they want to live amidst Nicaraguans, and this may be understood as a quest for "authenticity" and as a "strategy of socio-spatial distinction" (Rofe 2003: 2520). Despite such intentions, they often have difficulties in maintaining personal relationships with Nicaraguans, as will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Though they certainly do not want to live like Nicaraguans in terms of comfort and style, many lifestyle migrants revel in living among them. One American property manager summed this up:

> [The lifestyle migrants] say they want to be part of the culture, but they don't want to be part of the culture. Probably one percent wants to be part of the culture and those normally aren't Americans. They will invite their neighbors in, they'll get to know their neighbors. They'll eat Nicaraguan food, they'll help with the schools. But they don't want to be part of the culture. You find me one gringo who is out shooting off fireworks. And they will never be part of the culture, you will never be, no matter what, no matter how long you've lived here, nothing. I think the closest person I see doing that is [a woman married to a Nicaraguan] and she's fitting in more that her kids are going to the school. But…they're not part of the culture, they're not living on dirt floors, you know. So there's a, you want to be a part of the community, that's different than being part of the culture. Because the culture, I don't understand it, it's

different… Are they going to be sending their kids to the schools, are they going to be hanging out with their neighbors? ...Even [that woman] will tell you, you don't. And most Nicaraguans just won't invite anyone to their house, you know… As people will say, I'm going to immerse myself in the culture. You're going to immerse yourself in the community, not in the culture… I'm not going to immerse myself in the culture because there're so many things in this culture that I don't understand and I disagree with.

In today's globalized world, lifestyle migrants gain even more cultural capital by gentrifying a Global South city. One lifestyle migrant who came to Granada with her husband boasted that "half of, most of our friends and all of our family think we're crazy" for moving and investing in Nicaragua. This will be explored more in Chapter 7. Lifestyle migrants share with gentrifiers a fascination with cultural capital based on specific and classed ideals of aesthetics and ways of living. Authors such as Bridge (2001, 2007), Binnie *et al.* (2006), and Rofe (2003) have discussed that some gentrifiers pursue a cosmopolitan identity, and express desires to experience the international, sophisticated, and beautiful, but also the "real". Such cosmopolitanism is primarily manifest through consumption practices. They want to live an "authentic" life, but just as important is to live in a setting they consider beautiful. For lifestyle migrants, living in Nicaragua is about being among "real" people, but also about living in an urban setting, in a colonial home with an open courtyard, not in a modest house in a village.

THE RENT GAP GOES GLOBAL (PRODUCTION OF GENTRIFICATION)

In this section, I discuss the global structures which facilitate the gentrification of Granada by lifestyle migrants. First, I discuss how lifestyle migrants are able to gentrify because of their Global North privilege. Next, in addition to coming from wealthier countries, lifestyle migrants remain linked to these countries and economies, which enables their gentrification efforts. Further, the global rent gap is manifested through the hype of international real estate which promotes international investment to the relatively privileged Global North middle classes.

**LIFESTYLE MIGRANT GENTRIFICATION DEPENDENT UPON PRIVILEGE AND WEALTH
DISPARITIES**

One of the fundamental points I wish to highlight about lifestyle migrant-led gentrification in Granada is that it made possible because of extreme disparities of wealth and privilege. Lifestyle migrants in Granada are able to maintain a heightened social position, have enhanced entrepreneurial opportunities, and purchase and renovate properties because of their comparative advantages based on disparities of wealth and privilege.

The details of lifestyle migrants' advantages are outlined in the rest of the dissertation, but I will summarize them here. First and foremost, Nicaragua is a poor country where its citizens have extremely limited access to capital. Economic activity within Nicaragua is constrained, and inflation, unemployment, and underemployment are high. Tourism, agriculture, industry, and remittances from family members (mostly in the US and Costa Rica) are the largest sources of income (CIA World Factbook 2013; Wood and Berman 2010).

Compared to most real estate markets in the Global North, property prices in Granada were low before Global North lifestyle migrants began buying, investing, and speculating in the city. Now that prices have risen, most Nicaraguans cannot afford to purchase a home in Granada's historic district. Global Northerners have a relative advantage because they have lived and earned their capital in much wealthier economies. Nicaraguans are further disadvantaged because the limited lines of credit available to them come with exorbitant interest rates. In the US, there are myriad sources of capital available, including government-supported loans for houses for low-income families. One realtor explained:

> There's no financing in this part of the world, whether here or Costa Rica, etc., it's
> not a big business like in the United States. In the United States, because banks lend
> you money to buy properties, it makes everyone able to be a property owner. But
> here only it's a limited number of people who can own property. And so it's not the
> same concept like we have at home.

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Nicaraguans do not have easy access to travel, so they cannot readily leave Nicaragua, especially compared to Global North citizens. Finally, most lifestyle migrants are white, which allows them to enjoy a social privilege in Nicaragua based on institutional racism as a legacy of colonialism (Dwyer and Jones 2000; Kingsbury and Klak 2005; Lancaster 1992; Swanson 2007; Mignolo 2005). In the following chapter, I will describe other ways that lifestyle migrants' experiences in Granada are shaped by their privileged positions.

TRANSNATIONAL STATUS FACILITATING FOREIGNER GENTRIFICATION

The lifestyle migrants in Granada are only able to maintain their lifestyle by utilizing transnational capital and relationships. For example, many lifestyle migrants in Granada often receive some sort of capital from their home country. Many lifestyle migrants in Granada would be unable to buy houses, renovate them, and live in Granada without mobilizing transnational flows, specifically money, but also information (for example through accessing transnational media and social networks).

All lifestyle migrants are able to live in Granada because of their money accumulated in the Global North. Simply put, the gentrification of Granada would not be occurring without money from the Global North. One retiree notes her dependence on recurring income from pensions and social security in the US:

> If there's any stoppage of income from the banking system through the States, I cannot access any money. Right now my income is direct deposit that I can access through ATMs. If that stops, if bank money stops, I can't, I have no income, I can't live here. I have pennies… My husband's pension and social security is what we're living on. If I can't access that money, I cannot live here. I immediately lose whatever that I have here. You know, it's like do not pass go, do not collect $200, so it's directly go somewhere.

Every lifestyle migrant I interviewed was able to come to Nicaragua and purchase a house because of earnings originating in the Global North. This money has paid for renovations and upkeep. Most lifestyle migrants are able to sustain their lives in Granada because of regular money transfers from sources in the Global North. Many are dependent upon pensions and social

security benefits. Additionally, many count on earnings from foreign investments, such as from property, rentals, or stocks and bonds. Some have spouses or relatives who continue to earn money in the Global North. Two lifestyle migrants I interviewed work remotely for businesses based in the US. One does trading based on the US stock market, and the other one works part time online in an NGO business. Most lifestyle migrants keep their money in foreign banks and most utilize telecommunication services to pay bills internationally. One working lifestyle migrant summed up most lifestyle migrants' position: "Most of my money's in the United States because I just think it's safer, in banks and in brokerage accounts. I don't keep a lot of actual money in Nicaragua because I just, it's just not as safe."

Lifestyle migrants in Granada are also highly dependent upon social relations maintained transnationally. As discussed earlier, the amount of time lifestyle migrants spend in Nicaragua varies, but most visit another country at least several times a year, often to visit family and friends. Communicating via phone and internet is vital for most lifestyle migrants (Huber and O'Reilly 2004; Gustafson 2008; King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000). Some have said that being able to stay in touch with family and friends has allowed them to stay in Nicaragua given that they have not established deep personal relationships with other foreigners or Nicaraguans. Staying connected to home also mitigates the difficulties in living in a foreign land, especially because of language differences.

For many lifestyle migrants, consuming foreign media, such as watching US television, provides an important cultural connection to home (Ehrkamp 2005; Scott 2004; Huber and O'Reilly 2004). Cable television is cheap in Granada and comes with several English-language stations, so lifestyle migrants needn't pay for satellite TV. Most lifestyle migrants now have internet connections in their homes, which makes it quite easy to live in a small American bubble which could be located anywhere. While several lifestyle migrants sold everything and only have

social connections to their home countries, most in Granada remain highly connected in multiple ways. As one retiree said when asked about connections with America:

> The only way that I don't [have a connection with the US] is that I have a house here. Everything else is still connected to America. My legal address is America. I still use an American driver's license here. My family is in America. Yeah, I have a house here, that's it. Everything else is still American. My legal address is America. I mean I have residency here, but I have a legal address in America.

Many lifestyle migrants in Granada keep a house in their home country, and continue to maintain multiple households. Most lifestyle migrants are heavily dependent upon and involved in, transnational social spaces (Scott 2004; Ehrkamp 2005), as will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

TRANSNATIONAL GENTRIFICATION

Transnational migration can be used as a strategy by elite actors to enhance their lives (Ong 1999; Mitchell 1997; Ley and Kobayashi 2005). Some Pacific Rim elites are hypermobile and may decide to move to North America (or back) based on specific events in their lives, such as education opportunities. The transnational migrants' movements are often dependent on stages in their life cycles, which Ley and Kobayashi refer to as "time-space coordination" (2005: 112). Pacific Rim elites frequently buy and renovate property in North America as part of their transnational strategies and this gentrification process is enabled in part because of their comparable wealth accumulated in a different economic region.

Such strategies of transnational movement utilize the global rent gap, a concept which is useful for understanding the lifestyle migrant-led gentrification in Granada. Some lifestyle migrants are living and investing in Granada and maintaining transnational connections in a strategic attempt to maximize wealth and/or investments, whereby utilizing a strategic flexible citizenship (Ong 1999). Lifestyle migration is also often directly associated with the migrant's life course position (Benson 2010). Those coming to Granada to retire are taking advantage of the comparatively low costs in Nicaragua to maximize their economic status determinant from their stage of life. Most lifestyle migrants in Granada move either in their twenties or early thirties

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(often with a young family) or in their fifties or sixties (to retire or planning for it). Granada's low cost of living draws both retirees who need to conserve their savings, and young families whose adult members are pursuing new careers.

Lifestyle migrants are gentrifying Granada by utilizing the global rent gap. Additionally, the desired aesthetics of the colonial city center help to garner cultural capital for the lifestyle migrants, but economic capital is perhaps ultimately more important. As Jager (1986) asserts, gentrifiers won't sacrifice their economic capital in pursuit of cultural capital (by buying a non-profitable home). In his research in Sydney, Australia, Bridge disputes this claim, asserting that some gentrifiers are prepared to pay a premium for desired aesthetics despite economic risks (2001: 98). I posit that most gentrifiers would not willingly jeopardize economic capital in buying houses in Granada. However much they claim an attachment to Nicaragua, no lifestyle migrant is known to have renounced their Global North citizenship. Most lifestyle migrants reserve their access to (hyper)mobility and many are willing to invest elsewhere if Granada ceases to be economically advantageous. As one interviewee said:

> But at this point, this is where I happen to be. Do I plan to be here forever? I doubt it…. This was planned to be home base, to travel from. But especially now, I have no idea. And what we've always said is, we never invested here, I mean as much as this house is costing us and the other property, one of which we now have back on the market. I would never put more money in here than I can afford to lose and walk away from. If I have to, I'll walk away from it all.

INTERNATIONAL HYPE OF REAL ESTATE

The global rent gap has been promoted by the international boosterism of real estate (Davidson 2007; Cook 2010). In Granada, however, it is through the promotion of international property investment that the structural element of gentrification has manifested, rather than by interventions of the Nicaraguan government. In other words, in Granada, the global rent gap has not been aided by government partnerships with private developers. Instead, capital is being

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(re)invested in (relatively) devalued markets like Granada in part through the promotion of global real estate investment opportunities.

In his examination of the new-build gentrification along the River Thames in London, Davidson (2007) discusses how the globalization of gentrification is not a product of consumption-led pursuers of a cosmopolitan global habitat, as discussed by Rofe (2003) and Butler (2007). He argues that the gentrification he studies is instead a result of corporate developers supported by governmental policies. The gentrifiers he interviews say that the specific neighborhood location in which they are buying property is unimportant; they feel disconnected to it, and they could be anywhere.

> These spatial perceptions and behaviours therefore provide a stark contrast to Rofe's (2003) globally-connected gentrifiers and Butler's (2007) 'place-makers', since local neighbourhood is far from being used to engender a personal association to globalisation or established place-based identity. Rather this group is pursuing these practices in other urban spaces not proximate to their gentrifying residencies (Davidson 2007: 502).

Davidson's study offers a useful examination of how gentrification is manifested through corporate promotion campaigns. The important distinction between his case study of gentrification and that which is occurring in Granada is that establishing a "place-based identity" is exactly what is important for the independent lifestyle migrants. While lifestyle migrants in Granada place great importance on their investments, most have come precisely because they want to pursue a new lifestyle centered on cultural capital based largely around the city's colonial aesthetic.

Although the gentrification in Granada is a not a direct result of corporate boosterism, it has nevertheless been affected by Global North media discourses of personal lifestyle pursuits sought through international real estate investment in the Global South. Organizations such as International Living, TV shows such as House Hunters International, and popular media articles in newspaper travel sections and in travel magazines have helped to promulgate the idea of

buying property in desired destinations to pursue a preferred lifestyle (Bell and Hollows 2005; McGinn 2008). The internationalization of real estate (Zoomers 2010; Zukin 2009; N Smith 2002) is a result of modern day capital's search for profit, which shares the same root as the rent gap – pursuit of profit through the movement of capital.

There has been little scholarly examination of the role of the media in the internationalization of property markets. Some scholars have made brief references to the role of popular media promoting the internationalization of property markets as part of lifestyle migration (Buller and Hoggart 1994; Geoffrey 2007; Casado-Diaz 2006; Bozic 2006). Neil Smith (2002) and gentrification scholars such as Zukin (2009) have made note of the phenomenon, yet case studies are not yet common. This is striking considering the matter-of-fact pervasiveness of the internationalization of property markets in mainstream media. This goes hand in hand with the fetishization of home ownership in the US (and Canada) and the widespread popularity and promotion of consumerist do-it-yourself home renovation and decoration (Bell and Hollows 2005; Rosenberg 2011).

The popularity of Granada didn't just happen. Early on entrepreneurial foreign realtors are credited among the foreign population in Granada for hyping the city and creating the property frenzy in the early 2000s. Such realtors are part of a whole network consisting of other realtors, real estate companies, websites, and businesses that offer information about international retirement and international living. All are geared to promote the purchase of real estate abroad.

The *New York Time*s published three articles about tourism and property investment in Nicaragua between 2006 and 2009. The first article was called the "Rediscovery of Dreams" (Dicum 2006) and focused on Nicaragua's renaissance. The next two specifically highlighted Granada, with the 2009 article appearing in the International Real Estate section gave an overview of buying colonial property in Granada (Hooper 2007; McGuire 2009). Many

interviewees told me in 2007 that they'd heard from many foreigners that they came to Granada

after they first read about its praises in the *New York Time*s. One realtor told me:

> Well, there's been a lot of favorable publicity done by *LA Times*, *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, different travel magazines. International Living did a lot to introduce Nicaragua to people. They're always looking for a great opportunity, right, to get in on the ground floor before it's Costa Rica or before it's Miami Beach. And yeah, there are opportunities here like that. Because it's a developing country, I think the potential is terrific here.

One of the more popular and influential information businesses in Granada is

International Living (IL), which offers how-to guides and tours for those interested in purchasing

property and living abroad in various international destinations. Before Daniel Ortega was elected

in 2006, they were heavily involved in promoting Granada as a site for international living and

investment. After the election of Daniel Ortega, International Living subsequently shifted their

heavy focus on investing in Nicaragua to other countries, most notably Colombia and Panama. As

of 2013, however, there has been an increase again in IL's touting of Nicaragua. They continue to

have an office in Granada and regularly offer information seminars, where, for a fee, they offer

guidelines about living and purchasing property in Nicaragua. Two couples (3 of 44 property

owners interviewed) came to Nicaragua through International Living.

One of the couples told me that International Living recommended them to open a bank

account, and establish a real estate holding company. International Living has also cautioned

them about ensuring clear titles. They relayed International Living's advice to investors:

> C: Well, I think International Living stressed more the affordable economy of the properties, more of the real estate. The fact that that there were opportunities for volunteering and starting businesses if you want to do that...
> B: I thought they stressed investment opportunities, things like that more than retirement.

International Living works with locally-based foreign realtors and promotes specific properties,

and is notable because of its longevity and influence. According to one informed lifestyle

migrant, the organization did a lot to hype Nicaragua to international investors by encouraging

property speculation in Granada. It can be argued that International Living gives a stamp of approval and vouches for the safety and viability of comfortably living in a foreign destination. The two couples I interviewed in 2007 had only bought property the year before and only did so after careful consideration. From my research, the growth of lifestyle migrant property buyers in Granada demonstrates an evolution of the types of Global Northerners drawn to live and invest in Nicaragua. The earlier group of lifestyle migrants would most likely have eschewed such a conformist, hand-holding organization and would have deemed it an inauthentic means of finding Granada. The earlier group wore their scars of settling the Granada "frontier" with pride. This new group is identifiable because they do not see themselves as risk-takers in the same ways as did the earlier explorer types who initially opened up the tourist market. I will discuss further in the chapter 7 the changes in lifestyle migrants drawn to Granada as the city has evolved since 2000.

There are other media outlets which are less directly involved in Granada, yet help to promulgate the pursuit of attaining a specific lifestyle through international property investment. These include websites (Escape from America 2013; Expat Exchange 2013), books geared to moving and retiring abroad (Knorr 2008; Golsen 2008) (especially relevant to my research are *Moon Guidebooks to Living Abroad in Nicaragua* (Wood and Berman 2010) and *Living and Investing in the New Nicaragua* (Rogers 2005)), and television shows such as House Hunters International.

In the US, the cable television network of Home and Garden TV (HGTV) is solely dedicated to promoting these topics. One of their popular shows is House Hunters which follows would-be property purchasers as they are shown three properties, culminating with the purchase of the winning property at the end of the half hour. HGTV introduced House Hunters International (HHI) several years ago, in which they focus on property acquisition in foreign destinations. Occasionally the buyers are local and they are buying in their native communities.

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The majority of buyers are from the Global North, however, and they are buying internationally, most often in locations in the Global South, often beach houses in the Caribbean. Granada has become one such hotspot; in fact, that HHI filmed two episodes in the city documenting two couples purchasing property.[5]

In summary, Granada, Nicaragua has been widely promoted in the past decade as an "up-and-coming" destination for tourists, real estate investors, and retirees. Such promotion has been based upon many people's desires to be the explorers on the frontier of a new destination. As mentioned earlier, the growing popularity of the city helps to draw foreigners, but ironically, once a place becomes too well-known and popular, many of the people that created that buzz – the explorer types – become turned off to it. Several of the earlier residents and property developers of Granada during the early 2000s have since deemed the city to be "tapped out" and have relocated to other destinations in search of a new "it" place, including Cartagena, Colombia and Uruguay. Media sources have been part of a global trend of fetishizing international property consumption, via agencies like International Living, which have identified Global Northerners desires to invest their economic capital in foreign properties in order to gain cultural capital by owning in a chic foreign destination.

HOUSES AS HOMES VERSUS HOUSES AS INVESTMENT

One finding from this research is that several foreign interviewees noted that the influx of foreign residents highlighted the disparate conceptions of properties and house valuation between Global Northerners and Nicaraguans. This conflict is occurring because there is a new contact zone as a result of the globalization of gentrification. The concept of perceiving homes as

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[5] One couple was an American man and a Nicaraguan woman who have lived together in Granada for years, and the man was a realtor when I interviewed him in 2007. The man later confirmed that the show was staged and that he had previously owned the house that he "bought" on the show.

"property" is not as pervasive among Nicaraguans as it is among people from the Global North. Many foreigners have commented on this, saying that most Nicaraguans do not consider their homes to be "capital" or treat them as investments to be bought and sold strategically. Most Nicaraguans keep their homes and pass them along to family members if they are not in use. There are conflicting conceptions of houses (as property versus home) as a result of the globalization of gentrification. McWatters witnessed this in Boquete, Panama: "With impressive increases in real estate demand and land prices throughout the district, a new way of seeing and evaluating the land has begun to compete with the community's long-held, collective values for land as the productive and sustaining foundation of life in Boquete" (2009: 121).

Many of the large, Spanish colonial-style homes in the historic district of Granada had been kept for many generations in a single family, as there almost always seems to be at least one family member who could inhabit the dwelling. Several interviewees described their purchased properties as "uninhabitable" but mentioned that family members of the former owners had been living there. One lifestyle migrant told me that a man had been living in the "shell" of a building she bought, sleeping on a table. Several realtors and a Nicaraguan official told me that houses in Granada were rarely sold formally before the arrival of foreigners, who are believed to have created the current property "market."

Granadinos generally do not buy and sell houses as speculation, as they do in the US and other Global North sites. Local people in Granada do not think of their houses as an "asset", "investment", or as a commodity to be sold – at least they did not before the recent property boom. An American retiree described this:

> [Nicaraguans] really didn't think of it as an asset like we do while we, speaking for
> the people from the States more so than people from Europe, we treat it as solely an
> asset that is bought and sold when the price is right. You know, the idea is buy low
> sell high. So that's changing their thinking, I mean, I think twenty years ago, a lot of
> these people would've gone, sell my house? Sell my farm? I can't even fathom that
> concept. While a lot of them are going, okay let's see I make approximately twelve
> hundred dollars a year. Somebody's offering me fifty thousand dollars for my *finca*

[farm]. Okay yeah I think I might sell. Yeah, I think we have a major impact on how they think about their property especially their land and homes.

Nicaraguans are believed to think of their houses as living spaces (homes) and as family heirlooms. Nicaraguans view homes at a family legacy, not something to be bought and sold capriciously – especially the larger colonial homes. For the wealthy, houses are part of the family history. For the non-wealthy, to own your own home is a symbol of wealth and pride and not to be parted with lightly. The Sandinistas made it easier for many families to own their own homes and now that that era of land redistribution is over and unlikely to return (Walker 2003) – especially with the foreign invasion – these homes are invaluable to most Nicaraguans who would be unable to come up with the money to buy a different property. The houses are part of the family narrative and offer important spaces for social reproduction; memories are made in homes.

EMPTY FRONTIER

The sites where property investment is being promoted is oftentimes presented as being empty and open, with the local peoples and history being ignored. This erasure of humanity has been well documented as related to notions of the "frontier", specifically on the frontiers of gentrification (Smith 1996; Douglas 2012). The promotion of lifestyle migration also positions the local receiving community as secondary. Geoffrey (2007: 286) writes that the advertisements promoting buying a house abroad don't address how it will affect locals. Similarly, the popular media presentations of moving and buying abroad focus almost exclusively on the experiences of the foreign buyers and not how it affects local residents (Coldwell Banker 2013a; International Living 2013). In a personal email (2013), one lifestyle migrant said, "Most of Nicaragua is empty so there is a lot of room for many more buyers before there is pressure to increase sales prices." In addition to referencing the low population of Nicaragua, this man literally views the countryside as empty and available.

While some lifestyle migrants buying property in Granada seem to be reflexive and give consideration to how Nicaraguans are affected by their actions, such concerns don't appear to be a decisive influence. For example, one realtor told me that she and other lifestyle migrants are concerned about Granadinos being unable to afford housing in the city center. They have been discussing pooling their money and purchasing a large tract of land on the outskirts of the city where they will establish some method to sell it to needy Nicaraguans at affordable rates. However, this is currently only a conversation among a few lifestyle migrants. Also, importantly, this realtor still sells Granada property primarily to Global Northerners.

Another young couple expressed reservations about buying property from poor Nicaraguans, but it did not stop them from doing so. In fact, the man said that he remained unaffected by the sellers' situation:

> A: You were talking about gentrification. How do you situate yourselves in that?
> C: It was really hard for me when we were looking for a house here. Because most of the time when we went around with real estate agents we were going into empty houses. But when we were going with the Nicaraguans house hunters, we'd go into a home that was still inhabited by Nicaraguans. And it felt so horrible to be the white guy, you know, walking through the house, checking it out, looking at…the cracks in the walls, and talking about it with each other and with the other Nicaraguan. It was terrible. And we ended up buying two houses that were empty.
> A: Do you think that was a part of it [why you bought an unoccupied house]?
> C: I do believe that was part of it
> B: Not for me.
> C: I don't think it was so much a conscious part of it but I did not like a single house that I saw that had people living in it. And I think it's because I never gave the house an actual look because it was so uncomfortable the whole time. I felt guilty.
> B: There's different ways to look at it. When the cost of land a couple of blocks away is so much cheaper and…[it would cost so much to improve their] dilapidated house in the historic center. They do it [sell] because it's positive for them. So this is gentrification that might be, at this phase, still positive. It's not like in some cities where you force people out their houses 'cause they can't pay rent and they end up in a much worse neighborhood…

In this couple's discussion, there were contrary understandings of their complicity in gentrification and local displacement. While the female said that she was perhaps unconsciously dissuaded from appreciating the house because of her feelings of guilt for potentially dislodging these owners, the male partner said that he was unaffected by the owners' presence. He was able

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to visualize the unoccupied potential of the homes he saw, and capitulated that locals would be better off in homes requiring fewer expensive restorations.

GOVERNMENT ROLE IN PROMOTING CITY

As part of global urban strategy, governments are trying to promote cities as sites for investment, oftentimes emphasizing tourism (Harvey 1989; N Smith 2002). Many scholars identify that with the current wave of gentrification, there have been many state-supported gentrification projects funded by public-private initiatives. Accordingly, the Nicaraguan government is trying to lure international investment from *pensionados* (with Decree 628) and through (large-scale) tourist development projects (Law 306).

While in many places gentrification is currently being led by public-private partnerships, with corporations and government agencies aligning to pass zoning laws, provide tax incentives, and to develop areas, this is not the case in Granada. Here, gentrification and associated place promotion activities are *not* being conducted primarily with the assistance of state agencies. In Granada, the state was late to the game; the government has been in the position of reacting to global trends. The initiators of Granada's development were the various international actors directly involved, such as International Living, the foreign entrepreneurs (especially the realtors), as well as international aid involved with building tourist projects (Mayorga Rocha 2005). Lifestyle migrants began coming to Granada before the state enacted incentives to attract them and independent foreigners started buying property without any kind of government aid. This is demonstrated by the fact that only 4 of the 44 interviewed used the pensioner visa, and none of the 44 was motivated to invest in Granada due to the tourism development incentive law.

When asked what effect on the city's property market realtors had, one prominent and early realtor said:

> Well we definitely made a market. In other words, there was no market. And I think
> it's all been pretty good. I mean, like I say, that is what we do. If I hadn't bought this
> property eight years ago and changed the roof, it probably would have been falling

> down. It's all *adobe*. You know, *adobe* is nothing but dirt and straw. And if it gets
> water on it, it'll collapse.

It is only after the various international actors have been active that the state has formulated a plan and they have responded with a tourism business visa and the *pensionado* visa.

The government's tourism department (INTUR) has been working to promote international tourism since the mid-1990s (Babb 2010); however, the foreigners involved in tourism in Granada reported that promotion efforts have been disorganized, uneven, and in their estimation, ineffectual. There has been a steady increase in international tourism to Nicaragua over the last decade (statistics are unavailable for Granada specifically, according to the city's INTUR director), yet interviewees told me that this is not correlated to the INTUR's efforts. Several interviewees said that Ortega has placed less emphasis on tourism promotion than did he predecessors since his election in 2006.

With the international development of the city center, the state is now helping to reconfigure the urban center for elite and foreign consumption. The government is trying to lure tourism dollars to Granada. In Granada, the largest and most visible example of this has been the redevelopment of the city's most prominent street, Calle La Calzada. Together with the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), the City of Granada carried out a complete renovation of the street (Figure 5.1), conducted in two phases from 2006-2008 (Lopez 2007; Babb 2010). Always considered the most desirable street to live on, Calzada connects the central park to the lake, and has become the central tourist street in the city. Before renovation, Calzada was a two-way street with raised sidewalks, divided by a narrow grass- and tree-lined median (Figure 5.2). The renovation transformed the entire street to accommodate pedestrians, which included extending the sidewalks to create outdoor seating for the bars and restaurants, as well as creating multiple public seating areas by placing benches underneath trees. The sidewalks and the

street became one level to create a plaza effect and the vehicle lane was narrowed, and became

one-way with a much lower speed limit (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.1, This sign at the city's central park and main cathedral identifies the "La Calzada Revitalization Sector", sponsored in part by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI).

Figure 5.2, Calzada under construction in 2007, but still maintaining its earlier two-way traffic design.

Figure 5.3, Calzada after redevelopment in 2011.

Although several businesses and organizations (such as a printer's shop and a women's organization) have long been located on Calzada, it wasn't until the city's first tourist businesses (bars-restaurants and *hospedajes*) started up that the street became a commercial area. Over time, many of the private homes along the street were replaced with entertainment businesses. Calzada has now, after its renovation, fully developed into an entertainment destination with a festival-like atmosphere (Figure 5.4). Most evenings during the tourist season, the streets are crowded with patrons dining and drinking in the bar-restaurants' outside seating, and with Nicaraguan peddlers and street performers in the public areas. In addition to foreign tourists and lifestyle migrants, the revitalized Calzada has become popular with Nicaraguans, especially wealthy Managuans on a respite from the city. In fact, one bar owner informed me that his business depends on the wealthy Nicaraguan patrons, as they consistently return year-round.

Figure 5.4, Calzada's spaces for elite consumption.

VISAS AIMED TOWARDS FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT

The Nicaraguan government has recently passed legislation aimed at recruiting international investment, including Law 306, which gives tax abatements and other incentives to foreign investors, as well as Decree No. 628, the 'Law of Resident Pensioners and Retirees,' which allows the entry of non-taxable income from abroad for lifestyle migrants, as well as one-time exception of import duties on cars (Babb 2010; Wood and Berman 2010; Rogers 2005). Although the government is attempting to lure international investment with these programs, very few lifestyle migrant gentrifiers said they chose Nicaragua specifically because of these incentives.

Promoting Tourism: Investment Incentive Law 306

Nicaragua's Law 306 promotes private foreign investment in tourism, by giving tax abatements and other incentives to foreign investment, with a section devoted to tourism. Not one of the 44 property-owning lifestyle migrants was motivated to come to Nicaragua or open a

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business because of the incentives offered by the Law 306, although two lifestyle migrants later decided to use the Law 306, with one person still in the process of approval when interviewed. There is no English-language translation available detailing the law, either in paper or on the internet. According to interviewees, there is wide confusion about this law, not least because it was amended a few years after it passed. One interviewee explained:

> It's basically tax benefits for people who come to invest here and bring a certain amount of money. It covers about 7 or 8 different investments. And for each category, there's minimum for how much money you have to invest. And if you invest that amount of money, you get exonerated for income tax for ten years and you get other tax exonerations. You're allowed to import some stuff for free, export for free…The bigger companies [use it], not the smaller companies.

Law 306 offers more attractive incentives for large investments, and several business-owning interviewees told me that they did not pursue using it because their businesses were too small to qualify. Only two interviewees had participated in Law 306. One of them is a businessman from New York who owns one of the largest privately-owned buildings in Granada and runs a hotel and spa in it. When I asked if he was influenced by any governmental policies to lure foreign investment, he quickly responded "absolutely not!" Although he now uses the tax incentives of 306, he claimed that "it's managed in a very inefficient way" and that the process of getting it was a "royal pain in the butt". He explained:

> For me, it wasn't personally much of a hassle because I retained someone who did a whole book that was submitted as part of the application. But it seems to me it's just a highly bureaucratic process. It's really not terribly productive. If it were done intelligently, it would be done a lot different.

The other person is part of an investment group which bought a building and created a hotel. Her investment group had not yet been approved for the 306 incentives. She said:

> No, we didn't buy the property because of the law. We bought the property because we were going to invest here. The law is an incentive, but with the change in government, it's a very iffy incentive. And it will be a big disappointment if we don't get the benefits. And if we get much less benefit than what we had originally been led to believe. But it wasn't a reason for buying the property.

This woman's experiences echo the general sentiments surrounding governmental incentives for foreign investment: many lifestyle migrants decided to use these incentives only after deciding to move to and invest in Nicaragua. Moreover, several interviewees said the law was too cumbersome and complicated, especially because the rules keep changing. My findings align with those of the authors of the book *Living Abroad in Nicaragua*: "A number of expats with whom we spoke decided not to apply for 306 because of concerns about paperwork and bureaucracy (or because their investment was too small to quality)" (Wood and Berman 2010: 163).

Enticing Pensionados: Decree No. 628, the "Law of Resident Pensioners and Retirees"

As of 2007, when I conducted this research, the benefits of becoming a resident were that foreign residents need not pay taxes on foreign earnings and they could bring into Nicaragua up to US$10,000 worth of household goods duty-free (one time), as well as a vehicle valued at up to US$10,000 duty free every five years. According to the Coldwell Banker website (2013b), since 2009, the value of the one-time container amount of goods was raised to US$20,000 and the car can be worth US$25,000. Other advantages of establishing residency are that foreigners are not vulnerable to the perceived discriminating whimsies of immigration officers, they needn't leave the country every 90 days as those on tourist visas must, and they can open a bank account.

With lifestyle migrants in Granada, the 628 permanent residency visa for pensioners is more popular than the tourism incentive law. Four of the 44 lifestyle migrants interviewed were permanent residents under the *pensionado* law and several others were considering getting it, or had thought about it. Many lifestyle migrants thought that this retiree incentive program is most beneficial for newcomers to Nicaragua. For someone who has already been in the country (or in Central America) and has already moved their belongings into the country, establishing residency doesn't offer many benefits, as one of the main advantages is that one can bring in their material possessions duty-free. Several people also eschewed the desire to bring in possessions and house

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wares from homes in the Global North, with one claiming that such belongings don't belong in tropical Nicaragua in a colonial home. Others claimed that part of the reason for moving abroad to Nicaragua was discarding such "American materialism".

One negative consequence of obtaining residency is that the foreign resident must apply with the government to exit the country. Although interviewees reported that there is rarely a problem with getting permission to leave the country, it is a requirement which some lifestyle migrants object to. It requires advance planning, making it more difficult to quickly leave the country if there was an emergency "back home". The close proximity to the US and Canada and therefore the ability to get home quickly is among the reasons why many foreigners are drawn to settling in Nicaragua, so this bureaucratic process rubs many foreigners the wrong way.

The *pensionado* law is a direct government attempt to lure lifestyle migration (Wood and Berman 2010: 95). Interviewees say that the Nicaraguan visa was inspired by Costa Rica's successful *pensionado* (pensioner) system begun in the late 1970s and which brought large numbers of retirees. As Costa Rica scaled back its *pensionado* system around the new millennium, its neighbors Panama and Nicaragua each came up with their own pensioner residency options (McWatters 2009; Dixon *et al.* 2006). Several interviewees told me many foreigners living on a fixed income came to Nicaragua around 2005 because Costa Rica raised the minimum monthly requirement.

To have a *pensionado* residency status in Nicaragua, you must be at least 45 years old, be in good physical health, be in good standing with local police, and have documentation of a stable monthly income earned abroad. In 2007, the required amount was US$400 a month, or US$500 for a couple. The benefits of 628 are that you become a permanent resident for five years, you needn't renew a tourist visa every 90 days, you can open a bank account, you are allowed a one-time container to enter Nicaragua with items valued at US$10,000 tax-free. One of the *pensionados* shared his thoughts on the resident pensioner 628 law:

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It's a very good law. Although it's lacking, very much lacking. Costa Rica started that law many years ago and it was approved. Costa Rica [received] thousands and thousands and thousands of Americans…because they could bring in all their household goods and not a ten thousand dollar limits. They get a new car every five years, no tax. They could get, there's some other benefits, they get put on the health insurance, all that stuff. What a nice deal for Americans that didn't get wealthy and they had a small retirement, it's perfect, perfect. So Nicaragua kind of adopted that law. But then they, like everything else, they did it kind of half-ass. Well you know, after ten thousand [dollars], you're going to have pay 40 percent tax on a vehicle. What kind of vehicle do you buy today, a new one, for less than ten thousand? You're looking at twenty to thirty thousand… It's not a big help. If you want to bring a container down, yeah, you can finally get it in here if you bribe enough people. So I looked at all that, and I said, it isn't worth it. No, their pensionado law is junk, it's a joke. Actually their 306 law is almost a joke also. It's so hard to get into and so hard to maintain… Basically the government is a joke.

The Pensioner law was updated in 2009 and became Law 694 and appears to offer greater tax benefits (Wood and Berman 2010). Coldwell Banker (2013b) offers a summary on its webpage about retirement benefits:

- Pay no taxes on any out-of-country earnings.
- Bring up to $20,000 worth of household goods for your own home, duty-free (The previous exemption was for US$10,000).
- The tax exemption for vehicles increased from $10,000 to $25,000.
- Import an additional vehicle every 5 years under the same tax exemptions.
- The minimum age for eligibility is 45, but this can be waived if the applicant proves stable income.
- Applicants can present a naturalization certificate instead of the birth certificate.
- An exemption from sales taxes now applies on home construction materials up to the first $50,000.

With this most recent increase of incentives for foreign pensioners, it appears that the Nicaraguan government is belatedly pushing to become competitive with neighboring countries in their attempts to lure foreign investment via lifestyle migration.

GRANADA'S HISTORIC CENTER AS A SITE FOR ELITE AND FOREIGN CONSUMPTION

TOURISM AS A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: SELLING THE CITY THROUGH TOURISM AND GENTRIFICATION

In the last thirty years, urban scholars have written about the transformation of urban governance and policy around the world (Harvey 1989; Hubbard and Hall 1998). Cities have

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shifted emphasis from managing cities (e.g., providing services) to promoting them as sites for investment and consumption. Governmental structures focus on smaller, localized spaces such as cities, to best compete in capturing the wandering, unhinged global capital in this period of late capitalism. In Granada, this can be seen in the transformation of city spaces to accommodate elite or foreign consumption.

Neoliberalism often involves a restructuring of economic systems. Robinson (2003) writes of the new economic policies currently existent in Central America that have moved away from the more traditional agricultural exports which have been the economic basis for over a century. The four new economic activities outlined by Robinson include: *maquiladora* manufacturing, non-traditional agricultural exports, export of labor and remittances, and tourism and hospitality. Tourism has been promoted by governments, development agencies, and business interests alike to be the savior for such poor economies as a development strategy (Britton 1991; Robinson 2003; Babb 2010; Zoomers 2010; Mowforth and Munt 2003; Hawkins and Mann 2007).

One important part of global urban entrepreneurialism is that places must compete against each other in order to lure limited and fickle tourists (and lifestyle migrants) and their capital (Harvey 1989; Smith 2002; Kavaratzis 2007). Granada is sold as timeless and "authentic" by tourism and real estate marketers attempting to promote international capital. Ashworth and Tunbridge describe how in urban place marketing, "heritage was used to endow places with what the tourism industry called a product's 'unique selling point' (2004: 211). In Granada, this is the "authentic" colonial landscape and international media are attempting to capitalize on the city's image (through real estate, tourism, and related services). As Duncan and Duncan point out: "[Real estate advertisements] are, in other words, selling a place, a way of life, and a placed-based identity" (2004: 50).

In cities throughout Latin America, much tourism (and gentrification) focus has centered on the prized historic colonial city centers. The disproportionate promotion of a singular district can lead to even greater disparities of wealth and access (Harvey 1989; Robinson 2003; Scarpaci 2005; Everitt *et al.* 2008). According to proponents, these developments of exclusive areas are often celebrated as a good for all, as they induce foreign investment through tourist consumption, real estate investment, and all the services which accompany them, and thus are said to produce jobs and taxes.

Foreigners in Granada are drawn to the distinct landscape of the historic colonial center (Urry 1990; Jones and Varley 1999). Tourists and lifestyle migrants alike are consuming an imagined landscape which is increasingly being developed by urban promoters. The Nicaraguan Minister of Tourism said, "We want to make tourism the main product of Nicaragua, and we plan to do that by promoting our country as an exotic destination at a reasonable price" (Rohter 1997). Echtner and Prasad (2003) discuss how third world marketing continues to be based on images and concepts derived from colonialism. The marketing of Global South places plays on colonial nostalgia, and the authors highlight three dominant myths promoted: The Myth of the Unchanged (i.e., fixed in the past), the Myth of the Unrestrained (i.e., pristine and welcoming), and the Myth of the Uncivilized (i.e., wild natives and nature). While Nicaragua has been presented as each of these to a degree, the most enduring myth of Nicaragua aligns with the Myth of the Uncivilized (2003: 275):

> The myth of the uncivilized creates destinations perfect for penetrating journeys of discovery. Similar to the myth of the unchanged, this representation draws heavily from a highly nostalgic version of the era of colonial exploration. But in this case, the journey takes the form of the great expedition to the deepest, darkest frontiers. Modern day tourists – like the great (white) explorers, hunters, traders, scientists, anthropologists and missionaries – can participate in expeditions to discover and observe these wild frontiers. Therefore, the primordial, pristine nature of these third world destinations must be preserved to allow this tourism expedition to occur.

Tourist promotion and branding are done by specific groups and often focus on one theme. In Granada, the popular international media has highlighted how the city is stuck in the past, and is safe and quaint, and poor and simple. This applies to Nicaraguan people as well, and in this conceptualization, there is little room for Nicaraguan agency.

Scholars have addressed the connection between tourism and gentrification (N. Smith 2002; Gotham 2007; Fotsch 2004; Osbaldiston 2011; Jones and Varley 1999). One aspect of the marriage between tourism and gentrification is the transformation of spaces to accommodate services desired by particular elites (Butler and Lees 2006; Osbaldiston 2011). According to Gotham "tourism gentrification" is "commercial as well as residential and reflects new institutional connections between the local institutions, the real estate industry and the global economy" (2005: 1114). Such linkages between the local and global economies through real estate are currently evident in Granada.

One of the most visible results of foreign-led gentrification in Granada has been the change in how space is used. Elite consumption is centered around the city's central plaza (*Parque Central*), and along Calzada. It is important to note that these areas have always been the cultural and aristocratic centers of Granada, and the wealthy have long had held claim to these spaces. One longtime lifestyle migrant resident who is fluent in Spanish told me:

> Granada's a city with no money. That's not entirely true. A lot of Nicaraguans, even the ones with big houses, they're living off of inheritances, or they're living off of remittance money. But a lot of people live in big houses but they don't have money to maintain them. So you know, the capital influx in the town is mostly the foreigners. There's no other business going on here. There's the free trade zone. And there there's a bunch of mom and pop stuff. But there's no other big, there's no other industry except for tourism.

To use Ley's terms again (2004: 2536), Granada has little economic capital, but lots of cultural capital. Considering the current limited economic activity, it is no surprise that Granada has turned to using its popular charm and architectural appeal to foreign tourists and investors.

In Granada, although there has been a transformation of public space, there has not been much visible opposition to the foreign-led changes. One British interviewee in his 40s who speaks Spanish and has been in Granada for five years explained why he thought this was the case. When I asked what he thought Nicaraguans think about city changes, he said:

> Well again, it's a generalization, some are more positive than others… It's a poor county, and with poverty, the most important thing is being able to eat. Finer social and political and cultural distinctions, if your belly is empty it's not so important, and so if foreigners are perceived as increasing employment, and a lot of the economy of this town is driven by tourism, then it's acceptable to some extent. And the expat community…along with the tourists…they're lumped in the same basket.
> So I think whatever perceptions were before, and I think they were generally pretty positive before, but I think they'll be missed because you aren't going to be able to feed your kid and that ain't good.
> Also, the population of Granada are quite a specific population, I think, because of this historical fact that there's been this relatively small rich layer of often landed Nicaraguans and either *campesino*, agrarian based class or servant class and, it's a huge generalization, but the sandwich between those two the middle class the servant class is relatively small in Granada and the gap between these rich people and the rest is pretty noticeable. So there is a kind of accustomed, a sense of being accustomed to having rich people around. So I always think that Nicaraguans are immensely tolerant of foreigners and particularly past colonial imperialist powers such as your country and mine.

As this man discusses, Granadinos appear to accept the new group of dominant (foreign) elites because they are accustomed to having a distinct ruling class and present little public resistance to change. For foreign lifestyle migrants, this means that they have easily slipped into their role as the new urban elite who transform and spatially dominate the city center.

The transformation of an urban district into a tourist space, which by definition is a space of privilege (Mowforth and Munt 2003), can cause locals to feel unwelcome in a space which was formerly felt to be their own. These public spaces can become effectively privatized and geared toward the tourists and new elite property owners, thereby excluding locals. This has occurred in several city parks in the popular tourist and expatriate city of San Jose, Costa Rica (Low 2000). Chang and Huang note some of the common problems when a city becomes a tourist destination:

Such a massive reconfiguration of local places for global tourism is not without problems. Much has been written about the vociferous tensions generated by tourism. For example, how local residents are displaced and marginalized by developments that essentially target tourists, or how local places are becoming theme parks and losing their traditional activities (2004: 231).

Despite possibilities for local displeasure about changes to urban spaces as a result of foreign consumption, lifestyle migrants interviewed assert that Granadinos have not openly resisted. Many acknowledge that local residents may be displeased, yet they claim that Nicaraguans are aware that such development is "the price of progress". When I asked an American woman about the foreigner impact on Granada, she responded:

Well, it's both negative and positive of course. I mean, with growth and development…you have to give up something. So I think in the long run, it's probably good for Nicaragua, or good for Granada… I think it's good because it gives more people work. And it's bad because prices have gone up so much that the Nicas can't afford buying anything in the city anymore. But that's the price of progress. And It's been like everywhere in the world. So…there's really no point in moaning about it because that's how it happens. And so if you leave that to the side, then I think Westerners moving into Granada has been a good thing.

The exclusion of the public in spaces for elite consumption is a fear for lifestyle migrants in Granada. In 2005, one guesthouse owner told me that several local Granadinos explained that they thought they weren't allowed into his establishment; they thought that they could be arrested for entering. While some lifestyle migrants in Granada would be happy to hear of the supplication of the local population, many lifestyle migrants are proud of their cosmopolitan world view and such realizations run counter to their desires for mutually beneficial relations with locals.

While local Nicaraguans greatly outnumber foreigners in Granada at any time, the city's historic center is now filled with businesses geared towards elite and foreign consumption. With the exception of internet cafes and some bar-restaurants, these establishments charge prices which are largely unaffordable for most Nicaraguans. There is a fear by lifestyle migrants that as the city becomes more popular, the historic city center will become dominated by foreigners. They will price out locals who will not be able to resist the large lump sums of money offered for their old,

oftentimes dilapidated houses. Lifestyle migrants claim that this is the case in Antigua,

Guatemala, as one female realtor described the future of Granada's real estate:

> B: Well, I think in the end it won't be so cheap. I think it'll get more pricey. It'll still be… I don't think we're going to turn into Costa Rica, I hope not.
> A: What about Antigua?
> B: I hope we won't be Antigua either [because it's] too touristy. Not enough Antiguans in the town. Crime is very bad there right now. You know, it's a boutique tourist town to me…
> A: So…you…think…it still maintains a lot of the Nica-ness of it?
> B: I think it does. There's probably not a week that goes by there's not some kind of a parade or bombs going off to celebrate something. Or kids marching down the street or…

Although lifestyle migrants generally agree that Nicaraguans continue to live, work, and play in

Granada, there remains the concern that "the bourgeoisification of the amenity migration

movement may lead to a public perception that living amid the authentic and desirable is a

distinct practice for the rich" (Osbaldiston 2011: 223).

WHO IS PRIORITIZED?

The transformation of Granada's city center through tourism development and lifestyle

migrant-led gentrification raises issues about who the city is for. In touristic cities, trying to find a

balance to please residents and tourists alike can be a challenge (Gotham 2005; Saarinen 2004;

Ashworth and Tunbridge 2004). "The most common problem in tourist cities in competition for

and 'ownership of spaces' by tourists and locals, new and old residents, foreign and domestic

visitors. Whether the 'local' or the 'tourist' is prioritized, and the extent to which the public is

involved in localized planning, depends on the contributions of tourism to the urban economy

(Chang and Huang 2004: 230).

In a city popular with tourists, there is often the concern that the promoted area is well

maintained by the local government, while less well-off areas are in need of infrastructural repair

(Scarpaci 2005). In Granada, it is true that there has been large investment into the elite-centered

pedestrianized street of Calzada. In this case, however, much of the funding has come from the

Spanish government, as well as other investors aiming to "preserve" colonial buildings. The rest of the historic center, which is maintained by the city, has not experienced an increase in governmental services, according to interviewees. Although the historic center does generally have better infrastructure than the outlying areas, this was the case even before foreign interest. Part of the reason for this simply relates to the age of the city – the historic district comprises a large part of the city and newer parts were generally built much later. These areas were not planned according to urban planning in the same way as the historic center, so they are not as well connected – especially because they were always for the less wealthy. All of Granada, including the historic center, lacks adequate sewage infrastructure. Many streets in the historic center have laundry wastewater running along the curb. The infrastructural impacts of foreigners is addressed further it the following section.

One issue concerning gentrification is prioritizing aesthetics. The gentrifying lifestyle migrants in Granada often strive to use "local", "authentic", and "traditional" materials, which brings up issues of what is authentic and which aesthetics (and specifically which materials) are valued in a city which is undergoing gentrification. The debates over which aesthetics need to be maintained imply decisions about whose voices are more highly valued. Foreign gentrifiers are able to afford the costs of utilizing "traditional" materials and the craftspeople who continue to create these arts. Because of the heightened demand, these artisans are now more expensive. Is it more important to facilitate the preservation of the traditional, "authentic" aesthetics and materials? Or is it more important to enable locals to participate in the redevelopment of their city, even if they are economically unable to utilize preferred renovation materials and techniques?

Due to the increase in the number of foreigners buying and renovating properties, the cost of highly skilled home craftspeople has increased. One foreigner married to a Nicaraguan told me

that a Nicaraguan in-law desired to repair something in her house in the traditional construction

style with traditional materials, but is unable to do so because the labor costs were now too high.

> The other thing is apparently the construction costs – this is a direct quote from my
> mother-in-law – Nicas can't afford to maintain their houses here anymore in part,
> like the really old ones because there is so much construction and renovation going
> on that the price of doing it has gotten really expensive. The labor costs, construction
> and material with more demand for the *tejas* [roof tiles] and all of that, so people
> before could afford better to maintain an older home like this than they can now.

This quote addresses the fact that although many lifestyle migrant gentrifiers prioritize the

revitalization of the historic colonial homes, their actions have, in fact, limited this possibility for

many Nicaraguans. The Nicaraguans who may want to renovate their homes are now unable to

afford the same capable, traditional craftspeople who service the foreigners.

Ashworth and Tunbridge raise the point that oftentimes the non-local "can be credited

with the widening of the tourism product, the 'discovery' of more saleable aspects of 'local'

heritage, and the celebration and promotion of local cultures" (2004: 219). Lifestyle migrants in

Granada believe that their passionate support of utilizing traditional materials is greatly helping to

maintain the historical integrity of the city center. This aligns with the goals of the city *centro*

histórico office, whose director told me that despite the fact that some foreign property-owners

have disregarded rules and made whatever changes they wanted, just as many have made an

effort to renovate in line with the office's codes. As discussed earlier, the director told me that the

problem for inaccurate restorations, in her opinion, can largely be blamed on the Nicaraguan

architects and designers who draw up renovation plans without first contacting the city office.

POLICY AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS OF LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS

Some of the retirement migration research, both international and intra-national, looks at

the policy matters surrounding an influx of elderly residents. This population has distinct

concerns: they usually are not employed and collect public assistance and/or pensions, and they

have significant health care needs (King *et al.* 2000; Serow 2003). In international retirement

migration, there are concerns about whether the sending or the receiving country is responsible for elderly care and how this is to be allocated (King *et al.* 2000; Lunt 2009; Smith and House 2006; Ackers and Dwyer 2004).

Truly (2011) addressed the growing market possibilities in the area around Lake Chapala, Mexico, which houses a substantial US and Canadian elderly population. He discussed that new businesses have been created catering to the large, aging population of retirees, such as nursing homes and funeral homes. Whereas King *et al.* (2000) and other authors have written of the concerns of southern European governments regarding the costs of caring for aging northern European immigrants, because Mexico, Nicaragua, and other Latin American states are not united in a political and economic system in which the government can be liable for paying for the health care of foreign retirees, this phenomenon can be regarded as an opportunity for economic growth rather than a hindrance. This is also because of the wealth disparity between Global Northerners and locals in most parts of Latin America; because health care is so much cheaper in Latin America, especially in Nicaragua and especially for people from the United States, and because lifestyle migrants are generally not poor, most lifestyle migrants in Nicaragua (and many in Mexico, according to Truly (2011)), can afford to personally pay for a great deal of medical costs and other costs associated with aging.

Another issue of the economic costs required by a new population of lifestyle migrants includes infrastructure upgrades to pay for the increased usage by Global Northerners, especially because they generally consume more resources than do locals, including electricity, water, and have more cars (Longino 1992; Litwak and Longino 1987; Cuba 1989; Serow 2003; Rowles and Watkins 1993; Hall and Muller 2004). One American man who moved with his wife said that Nicaraguans believe that foreigners are over-consuming limited resources:

> Some believe that we're using all the energy, we're using all the water, we're eating all the food, and using all the gasoline, so there's nothing left for them. Well I don't believe that, but I do hear that now and again.

Many lifestyle migrants agree with this sentiment, and they assert that their actions in the city only result in positive impacts on the city, especially considering how relatively undeveloped the infrastructure is in Nicaragua. For example, many claim that they revitalize dilapidated houses and pay more taxes (which can help fund public works). Further, the emphasis on international tourism development may help to stimulate the local government to invest in and upgrade the city's infrastructure to more closely meet international environmental standards.

Despite these claims, property renovations by lifestyle migrants may have very real physical consequences. The city blocks of *adobe* houses depend upon each other to function properly in this land of earthquakes and hurricanes. The authors of *Living Abroad in Nicaragua* cite a peer-reviewed article which said that "*adobe* is better at resisting earthquakes than modern buildings because of its inherent flexibility, which permits the buildings to distribute the seismic shock evenly" (Wood and Berman 2010: 114). One interviewee pointed out how the foreigner changes to the physical structure of properties have very real effects:

> People do stuff that also structurally jeopardizes city blocks by taking out [walls], saying, well this isn't a load-bearing wall, for example, so I'm going to knock it down to open up the space without understanding how *adobe* works. Because *adobe* works on its mass. So if my neighbor knocks down a wall in her house, although it might not structurally affect my house, if there's an earthquake, it could [affect me] because *adobe* works on its weight. If there's an earthquake, the whole block goes like this [a hand motion] and the vibrations are absorbed throughout the entire city block. But if you start taking chunks of that wall out, the vibrations aren't absorbed evenly, or they're absorbed or they're hit harder in other walls. So there are considerations like that that people never take into account.

This was one of the only examples given by an interviewee that addressed any harm resulting from structural or infrastructural changes caused by lifestyle migrants, demonstrating that most lifestyle migrants do not realize the full impact of their actions or are overwhelmingly confident that their effects are positive.

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This section addresses the economic impacts of lifestyle migrants in Granada. Lifestyle migrants feel that they have a generally positive impact on their adopted city. They feel they have helped develop the economy of the city and the business infrastructure. This has manifest most significantly through the widespread creation of jobs, lifestyle migrants repeatedly insist. Lifestyle migrants admit that their coming has not been entirely economically beneficial to Nicaraguans, because there is now a lack of affordable housing and consumer prices have generally risen. Most lifestyle migrants think, however, that these are just some "growing pains" and overall, they have brought a welcome infusion to the economy.

JOBS AND OTHER ECONOMIC BENEFITS

In my 2005 research of business-owning lifestyle migrants, interviewees emphatically emphasized that they contributed to the economic growth of Granada through creating employment (Foulds 2005). This earlier research "found that two hotels employ 25 local Nicaraguans, three others employ more than 10, and only three expatriates I interviewed employ only one worker" (Foulds 2005: 34). Further, they insisted that the money they spent in the local economy increased economic activity and wealth. The current research finds that lifestyle migrants in Granada continue to think that their presence helps the people and economy of Granada because they bring and spend substantial amounts of internationally-accumulated capital. The 2007 interviewees similarly focused on how the foreign presence in Granada helped create jobs for Nicaraguans, which facilitates a better way of life, such as increasing better education for local children. One realtor's answer summarized how many lifestyle migrants feel about how foreigners are affecting Granada:

> Well I think they are affecting positively in areas of giving the city new life with rehabilitating houses. They create a lot of employment. With employment comes better education for the children of those workers. So that is going to bring up the society, the level of economic potential for people. Also, as North Americans, we have a sense of what's fair… [We think,] 'We're paying our taxes and how come

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there's holes in the street?!' Right now, I'm crazy because there's those holes where the meter covers used to be, for the water meters and it's so dangerous. I think people here just tend to accept what goes on. We're more fighters and scrappers, let's make our community wonderful. Litter is a big preoccupation of the foreigners. And I do see litter cans when there was not a single one in the town when we started. I see changes in that.

Many lifestyle migrants have expressed similar sentiments that Nicaraguans would benefit from embracing the perceived American "can-do" approach to tackling problems.

The lifestyle migrants say that they help to economically develop Granada by spending a significant amount of money in the local community. One lifestyle migrant from the US said, "More people are moving in and we're spending our dollars which are giving them more dollars or more places to work. More maids, more security guards, more laborers, more whatever." In an interview with friends, they together succinctly described how lifestyle migrants impact Nicaraguans:

> C: It's good and bad for them both… Well it's good, there's more employment for them. It's bad, we're raising the prices.
> B: The employment that most of us can afford is hiring a maid or somebody ironing clothes or somebody to chop the tree down or something. I can't offer anybody a living wage.

The second person's mention that she cannot pay an employee a living wage defies the much repeated claims of the benefits of the increased employment resulting from foreigners. Even when foreigners can pay their employees well, most positions do not offer room for growth. But, the lifestyle migrants all insist, there are now more jobs than ever before. One young woman said:

> In terms of generally having foreigners here, I mean certainly there are more jobs, in terms of tourism jobs. I think some people who maybe in the past wouldn't've had a job at all are working in tourism. Or people who might have worked in something else are now working in tourism because they can get paid better.

A British man in his 30s who runs a restaurant had an interesting observation about the foreign impact on Nicaraguans and wages.

> A: What do you think about how foreigners are changing the city here?
> B: There's two points of view, really, for me for that. There's that, if things change too quickly and become too expensive for then local people, then I think it's going to cause some problems. But then on the other hand, if there's more work here and

they're paid fairly, then there's an advantage for local people. And if it's going to pick their city up and they're given opportunities, then I think it's a good thing. But if they're used as slave labor and are always being pushed then I think it will cause problems here.

A: And what do you think is happening now?

B: Well I don't think they get paid enough money, the local wage, I think the minimum wage is too low… It's about 2000 cords [Nicaraguan *Córdobas*] a month, it's approximately that. 6I always base wages on beer [because] I met a guy in London and I asked him how much it would be to [fix] to roof. And he told me it would be five hundred beers. I said, why do you always charge by beers? He said, cause when I was younger, it was five hundred beers, and it sort of keeps up with inflation so I still charge five hundred beers. And if you look at the price of a beer here, someone could work for a day and buy five half pints of beer at the end of a whole day's work and that is spending absolutely everything that they earn. And that, to me, using that as an example, is too little.

Despite this man's opinions, lifestyle migrants take great pride in the fact that they pay their employees well, especially in comparison to wealthy Nicaraguans. For example, one woman who teaches yoga said in response to my question of how Nicaraguans feel about foreigners in Granada:

I'm not really sure. I have people who work on my house, and I know they're happy to have the work and they're getting paid twice as much as what a Nicaraguan would pay them. You know and so in that respect that person is probably pretty happy.

Most lifestyle migrant interviewees' claims that they affect more positive than negative changes to Granada base this on the fact that they pay their employees more than do local elite Nicaraguans. According to their logic, such increases in employment and wages mitigate the impacts of inaccessibly inflated housing prices.

NICARAGUAN RESENTMENT

Although several lifestyle migrants reported that they could understand Nicaraguan resentment towards them, interviewees said that they had not experienced this. One longtime lifestyle migrant (who is an American military veteran) said:

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6 In 2007, 2000 *Córdobas* equaled about US$100.

I think we do more good than harm. And I think there's some [Nicaraguans] that just resent us because they think we're all wealthy. But on the whole, I think they realize we're doing okay here. I've never had, the only resentment I've had has been from an old man [who] used to call me an old gringo who thought I was above Nicaraguan law.

A young man who came with a girlfriend he had met traveling said that he would understand some resentment by Nicaraguans:

I've only been here a short time but if it was me living here as a local person and struggling and suffering and eating rice and beans everyday which now have gone up because of the bad weather and seeing somebody else come along in a nice car and have a nice restaurant, for example myself…and can see us all happy, then I think there could be some resentment there, so…[local older beggar woman comes by asking for one dollar please and *agua*] for example this lady here.

Both of these examples highlight that some lifestyle migrants find Nicaraguan resentment and jealousy understandable based on lifestyle migrants' privileged status which enable perceived double standards of justice.

MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT GENTRIFYING

As noted, many of the lifestyle migrants are drawn to the people and culture of Granada, in addition to the landscape and low cost of living. Many claim and indeed have demonstrated self-reflexivity regarding their personal involvement with the gentrification of Granada. One European man who came to open a hotel with the profits going towards charity was conscious of his position as a Global Northerner in the city:

B: Personally, I believe that foreigners, including ourselves, are driving the Nicas out of the town center. I think it makes Granada colonial center turning into a reserve for expats and rich Nicas. I think the middle class Nicas are slowly but steadily being moved out. I mean, who wouldn't turn down an offer for, even a small house here probably can easily sell for fifty thousand dollars. With an average salary of a hundred and twenty five dollars. That is a lot of months' salaries that people can get.
A: How do you negotiate that personally? You said that you're a part of it, so, with doing what you're doing? You realize the inequality of it, but yet you are a part of it.
B: I guess our situation is a bit different than if you're a *pensionado* or a rich foreigner that comes here to live. I guess we have a little comfort knowing that what we're doing is going to return a lot of other benefits to the city very directly. We have ease that 300 children will be able to go to school thanks to the hotel. So maybe that's why we feel that we're different. Although the effects of us buying the property are the same. I mean, by buying what we bought, we had to buy it on the commercial market, so naturally we paid the commercial price, which is the current

price, which Nicas would never be able to afford. Middle class Nicas and lower. I mean, frankly, the average salary is a hundred and twenty five dollars a month, I believe, a hundred and fifty, I don't know. Nobody can afford that, no way. You really have to be a rich Nica to be able to purchase a building right now in Granada.

One young couple was ambivalent about gentrification in Granada:

B: Gentrification is a serious issue in so many places. And the worst case scenario is that locals will get pushed out. They'll get by and large resentful and there'll be a security backlash like in, like I understand in Antigua has happened. But the best case is that the influx of foreigners and foreign money helps improve living for everything. And that is, not just that's what's happened, but that is what is believed to be happening by locals.
A: Is that what you think is happening?
B: It's a mix right now.
C: I do see things like houses still in the *centro histórico* owned by Nicaraguans that are getting fresh coats of paints around the holidays and things like that because there is this influx of money. So there is what little evidence we have as the foreign invaders seeing that there is some, more upward mobility, a little more education happening. A lot more kids in Granada, so it seems, in our age group that are going to college and being able to do those kinds of things. I don't know, you have to assume a lot of it has to do with the influx of capital. Just like the painting of the houses and things like that happening but um...
B: It's a matter of perception too. Locals need to believe that that is a result of foreigners coming in and investing money and building hotels and what not.

Almost all lifestyle migrants interviewed asserted that any harm they cause to Nicaraguans due to rising home prices is offset by the benefits they generate with increased economic opportunity and activity. As these quotes above highlight, despite some feelings of unease about their role in the gentrification of Granada, there is a general sentiment that Nicaraguans can survive any hardship they encounter. As an American man in his twenties told me:

You know Granada has a long history of being a conservative history, but it also has a long history of being an international city. Nicaragua's got such a long relationship with the United States too that…I don't think there's anything that's really that shocking happening.

WHERE DO NICARAGUANS GO?

Because the scope of this research was necessarily limited, I wasn't able to interview Nicaraguan Granadino residents about their experiences of gentrification. However, I have spent a considerable amount of time in Granada since 2000, and through participant observation and personal family involvement, I have personally observed that because of the foreign demand of

colonial-style homes in the historic center of Granada, house prices have skyrocketed, and many

Nicaraguans are now priced out buying homes in this district. These include people who never

bought a house when the prices were still low, or people who sold perhaps shortsightedly and do

not presently have enough money to purchase a different house in the city center. Further, the

common racialization of Nicaraguans by both Global North lifestyle migrants and other

Nicaraguans has impacted housing opportunities.

Also, almost all younger Nicaraguans who grow up, begin a family, and would seemingly

move into their own homes are now priced out of the center. The following interview conducted

with two women who are friends was the only time that an interviewee mentioned the problem

for a whole generation of Nicaraguans, currently in their twenties and teens, who will be unable

to own property in the historic center.

> A: What do you think Nicas think about the changes that are happening in Granada
> in terms of the properties with the foreign presence?
> B: That's hard to say too. I don't know. If they have any resentment, I never hear it.
> C: I asked one of my *meseros* [waiters] that same question one day and the answer
> was: I'm 25 years old. I would like to get married. I'm never going to be able to buy
> a house again because you people have all come and raised the prices. I'll never buy
> a house. We'll live with my parents. I said, but you have a job now. But I'll never be
> able to buy a house.
> B: That's an unusual idea though because so many don't think that far ahead.
> C: That's true
> B: I mean, I think they think more of, well there's a restaurant now, somebody can
> get me a job tomorrow. Or now I have somebody I can work for. I'm glad they think
> that far ahead.
> C: That's true, I didn't think of that.

This quote elucidates many lifestyle migrants' racist perceptions of Nicaraguans. Despite one

interviewee's acknowledgement of a young Nicaraguan man's serious concerns about his limited

options resulting from foreign-led gentrification, the conversation quickly turns disparaging. Both

lifestyle migrant interviewees here demonstrate their racist, neocolonialist perceptions of

Nicaraguans as incapable of logical thinking or planning for the future. Such patronizing

understandings of Nicaraguans are common among lifestyle migrants, who, in informal

discussions, often unapologetically describe this attitude as a world-weary and pragmatic result

after their experiences living in Nicaragua. Many lifestyle migrants embody racist, neocolonialist discourses, which inform their engagement with Granada's property market and Nicaraguan people; many Global North lifestyle migrants understand their role in displacing Granadinos as unproblematic, and in fact view their own role in the gentrification as a boon to the city.

As a result of gentrification, most local Nicaraguans are priced out of properties. I found it interesting how many lifestyle migrants in Granada did not seem to know where the Nicaraguans were moving to. At least half of interviewees expressed concern over the Nicaraguan housing situation, but some appeared to not have thought much about the issue. There appeared to be a disconnect among the gentrifying lifestyle migrants about their individual role in displacing and pricing out Nicaraguans. Although many spoke of foreigners collectively displacing Nicaraguans, no one thought that they personally displaced anyone. Further, none of the home owners I spoke with referenced altering their actions to change the current situation. Some spoke of possibly trying to organize collectively buying a property on which Nicaraguans could build homes. None said anything about selling their houses to Nicaraguans at a price they could afford.

When I asked lifestyle migrant interviewees where they thought Nicaraguans go when they sell their properties, there were several common answers given by lifestyle migrants. One, Nicaraguans move to the countryside and buy a newer, Miami-style concrete house with newer amenities, like air-conditioning, updated kitchens, and more bathrooms. Two, they move to the US, Costa Rica, or elsewhere, probably with or near relatives. Lifestyle migrants say that Nicaraguans selling their old Granada home may feel like they hit the jackpot, as their houses are now worth at least quadruple what they were worth before. Three, sometimes they have another property in Granada where they can live with the same family makeup, or into a house with different family members. Four, oftentimes, it is perceived by foreigners, that the Nicaraguan people who live in the house are not the owners, but family members. The family members who live there probably move according to the methods listed above. Five, sometimes no one is living

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in the house at all, so no one is displaced. Perhaps the owner had passed away and the inheritor lives in another house or in the US or Costa Rica, or, for whatever reason, does not want to take on the significant obligation of the upkeep of a colonial *adobe* home. The following are some responses to the question of where Nicaraguans go when they move.

A man in his early forties, who is married to a Nicaraguan woman said that owners either move or that many houses are empty:

> They go lots of places. A lot of them go to another house they own. A lot of them maybe leave, go somewhere else. The person that I bought from on Calzada – her and her husband were building a house in Masaya when I bought the house – her new husband. And so they were on their way to moving to Masaya... [Another one] was an old lady and…nobody was using the house at all and so it was just a family house. So they didn't go anywhere, there was nobody to go anywhere, it was empty… [In another one], the patriarch of the family died, he was the one that was living there, and there's like 8 kids and none of them lived in the house... So once again it was a family house that nobody was living in. That happens a lot.

A young woman who is married to a Nicaraguan man said that many Nicaraguans move:

> B: Just further out
> A: Just further out. What about the richer ones?
> B: Well, some of the ones that live on this street, that are Nicaraguans are of the wealthy class or whatever. So they either rent because they can't afford to buy because it's so disgusting. But they can afford the rent, like for a smaller nice house or something like that, they can afford that. Or they just stay with their parents. The extended families all live together, which maybe they've always done so whatever, it's not a problem. But the whole renting concept is kind of new idea. But it's sort of partial. So the renting thing and moving further out, or just staying with family
> A: What makes you think renting is a newer thing?
> B: Good question… I guess that the only rental agencies I know are ones that cater to foreigners and they're all relatively new. But some Nicas go through them also. Although having said that, before we bought this house, my sister-in-law was renting and it was just a word of mouth thing, so I'm sure.

Despite their principal position as the initiators of Granada's real estate market, most lifestyle migrants appear to not give much thought to how their actions affect Nicaraguans, apart from providing a substantial lump sum of money. Few interviewees personally acknowledged their role in the gentrification process and instead spoke of it as an objective process occurring by a third party.

Several lifestyle migrants mentioned that some Nicaraguans who sell their houses do not

use their money wisely, perhaps because they have never had access to such large sums (again,

payments are in cash) and they likely never will again. These people can end up without a house

and with no money to buy a different one. McWatters documented similar problems with

Panamanians selling their houses to lifestyle migrants in Boquete (2009: 130-131). When I asked

an older American man who is married to a young Nicaraguan woman where Nicaraguans move

after they sell their homes, he told me:

> B: You know, I don't know. Some I think are just absolutely dumb for doing it…
> Well, for example, I know one guy that his family sold their house, he got about ten,
> fifteen thousand dollars out of it. And he made an investment of five thousand of it,
> drank the rest and then needed more drinking money and so he sold his five thousand
> dollar investment and he had a monthly income off that. And he has nothing again
> and he's a young guy too.
> A: And nowhere to live either?
> B: I imagine he still lives with his family. I don't know, wherever they live, I don't
> know. But I would imagine that happens a lot. I think some of these of these people
> in country, they sell their *finca*s [farms] and they move to the city, I don't know how
> long the money lasts them.

"BUT IT'S NOT SO BAD FOR NICAS"

Some lifestyle migrants insist that even with the raising prices, Granadinos can come out

ahead. This is usually explained as Nicaraguans escaping the burdens of old, costly houses when

they have the resources to purchase more manageable homes. The following examples were given

by lifestyle migrants who are self-described "leftists." One young couple explained how they

helped old family friends who are Nicaraguan to sell their house.

> B: The Nicaraguan I grew up with, I took care of this little house, this tiny little
> house that she had that had two friends living in it. And that was a long process [to
> sell it].
> C: Everything was falling over.
> B: And you know he had no money, barely has a job. He wasn't going to be able to
> keep the roof over his head from collapsing. So he sold the house to a gringa who's
> turning it into a *taller*, a workshop for sewing, so to teach women to sew. So it's a
> positive for them and…the community as a whole. And then they took…between a
> quarter to a third of the money that she made and bought a [property] two blocks
> away that was…one-tenth [the price and]…they built a house for another three

thousand dollars. It's bigger, has more amenities, and is a much safer, nicer house for this family. So everybody benefitted.

C: And they only had to move two blocks.

One woman who came because of International Living promotions said Nicaraguans can move to another "Nicaraguan" neighborhood, to nearby towns, or to the US. When I asked where she thought Nicaraguans move after they sell their homes, she said:

B: I would think that, if they're smart they're probably moving to Reparto San Carlos.

A: Where's that?

B: Right…over the bridge…there's a whole middle class neighborhood. It's lovely, houses there are like twenty, thirty thousand dollars. Plots are ten thousand. Lovely Nica area. So I think they're moving to other parts a little further out of the center. They could certainly, with the money they make on these sales…if they're getting what I paid, yes. If they're getting what the real estate agent is paying, I don't know. I would think they're moving outside of the city, outside of Granada. Even into some of the developments, the urbanization project outside Managua. Those houses are forty-five thousand dollars. They're lovely. So it depends on what they're getting for their house here. If they're getting eighty thousand, especially if it's a lot but not living in anyway, then they certainly could buy a house and live comfortably.

I think some of them are going to the States if they get the visas or even without the visas. But you could move outside, anywhere outside of the city...[to other] towns, where it's much more reasonable. It's Nica, very Nica, as you know…

Are we totally *extranjer*-izing [foreign-izing] the colonial area? It seems to me there's still a lot of Nicas walking around. I think…the gentrification…[is] going to affect some of the neighborhoods. The neighborhood where we are has some very wealthy neighbors. We don't seem to have a problem with the neighbors. But a little further, there are a lot of junkies. Other areas that are now getting gentrified, I think it's going to clean out the junkies. We don't know where they're going to go, that I'm not sure of. They're not the ones selling the property, but they're the ones getting dispossessed in some ways.

These responses show that many lifestyle migrants diminish their own complicity to the gentrification problem. Both quotes provide examples where Nicaraguan owners not only are perceived to be unharmed by rising prices, but to have benefited from them because they now can live in a better house or community. In the second quote, the woman dismisses the concern that the historic center is becoming dominated by foreigners, yet she describes, without irony, a suitable destination for displaced Nicaraguans as a "lovely Nica area." Additionally, she extols that foreign-led gentrification will help "clean out the junkies" in some areas because, she infers, displaced Nicaraguans will be forced to move there. She doesn't acknowledge the possible

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conflicts and concerns of the displaced Nicaraguans who would seemingly be "cleaning out the junkies", nor is she bothered with the consequences of the "junkies". In her estimation, displaced Nicaraguans can unproblematically move to a new "Nica" area.

<div align="center">NICARAGUANS RENTING</div>

The Nicaraguans who live in the historic city center in rented homes have been harmed by the increase in property values resulting in increased rents. Most lifestyle migrants I spoke with, including more knowledgeable interviewees, were dismissive of the rental problems of Nicaraguans. Many said that most Granadinos own their own homes, so they believed that few Nicaraguans needed to rent. It is true that many Nicaraguans own houses in Granada as a result of government programs to increase ownership during the Sandinista period, as well as because housing was inexpensive before the foreigners raised property costs. For the Nicaraguans who rent and have always lived in the city center, however, the high costs of rents are devastating. Further, most Nicaraguan landlords list their rents in US dollars and Nicaraguan renters must pay that amount each month, in either US dollars or in the adjusted equivalent in Nicaraguan *Córdobas*. This means that rental prices for Nicaraguans continuously rise because of inflation.

Moreover, I was surprised at the indifference for renters considering that there is surely an increase of Nicaraguans who are renting – as a result of gentrification because there is more housing demand and fewer people can afford to buy. As discussed above, many Granadinos who sold their houses found that they cannot afford to buy a house in Granada's city center. Because many Nicaraguans must continue to want to live in the city center, it would logically follow that many rent now that homeownership is unaffordable.

One retiree woman, who has made great attempts to befriend Nicaraguans, was unaware of the problematic rental situation for Nicaraguans:

> A: What about renters? Do you think they'll probably just rent more further on the outside than-?
> B: Other renters who?

A: Like Nica renters.
B: Nica renters? I don't think there are a lot of Nica renters. Most of the Nicas I know live in their own houses or in the houses of relatives. I don't think I know any Nica renters – at all.
A: My family does.
B: Your family does. I know someone who'd like to be but can't find a place, but that's another issue.
A: Why, why can't they find a place? [It's not] cheap enough?
B: Yeah, cheap enough. Yeah, the people I know either live in their [own house or] they live in houses their family, you know the aunt in the US owns the property, and they live in it, kind of thing. The ones that don't own their own houses.

I have heard anecdotal stories that even rents outside of the city center are rising and, since my 2004-2005 research, I have repeatedly heard stories about landlords ejecting Nicaraguan renters to instead rent to foreigners who will pay more (Foulds 2005). Most owners (Nicaraguan and lifestyle migrant alike) prefer foreign renters over Nicaraguan owners, not least because of fears related to squatters' rights. Nicaragua has strong squatters' rights and it is considered to be very difficult to remove unwanted tenants. One female realtor explained why Nicaraguans prefer not to rent to other Nicaraguans.

A: Do you think a Nica would lower the prices for the Nica families?
B: Probably not. I don't think so. Because they like having foreigner renters better than having Nica renters because if there's ever a problem, the foreigners are easier to kick out. If a Nica family's in your house, you basically can't kick them out.
A: Really? Why?
B: There's so many laws that protect them. I can sit in a house and they know the laws. So a Nica family knows the laws. I can sit in a house and not pay you rent for a year. And you couldn't do a thing about it. There's nothing you could do. And eventually you'd get me out maybe 18 months later, but I would pay rent for 18 months. And if you wanted me to leave, you'd have to pay me to leave.

One of the property managers talked about her experience with Nicaraguan renters:

A: So you think there are still lower rates, lower rents in Nicaragua, in the center?
B: If people take the time to find those houses they are out there. I don't have them. But they are out there.
A: Do you think that your market, your business has affected the city rental market?
B: I don't think so. Because most our houses are owned by Westerners and are rented to Westerners. And the people who come from the States and Europe, especially Europe, they can afford it, more than afford it. No, there's two markets here. One owned by Nicas and one owned by Westerners. And one rented to Nicas and the other rented to Westerners.
A: Do you think that there, a lot of people told me that they think Nicas don't rent that much… Do you think that's true?

B: You know what, we get probably one out of two is a Nica coming into the office asking. At least asking. Very seldom that I can help them. Because like I said, my prices are too high. But sometimes I do make an arrangement, where I lower the price especially if a house has not been rented for a while. I make arrangements.
A: Would that be in a house that's a foreigner-owned house?
B: Mmhmm [yes].
A: Do you think that any foreigners would have problems with that?
B: Some. Some specify.
A: Why do you think?
B: Well, even Nica owners specify. Because if you move in a Nica, the whole family moves in. and that's a problem.
A: So what, like over usage of the space?
B: Yes, yes, and they're not cleaning up after themselves. That's the complaint, I'm not saying it, but that's what [I hear].
A: That's interesting. Have you had experiences like that, where someone was unhappy?
B: One time, one time. Oh, no, twice.

These last two quotes, from a realtor and a property manager, respectively, summarize how many lifestyle migrants perceive Nicaraguans as renters: problematic and to be avoided. Further, the property manager in the second quote describes how lifestyle migrant owners commonly characterize Nicaraguans in racist terms, such as being unclean and undesirable, as will be discussed further in the next chapter. Although lifestyle migrants have assigned their Global Northern valuation of homes as investment property onto a foreign city and contributed to the inflated property market in Granada, lifestyle migrant interviewees did not feel that it is their responsibility to care about Nicaraguan displacement or to help find solutions.

<u>CONCLUSIONS</u>

This chapter has addressed the gentrification processes occurring in Granada caused by lifestyle migrants. Gentrification is manifesting in Granada through increased property prices, higher rental rates, and through a transformation of public spaces to accommodate elite consumption. The gentrification in Granada is a product of several processes, including the internationalization of real estate markets, and the marketing and fetishization of global home ownership.

CHAPTER 6: LIFESTYLE MIGRANT PERCEPTIONS OF NICARAGUAN PEOPLE AND CULTURE

> I think that a majority of people come as investment. One of my criticisms of the expat community here is that a lot of it lives on what I call on top of the Nicaraguan society. They're here because they've got the money and can afford to be here and they like what they can do and have been able to get with their money. But some of these people have never lived outside of their home country before. They really could care less if it's Nicaragua or some other country. They don't bother to learn the language. They really don't even like Nicaragua. What I consider is they just simply impose themselves on the superficial basis on the structure and live at their level the life that they can manage to put into place. Frankly, I know really few people that I consider live a Nicaraguan life. And I certainly can include myself in that. Nobody comes here to live like a life that my neighbors have to live. They don't come here to [fight] with water or the light. They don't come here to live in substandard houses. They don't come here to send their children to an appalling school system. So no, so people who live like a Nicaraguan, very, very few. Most people are coming for their own reasons and because it's a pleasant place to do whatever they decided they want to do (interview with woman running a hotel).

This chapter examines relations between lifestyle migrants and Nicaraguans, focusing specifically on Global Northerners' understandings of the dynamics between the two groups. For many Global Northerners, part of the allure of Granada is the people and their culture. Many lifestyle migrants say that they admire how humble, resilient, and kind Nicaraguans are. Yet, however much praise lifestyle migrants afford Nicaraguans, there are often tensions resulting, in part, from neo-colonialist and racist attitudes towards Nicaraguans. Although many come to the city with the earnest intention of participating in the Nicaraguan culture, and they vociferously denounce any association with Global North colonialist intentions, I contend that even they maintain a neo-colonialist mentality. Building on my earlier Master's research (Foulds 2005), I find that such a superior, privileged mindset is deeply embedded in lifestyle migrants and many do not even recognize it, as this is how privilege works (Leonard 2010). In fact, many Nicaraguans also reproduce an understanding of Nicaraguan politics, economics, and culture as "backward" and in need of "evolution" along a development continuum. Further, lifestyle migrants insist that Nicaraguans also often actively position white Global Northerners as "superior" harbingers of modernization.

In this chapter, I examine the ways in which lifestyle migrants position themselves in relation to Nicaraguans and what they perceive to be their role in Granada. I address how this is manifest through active economic development initiatives (e.g., starting businesses), as well as through volunteering. Volunteering has been rapidly expanding in Granada in the past few years and for many, especially the increasing population of full-time retirees, volunteering provides a purpose for their daily existence (now that they no longer work), as well being a feel-good justification for spending time in the city.

Another section addresses issues of lifestyle migrant revanchism. As many understand their roles in Nicaragua to be helping to jumpstart the economy, some Global North gentrifiers can arguably be attempting to "take back" urban space from post-colonial subjects who are not perceived to be effective managers. This chapter also focuses on lifestyle migrants' perceptions of their relationships with Nicaraguans, including their animosity towards Nicaraguan elites, their frustrated attempts at maintaining friendships with Nicaraguans, and their pride at maintaining amicable relations with their Nicaraguan neighbors. Finally, I address the contentious issue of Global Northerners' sexual and romantic relationships with Nicaraguans.

<div align="center">GLOBAL NORTH PRIVILEGE FROM WEALTH AND RACE</div>

As described in Chapter 5, Global North lifestyle migrants in Granada benefit from their privileged positions based on their relative wealth in multiple ways. In this section, I discuss how lifestyle migrants' status as white Global Northerners gives them an advantaged position in regards to race and mobility. The acute disparity of privilege and wealth between Global North foreigners and local residents informs all aspects of how lifestyle migrants engage with the host place and population. Besides economic privilege, Global North lifestyle migrants benefit from an ability to travel due to their citizenship status, as well as because of their white privilege (Sundberg 2004; Dwyer and Jones 2000). Lifestyle migrants have the ability to travel almost anywhere thanks to their passports from the US and other Global North countries (Geoffrey

2007). If they have the money, Global Northerners are welcome in most countries without a visa. Although many lifestyle migrants are conscious of the fact that they won the "birth lottery", not all are aware of the resultant privileges they have.

When I asked a self-described political leftist how she negotiated her political views with her position as a privileged Global Northerner in Nicaragua, she said:

> Oh I'm a rich American, but I'm also doing aid work… It can be uncomfortable but I think you have to have a sense of yourself. You know what I mean, it's like, I'm sorry I'm not going to feel guilty about having money. I worked my whole life. Sorry, I was born in the US, you know [shrugs shoulders and laughs]. I just don't want to get into this angst thing like some people really do… [Some people feel like] oh god, I'm so rich and here are these poor Nicaraguans and I'm like, well that's nice. So I do my part I'm not going to kill myself you know I'm not going to beat myself over the head about it. Really. Yeah, it is kind of unfair…that I've got this big house and there's seventeen people over there in that little big shack and it's like, that's the world, I guess… What are you going to do, sit around feeling guilty?

Compared to Global Northerners, Nicaraguans are disadvantaged in their mobility. Nicaraguans face tight restrictions entering Costa Rica[7], Mexico, the US, and Canada. While getting to Europe is not affordable for most Nicaraguans, they are granted standard 90-day tourist visas in most European countries.

Global North lifestyle migrants may enter Nicaragua whenever they choose, while Nicaraguans must pay US$160 simply to apply for a US tourist visa. Actually receiving a visa requires more fees, such as those for a medical examination. Moreover, the US requires a demonstration of wealth and "family and professional ties to their home country to establish that they will depart the U.S. after completion of the trip" (US Embassy 2013). For many Nicaraguans, travel to the US requires a great deal of money and can entail an illegal, perilous journey. This disparity illustrates a fundamental privilege Global Northerners have over Nicaraguans.

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[7] Nicaraguans provide much of the cheap labor for Costa Rica and are commonly discriminated against.

Another important way that many Global North lifestyle migrants in Granada hold a privileged position is due to their "whiteness" (Sundberg 2004; Dwyer and Jones 2000; Pulido 2000; Hankins et al 2012). Almost all lifestyle migrants in Granada are white (all interviewees were "white", although return migrants could arguably be considered "white" or "mestizo"). Due to a history of imperialism, Nicaraguans often associate Global Northerners and whiteness with an elevated status (participant observation; Lancaster 1992; Sundberg 2004). "Politically, color relations inside Nicaragua reproduce Nicaragua's own history of repression at the hands of other states. Where power and privilege are at stake, *white* implies might and right, as it were" (Lancaster 1992: 222, italics in original). This white privilege gives lifestyle migrants higher social status in Nicaragua. "As a hegemonic formation, white privilege constructs a normalized performance of whiteness, casting other racialized embodiments, practices, and behaviors as deviant" (Hankins *et al.* 2012: 383). Because of their white privilege juxtaposed against "mestizo" Nicaraguans, lifestyle migrants are elevated to a higher social status in Granada, regardless of their economic or social status in their former situations. This white privilege confers an economic and social advantage to lifestyle migrants. White privilege is so deeply ingrained that oftentimes, the mestizos (and indigenous) peoples of Nicaragua assume a "natural" deference to whites (Pulido 2000; Swanson 2007).

A young couple consisting of a white woman and mestizo Nicaraguan man gave an example of how Nicaraguans defer to those who are wealthier and white:

> C: I've been feeling that Nicaraguans tend to, if you establish this status you have more money than most people, Nicas tend to put a wall and you who you are, the man with money and I'm just a Nica.
> A: So you think the Nicas also help to make the boundaries and make it harder for the foreigners to become friends and to become part of the culture… Because it's part of the culture to have respect to the person who has the money. You're the boss, even if you don't have any relationship with that person.
> B: This may be a weird example of that but I feel like when we were having work done on the roof and we had the workers here. Mostly they would bring their own things to drink out of. But occasionally they'd want a glass of water and we actually only have glasses. And they'd be like you don't have a plastic cup? They didn't want

to drink out of the same thing we were drinking out of. So they felt like they shouldn't-

A: They should drink out of a bottle or something less?

B: Yeah something less important and different than what we were using… And we would be like, we insist and they're like no, it's glass. And then one of the workers broke one of them and he felt really bad and we felt awful.

A man in his 40s described how Nicaraguan culture has a rigid class system:

Granada has a history of a high class and a supporting lower class. To a greater extent than any other town in Nicaragua. So to some extent the change of the foreigners coming in isn't as great as it could be because people are used to having the rich people coming in and them having the money and being whatever rich people are. And the fact that they are from the United States or from Europe as opposed to whatever generation white Spanish, which generally the rich in Nicaragua are. It makes it less of a change than it could be.

As the above quote illustrates, Nicaraguans tend to give deference to the wealthy, in addition to those who are white and from the Global North. The privilege of lifestyle migrants in Granada is solidified because they are usually assumed to be wealthy by nature of their whiteness and Global North-ness.

Because of institutional racism, the low wages of Nicaraguans, and the comparable low cost of living in Nicaragua, even working foreigners in Granada maintain a stature above most laboring Nicaraguans. Based on interviews and participant observation, while some Nicaraguans work as equals with lifestyle migrants (e.g., architects, lawyers), to my knowledge no Nicaraguans in Granada employ lifestyle migrants in positions underneath them. The heightened social and economic position of lifestyle migrant in Granada based on disparities of wealth and privilege inform how foreigners interact with Nicaraguan people and landscape, specifically in housing. The rest of this chapter deals with how this disparity manifests in these Nicaraguan-lifestyle migrant relations.

SHARING THE SPACE OF GRANADA

Lifestyle migrants in Granada generally insist that the new residents enjoy a mutually beneficial coexistence with the local population. Many report that they are cordial with their neighbors and other acquaintances. They do admit that maintaining friendships can be difficult

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due to wealth and cultural disparities. Many continue, however, to engage with Nicaraguans in the hopes of becoming part of the local culture. It is important to note that very few lifestyle migrants, regardless of their strong interest in integrating into the Nicaraguan culture, ever intend to fully assimilate. Almost all lifestyle migrants would admit that they have no desire to live in similar conditions to Nicaraguans. Few would tolerate living in houses in which Nicaraguans live – even in the homes of Nicaraguans who are not living in poverty.

There are a handful of lifestyle migrants who do live a humble lifestyle similar to Nicaraguans, but most of these were early arrivals, young, and/or live outside of Granada. Living in Granada (or Managua) is very expensive compared to the rest of Nicaragua, so the lifestyle migrants who want to live cheaply (and generally more in tune with the land) do not choose to live in Granada. The lifestyle migrants who do live in conditions similar to Nicaraguans are often living with Nicaraguan spouses or boy/girlfriends.

DIFFERENT SPACES FOR SOCIALIZING

Many lifestyle migrants claim that they want to be friends with Nicaraguans, but many admit that this is difficult for several reasons which will be discussed in the next few sections. One reason for the lack of integration with Nicaraguans is there are few common spaces in which to do it. Nicaraguans and Global North lifestyle migrants generally socialize in different spaces. Granada's *Parque Central* is the city's historical public gathering place and it is where many Nicaraguans gather to meet friends and attend large events. Public parks, however, are often understood as masculine spaces where adult women would not likely spend much time with other adult women (Low 2000). Instead, Nicaraguans largely socialize in other spaces. People often interact when they are out and about on the streets, since the city is designed for pedestrian traffic and few Nicaraguans own cars. As discussed in Chapter 2, Granadinos are proud of their custom of bringing their rocking chairs out to the city sidewalk in front of their houses at dusk. During this time, Nicaraguans socialize on the sidewalks while strolling or while rocking in their rocking

chairs. Overall, Nicaraguans primarily socialize in each other's homes. They drop by to say hello, or go to a party at a friend's house.

The lifestyle migrants in Granada, however, are not often invited to Nicaraguan homes for parties or other social visits. Lifestyle migrants are accustomed to socializing in bars and restaurants. Most Nicaraguans, however, are not used to going to bars or restaurants, not least because they usually cannot afford to spend money in them. Traditionally, only men go to bars and drink alcohol. Nicaraguans and lifestyle migrants may feel uncomfortable in the other's domain, as described by a young lifestyle migrant female married to a Nicaraguan:

> In terms of social life, I think there's a two tiered system, for the most part. And there's exceptions to this. But mostly there are places that foreigners go and there are places that Nicas go. And they're generally separate places. And so there are more places now, certainly in the time we've been coming, that cater towards foreigners. And there's always been places for Nicas. And those places still exist I think. And there's a few places where both go, like [a bar] or something like that. But [a coffee shop], like, no one in my husband's family would imagine, ever think of going there. Unless we're going and we invite them to come with us because it's just so [different].

FOREIGN ENCLAVES

Much of the scholarship addressing the geography of expatriates focuses on their tendency to remain spatially segregated from local residents by living and socializing in enclaves. In existent literature, transnational elites in global cities are described as rarely living amidst local people (Beaverstock 2002, 2011; Pow 2011; Willis and Yeoh 2002), nor do corporate expatriates who relocate to Global South places (Smiley 2010; Walsh 2007; Fechter 2007; Coles and Walsh 2010). In Granada, the lifestyle migrants have decidedly not segregated themselves into a distinct enclave. Instead, they are committed to living in the "authentic", colonial city among "typical" Nicaraguans.

Lifestyle migrants also commonly live in gated communities and spatial enclaves in places such as the Costa del Sol of Spain (King *et al.* 2000; Casado-Diaz 1999), Boquete, Panama (McWatters 2009), and the San Miguel del Allende and Lake Chapala areas of Mexico (Bloom

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2006; Truly 2002). There are gated communities and foreign spatial enclaves in Nicaragua; however, they are located near Managua or on the coastal areas. One informant told me that he believed that gated communities would soon develop on the outskirts of Granada:

> There's nowhere to put a gated community here. But once Managua continues to grow southeast towards Masaya [and Granada], you're already starting to see more gated communities there. Gated communities pop up in open areas and not in the cities. There will be more.

According to the Reveal Real Estate (2011) web site (which promotes developing real estate databases in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and Belize), more than 80% of real estate transfers in Nicaragua are located in the Central Pacific Coastline. This area is subdivided, but outside of this region, the only two other geographical hotspots are Granada and "other". This means that the vast majority of properties being sold to foreigners in Nicaragua are at the beach. Most of these properties are located in gated developments at the beach and lack much local distinction. They may be filled with local woods and other materials, but otherwise are similar to other houses currently being built in tropical coastal areas around the world. For some lifestyle migrants, *where* they are matters less than having an ideal house amidst a preferred setting. McWatters described "landscape nomads" who value a "particular *setting*" over a "*place*" (2009: 108): as long as their house has beach access, it could be located in any country. There is actually very little scholarship which addresses those lifestyle migrant or transnational elite who do *not* live in enclaves. Exceptions include Benson (2010) and King *et al.* (2000), who report that British lifestyle migrants who move to France do not live in enclaves. This population often speaks French and they prioritize living a low-key, "rural idyll" which includes buying and renovating old French country homes.

In Granada, although most foreigners insist they live amongst Nicaraguans, almost all live in the historic city center. This is the esteemed place to live in Granada, including among Nicaraguans, but the historic center is increasingly owned by foreigners. I do not presently

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consider the historic center to be an enclave because it comprises about half of the city and still houses Nicaraguans of all classes. There is the real threat, however, that in the future Nicaraguans will no longer live in the city center because they will be unable to afford to own property there.

Although most lifestyle migrants live among Nicaraguans in the historic center, most rarely venture out of it into the poorer outlying areas. I must admit, that I too have not gone much to the outskirts of town. Granada's historic center has relatively well kept houses and roads, which is surrounded by more colonial-style homes which are not as old. Outside of these areas are what the lifestyle migrants call *barrios*.[8] Some *barrios* have paved roads and well-kept cement homes, sometimes in a style mimicking the colonial-style (e.g., with an interior open space resembling colonial courtyards). Other neighborhoods right outside of the city center, however, lack basic infrastructure such as paved roads, and have cement houses or shanties built with found materials (like wooden boards) (see Figure 6.1). Granadinos from all over the city come into the historic center to do their daily chores (e.g. grocery shopping in the market) or to meet friends to socialize, but for most lifestyle migrants, there is not much reason to go to the barrios and few go beyond the city center.

Research has found that the first foreign lifestyle migrants in Spain's Costa del Sol area (King *et al.* 2000; Casado-Diaz 1999) and in the Lake Chapala area in Mexico (Truly 2002) commonly first lived among the local residents, but as the areas have become more popular, housing specifically designed for second home owners and lifestyle migrants has been built (Casado-Diaz 1999). By examining census data and building permit records, Casado-Diaz (1999) finds Torrevieja, Spain's new buildings have been geographically located in the outskirts of town, and these areas are now disproportionately populated with educated elderly lifestyle migrants

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[8] Although *barrio* simply translates as "neighborhood", it has a negative connotation for US people.

who were not born in the region. Although these scholars write of the earlier patterns of lifestyle migrants who usually lived in the same neighborhoods as local residents, besides the studies of lifestyle migrants in France, there has been very limited research focusing on lifestyle migration occurring where the migrants are actively seeking to live among a local population. One example is Korpela's study of Western lifestyle migrants in Varanasi, India who are drawn to learn traditional music (2010).

Figure 6.1, Right outside of Granada's historic center, many streets remain unpaved.

Granada, Nicaragua is notable because lifestyle migrants purposefully choose to live in the historic houses in the colonial city center among local Nicaraguans, although Granada is clearly not the only example of this pattern. There are many colonial cities in Latin America which have become lifestyle migration destinations because of their colonial ambiance, such as: Antigua, Guatemala; Cartagena, Colombia; Cusco, Peru; and several cities in Mexico.

Smiley (2010: 338) writes that expatriates in Dar es Salaam like to live with other expatriates in a specific neighborhood because there are many amenities, but also because it feels comfortable and safe. Further, transnational elite migrants often live in a social enclave, as well as

a spatial enclave. They usually socialize with other foreigners and limit where they go (e.g., they only go to a specific shopping district) (Beaverstock 2011; Smiley 2010; Fechter and Walsh 2010). The lifestyle migrants who live in enclaves and developments dominated by other foreign lifestyle migrants (Boquete, Panama, and increasingly in Lake Chapala area) are similarly focused on safety, convenience, and community. Many lifestyle migrants claim an appreciation of local people and culture, regardless of how much they actually interact with local populations. Even if they do live amidst the local residents, as they do in Granada, in many ways lifestyle migrants and locals live separately. Korpela describes how although the young Western lifestyle migrants in India want to live in an authentic environment among locals, this does not result in social intimacy: "It seems that the Western lifestyle migrants in Varanasi have found an ideal life *in* India but not *with* Indians" (2013: 1303).

Similarly, living in the colonial city center in houses adjacent to Nicaraguans allows foreigners to believe that they are living in a cosmopolitan community. The lifestyle migrants I interviewed asserted that they do not live in spatial enclaves, although several admitted that they remained socially segregated from locals. When asked about this, one young woman married to a Nicaraguan and with a child elaborated:

> Well, they tend to all kind of live in the center. But Nicaraguans live in the center too… I mean they're walking in the same streets and living in the same neighborhoods, but they just live totally different lives and so they don't necessarily intersect. Because they're going to different restaurants, they're shopping in Managua a lot so not even necessarily going to the same grocery store. They're not participating in children's first communions and birthday parties necessarily because it's a whole different [world]. I think most of the foreigners down here don't have kids, frankly… And to me that's part of the difference, that they're [like] single people even though they're families sometimes or couples. But they go places on weekends for weekend trips because they can afford to. Where the Nicas can't and so they're here all the time. So it's just the experiences are really different I think… I mean, I don't know most of the foreigners frankly that are here… But it seems like when you get to know one, they know all the others and they all know each other because they're all friends with each other. And yet they don't really know many Nicaraguans.

This woman highlights how many lifestyle migrants may live alongside Nicaraguans in Granada, yet their daily activities and lifestyles often do not align. Their different consumption patterns and family obligations point to a social segregation predicated on disparities of wealth and cultural preferences.

<u>PERCEPTIONS OF AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH NICARAGUANS</u>

Lifestyle migrants in Granada are drawn to the city in part because of the Nicaraguan people. Many say that they admire the hardiness of Nicaraguans who must deal with poverty and lack of opportunities, yet who appear to remain relatively happy and welcoming to foreigners. Although lifestyle migrants were prone to paint a rosy picture of their relationships with Nicaraguans, these dynamics were more nuanced, as is documented in lifestyle migrants' own accounts. Many lifestyle migrants view themselves as vital harbingers of progress who can help advance the people, culture, and economy of Nicaragua. Many lifestyle migrants enact racist and neocolonialist understandings of Nicaraguan people, whom they position as simple and child-like (Said 1978; Coles and Walsh 2010), and lacking in training to effectively develop Nicaragua, especially Granada's burgeoning tourist economy. In this section, I describe some of the common ways that lifestyle migrants perceive Nicaraguans, which echo the findings of researchers investigating American retirees' perceptions of Mexicans. As Banks found, there are:

> …complexities and contradictions in expatriate retirees' soliloquies and stories about Mexicans. The pattern of participant narratives describes Mexicans as friendly yet incapable of being close friends; helpful yet dependent and incompetent; polite yet untrustworthy; happy yet pitifully poor and, in some characterizations, backward (2004: 373).

DIFFICULTY IN MAINTAINING FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC DIVIDES

When lifestyle migrants were asked about their relationships with Nicaraguans, most mentioned the difficulty they have in maintaining friendships, which they assign to the cultural differences, but also to differences which can be attributed to disparity of wealth. Lifestyle migrants in a variety of settings have discussed how language barriers and cultural differences

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create obstacles to friendship and communication (O'Reilly 2000; Gustafson 2001; O'Reilly 2003; Bahar *et al.* 2009; Sunil *et al.* 2007). These problems also exist among lifestyle migrants and local Nicaraguans in Granada, but this research finds that lifestyle migrants emphasize barriers related to wealth and privilege disparities. Surprisingly, the existent lifestyle migrant literature in Global South destinations has not explicitly addressed how disparities of wealth and privilege can condition and deter cross-cultural relationships (McWatters 2009; Sunil *et al.* 2007; Korpela 2010; Smiley 2010). The following quotations highlight how wealth disparity hinders relationships in multiple ways. For example, many lifestyle migrants say that they do not have much in common with many Nicaraguans who cannot afford similar leisure activities, such as patronizing bars and restaurants. One female retiree pointed out:

> There's no way that you can be on equally sociable terms with someone like that [poorer] because they can't afford to go out for a beer with you because they can't afford to pay the prices, or go to a restaurant.

In addition to being unable to afford the same leisure activities, there is an incompatibility between the life experiences of most Nicaraguans and lifestyle migrants which the foreigners find hard to overcome. Several interviewees mentioned that they find it hard to relate to the numerous Nicaraguans with minimal education. An American couple in their twenties told me that Nicaraguans of a similar age usually have had a different life trajectory.

> B: It would have been a lot more difficult to be here without the expat community because we're generally open-minded liberal people. But there are cultural divisions that make it difficult to establish healthy, long term relationships with Granadinos. It's classist or whatever, [it's] a lot easier to hang out with the educated/wealthy class. Usually those two things go together, unfortunately, here.
> C: It has a lot more to do with education for me than anything else. I don't have a single 28 year old … Nicaraguan girlfriend in Granada who is educated and doesn't have children already.
> B: Who has never studied abroad or lived abroad
> C: All my friends are like me. I have friends who are a class of Nicaraguan women who are my age who come from Managua who grew up educated and have different life expectations and are my age and don't have kids yet and have traveled and have similar experiences. But I don't have any local [Granadina] friends because we don't have similar experience. We don't have anything to talk about.

Even when friendships with non-elite Nicaraguans develop, some lifestyle migrants find it difficult to overcome clashes resulting from cultural and economic differences. One American woman in her fifties explained:

> You're going to relate to people who are, you know, your same kind of background class, education, etcetera. Not that you can't be friends with someone who is very different but it is a much bigger jump… For the first few years I was here, my really best friend was a Nicaraguan guy and…he was quite a bit younger actually, but he was educated. He was poor as a church mouse. And it was very difficult to overcome our cultural differences… Going out, I'm always paying. There was the money thing… He's the guy, but I'm paying. All that stuff plays into it. So there were a lot of hurdles to overcome. But we were very close and very good friends… And you know it was uncomfortable in many ways… I would go to his house for dinner, there's [many] people living in a shack. I'd invite his whole family over to my house and I'd feel embarrassed. Here I am this single woman, I'm in huge house.

One retired woman in her early 60s said that although she spends a great amount of time with Nicaraguan friends, trying to balance their wealth disparity can be difficult:

> B: I'm finding myself more with Nicaraguans these days. But again, I can't go out to eat with them. I can't do that. And I wind up trying to keep the peace… They're poor Nicaraguans, but they give me more than I give them.
> A: In what ways?
> B: Lending their cars to me, including me in any party. I am part of the family, you know, they're there. I try to give back without it being patronizing and that's where it becomes difficult. And wanting…what I consider a friendship and yet also not wanting to feel cheap and keeping back from giving to them. So how do I do that? How do I keep that bridge going?
> A: How have you been doing that?
> B: Buying stuff in the States that they need. You know, TVs, or sewing patterns, whatever. If they need anything from the States, when I go I'll bring it back. Paying for gas when we go places. I'll use my car… I'll pay for gas. Buying birthday presents for the kids, which I would do anyway. Right now we're talking about taking a boat to Zapatera [island]. We said we will [pay a hundred dollars for the boat trip] as a Christmas present to the entire family... Because I don't want it to be that I'm buying a friendship. I don't want to be buying. So yeah…trying to keep that balance.

The previous quotes address how lifestyle migrants struggle in their relationships with Nicaraguans resulting from disparities of wealth. Despite their best intentions, they discussed the difficulty in maintaining a mutual sense of equality in their relationships. Many lifestyle migrants similarly reported that they found the economic, cultural, and economic differences with Granadinos to be barriers to balanced and equal relationships.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH NICARAGUAN ELITES

During my Master's research of business-owning lifestyle migrants, many interviewees

spoke of Nicaragua's acute class and wealth disparity, blaming the local elite for many of the

country's problems (Foulds 2005). That research found that many lifestyle migrants felt that

Nicaraguan elites took advantage of the entrenched privilege granted them by the great wealth

and class disparities existent in the country. According to the 2004-2005 interviewees, the local

elite status is dependent upon keeping wealth and education decidedly inaccessible to the masses.

The authors of *Living Abroad in Nicaragua* explain Nicaragua's highly stratified class system:

> Economists rate Nicaragua as one of the most unequally advantaged societies in
> Latin America… That means a relatively small elite sector controls the lion's share
> of economic resources while an overwhelming majority remains poor. Nicaragua's
> tiny middle class continues to shrink while the number of people who get by on less
> than US $2 per day rises inexorably. The typical expat falls economically squarely in
> the middle: not as garishly rich as Nicaragua's privileged, but certainly not poor by
> any definition. The same goes for the class of Nicaraguan nouveaux riches returning
> from years of exile in Miami with savings accounts, some worldly goods, and lots of
> plans. More than one economist has identified this class as one of the most prominent
> elements of socioeconomic change in 21st century Nicaragua, a role that the
> conscientious investor or retiree will undoubtedly share (Wood and Berman 2010:
> 44).

My 2004-2005 research found that despite their contempt for the way elite Nicaraguans treated

their land and fellow citizens, few lifestyle migrants interviewed had much experience interacting

with elite Nicaraguans. During my 2007 research, however, there appeared to be less tension

between the two groups, with more interviewees socially mixing with Nicaraguans, especially

with the elite who can afford to patronize the same bars and restaurants. I posit that this

increasing mixing is occurring, in part, because there are more "mainstream" new groups of full-

time retiree lifestyle migrants, who are not put off by conspicuous consumption as earlier lifestyle

migrants were.

Despite the increasing socializing with elite Nicaraguans, in 2007, I found that many

lifestyle migrants continued to maintain only cursory exchanges with any Nicaraguans, in large

part due to lifestyle migrants' limited Spanish language abilities. One American man described

his and his wife's experience with Nicaraguans which I found to be not uncommon:

> Like the other Central American countries, they have such a divided class vocation. I mean they have a very small middle class, a very small, very wealthy, *very wealthy* class. But the majority are the *pobre* [poor] and so most of our interaction has been with the poor people because those are the ones we employ, you know, for jobs and things like that, at least for now, for working on the house and little odd jobs. Now as we start businesses, we'll be dealing more and more with the college educated ones.

Earlier research found that many lifestyle migrants believed that Granada was benefitting

from the North American sense of fairness and equality they brought (Foulds 2005). The 2007

research also finds that, although they too rely on their relative wealth and privilege, lifestyle

migrants believe that they are fair in their dealings and help poor Nicaraguan people more than do

local elites. One US man who has lived for years in Granada described ways that lifestyle

migrants enhance the city:

> Oh, we provide a lot of jobs. A lot of jobs. And I think on the whole we're better employers than Nicaraguans, we treat people more fair. We pay the taxes. We pay our bills… The city collects every month for garbage pickup. The guy that collects in our area loves me because I don't mind paying, I don't hide from him. Sometimes I pay six months in advance.

Another longtime Granada resident concurred that lifestyle migrants help Granada develop by

willingly paying taxes, emphasizing that locals do not:

> We pay our taxes – just because we're used to city taxes. I mean, locals will not pay taxes. And so there is some tax base now so the city can do repairs, clean the streets, etcetera.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, many lifestyle migrants pride themselves on their benevolent

treatment of Nicaraguan workers compared to the local elite and most are confident in their role

as economic stewards who help invigorate the economy. One return migrant, who can arguably

make a claim of understanding the perspectives of both lifestyle migrants and elite Nicaraguans,

said:

> I think that wealthy Nicaraguans are kind of indifferent [to changes prompted by foreigners]. They don't feel threatened per se. And I think it might provide a little competition or a little more opportunities for joint ventures.

Many lifestyle migrants discuss their amicable relationship with their neighbors, but most admit that these are not deep relationships, consisting primarily of waving hello and ensuring that no one's property is violated. Lifestyle migrant and transnational elite literature have discussed how lifestyle migrants enjoy living among local populations and relish the idea of having friendships with locals, yet rarely are able to maintain such friendships. One reason why lifestyle migrants have trouble having Nicaraguan friends is that many speak minimal Spanish. It is difficult to become friends with someone when you can only have a basic conversation. One retired European woman said her relationship with her Nicaraguan neighbors as good, but the interaction she described suggests that these remain superficial:

> B: [The hairdresser] He's lovely. They're honest, they're nice. I've had lunch around there. [The Nicaraguans who own] "American" drycleaners I've met. Don't talk to them but always smile nice. Their garden goes around the back of ours. So we're quite secure. Our neighbors opposite are very religious. We don't talk to them much, but they seem very nice. The ones diagonally opposite are lovely. And they're the ones that are very friendly with our *cuidador* [caretaker] and called the *bomberos* [firemen] for us when we had the flood. And when we went home to England, I paid them a bit of money to keep an eye on the house during the day when Eduardo wasn't here
> A: Just to keep their eyes out, kind of?
> B: Yes. Because the grandpa sits on his rocking chair all day. And I said, you know I can give you fifty dollars if you just watch my house for me during the day when you're out rocking on your chair. Very happy, I brought back a present from England. They're lovely. We are very lucky here. This is a nice street, nice people. It's good.

In fact, on a daily basis, lifestyle migrants primarily interact with Nicaraguans who are working, such as shopkeepers, maids, or waiters. This observation is echoed in Sunil *et al.*'s findings regarding American retirees in Mexico (2007: 503), as well as in other locations with many expatriates (and tourists) (Fechter 2007; O'Reilly 2000; McWatters 2009). Many lifestyle migrants only have a superficial engagement with Nicaraguans, and therefore their perceptions of Nicaraguans are based on very limited interactions. Furthermore, these limited interactions usually consist of Nicaraguans performing service work for the Global North lifestyle migrants. I

asked a couple in their 80s who recently purchased a home in Granada what Nicaraguans thought

of the foreigners in Granada, and they said:

> B: We haven't talked to many people except our gardener and our driver, have we?
> C: No, but I can tell you that the merchants, the man at the hardware store was absolutely delightful. He tried to help so hard, he found a woman who could speak English and when he couldn't understand, he got a pencil and paper and would draw me a picture. And that's how much he cared. And before we left, he said would you please come back any time, if you have any questions about touring the country, or if there's anything you need. Now how many sales clerks in our language do that? Not very many. At the market, people were looking at us like what we had in the basket was kind of, they thought probably extravagant.

LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS POSITION NICARAGUANS AS TIMELESS AND PRE-MODERN

Understanding Nicaraguans as simple, friendly people is an example of how many

foreigners in Granada operationalize an Orientalist discourse (Said 1978; Coles and Walsh 2010),

positioning Nicaraguan people as the simple, timeless Other. Granada's seemingly slow pace of

life and friendly atmosphere helps to create its image as a timeless city. The foreigners in the city,

consciously or not, tend to include the local people in their understanding of Granada as

antiquated. Vendors walk the streets selling fruit from a basket balanced on their heads; tourists

and locals alike ride horse-drawn carriages around the city; groups of uniform-clad young

children run and play in the streets unattended. All of these common city sights are fondly seen

by foreigners to be reminiscent of times past. Together with the historic urban landscape, the

local population and their daily goings-on create a timeless ambiance which many Global North

foreigners currently find intoxicating. They want to consume and participate in it.

Neocolonialist positionings of locals are similar to those observed among tourists and

host communities (Mowforth and Munt 2003; Urry 1990; Edensor 1998; Crick 1989), particularly

since often local host people become positioned as service workers accommodating tourists. As

mentioned earlier, Echtner and Prasad write that the third world is often marketed to tourists

through specific myths, such as the myth of the unchanged, unrestrained, or the uncivilized. In the

myth of the unchanged, locals are portrayed as passive and trapped in the past. In the myth of the

unrestrained, "the people of paradise are essential for catering to the tourist's indulgence. These people must be smiling, serving and submissive" (2003: 674). Both of these myths about Nicaraguans are perpetuated by lifestyle migrants in Granada. As one woman in her 50s said: "The people of Nicaragua have to be one of the biggest draws. They're friendly, they're happy, they're engaging."

Emphasizing the slow pace of life and the timeless charm of the city highlights the perspective that many Global North foreigners have of the city and thereby the local culture. Nicaragua is a poor country. Although many Nicaraguan residents in Granada are wealthier than most of their country folk, a great many people in the city live a relatively humble, day to day existence. From his research in Mexico, Banks points out that, "Saying that Mexicans are friendly and helpful reflects a longstanding positioning of Mexicans as benign and as operating socially to enhance the ease and pleasure of the expatriate community" (2004: 374).

<u>COMPARING NEW LIFE TO OLD</u>

Benson and O'Reilly note that lifestyle migrants in France use a "comparative frame" to justify their migration (2009: 611). Lifestyle migrants in Granada similarly compare Nicaraguan culture, economy, and people in relation to their "normal" points of reference: life in the US or Europe. Benson and O'Reilly (2009) warn, however, that such perceptions are often skewed to romanticize and justify the present experiences, while only remembering the bad characteristics of their former homes, such as high crime rates (O'Reilly 2000; Benson and O'Reilly 2009). Lifestyle migrants' assessments of life in either place are complicated, as there is often a love/hate relationship (O'Reilly 2010; Durr 2012; Sunil 2007; Banks 2004; Otero 1997). Many lifestyle migrants complain about the US and do not want to live there anymore, yet they also gripe about the ways in which Nicaragua does not compare favorably to the US.

The comparison between home and adopted land often is put forth onto people themselves. Coles and Walsh (2010) write about how British expatriates in Dubai position

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themselves vis-à-vis local peoples as the Self/Other, recalling colonial imaginaries in new

manifestations (Leonard 2010; Ho 2011; Yeoh and Willis 2005; O'Reilly 2000). Using

postcolonial theory, Echtner and Prasad have explored how Global North tourist representations

of the Global South are portrayed as a binary between modern/ancient and advancing/decaying.

The native subjects are positioned as premodern and available for improvement in ways

reminiscent of colonial-era conquest (Echtner and Prasad 2003: 669). One US woman explained

why she "loves" Nicaragua:

> One of the reasons I moved here is I fell in love with the people of Nicaragua. I just
> fell in love with them. People say, 'What it is about the people?' I say, I stay in this
> country and I don't hear bitching... You're in the United States and everybody was
> always bitching about something, whether it's some problem with their coffee or the
> price of the gasoline or they don't like their house or they don't like their new
> electric stove or something. These people have nothing and they don't bitch. And I
> found that very endearing.

This description of Nicaraguan people positions them as noble savages, who stoically endure their

fate. This perspective doesn't allow for Nicaraguan agency and helps to reinforce Global

Northerners' self-perception as culturally superior. Lifestyle migrants are generally confident that

they are bringing progress to Granada. As one longtime realtor from the US succinctly said, "I

think everything gringos are here for has been an improvement in the city."

REVANCHISM

Much of the current research about gentrification, especially in the Global South, has

highlighted how the public-private financial partnership has significantly fostered gentrification

(Smith 2002; Gotham 2005). In Mexico City and Ecuador, David Walker (2008) and Swanson

(2007) (respectively) have written about neoliberal revanchist policies whereby local vendors are

pushed out of public spaces because they do not conform to the city's new, reformed presentation

of these spaces. While there has not been such a concerted effort by Nicaraguan authorities in

Granada to remake and retake the city, it can be argued that Global North property-buyers have

utilized a revanchist mentality in their approach to living and redeveloping Granada for their own

uses. The gentrification and tourist investment in Granada continues to be conducted by small-scale investors like the independent lifestyle migrant gentrifiers. For these Global Northerners, perhaps revanchism can be understood as a racist and neocolonialist development. Although there isn't a take *back* of the land, to some gentrifiers, there is a mindset of needing to teach Nicaraguans how to properly run their country and economy because current methods are not working. This can be understood as a racist manifestation of white privilege by lifestyle migrants asserting their "natural" right to ownership (Dwyer and Jones 2000; Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Hankins *et al.* 2012; Leitner 2012). In her research on environmental racism in Southern California, Pulido describes how the racism of white privilege enables entitlement. "That whites feel they have the right to exclude others attests to the degree to which they assume ownership of this nation's [US] opportunities" (2000: 16). I posit that such a natural assumption of ownership can be coupled with neocolonialist understandings to facilitate a logic of revanchism by white Global Northerners in their position as gentrifiers in Granada. In other words, because they are white and from the Global North, many lifestyle migrants believe it is their right and duty to "take over" and occupy Granada (Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Hankins *et al.* 2012). This mindset was exhibited by several interviewees during both research periods, when I asked how Global Northerners in Granada impact Nicaragua. In 2005, a business owner said, "It's really good. It's what they want, no? They need evolution" (Foulds 2005). A different lifestyle migrant concurred in 2007: "You have people down here building houses, doing things, teaching Nicaraguans how to do it right." In these quotes, the lifestyle migrants exhibit their racist perceptions of Nicaraguan people, positing them as "undeveloped" and needing assistance in "evolving" towards a more "advanced" model, such as that of white Global Northerners.

"THEY NEED OUR HELP TO PROGRESS"

Although many lifestyle migrants espouse an interest in learning from Nicaraguans and appreciating their lifestyle and the environment, this research has found that lifestyle migrants

perceive their roles in Nicaragua in terms of helping to develop the culture and economy. My MA

research showed that entrepreneurial expatriates who helped initiate the city's tourism and real

estate economy believed that they brought a vital Global Northern business sense to Granada

which helped jumpstart the local economy (Foulds 2005). In this current research of property-

owning lifestyle migrants, I found that even the most ardent, earnest champion of Nicaraguans

and their way of life, including self-described "do-gooders", found fault with Nicaraguan people

and culture. Despite their assertion to the contrary, lifestyle migrants often reproduce

neocolonialist dynamics, and this is often enacted through their language. As Leonard (2010:

1252, emphasis added) writes: "Rather than providing a straightforward window onto subjects

and their lives, the *language* used in interviews gives rich insight both into the ways people

represent themselves and the culture of which they are a part." This is instructive for my research

because, based on their language and actions, even lifestyle migrants who do not consciously

espouse neocolonialist or racist worldviews actively reproduce them, as is demonstrated in the

lifestyle migrant quotations given in the next several sections.

Many Global North lifestyle migrants sincerely believe that their own (Global North)

culture is more "evolved", and that Nicaraguans have been hindered by Spanish colonialism,

Global North imperialism, as well as internal corruption and poor leadership. One longtime

lifestyle migrant from the US said:

> To me in a nutshell, the difference between the foreign mentality and the Nica
> culture is there's no sense of detail. None, in anything. Whether it's in construction
> or clothing or food or-. There's just no sense of detail. No, it's something as simple
> from the cleaning lady putting in the pink towels in the blue bathroom and the blue
> towels in the pink bathroom. Or, my cleaning lady for 6 months now, she puts the top
> sheet down first and then she's trying to put the elastic over it. There's just no sense
> of detail. I consider that practical [information].

According to this interviewee, because the Nicaraguans she has employed do not share her

housekeeping ideals, she concludes that Nicaraguans as a whole have not developed a proper

sense of practical logic, which they need to be taught. One missionary told me that he had come

to help Nicaraguans, and he actually used the aphorism of, "Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he'll eat for life" to explain his pedagogical approach. These quotes clearly demonstrate the racist and neocolonialist stances of these and other lifestyle migrants.

In the mid-twentieth century, international development was guided by the principles of "modernization theory," most famously espoused by Rostow (1960). This theory presents a timetable of development, which positions Europe and the US at the latter stages of development and the countries of Africa and Latin America at the beginning. The plan was to help those "third world" countries move along the trajectory to progress in terms of health, education, and economic development. This model places the "third world" states as backward, infantile, and feminized. This patronizing viewpoint was a driving foundation of international policies and continues today in modified form. In my 2004-2005 research, I found that entrepreneurial expatriates agreed with such ideas about stages of "progress". In 2005, one lifestyle migrant said, "Nicaraguans are…coming out of war and the dark ages at the same time." Several years later, the mindset that Nicaraguans need proper training and guidance to "develop" continues. In 2007, one return migrant who owns a business discussed changing the attitudes of her employees:

> I think Nicaraguans don't have an idea of what service is…[But] I find that it is getting better, the service, somewhere in those thick skulls, it's penetrating. But [there is] it still…this attitude of like, I'm going to serve you or I'm going to help you whenever I'm ready, not when you need me and not how you need me to do it. And I especially think it's better in Granada because there's a lot of foreign-owned restaurants and because 90% of the clientele is foreign with higher expectations and higher demands. That's one of the things that we try to teach our staff. Be more serviceable… The client is your ultimate boss, you know.

By assigning Nicaraguans characteristics such as having "thick skulls" or describing them as coming out of the dark ages, both of these lifestyle migrants demonstrate an overtly racist perception of Nicaraguans as pre-modern and un-evolved. The business owner believes that the capitalistic model of how employees should conceptualize their roles to serve the clients is unproblematically put forth as "natural" and "correct". Despite the fact that her business is

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located in a Nicaraguan city, she expects that the (non-white) Nicaraguans with "thick skulls" need to learn to properly accommodate the (white) foreign clientele who have (naturally) "higher expectations and higher demands", which were refined in the US. In other words, Nicaraguans must learn to adopt the (white, US) proper standards (Leitner 2012) in their own country.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

In my MA research, many lifestyle migrants believed that the Nicaraguan economy was inefficient and this perspective persisted in my 2007 research findings: many Global North lifestyle migrants have internalized a racist, neocolonialist "big brother", "white man's burden" perspective of Granada whereby they believe their role to help the economy and culture develop, modernize and evolve into something better – which, lifestyle migrants insist, the Nicaraguans are capable of doing and becoming. One Nicaraguan return migrant interviewee runs a business and her perspectives echo those of many of the foreigners I interviewed, each insisting that they "have some intention of doing something good." In the following quotation, she described her goals:

> B: One of the visions of [my business] is to create in the workers the opportunity to rise up to higher levels. I think a lot of Nicaraguan-owned companies only give higher positions to, kind of like nepotism, to somebody that's a friend of a friend, somebody that's a nephew and somebody that only comes from the right family. We want to promote from within. We hope that somebody that can start as a dishwasher can move up to maybe later be a supervisor or a manager. Now that we're in the reality of seeing some of the shortcomings of that. Education level is really horrible. But I don't, I'm not restricted to that. I don't want to just hire somebody that comes from a good family for a higher level position or somebody that's lighter skinned. And I want to also, by providing good pay, better benefits, fair treatment of my employees, at least the people that we come under contact with realizing that they are equals and they are worth something… We have monthly meetings and we talk with our staff a lot about the fact that, hey, I treat you with respect and I expect the same back. I am not here to give you a job. I am here to give you an opportunity that you need to work for and you need to take advantage of. And there's a fine line there, but it's something that, people that have been oppressed for so long, don't fully grasp. And it's not because they've been oppressed by foreigners. They've been oppressed by the same Nicaraguans, but light skinned Nicaraguans, wealthy Nicaraguan, wanting to keep them uneducated, wanting to keep them in menial jobs and making 85 dollars a month.
> A: So would you talk about that as a feeling of initiative?

B: Yeah, initiative and hope and also self-accountability. Self-accountability. I am responsible for what happens to me. Not this fucking gringo that gives me a job or doesn't give me a job. Rather I am responsible for maintaining this job and for maybe doing better in this job.

This return migrant compares her goals with elite Nicaraguans who promote workers according to nepotism. She wishes to instill in her workers a "better" (i.e., American) work ethic. She discussed how many Nicaraguan workers do not currently possess initiative, hope, or self-accountability as a result (in her view) of the country's deficient education system, as well as from wealthy Nicaraguans' self-interested practices of maintaining the status quo. The return migrant aims to use her knowledge of both Nicaraguan and American cultures to help Nicaraguans develop into proud, self-enterprising workers who will help advance Nicaragua's economic and social progress. The entrepreneurial expatriates I interviewed in 2004-2005 also saw it as their duty to instill their notions of economic progress into Granada. "We are trying to give them problem-solving skills," said one entrepreneurial expatriate. Another said: "Having foreigner owned businesses will help Nicaragua. Nicaraguans see our business and see how it is run, how we treat employees, how the owners run a business, and it is an eye-opening experience" (Foulds 2005).

The pattern of the West teaching basic logic and reasoning to the non-West has a long history within the racist and masculinist traditions of colonialism. It is important to note that Global Northerners within the imperialist system work to reproduce Western racist standards. Mary Louise Pratt discusses the idea of the "anti-conquest," which are "the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony" (1992: 7). Examples of the anti-conquest include missionary-like work, whereby Global Northerners work for the "betterment" and uplift of an inferior people. This notion of the anti-conquest remains pervasive among lifestyle migrants. For many years, this racist notion of helping "inferior" peoples rise up to Western, "superior", and

"rational" ways of being was seen as an honorable, selfless task. Importantly, this idea of the anti-conquest is done with the best of intentions. Although elements of European and American imperial projects had sinister or even malicious intentions, many people involved in reproducing the colonial projects thought they were doing good works.

Critical race scholars similarly address how racism can manifest more subtly through white privilege, whereby the white person is unaware of how their privilege may negatively affect people of color (Pulido 2000: 15; Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Leitner 2012). Pulido explains that, "White privilege thrives in highly racialized societies that espouse racial equality, but in which whites will not tolerate either being inconvenienced in order to achieve racial equality, or denied the full benefits of their whiteness" (2000: 15). This can be applied to the many lifestyle migrants in Granada who insist that they appreciate Nicaraguan culture, yet they are intolerant toward any encroachment of their personal space. For example, many lifestyle migrants complain about how they are inconvenienced by the loud volume at which Nicaraguans play their music; they assume that they shouldn't be bothered and that their Global North (i.e., proper) standards should be respected.

One American woman was optimistic about being able to enlighten young children in Granada regarding how to be "proper" neighbors by respecting private property:

> From us, they're picking up gringo ways, maybe better ways... Maybe the younger ones [will]…probably [learn]…how to take care of your property. Where I think the older ones, you can't teach an old dog new tricks, so to speak. But maybe the newer ones, like the little kids…just today [when] I was out there [sweeping] the street… And [a kid] had something in his hand, it looked like a stick. And he was running alongside the building and I went 'No, no, no.' I mean he was just a little toddler. And I said no and I did this [wagging finger no] cause I can't say 'Please don't mark up my house.' But I was saying, 'No, no, no' and he looked at me and he put this stick like this. And I said 'no gracias.' And he took the stick and he actually threw it out on the street… And I'm thinking, you know, they have to learn, you don't just take a stone or a stick and gouge the side of their house or appreciate what you give them to help them learn that this is. I mean, I have things that…have lasted ten or fifteen years, that I've had forever. And it can be done. I mean, maybe we can rub that off on them, I don't know.

This woman compared some Nicaraguans to animals, but she was confident that there was still hope for young Nicaraguans to learn how to behave correctly, by "picking up gringo ways" and that "maybe we can rub that off on them". This woman spoke almost no Spanish and as a snowbird, alternated staying several months either in Granada or in the US, over the course of about two years. Despite her limited knowledge of Nicaraguan culture, she was confident that her (white) American way of conceiving of property was superior to Nicaraguans. Moreover, she had no doubts that she could personally help in the advancement of young, "wayward" youth.

Another lesson that many lifestyle migrants believed they ought to teach Nicaraguans was about garbage. Several lifestyle migrants discussed how disturbing they find the garbage situation in Granada to be. The city provides few public garbage cans and residents must directly pay for their home trash removal, which many do not or cannot. Accordingly, there is often trash on the streets. As noted earlier, there is also an inadequate sewage system, even in the city center, so waste water runs along the streets. One female realtor talked about how Nicaraguans need to be taught how deal with garbage:

> I'd say it's kind of the agrarian concept of, that when society is small and when all of your eating utensils and serving dishes are organic, it doesn't matter. People ate on banana leaves, like *vigarón* [Granada's signature food]. I lived in the jungle of [another country], the same thing. Throw it on the side of the road, it goes away. Okay, then come the aluminum cans. But our habit is we just throw it away. They don't say, oh, now what do I do with this? No, it's just, that's what you've learned. So it's modern society developing things that don't go away. So we have to redo the habits. And the same in the US. Same thing, people used to throw. I remember my mother throwing cigarette butts out the window, throwing a cup out the window after she drank a pop. And we as kids learned in school, don't be a litter bug… It was only through [the] Woodsy [national anti-pollution education campaign] and education to bring awareness up.

This woman was among several interviewees who focused on Granada's garbage problem as an exemplar of how Nicaraguan people, their societal expectations, and governmental policy are deficient and in great need of change. This quote positions Nicaraguan people and culture as

ignorant and infantile, and their misled ways can be explained as childish ignorance. As such, Nicaraguans require guidance to better care for their environment, and Global North lifestyle migrants expressed satisfaction in helping to correct this problem. As the woman above expressed, Americans, too, once tolerated litter; yet with education, they changed their ways. According to lifestyle migrants, this gives hope to the fact that Nicaraguans may have the capacity to evolve into "proper" citizens, akin to Global Northerners.

HELPING NICARAGUANS AND VOLUNTEERING

In this section, I discuss the practices of lifestyle migrants volunteering and generally attempting to help Nicaraguans. As stated in the above section, there is a recurring narrative that Nicaraguan economy and culture are not far enough along a development pathway. Lifestyle migrants tend to see themselves as able to help because they are from "advanced" countries and can therefore help instill in Nicaraguans a similar Global North-learned knowledge of how to be successful in terms of the economy, education, and the environment. Further, volunteering allows lifestyle migrants to have a purpose to their lives, with the great bonus of helping the needy. My research has found that as the city attracts more full time retirees who have no intention of starting a business, interest in volunteering has increased.

HISTORY OF FOREIGNER VOLUNTEERING/CHARITY IN NICARAGUA

Nicaragua has been attracting visitors and immigrants with leftist political leanings since the socialist Sandinista government in the 1980s, when the "sandilistas" came to participate in works to help the livelihood of poor Nicaraguans (Randall 1994; Belli 2003; Babb 2010) (although some came more with the intention of witnessing the spectacle and to say "they were there when"). When the Sandinistas were voted out of office by the pan-party of neoliberals in 1990, many Sandalistas left in disappointment. Nonetheless, foreign leftist non-governmental organizations persisted and Nicaragua continues to see many Global North people coming to help

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in the development of Nicaragua. Furthermore, the neoliberalization of the 1990s included the development of additional Western-friendly NGOs (Babb 2010).

Several lifestyle migrants in Granada have started NGOs with volunteering programs geared toward Global North travelers, including Building New Hope, a Pittsburgh-based organization, La Esperanza Granada (which translates to "Granada Hope"), founded by a colorful lifestyle migrant guest house owner, and Carita Feliz (meaning "Little Happy Face"), founded and funded by a European man. These organizations focus on education, providing meals and medical care to children, and generally bettering the livelihood for Nicaraguans. In addition, the United States Peace Corps has had a strong presence in Nicaragua after the Sandinistas lost control of the government.

Religious missionaries have long deployed to Nicaragua to help locals better themselves. These missionaries usually work in rural areas, although there is a heavy base in Managua. North American church groups frequently come to Granada on mission trips, including a growing number from evangelical congregations, as evangelical churches have gained popularity in Nicaragua during the past few decades (Wood and Berman 2010). Although I don't often interact with missionaries when I am in Nicaragua, it is not uncommon for the plane to Managua to be filled with Americans bearing identical t-shirts with their religious group affiliations sprawled across their chests. One lifestyle migrant who came to develop a Christian missionary program explains his outreach programs:

> My wife has a heart for the brokenness that we find among the young girls and women... But there's a problem in this city, as you know, and that is something that we would like to be part of it. So you can't come here, as far as I'm concerned and not be aware of all these things. Doesn't mean you have to work on all of them. But the whole process is transformational. I'll give you an example of taking a young man who has, from a machismo society, which this is, a priority of getting girls pregnant and then running away. That's what animals do. And we're not animals. We're called to much more than that. And many of them are involved in drugs. And so you have this brokenness. You have a woman who has no support. The father of her children ran away. They have illegitimate children. So if you can find that man and transform his life, then he can start working backwards through the process to go

to that woman and at least be reconciled. You know what, what we did, here's the consequences and I'm willing to admit that there are consequences. I'm willing to stand up and support you on that. And be willing to do whatever else it takes to make that a family, if that's what you want. You can't make somebody into a family. And to support that child and to start a process of reconciliation. That's what transformation is all about. That's why we're here.

The missionary's words position Nicaraguans as potentially savage, as he compares Nicaraguans to animals. He understands the problems he describes to be a consequence of Nicaragua's inferior, barbaric *machismo* society. In this paternalistic and racist perception, he affords the Nicaraguans little agency, positioning them as victims of their culture. In this quote, this man demonstrates his belief that Nicaraguans require guidance to fully "transform" and that as a white, American, Christian man, he can help steer them in the right path. Such social, conscious, and religious transformations are on par with most Christian outreach objectives. Moreover, they align well in Granada with other Global Northerners' similar – although usually non-religious – racist and neocolonialist aspirations of changing and bettering Nicaraguans. Kobayashi and Peake describe how White privilege works:

> Whiteness is indicated less by its explicit racism than by the fact that it ignores, or even denies, racist indications. It occupies central ground by deracializing and normalizing common events and beliefs, giving them legitimacy as part of a moral system depicted as natural and universal (2000: 394).

The understanding by white lifestyle migrants that their moral system is "natural and universal" informs how lifestyle migrants engage with Nicaraguan people.

CURRENT VOLUNTEERS IN GRANADA

Volunteering has become increasingly popular among resident foreigners as the lifestyle migrant population of Granada has developed and there are more full-time retirees with abundant time to spare. One American couple described how they chose Nicaragua based on economic and volunteer opportunities:

> C: So it was down to Panama and Nicaragua. We really liked Panama, northern Panama, but since we were leaving early, we knew we weren't going to be turning into true retirees and just sit on a porch and rock, so we said no, it had to be somewhere that has opportunities too and that pretty much just left Nicaragua. We

felt there was opportunities here to start a business or maybe something that doesn't make money, but something that we could do for activities, plus volunteer activities

B: Yeah, so we wouldn't be just completely idle.

Many of the retirees whom I interviewed spent time volunteering, usually teaching English. There is a trend of volunteering in education because many lifestyle migrants understand Nicaragua's education system to be unsatisfactory. Many of the lifestyle migrants who volunteer consider doing so to be a badge of honor. When asked about how lifestyle migrants generally help Granada, respondents in 2007 cited the community's volunteering efforts as a major contribution, in addition to job creation. This is in contrast to my research findings from 2005, when the expatriate business owners significantly prioritized foreigner-led job creation over volunteering. While their priority is not surprising, this research has found that volunteer opportunities in Granada have been increasingly emphasized and promoted in accordance with the growth of lifestyle migration and tourism. For example, at least one of the prominent volunteer organizations has its headquarters located on Calzada's tourist entertainment street, with a storefront into which potential tourists-cum-volunteers can venture.

Many current lifestyle migrants pay lip service to their investment in the community, feeling that they are in Nicaragua to help. They speak of wanting to give back to the community they have adopted, and say that they do not want to be neo-colonialist in their actions by only taking resources. Many lifestyle migrants repeated, "This is their country and I am a guest" as a reason for their involvement with helping the native Nicaraguan population.

This echoes the intentions of the original leaders of the Peace Corps (Fischer 1998) who aimed to *not* repeat this role as colonialist master, and instead wanted to help their neighbors by sharing the knowledge and best qualities of the west. Such a discourse of helping those who are disenfranchised, however the good intentions, are an example of Pratt's anti-conquest (1992) and continue to reinscribe a master-subject relationship (Gronemeyer 2003). This conception helps to establish the US' role as leader and the patron father-figure to these infantilized, feminized states.

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Lifestyle migrants take pride in volunteering and many feel that it is their "duty" as a relatively wealthy person in Nicaragua. Descending from the patronage system, as well as because of limited governmental resources, poor Nicaraguans often seek assistance from their wealthy employers when a family member is sick or needs money for school fees. As the new elite in Granada, lifestyle migrants have stepped into this role of helping the needy. Regardless of how they feel about this role (many resent regularly being asked for additional money by employees), it allows lifestyle migrants an opportunity to instill new Global North values in Nicaragua, where they believe it is needed.

In her research about lifestyle migrants, tourists, and volunteering in Mexico, Durr (2012) describes retirement migrants' sentiments about helping Mexico develop, and the same can be said for lifestyle migrants in Granada:

> The wish to better the living conditions in Mexico according to their own values and worldviews seems to be ubiquitous among affluent retirement migrants. In their perception, they bring the 'first world' to the 'third world' while still appreciating the 'Mexican way of life' (Durr 2012: 344).

VOLUNTEERING AS SELF-FULFILLMENT

In addition to an increase in volunteering among lifestyle migrants in Granada, "volunteer tourism" has drawn Global Northerners, in accord with a growing global trend (Guttentag 2009; Durr 2012; Sin 2009; Lyons *et al.* 2012). Guttentag (2009) writes that while volunteer tourism is commonly lauded in tourism scholarship because it enables tourists to give back to the community and allows a more personal contact between hosts and guests than in most touristic experiences, there are significant problems associated with volunteer tourism. Several of the issues related to volunteer tourism can be applied to volunteers in Granada, including lifestyle migrants, such as the colonialist mentalities of the volunteers, re-creating dependent relationships, and that the free work of volunteers may take away opportunities for paying employment for

locals. In this section, however, I focus on how lifestyle migrants volunteer as an act of self-fulfillment.

Research on volunteer tourism finds that although many volunteer tourists claim to be primarily focused on doing good works, most quickly admit that a primary goal is to grow as a person – while helping others. Even the Peace Corps prioritizes the personal fulfillment of the volunteer (Fischer 1998).When I asked one interviewee his motivations for opening up a business with profits going towards Nicaraguan children, he responded, "[To] have a break from the rat race. But also dedicate some part of my life for doing something for people not as fortunate as I am to have been born in the first world." While the volunteering lifestyle migrants use their relatively elevated status for "good", they are often motivated by the goals of self-satisfaction and pride. Further, they can gain social capital by volunteering (Durr 2012). Some lifestyle migrants try to mitigate their feelings of guilt associated with their white and wealth privileges by volunteering, yet volunteering often garners them social capital among fellow lifestyle migrants.

Volunteering allows lifestyle migrants to gain social and cultural capital. It demonstrates that they live among real Nicaraguans and actively engage to help Nicaraguans to offset their colonialist homeland's actions. Interviewees often highlighted the volunteer efforts of lifestyle migrants when the conversation turned to the possible negative impacts of the foreigners. When I asked a British woman if foreigners live in a social or spatial enclave, she said:

> I think so. It's not as though people don't mix with the locals, I mean, but I think they're doing a lot of it through what I call charitable work, which is good. But I don't think you could say that they were on equal [terms] because most of the time people who are doing charitable work are helping the poorer people here. Because obviously the rich people here don't need any help. They can help themselves. So they're [lifestyle migrants] building schools for the people who maybe can't afford to go to school, or libraries for people who can't afford to buy books. Or, [one man] is showing films for the local kids in the neighborhood and saying bring a chair and sit and it won't cost you anything.

Many lifestyle migrants understand the system of philanthropy to be different in Nicaragua than in the Global North. Nicaraguan elite do not donate much money, they say, in part

because charity and public works are seen, historically, to be the responsibility of the Catholic

Church. Lifestyle migrants often think themselves more generous than the local elite and pat

themselves on the back for their good will efforts.

BUT IS THIS HELP WANTED?

Lifestyle migrants like to highlight how much they intend to help Nicaraguans, but do

Nicaraguans need the help offered? A few lifestyle migrants discussed the Nicaraguan responses

to foreigner charity. When asked a long-time volunteer about how foreigners help or hurt

Nicaragua, she said:

> Yeah, you know what, a lot of us are do-gooders, and I think there's a lot of handout
> too. And there's a lot of dependence on, well, you know, they're gringos, so let them
> send my kid to school. You know, there's all these families, these gringo couples that
> come down here and they'll pick a kid off the street, say, I'm going to send him to
> school and buy him shoes and buy him a uniform and da-da-da. When actually the
> kid has no interest in going to school, but he'll take it, because it's free, why not, I
> would too. But I think that instills some kind of a mentality that kids…have to grow
> up with. That of look, I have a patron.

Another female who volunteers described the possible negative response by Nicaraguan

to volunteering.

> B: I think that on one hand this is a very poor beggar nation and, so in that respect
> they need all the help they can get. You have a lot of people here doing aid work,
> there's a lot of NGOs and a lot of people like me, you know, like my friends who are
> doing some kind of volunteer work and who are helping to you know just, just
> increase levels of educations, or levels of self-sufficiency, empower communities. If
> that's portrayed as bad fine, you know, but I think most people probably perceive it
> as something good.
> A: How can it be perceived as something bad? What do you mean by that?
> B: Oh people can perceive it as very bad, you know, we don't need your handouts.
> Of course, you know if you talk to a hundred Nicaraguans, you're gonna get some
> bad feedback on that. We didn't ask for your help. You know? What makes you
> think you can tell us how to do a thing? Which you know…is true in many ways.
> Sure, there's negative reactions. Definitely. And depending on how aid is given and
> how that kind of work is done can be very negative.

These quotes address concerns about creating economic (and corresponding social) dependency

among Nicaraguans. While the first quote speaks to lifestyle migrants' concerns about

contributing to the subjugation of Nicaraguans by way of disparagement, the second quote

acknowledges that Nicaraguans too have reservations about reproducing such a dynamic. This second quote was one of the infrequent occasions when a lifestyle migrant recognized Nicaraguans' agency and potential disapproval of the aid and assistance which some lifestyle migrants are so intent on giving. Nevertheless, this woman still conceived of Nicaragua as a "very poor beggar nation", thereby positioning Nicaragua as unquestionably needing assistance. Despite acknowledging a reluctance by Nicaraguans to reinscribe a dependent relationship with patrons, this quote reinforces that most lifestyle migrants, regardless of their self-reflexivity or political leanings, actively believe and reproduce the idea that Nicaragua and its people do need to develop according to their Global North standards.

SOCIAL IMPACTS OF LIFESTYLE MIGRATION

Lifestyle migrants in Granada have helped to change the landscape of the city. Several stated that there are now many more businesses than there were ten, or even five, years before. One man in his early 50s who has been in Nicaragua since 2001 described the social changes he's witnessed:

> This town was the town that nobody did anything twenty years ago or fifty years ago or whatever. It's just a very conservative town. I don't even know if people left their houses at the time. So it's kind of opened it up a little bit now.

Although this man's observation is glib, he is not wrong that Granada has long been a conservative city and that social gatherings usually occurred in private homes. While this is still common, younger Nicaraguans are more prone to socialize outside of the home, now that there are more businesses providing spaces for it.

Many lifestyle migrants insist that they are helping to invigorate Nicaraguans through expanding their worldviews and teaching them about new life possibilities (through education and, as discussed above, volunteering). The growing lifestyle migrant population inevitably brings their home culture with them and this has arguably affected the social atmosphere of Granada. In general, the lifestyle migrants feel that the social notions and standards they bring

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with them transform the local culture, however subtly, in mostly positive ways. In 2005, several

female lifestyle migrants I interviewed said that the expatriate presence has helped to empower

local women. One woman in her thirties said, "We are a role model. Women see us and they

won't think it acceptable to be treated so badly." In 2007, lifestyle migrants continued to mention

changes related to gender relations in Granada when asked about social transformations. A man

running a non-profit business said:

> I do believe that there are some NGOs that are definitely working on women's
> awareness or sexual awareness about teenage pregnancy. So I do believe…I think
> there's quite some foreigners…maybe not it's their objective of coming but whilst
> they're here, I would tend to think that they would try and educate the people, the
> Nicas that they get to know a bit, even if it's only the people that work for them, to
> try and get to the conscience, such as you get better future if you take your time for
> the education and don't get pregnant too early. So they're might even be a bit of
> social progress as well.

In 2005, a bar owner noted that Granada is becoming more gay-friendly. "Granada is

becoming more open. Local gays are more visible now because they see more foreign gays and

the community sees that you can be gay and respectable. It's a good thing." In 2007, a European

female in her 40s said gay-acceptance is slowly increasing.

> B: I think [Nicas are] more open-minded than the rest of the country. They see what's
> going on, the way they get dressed. I don't know if it's good, but they have a
> different influence than the rest of the country… I think the last year it's really
> changed a lot. But I think people, because they saw European, they feel free, they
> feel more open. And we're open. So I think that's probably the reason they feel
> comfortable
> A: It seems that there are more out gay Nicaraguans. What do you think?
> B: Definitely. Masaya is number one, I think. Masaya, we have the biggest gay
> group. But I think, yeah Granada is really open-minded. And it's tourism. Definitely.

One American man noted that although the city is changing, he isn't confident that this is

primarily a result of foreigners.

> Well, socially I think that this city's probably going to become, is starting to become
> more liberal. But that's always happening in Managua, so I don't know if that's
> foreigners. It's just sort of changing times, women going out. Even groups of women
> going out to bars and hooking up with guys and you know that didn't happen.
> Women, like my girlfriend living with me, that's unheard [of], even ten years ago.
> Every one sort of comes from the background of, you know, trying to maintain the
> proper family. You know it's a tradition where that doesn't happen. So you know

that's changing. Is that because of foreigners? Probably it's accelerating it, the process. But it's probably happening in Managua too, with the young professionals. It's also the people who studied in the United States and coming back here.

FOREIGNER-LOCAL SEXUAL RELATIONS

In their research on Global North experiences in Cancun, Torres and Momsen (2005: 328) succinctly hit on a dynamic which plays out in tourist destinations in the Global South, including Granada:

> Tourists are empowered by the relative strength of the dollar and the extreme differences in wealth between themselves and local residents. Tourists, often of middle-class origin, enjoy luxury accommodations (through heavily discounted packages) and are served by Mexican workers in a manner that many have never before experienced. The middle-class American factory worker is converted, if only for a short while, into a person of relative wealth and prestige who commands respect and attention. The extreme differences in wealth and power between tourists and local workers also leave Mexicans vulnerable to the subordinate position of catering to tourists' more lurid desires through prostitution and drug dealing.

"Perverted" gringos

In both my MA research, as well as in the current study, the biggest social tensions among lifestyle migrants concerned older lifestyle migrant men having sexual and romantic relations with younger Nicaraguan women. Many lifestyle migrants think that "perverts", pedophiles, and sexual deviants come to Nicaragua to take advantage of the desperation of poor Nicaraguans, and that impoverished families and corrupt authorities turn a blind eye towards pedophilia and prostitution. An American man in his twenties said:

> I think that it was just starting to move in that direction and away from pioneers and pedophiles. Which there's a small population – part of the expat population – who can come down here because they have criminal records and because they can get away with things here they couldn't elsewhere.

Many foreign residents in Granada are prone to speaking of sexual tourists with vitriol. For obvious reasons, it is difficult to assess how common sex tourism and lifestyle migration based on sex is in Granada (Oppermann 1999), but foreigners claim it is widespread. In 2011, a US man was arrested in Granada for raping a 14-year-old Nicaraguan girl. The man is a convicted sex offender in the US who is believed to have come to Nicaragua to escape restrictive laws in the

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US, which require him to publicly register as a sex offender (Rogers 2011). In March 2012, police busted two businesses owned by gay foreign men and charged the owners with "promoting tourism for the purpose of sexual exploitation, pornography and sexual abuse" (Rogers 2012, March 12). These businesses included a guesthouse in the historic center, as well as a new gated community on the outskirts of the city.

A more pervasive relationship type seen in Granada is that of men from the Global North who become sexually involved with Nicaraguan women (and men), which is not uncommon in many Global South places (Oppermann 1999). Although there are many variations of these relationships, it is the cases when the Global North man is relatively old and the woman is much younger that are noted and discussed among lifestyle migrants. The foreigners I interviewed were themselves divided on this issue, in part because several interviewees were older men who date younger Nicaraguan women. Other interviewees expressed distaste for the older men interested in younger women. Younger lifestyle migrants and women lifestyle migrants were especially vociferous in their outrage concerning these relationships. They claim that the older men are taking advantage of the lack of economic opportunities for the young women. One foreign woman explained in 2005 why she thought younger Nicaraguan women date older foreign men:

> That's cause they're poor and I understand that. I think it gives a bad reputation to American men, though. I don't like it. It grosses me out. I don't know. To see a 70 year old man with an 18 year old girl, that's disgusting to me.

In 2007, when I asked a man from Holland about how foreigners interact socially in Nicaragua compared to their home country, he said:

> Oooh. You've touched upon a difficult issue. I'm a bit appalled by especially older middle aged men dating young Nica girlfriends here because of the money they have – obviously because of the money they have. I think you should see that a lot. I'm afraid it's part of the developing world and most of the developing countries are so poor, that's what you're going to see. Where all the middle aged men just, for whatever reason, don't seem to be lucky in their home country, can buy their luck here. Every time I see them… it makes me stomach revolt.

A note of caution: I have found that some lifestyle migrants are quick to make assumptions about older male lifestyle migrants and the places they frequent. For example, one bar run by lifestyle migrants has a reputation among other foreigners as a gathering place for older foreign men to go with their younger Nicaraguan girlfriends. I spent a significant amount of time in this bar and I knew many of the clients. Several lifestyle migrants reported with certainty that this bar catered to old male foreigners and their younger Nicaraguan girlfriends, but in my experience, most patrons were not these types of couples. In my 2004-2005 research, I found that although not all earlier lifestyle migrants personally approved of these relationships, they felt it was not their place to judge, as long as both were consenting adults. In 2007, I witnessed the same attitudes: many female and young male lifestyle migrants criticized the relationships, while others, especially older male lifestyle migrants, were more tolerant.

In my earlier research, I wrote that one lifestyle migrant asserted "that in Nicaraguan culture, it has long been socially acceptable for older men and younger women to date" (Foulds 2005). In a 2007 interview, the same interviewee repeated his claim that Global North men are simply adhering to cultural norms. I discussed this issue with an American man in his 70s who was currently married to a woman sixty years his junior. He was outraged that Global North men are targeted for sexual deviancy in Central America, when, according to him, local men behave similarly:

> In Costa Rica, it's such an insult. I saw big signs, in English, about going out with young girls. Well why was it in English? They had to be predominantly saying people who are speaking English. I lived there a long time. All these old Costa Ricans have girlfriends twelve, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old. I didn't see any signs…, in Spanish, showing old Costa Ricans with young girls. It's the lifestyle around the world in poor countries. But here they make it seem like the Americans came here and specialized in this. It's bullshit.

This man was bothered that Global North men are singled out for their behavior, but he admits that the dynamic of younger women seeking to date older wealthier men is common in countries

where economic opportunities are limited. Lifestyle migrants are disproportionately able to take advantage of impoverished Nicaraguans.

<center>**Female lifestyle migrants' sexual relations with Nicaraguans**</center>

Men are the not the only lifestyle migrants who engage in sexual and romantic relationships with Nicaraguans. Female lifestyle migrants and tourists also have them, although these relationships do not inspire a similar ire. Babb discussed this phenomenon in Nicaragua (2010: 148):

> Besides those women who choose sex work, others simply prefer to date foreign men, whom they find attractive and often better mannered than local men. I met several young women, frequently with some professional training, who are holding out for an *extranjero*, a foreign man, who has better prospects than the Nicaraguan men they know. Some local men are similarly interested in foreign women, often for the advantages that these tourists offer in the form of money to spend, desire for a good time, and so on. Such men may be not only *mujeriego* (womanizers) but gringa-iego (specifically seeking women travelers), as one local observer expressed it. This may be a result of the Americanization of youth that has accompanied the growth in tourism from the north. The possibilities for romance, short or long term, are appealing to many Nicaraguans, and some spend time around language schools and other places that draw tourists in order to meet them. I learned of young Nicaraguans (more often male than female) who had dated a series of foreign students over a period of years, apparently hoping for a long-term commitment or marriage. Although romance tourism is not as well known in Nicaragua as in Cuba, it is found in places frequented by foreign travelers – in seaside resorts, retirement communities, and study-abroad programs – raising questions about gender and power in these relationships.

Sex or romance tourism by women has recently been studied (Meisch 1995; Sanchez Taylor 2006; Pruitt and LaFont 1995; Jennaway 2008, Malam 2006; Jeffreys 2003). In Granada, sexual interactions with Nicaraguan men are not uncommon for female lifestyle migrants or tourists. One female interviewee was married to a Nicaraguan, as were several more who I spoke with but did not interview (because they did not own property). Unlike Global North men, however, most female lifestyle migrants date Nicaraguan men who are relatively close in age. One woman in her thirties was married to a man about 5 years her junior.

Scholars write that one reason why women engage in sexual relations while abroad is the thrill and exhilaration of being in a new place (Meisch 1995; Pruitt and LaFont 1995). The

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freedom from normal situations and social constraints is a widely noted experience for all travelers and is why many travelers act so differently when they are in an unfamiliar setting. Anything is possible, no one you know is around, and no one will know what you do (Meisch 1995: 454). Walsh (2007) also writes of the sexual freedom expatriate women feel in Dubai because they feel that they are removed from everyday rules. Women in particular may feel compelled to exploit their freedom while being abroad because they face so many social constraints at home. Being in a new situation lets one write her own story and create a new identity. This has long been one of the reasons why urban life has offered emancipatory possibilities for women; they have the potential to pick and choose their friends and experiences and escape former labels and limitations (Rose 1984; Bondi 1998).

Some female foreigners have sex with locals while traveling in order to try to have an "authentic" experience. Hooking up with a local provides access to a world that might be inaccessible otherwise. What's more authentic then getting to know someone who can show you all the places that are otherwise hidden, or "back stage" (MacCannell 1989)? Meisch (1995) and Sanchez Taylor (2006) write that female sex travelers are indeed using local men in order to gain access to the back stage, which are the areas and customs that are not part of the presentation given to tourists. Meisch (1995) and Pruitt and LaFont (1995) describe that these men become cultural brokers who help tourist women learn about the local, authentic culture and who are able to provide convenient services, such as translating and getting better prices.

Some authors such as Meisch and Sanchez Taylor think that many female sex tourists, like male sex tourists, are motivated to sleep with local men while traveling to fulfill their racist fantasies. Sanchez Taylor (2006) says that many women purposely seek out Caribbean men in order to be pleasured by Black men as a fantasy. In the Otavalo region of Ecuador, Meisch writes about white women similarly travel to engage in sexual relationships with the Other, in this case indigenous men.

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Perhaps more insidious than the white women's fantasies of sleeping with stereotypical men is that because the men are economically dependent on securing a female tourist customer/relationship, they must enact the desired role. This playing into an ideal image is similar to the ways in which Othered people are forced to reproduce a stereotypical way of being in order to get by, either financially or socially. Of course, however, it is in part because these racist stereotypes exist that these Othered people are in such a disenfranchised state – so they are working to harm themselves in the long term. "Since local men's economic and social marginalization is inextricably linked to racism (both contemporary and historical), there is a sense in which, in order to survive economically, they have to contribute to their own continued oppression" (Sanchez Taylor 2006: 54). No formal or informal interview addressed the factor of race in sexual relations with Nicaraguans. Regardless of whether such motivations are a factor or not, the economic limitations and dependency of Nicaraguan men and women clearly influence such relationships.

<div align="center">CONCLUSIONS</div>

This chapter has addressed how lifestyle migrants perceive and interact with Nicaraguans. Lifestyle migrants are granted a privileged status in Nicaragua according to their race and Global North citizenship, which informs all interactions. Many lifestyle migrants claim to appreciate Nicaraguan people, landscape, and culture, yet most enact a neocolonialist and racist conception of Nicaraguans and actively work to improve many aspects of Nicaragua.

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CHAPTER 7: LIFESTYLE MIGRANT SOCIAL DYNAMICS

In this chapter I address issues surrounding lifestyle migrants' relationships with other lifestyle migrants. These issues include: how the lifestyle migrant community perceives itself and how it is transforming as it further develops. This chapter also focuses on how members of the lifestyle migrant community depend upon each other to maintain their way of life. Perhaps the most noteworthy findings concern the development of businesses and services geared primarily – and sometimes exclusively – towards lifestyle migrants. These businesses, usually run by lifestyle migrants, are evidence of the evolution of the lifestyle migrant population.

This examination of the lifestyle migrant community and its impact in Granada provides an important snapshot of a relatively new lifestyle migrant community which has sprung from a relatively undeveloped tourist economy. Much of the scholarship about lifestyle migrants has focused on social relationships among a community that has been existent for multiple decades, is quite large, and has been birthed, in part, from a mass tourist destination. So, for example, the fact that coastal Spain has been a mass tourist destination for British and other northern Europeans for years affects the resulting lifestyle migrant community. A newly developing lifestyle migrant community in the Global South like that in Granada, where members are averse to being necessarily linked with other lifestyle migrants, has not yet been examined in the scholarly literature.

THE COOLNESS FACTOR OF BEING IN NICARAGUA: LIVING AN "AUTHENTIC" LIFE IN A FRONTIER DESTINATION

Authenticity has been widely examined in tourism literature (MacCannell 1989; Urry 1990; Gladstone 2005; Echtner and Prasad 2003) and its importance to lifestyle migrants in Granada is consistent with claims of other lifestyle migrants (Korpela 2012; Osbaldiston 2011; McWatters 2009; Truly 2002). Further, authenticity has been documented as important

motivation for gentrifiers moving into new areas (Brown-Saracino 2009; Douglas 2012; Bridge 2001; Ley 1996, 2003; Zukin 2009).

Although Granada possesses a unique heritage, the city's transformation is being conducted in large part by foreigners, who may not be fully knowledgeable about this heritage. Moreover, while lifestyle migrants appreciate many aspects of Nicaraguan culture and aesthetics, most believe that they can be improved upon. In Brown-Saracino's study of different types of gentrifiers, the social homesteaders (which I believe are common in Granada) care about maintaining authenticity in their new community, but they are also intent on bettering the community. For them, "authenticity rests in the true potential of their neighborhood or town, and they take pleasure in cultivating this in a manner akin to those who relish preserving embodiments of the past or landscape" (2009: 65).

Many lifestyle migrants revel in the fact that Granada is perceived as "alternative", "off-the-grid", and "authentic". For example, one foreigner who came with his family said:

> I think one of the appealing things about Nicaragua is you feel a little bit like you're living off the grid, without having to be too far off of it. You know, we can all complain about no water and no electricity [due to outages] but there is water and there is electricity. I think there's an appeal in living in a country not far removed from a revolution… I'd say in general, it's kind of a one-off place for people and it's attracting one-off people, not your average tourist.

This reputation draws a certain type of lifestyle migrant who is unlike those in more established destinations. Life can be hard in Nicaragua, but such hardships give lifestyle migrants social capital among their peers in their home countries and in Nicaragua. They gain cachet because they live in Granada, a difficult, but authentic place (Babb 2010). Foreigners in Granada are self-congratulatory about living an authentic life among genuine Global South peoples. One young couple explicitly used "authenticity" to describe the appeal of Granada:

> C: It is a gem. I mean it really does seem like that people have caught on to something that's an energy that's different here. It's a very interesting place to live. There's no McDonalds or fast food from outside of Nicaragua. There's definitely some of that authenticity here that I think is lost.

B: I keep talking about America and authentic is the only word I can use to describe to my experience here. But that in America we've created these bubbles for ourselves. You can go through your entire life completely isolated from everyone else. And never have to feel any of the highs and lows of living. And in Nicaragua my home is right there on the surface. So you're feeling the whole, elated, spectacular highs of life. You have these great highs. And then you also experience the lowest forms of life. You still haggle for prices… So every day is a roller coaster ride, whereas in the States it's just a straight line.
C: It's a more emotionally engaging experience of life here.

Other lifestyle migrants similarly derive great satisfaction from living in a place they understand to offer the thrills of "authentic" living with its difficulties and rewards.

COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITY AND HOME OWNERSHIP

In addition to being drawn by "authenticity", the gentrifying lifestyle migrants in Granada embrace a cosmopolitan identity, which is demonstrated through consumption, and a specific aesthetic, which is based on colonial architecture (Atkinson 2003; Bridge 2007; Binnie *et al.* 2006; Ley 2004). The discussion of a cosmopolitan identity was renewed in the 1990s when scholars considered it to be a response to globalization. Authors discussed the possibilities of a global outlook of cosmopolitans, who have a supposed openness to diversity and difference (Hannerz 1990). Cosmopolitans can often be thought to espouse a notion of world citizenry, an idea traced to Kant (Binnie *et al.* 2006, 13; Pollock *et al.* 2000). Bridge (2007) questions the cohesion of a supposed collective global class in his study of gentrifiers. He writes that there are multiple strategies and goals of different gentrifiers which do not necessarily coalesce. Moreover, there are often distinct local factors affecting gentrification processes in each site.

Some writers on cosmopolitanism discussed world citizenship as a dismissal of national attachment (Hannerz 1990; Pollock *et al.* 2000). The lifestyle migrants in Granada also do not desire a new cosmopolitan order of world citizenry, as they deliberately maintain distinct national identities and citizenships. Moreover, their overt differing nationalities are constitutive of their social relations in Granada. All lifestyle migrants remain citizens of their home countries and many do not acquire a residency status in Nicaragua. In fact, many lifestyle migrants live in

Nicaragua, but do so using a series of 90-day tourist visas. Binnie *et al.* write that instead of a lack of attachment, there can be a sense of connection to multiple places. They see "a realization that holding sentiment for somewhere, rather than eschewing ties to anywhere, might inform and foster a cosmopolitan attitude and disposition to diversity and difference" (2006: 11). This proves useful for understanding how many lifestyle migrants in Granada demonstrate that they simultaneously feel a sense of attachment and involvement in Nicaragua, as well as in their home (or other) nations. For example, many interviewees referred to both Nicaragua and their former or other place of residence as their "home". This attitude has been well documented among second home owners as well (Halfacree 2012; Hall and Muller 2004).

The second characteristic of cosmopolitanism is the lifestyle migrants' identification with a cosmopolitan attitude of acceptance of difference, although authors note that this is often a superficial "imaginary celebration of difference" (Ho 2011: 731). This manifests most clearly in the consumption of international goods, landscapes, and properties. Urry's concept of "aesthetic cosmopolitanism" proves applicable to lifestyle migrants in Granada. He writes that modern societies have a specific kind of cosmopolitanism. This includes:

> The idea that one has the right to travel anywhere and to consume all environments; a curiosity about all places, peoples and cultures; an openness to other people's culture and a willingness/ability to appreciate some elements of language/culture of the place one is visiting; willingness to take risks by moving outside of the tourist bubble; an ability to locate one's own society and its culture in terms of a wide-ranging historical and geographical knowledge; a certain semiotic skill – the ability to interpret tourist signs and know when they are partly ironic (Urry 1995: 167).

The lifestyle migrant gentrifiers are pursuing such an international, aesthetic cosmopolitanism (Urry 1995) and buying a colonial property is a demonstration of their appreciation of difference. Cosmopolitanism is bundled with gentrification in a number of ways. Cosmopolitanism involves an aesthetic appreciation of difference reminiscent of Ley's (1996) conception of the desires of the new middle class gentrifiers to experience authenticity. A desire to engage with diversity often entails moving into a community which is filled with people who are different. This is

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usually associated with white elites moving into mixed ethnic communities. This pursuit of engaging with the Other may be understood as an attempt to gain cultural capital (Bridge 2001; Binnie *et al.* 2006). Lifestyle migrants in Granada gauge their cultural capital and authenticity by comparing their lives in Nicaragua to their former homes, as well as to the lives to others.

Many of the foreigners exhibit great pride in their claims that they are among the first people from the Global North to "discover" Nicaragua. They show this through their houses. In Granada, the importance of the colonial-style homes cannot be overestimated, as lifestyle migrants can gain social capital by purchasing and renovating them. These purchases signify to others that not only do the gentrifiers exhibit taste and an appreciation of quality, they have the "gumption" and initiative to live in a new frontier. The spirit of the pioneer is unproblematically lauded in this gentrification frontier. One American snowbird who used to winter in Costa Rica with his wife, but came to Nicaragua in 2000, told me:

> When we first started coming, there were not very many foreigners. Back then, when we told people in Costa Rica we were going up, oh no, no, you'll get shot, you'll get killed. People in the States said, 'Oh they're having a war.'... So we slipped in and I could see that things weren't bad. And it was just the perfect time to start buying stuff. And that's when [a foreign realtor] had got here – about a year and half before I did. He was here to buy too.

This man takes pride in the fact that he was a "pioneer" in the early, "frontier" days of the property boom in Granada.

Bridge (2001, 2007) and Jager (1986) both document how gentrification is a move to gain class distinction. Bridge writes how gentrifiers gain distinction over the ever shrinking middle classes, and for those in Granada, the transnational nature of their property purchase heightens the prestige. Importantly, lifestyle migrants in Granada are not interested in distinguishing themselves against local Granadinos. Nicaraguans and Global North lifestyle migrants already possess a sufficiently distinct, elevated status due to their position as Global Northerners. Lifestyle migrants in Granada are interested in flaunting their cultural capital to

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other expatriates. Further, this cultural capital is often deployed back home in the Global North, perhaps with bragging rights about having a colonial property in Nicaragua. One man who has lived in Central America for a decade compared Granada's colonial homes to those in the US:

> Would you ever see a living room in the United States like this? Maybe in a multimillion dollar house. But it's kind of neat to walk in, twelve foot high doors and thirty foot high ceiling. And you look back and you see a garden and you go, wow. Secure, beautiful, you close these doors…you kind of block off the rest of the world. If you can get into that, I think it has an appeal that you just can't find in any American city. I don't hear fire engines, I don't hear police sirens... But I don't hear gunshots like I do in my hometown.

Lifestyle migrants get to gain cultural and social capital by having a second home and they get more acclaim when the location is an exotic foreign land. Although few interviewees directly expressed that owning a house in Granada brought them social capital, many spoke with great pride of how family and friends "at home" in the Global North were awed by the gentrifier's daring and savvy in moving and investing in Nicaragua. When I asked an American woman in her fifties what specifically about colonial houses draws foreigners, she said:

> It's a lot of space. It's very impressive. It's, you know, an elegant setting. It's a completely different type of home than one could afford before in the United States… It's a status symbol.

This quote demonstrates that lifestyle migrant gentrifiers gain prestige because their colonial homes are large and elegant, especially compared to what they could buy in the US.

The media promotion of international property investment plays on such desires to own a status symbol and to be economically savvy. International realtors in Granada push Global Northerners to purchase property by appealing to a fear of passing on a profitable economic opportunity, as well as through showcasing a tempting, ideal lifestyle. One US woman in her forties who opened a bar in Granada explained:

> I got on a website, I don't remember what they call it. It was saying you need a retirement haven, kind of thing. It was like, hurry up and get in [Nicaragua] before it gets to the cost of Costa Rica. Or either it's an investment or a great place to live or both. So we pretty much closed down everything in the States and came down here.

Several other lifestyle migrants told me that they similarly felt compelled to come and buy in Nicaragua after learning more from international media sources, such as web sites and print articles.

Owning a colonial house in Granada is one way that lifestyle migrants express their authentic, aesthetic cosmopolitanism. Many demonstrate their appreciation of local traditions by properly renovating a colonial property. One British man spoke of traveling the country in search of *adobe* specialists. An American woman in her twenties said:

> We actually had an *adobe* master come in and do real *adobe*. We didn't want to put concrete block up over these beautiful walls. So they mixed *adobe* with their feet and everything.

One specific way that lifestyle migrant gentrifiers in Granada can showcase their homes is through a house tour. Beginning in the mid-2000s, house tours began to be offered every week. These houses are generally owned by lifestyle migrants and are managed by one property management company. These house tours are a vehicle to display wealth and cultural capital, as many have spent considerable time and money on renovating their homes to demonstrate their personal style. The specific houses change every week and only properties currently vacated are toured. In addition to demonstrating a personal aesthetic, the homeowners and GPS also benefit from house tours because it provides a platform to display houses available to rent, and perhaps purchase. The house tours cost US$15, which makes them prohibitively expensive for most Nicaraguans (although they may be offered a discount). The proceeds benefit the new International School, which is discussed later.

<u>LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS' FEAR OF HOMOGENIZATION</u>

Although they say they love Granada's antique charm and revel in its historicity, many lifestyle migrants are conscious of the fact that their presence is transforming Granada. While most pride themselves on the economic and social advancements they feel they bring to Nicaragua, there are anxieties about how they are changing the city (Osbaldiston 2011; Gustafson

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2002; Truly 2002). One American realtor spoke of her concerns of displacing Nicaraguans because:

> I don't want to lose the character of the city by Nicaraguans disappearing. It makes for a good community when we have a mix. And more interesting life here and so, in that respect I don't want Nicaraguans to disappear from the city center.

In addition to their concerns about the effects of inflation and rising house prices on Nicaraguans, lifestyle migrants have expressed trepidation about Granada losing its character through increasing consumerism brought on by the foreigner presence, especially with tourism. An American man who came with his family said he fears that the onset of American consumerism will mean that "instead of having orange juice for breakfast, we're having soda."

Lifestyle migrants come to Granada for its unique character. Yet as cities compete to capture international tourist dollars, they capitalize on their specific appeal as an act of place promotion (Harvey 1989; Kearns and Philo 1993; Hubbard and Hall 1998). Although the Nicaraguan government isn't a major perpetuator of branding, international media sources (as well as consuming tourists and lifestyle migrants) generate specific images of destinations. Granada has been designated as a cheap, colonial, and authentic city. One problem with this is that there are many other Latin American cities with similar brands. "There is a need to differentiate clearly your product in the mind of consumers from that of competitors, even if most of the attributes of the product are barely distinguishable from each other" (Ashworth and Tunbridge 2004: 211). Many colonial Latin American cities look alike, according to some tourists in Granada who mentioned to me that they quickly bore of historic churches, and colonial cities in general when traveling throughout Central America (and Mexico). Although Granada has had tourist development sponsored by local and international governments (Lopez Calzada 2006; Babb 2010), private businesspeople (including lifestyle migrants) and a limited number of corporations have helped to develop the city's tourism economy. These actors don't always prioritize "traditional" Nicaraguan aesthetics or products. This is not uncommon in tourist

destinations: "The tendencies of homogenization and differentiation in tourism development may transform the tourist destination and the representations of local culture to conform better to the images of it that exist outside the region and to fulfill the historically and touristically constructed expectations of tourists" (Saarinen 2004: 173).

Perhaps incongruously, it is usually lifestyle migrant gentrifiers who completely transform the homes which were desired for their traditional "Nicaraguan" aesthetics. Both the Granada city architect and the historic center director told me that foreigners do not always understand the Nicaraguan colonial-style. One lifestyle migrant interviewee told me that some lifestyle migrants model their renovations on Mexican colonial "which is different from Nicaraguan colonial". One young American couple griped about lifestyle migrants using a Mexican style, yet, ironically, they themselves used non-traditional paint colors. According to the city architect and other lifestyle migrants, one of the main distinctions between Mexican and Nicaraguan style is the paint colors. Still, the couple asserted:

> The architecture, the bones of the house is very much in keeping with the colonial-style. And the doors are arched and they have the little cutout doors. We used all old school tiles that are still being made like they were made a hundred and fifty years ago at Favelli, the tile makers in town.

In their estimation, although they used non-traditional paint colors, they successfully renovated their home in a colonial fashion because they used some personally-appealing Nicaraguan colonial designs, and should not be grouped with others who inaccurately remodeled their homes.

Global Northerners are drawn to the place-image of Granada centered on its unique local heritage. Such place-images, however, are designed to appeal to global consumers of a cosmopolitan aesthetic. Despite Granada's historic attraction, many Global Northerners choose to eat pizza rather than Nicaraguan food. A global identity can be constituted in a site which has "ethnic restaurants, import stores, international newspapers and media" (Ley 2004: 160). Granada currently has restaurants serving pasta and sushi, but not many offering higher-end "Nicaraguan"

cuisine. This speaks to the other, perhaps more common fear of homogenization in Granada: that

the city will become too generically "international", a concern noted in cosmopolitan

gentrification (Bridge 2007; Atkinson 2003a; Binnie *et al.* 2006), as well as in lifestyle migration.

As Gustafson noted of Spain, "Modernization and internationalization was sometimes perceived

as a threat to the genuine Spain and thus to the authenticity that the winter residents valued"

2002: 912).

Since my earlier research in 2004-2005, I have found that lifestyle migrants worry that

Granada may become too popular, developed, and expensive (Truly 2002; Foulds 2005; O'Reilly

2000; Osbaldiston 2011). Currently there is no Starbucks or McDonald's in Granada and the only

US franchise, Subway, recently shut down. Lifestyle migrants cherish their distinction of being

located in a city that is not inundated with corporate American establishments. The fear looms

that the city will soon become spoiled – if not in regard to corporate development, for this

presently seems far off, then in regard to becoming overrun with tourists and other lifestyle

migrants. Garland's novel *The Beach* describes the greatest fear of alternative tourists: the

discovery of their own private paradise by the masses. This fear is commonplace for gentrifiers in

tourist areas (Gotham 2005: 1113). Two lifestyle migrants mentioned that although Granada is

not currently a "Disneyland", that is a commercialized impersonation of a city, the threat looms.

When I asked a European businessman about the consequences of the CAFTA agreement (passed

in 2005), he said:

> You'll have a lot of Americans coming down here sooner or later. Is that positive or
> negative? In terms of economy, it's a very positive thing. In terms of Granada as a
> city and its uniqueness, it's probably negative because it will be like a Disneyland,
> kind of dark, you know… Fortunately this is not like a Hollywood scenery that's
> built for the purpose. It's been here for many hundred years, so it has some
> authenticity to the place. So… that cannot be changed. But of course, if all of the
> antique part of Granada is…Americans [and] Europeans…living in the houses, it's
> not Granada, anymore. It's different, it's a tourist town.

Although some lifestyle migrants in Granada fear that the city is changing, many concede

that Nicaragua is so undeveloped that there is lots of room for improvement. One young

American couple said:

> B: Because there's such basic institutional changes within governance which just
> changes that need to be made and a little bit of effective management. There's no
> reason the roads are as bad as they are out in the country. I think it's ineffective
> management and the ability to fire unnecessary workers. Which nobody does now
> because they're loyalists. You'll see this country improve dramatically towards
> governance. And then more, right now, it's more of the same.
> A: But is there any fear that that would take away some of the love of what brought
> you here?
> B: I don't think so.
> C: No. I think that if I could ride to go get plants from the nursery without breaking
> my spinal column, I wouldn't mind.

> A US woman in her 60s said:

> I like to see competition. People sometimes…wish that the town was like [how] it
> used to be and there weren't so many realtors. Or when Subway came in up here,
> they were all, you can hear them, 'I can't believe [it]!' That never bothered me. I
> mean, this is progress. I think it's good for the people to see new things happening.
> Cause it's new jobs. More [Nicaraguan] people I have run into speak more English.

Despite fears of Granada transforming into a more homogenous, corporate, or themed urban

destination, many lifestyle migrants think that increased economic and infrastructural

development would enhance their lives, as well as the lives of Nicaraguans.

REINVENTING SELVES AND NEW PRESTIGE

In this section, I discuss how lifestyle migrants are able to reinvent themselves by coming

to Granada, and often experience a rise in status. They become a part of an international

community which embraces the mantra of "your past doesn't matter" (O'Reilly 2000; Benson and

O'Reilly 2009) and where they can redefine themselves. Their comparable wealth and privilege

(based on freedom of movement and whiteness) affords lifestyle migrants a raised status,

regardless of how limited their material resources. A US woman who invested in a hotel

explained how many lifestyle migrants rise in class by coming to Nicaragua:

> I think a lot of people come here because they have a certain amount of money…and
> for that money here, they step into a class that is appreciably better, at least visually

and certainly materially in what they have for that amount of money. That same amount of money in other countries would give them a rather limited middle class, lower middle class existence.

As noted earlier, many interviewees can afford a better lifestyle in Granada, including some luxuries which they've never before been able to afford, such as employing a cleaning person, a gardener, or an on-call handy-person. In 1977, Cohen wrote: "Contrary to most other types of migrants, the expatriates often actually *gain* status by their move abroad, rather than lose it" (Cohen 1977: 22, italics in original). He also points out that "expatriates often live in considerable luxury in comparison with their life-style at home as well as with that of the local elite" (Cohen 1977: 22). One realtor spoke of how new lifestyles are now affordable: "In the US, you'd be really hard pressed to have a city house [and] a country house. I mean, yes, there are people that have that. But these are working people that have a chance to have something to fulfill their dream."

During the course of interviews for this research, although I attempted to draw out lifestyle migrants on the topic of status changes, few would acknowledge that some foreigners were able to elevate their social and economic status by coming to Nicaragua. Considering the substantial wealth disparity, however, I tend to agree with Torres and Momsen's findings on expatriates in Cancun, Mexico: "Many expatriate settlers come initially to Cancun as tourists and become intoxicated by the instant elevation in status they achieve, not to mention the lure of the beaches, American amenities, and resort life style" (2005: 328).

In Granada, because of the general 'live and let live' attitude, class is not perceived to be important – at least in the same capacity as in their home cultures. Also, perhaps impacting notions of class in Granada is that most foreigners are from the US, and proudly eschew class distinctions (however disillusioned). One interviewee proclaimed: "Status doesn't exist like it does in the States. I think here people really go for personalities and who has an abrasive personality and who's a nice person. What they have doesn't seem to matter."

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In their study of the developed foreign community in the Costa del Sol in Spain, Oliver and O'Reilly (2010) find that, despite claims of reinvention, class status remains relevant, but in a rearticulated form. For example, some British lifestyle migrants hire other Britons as gardeners or hairdressers. Class is transformed and read differently in new contexts. The class statuses of foreigners in Granada are similarly reconfigured into new social dynamics. Because of institutional racism, the low wages of Nicaraguans, and the comparable low cost of living in Nicaragua, even working foreigners in Granada maintain a stature above most laboring Nicaraguans. For example, a construction worker in the US becomes a foreman in Nicaragua, leaving the manual labor to low-paid Nicaraguans (who are widely available for work because of high unemployment).

In fact, due to the high demand and status associated with stylishly renovating colonial homes, skilled foremen are needed. For several reasons (e.g., Nicaraguans' inexperience with Global North housing standards, materials, and methods), interviewees say a reliable, trustworthy English-speaking project manager who can supervise and successfully coordinate Nicaraguan workers is highly valued. Although many foreigners once worked as landscapers and hairdressers in the US, they rarely continue these careers in Granada, in large part because Nicaraguan labor is inexpensive. Whatever their former jobs, these lifestyle migrants have access to more wealth than Nicaraguans simply because they are from the Global North. While foreigners may still occasionally tend gardens or cut hair, this rarely diminishes their class status in the eyes of either locals or lifestyle migrants. More likely, such activities are interpreted as a hobby or a passion, even if the lifestyle migrant is dependent on these earnings.

Oliver and O'Reilly's (2010) input into class manifestations proves useful for describing the cliques in Granada. Although there are factions among the lifestyle migrant community, this research finds that distinctions are rarely drawn on wealth and former career. Instead, distinctions are based on more immediate characteristics, such as foreigners' ages, preferred hangouts, and

Figure 7.1, A bar on Calzada rumored to attract older lifestyle migrant men and their younger Nicaraguan girlfriends.

how integrated they are into the local community, a factor often based on their Spanish-language abilities. Generally, "do-gooders" generally socialize with "do-gooders", young entrepreneurs have late night drinks with other young entrepreneurs after they close their businesses, and old lifestyle migrant men sit with other old lifestyle migrant men in bars, while their young Nicaraguan female companions sit together, speaking Spanish (see Figure 7.1).

COMMUNITY

In her study of lifestyle migrants in coastal Spain, O'Reilly (2000) utilizes a conception of "community" based on networking and exchanges, rather than on a discrete or fixed group. I similarly conceptualize community in this research as a loosely connected group who are identified primarily as Global Northerners who speak English. Many lifestyle migrants claim to have not felt a strong national allegiance before moving to another country. Many from the US claim to have a strained relationship with their homeland for one reason of another. Upon moving to Nicaragua, however, there suddenly seems to be an affinity with their compatriots. This is

especially true for whites who have been accustomed to being the generic normal, and because of their white privilege, have not be conscious of their race before (Leonard 2010). It is only upon being in a minority group in Nicaragua that many lifestyle migrants look to other lifestyle migrants as compatriots.

One of the significant features of the new lifestyle migrant community in Granada is how reluctant they are to identify as a group. While other lifestyle migrant communities may eschew group categorizations based on nationality, researchers highlight how social groups and community organizations nevertheless figure prominently in everyday interactions among these groups (Truly 2002; King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000). Although most lifestyle migrants in Granada are dependent upon each other in various ways, they are reluctant to conceive of themselves as a group in any sense. Further, it is only in the past few years that there has been any sort of organization into established groups and organized activities. I argue that this emerging focus on group organization demonstrates an evolution of the lifestyle migrant community.

RELUCTANT COMMUNITY

The lifestyle migrant community is generally a reluctant community. Most acknowledge some good things about connecting with the lifestyle migrant community, and a few interviewees spoke of enjoying it, yet this research finds that most are reluctant to admit their dependency on or level of involvement with other lifestyle migrants. As one British man who has been in Granada since 2000 says:

> The expat community has been fairly disparate, it's nascent and it's only beginning to show some signs of cohesion as a community – but only signs. There's *Amigos de la Policia*. There isn't much of a cohesion as a group of people.

Because of their roguish self-perception, many lifestyle migrants are loath to associate themselves with the types of formal social groups popular among lifestyle migrants in other destinations (O'Reilly 2000; Truly 2002; Casado-Diaz 2006). For various reasons, however, they are often

(reluctantly) united as a group, in part because they are visibly distinct from the local population (based on apparent wealth and whiteness) (Ho 2011: 739).

In his study of expatriates in 1972, Cohen finds that foreigners are not always together by choice. Although lifestyle migrants in Granada are generally averse to being grouped together, they are united in some ways based primarily on their shared cultural attributes, references, and, importantly, English-language skills. Several lifestyle migrants say that because they don't fit in with Nicaraguan culture, they are drawn towards the lifestyle migrant community – because they have to interact with *someone*. While other lifestyle migrants may not be their first choices, most do feel compelled to socially interact and they find doing so with other lifestyle migrants results in fewest complications or is the least awkward.

Cohen writes of expatriate communities which consist of "a mixture of artists, bohemians and drop-outs… Some of these communities are marked by a strong 'anti-establishment' tendency, and their structure and dynamics appear to differ considerably from those of the majority of expatriate communities" (Cohen 1972: 27). This summarizes the early lifestyle migrant group in Granada, although it is currently changing. The lifestyle migrant community in Granada is notable because it is so small. Even though they are wary of being part of a group, lifestyle migrants are generally highly dependent on each other, if for no other reason than to negotiate the trials and tribulations of living in a foreign country. Even the outlier lifestyle migrants who rarely interact with the visible lifestyle migration population usually maintain some connection with the group – perhaps they come out of the woodwork to watch a major sporting event such as the World Cup or American football's Superbowl at a lifestyle migrant sports bar. One man in his 40s who has been in Granada for years and lives with a Nicaraguan girlfriend summed up the attitude of many older male lifestyle migrants whom I call non-conformist. When asked if his move here was influenced by the foreigner presence, he said: "No, not exactly, no.

I'm pretty independent, I guess. It is nice to have some foreigners around to speak English once and awhile."

A young American woman likened her experience in the lifestyle migrant community to being a college freshman:

> Every crop of freshmen that would come in would be best friends with their neighbors because you're all experiencing the same thing. So these people that I was friends with my freshman year of college and the people I'm friends with here now, I might not normally hang out with. I'm doing it because they're on my floor. We're all experiencing the same thing together. So there doesn't really seem to be a hierarchical or a socioeconomic thing because all Americans seemingly that live here are able to travel back and forth. We have that in common and almost everyone here is a homeowner…
> Whenever you have a group of people and they have a shared experience living in a small community, there's a leveling effect. And it creates camaraderie between people that in the States might not have had the same opportunity or had the same impetus to become close. So as an expat living in a fairly small expat community, you hang out with people, a wider range of ages and types of people than you probably would. In [the US] I hung out a lot more with people between around the ages of 25 and 35 by far than anyone else socially and whatnot.

This woman's analogy to college dorm roommates clearly illustrates how the lifestyle migrants in Granada feel a sense of reluctant camaraderie based on their shared Global North identity and experiences. Despite whatever antagonisms exist in the group, their shared language and privileged position unites them vis-à-vis the Nicaraguans.

Another interesting finding was that some lifestyle migrants say that they continue to socialize with other lifestyle migrants who have taken advantage of them. One American woman told me that despite the fact that a lifestyle migrant builder grossly overcharged her in the construction of her home, they remain cordial. (That same man has been sent to jail by another lifestyle migrant, yet he is still very involved in the lifestyle migrant community.) Although they are not good friends, this example demonstrates how the community reluctantly holds together. They spend time together because there are minimal foreigners to engage with. It is telling that they keep spending time together anyway – because they so highly prioritize socializing with other lifestyle migrants.

TRANSIENT NATURE OF COMMUNITY

Expatriates are notoriously transient (Smiley 2010; Walsh 2007; D'Andrea 2007). The mobility of elites is often positioned against the immobility of other groups (Binnie *et al.* 2006: 10). Elites and Global North middle classes can be understood to have the ability to move freely across the globe, while others might be stuck in place, unable to move due to restrictions related to citizenship or money. In general, lifestyle migrants in Granada are highly mobile, and while every individual lifestyle migrant is not necessarily hypermobile, they do have the money and citizenship privilege to fly "home" and back whenever they chose. One reason why lifestyle migrants in Granada do not feel like a cohesive community is because of its transient nature. As O'Reilly writes of lifestyle migrants in coastal Spain, the biggest threat to the foreign community is transience (2000: 132) because, she finds, relationships and groups are more difficult to maintain if one cannot count on the presence of certain individuals.

Of the expatriate clubs in Singapore, Beaverstock wrote that they "were nodes in a wider space of flows, where the notion of a transnational space was being constantly transmogrified by the incessant turnover of departing and new members, as talented migrants continuously left and came into the city" (2011: 725). Although lifestyle migrant clubs do not widely serve as uniting group focus in Granada (though this is changing), this quote is applicable in regards to the constant turnover of the community, as various lifestyle migrants continually leave and return. One American female retiree said that this affects her relationships with other lifestyle migrants:

> I think I consider some of the Nicaraguans my friends and the foreigners are social acquaintances. So actually of the people I consider friends, they're Nicaraguans. The foreigners, one or two friends, but more, I wonder if I'd miss my Nicaraguan friendships more... Part of it has to do with the foreigners coming and going, and distraction, I don't know what it is... I've been trying to figure it out myself. It's an interesting sense for me. I think part of is foreigners, I get to speak English and it's this instant rapport. We're similar, so we're friends, as opposed to friendships that take time.

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While the lifestyle migrants in Granada can mostly be considered to be highly mobile, this understanding cannot be simplistically applied to all. As stated, in the context of Granada, most lifestyle migrants can be considered elite in Nicaragua due to their comparable wealth and race, as well as by their status as property owners. Some lifestyle migrants, however, with limited wealth, or who have legal troubles, may not be so hyper mobile.

<div align="center">NEW SOCIAL GROUPS</div>

As Granada's lifestyle migrant population has grown, it is attracting new kinds of Global Northerners. There are more women, families, and, in particular, more financially stable, full-time retirees who are more prone to participate in group activities. Sunil *et al.* (2007) and Truly (2002) have described a similar evolution in the Mexican Lake Chapala region, which has moved from attracting artistic explorers to gated community club members. Coastal areas of Spain have similarly undergone such a transformation (King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000). An American couple described the changing population in Granada:

> C: The first arrivals were sort of the wacky people up for adventures. And now you have a lot of, still adventurous prospecting and it's just starting to move from these kind of prospectors and the economic boom which may or may not be happening here and the tourism boom that may or may not be happening here into the more…
> B: Entrepreneurs?
> C: Well no… 'Cause they're sort of less adventurous. This next round of people coming in, they want nicer amenities, they want nicer restaurants. They're not here to take our little crappy truck up the little back roads and buy their plants. They want to have their gardens delivered. It seems to be shifting.

Now in Granada, there are increasingly more organized activities geared towards lifestyle migrants, such as a monthly farmers market located inside a hotel. Lifestyle migrants are becoming more active in local charities, such as *Puedo Leer* ('I Can Read'), which supports a library for local children. Perhaps tellingly, two of the oldest associations with foreign members are the American Legion and *Amigos de la Policia* ('Friends of the Police'), which somewhat self-servingly raises money for police to pay for petrol and assures a quick response to foreigner emergencies.

Lifestyle migrants in Granada have become more organized in recent years. There has been more concerted communication as their numbers have grown. One unifying source has been the Nicaragua Dispatch, an English-language news website based in Granada (Nicaragua Dispatch 2013). The site's founder and primary author is Tim Rogers, a well-respected US man in his thirties living in Granada who has been living and reporting in Nicaragua and Costa Rica for a decade. The Nicaragua Dispatch has become an important source of information to lifestyle migrants as Rogers and other authors report on issues relevant to lifestyle migrants. Lifestyle migrants turn to the website to learn about Nicaraguan issues and news events written in English by authors who comprehend their perspectives. The Nicaragua Dispatch also posted blogs, opinion columns, and relevant "community news" written by lifestyle migrants and Nicaraguans. In July 2013, however, Rogers accepted a year-long journalism fellowship in the US and currently only posts articles on the site intermittently.

Another vital source of information and communication among lifestyle migrants is the weekly newsletter and corresponding web site run by an American retiree-cum-realtor-cum-retiree and his wife. In 2011, Darrell and Amy Bushnell began sending mass emails relaying information about events or items for sale to a personally-gathered list of interested people (mostly lifestyle migrants). On September 22, 2012, the Bushnells wrote that "there is a real need for a community newsletter" (personal communication) and enjoined readers to contribute to the forthcoming newsletter. On March 5, 2013, Darrell Bushnell created a Facebook page and a website called "Nica Nuggets" on which the articles are now posted (Nica Nuggets 2013), and weekly updates are sent via email. While the Nica Dispatch serves primarily to offer news articles especially relevant to English-speakers in Granada, the Nica Nuggets newsletter has developed specifically to provide space for the exchange of information for lifestyle migrants centered in Granada. For example, since the blog went live in early 2013, lifestyle migrants have posted about buying or selling items, such as furniture or cars. There are often informational notices

about upcoming special event, such as art exhibits or musical performances, and there has been a campaign by several lifestyle migrants to organize a system to collectively receive mail from the US.

In September 2012, the first (and so far only) condo development built in the city, Condos Hotel Xalteva, announced that it would begin hosting a monthly "Networking Social", where "we will be sampling great products from local business as well as offering local business discounts to all participants, listening to a guest speaker and teaching an ice breaker to use with your colleagues and workers" (personal communication, September 29, 2012). The announcement was also listed in Spanish and there is a bilingual Facebook page. As of September 2013, Nica Nuggets reported that 31 people were in attendance and that the monthly meetups were growing (Nica Nuggets 2013, September 16).

Another new development is the international primary school. Following a US-modeled school calendar year, with classes starting in August (as opposed to the Nicaraguan school calendar year which begins in February and concludes in December), the school began its first classes in August 2012. Serving children for early child development through grade two, the school is the first international school in Granada, as most of the small number of international children have been going to Managua to attend international schools. According to their web site (Granada International School 2013), the school began when several lifestyle migrant parents met at Granada's Waldorf Kinder school:

> They took turns lamenting the absence and dreaming of a progressive international
> school in Granada. One Sunday afternoon they all came together for the first time
> and discovered their ideas and expectations were all heading in the same direction.
> They discovered they all wanted their children to love learning, to spend time playing
> and exploring outside, and to grow up truly bilingual. They also discovered a
> common dedication to contributing to the betterment of their community, their
> adopted home: Granada.

All of these examples of new and concerted group efforts by lifestyle migrants are especially noteworthy when compared to the lifestyle migrant population and community just a

few years earlier. Even when I did my first formal fieldwork in 2005, there were few organized activities by or for lifestyle migrants. At that time, lifestyle migrants would meet up at breakfast restaurants in the mornings and afterwards in bars. Bars were seen by the burgeoning independent female lifestyle migrants at that time as masculine spaces and a female owned bookstore/coffee shop served as a vital social space for female lifestyle migrants. Starting right after, in 2006 or 2007, many more female and family-friendly spaces appeared in Granada, including cafés, another coffee shop, and an art studio.

EMBRACING THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL CLUBS

The importance of the community and specifically social clubs has been documented in the limited existent research on established lifestyle migrant destinations, including in the Global South, such as in Mexico and Panama (Truly 2002; McWatters 2009; King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000; Gustafson 2001; Sunil *et al.* 2007). This dissertation offers an examination of a destination as it transforms from consisting primarily of individualistic, non-conformist lifestyle migrants into one attracting community-involved retirees, single women, and families.

The lifestyle migrant communities in southern Europe and Mexico have been described as being very social, and that the foreign community itself helped to draw others (as is the common development of migrant communities – new immigrants tell their friends and families about their new lives, whom then immigrate). According to Sunil *et al.* (2007: 502), American expatriates in the Lake Chapala area of Mexico ranked the statement "I live in Mexico because there is a large American community" fifth among reasons for choosing to retire there. According to their research, most respondents frequently met socially with other Americans, relying on them to help them "adapt to the Mexican culture" and they "praised the camaraderie and the networks of assistance in the expatriate community" (Sunil *et al.* 2007: 502).

Although many lifestyle migrants in Granada eschew groupings, some have embraced the community and admit to being drawn to living in the city in part because of the presence of other

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lifestyle migrants. Some came to Granada and decided to stay because of their positive

experiences with resident lifestyle migrants. Some enlist their family and friends to come (Cuba

1989; Sunil *et al.* 2007), as one American realtor told me:

> That's how it is. People will come and want their family members to come. We have
> a lady who left today. First her sister came. Her sister's a friend of my sister. She
> bought a little house. Then her sister came and bought two properties. Then her
> cousin came and he bought two properties.

Very few of the lifestyle migrant interviewees said they were drawn specifically because of the

existent lifestyle migrant community, although the newer arrivals were more likely to admit it

was one factor for choosing Granada. One retiree cited the existent foreign community as a

reason for staying in Granada and buying a house. Although she and her partner planned to travel

extensively in Latin America, when they stopped in Granada, they were charmed by the city's

architecture, its people, and the resident lifestyle migrant community. She met a lifestyle migrant

who sold and renovated property:

> We had a [pool] party at [a realtor's] house, we met lots of people. And we thought,
> as far as locals, there's a nice local community. And I think, yeah, that was a big
> selling. Yeah, that's nice [having a local expat community]. You walk along the
> street you see people you know, you can have a coffee with. [My boyfriend] will go
> down to [a] bar and have a drink and he'll notice two or three guys that he knows.
> And there's people coming through. You know we've got [some friends] up the road,
> [another couple] down the road…You know, it's a nice community… We do stuff
> together. At home, most of my friends are working still. Most of my neighbors are
> working... Because [my old city] is so big, you don't often walk down the street and
> see people you know.

This woman was attracted by the leisurely lifestyle led by foreigners in Granada and camaraderie

that it allows. In addition to Granada's general "slow pace of life", most lifestyle migrants are

able to enjoy such a relaxed lifestyle due to their relative wealth.

Even for those who were not motivated to move because of the foreign community, many

lifestyle migrants have alluded to enjoying it, or at least the amenities associated with or resulting

from lifestyle migrants (e.g., more restaurants, lots of houses to rent/buy renovated by foreigners).

This research finds that though lifestyle migrants may not always consciously appreciate having

other foreigners around, foreigners frequently interact with each other. Many lifestyle migrants admitted that it was nice to be able to share similar cultural references and a common native language (so they could effortlessly communicate with slang and idioms). For example, one American man who came to retire with his wife said:

> Well, again, you learn as you do things. It sounds easy to say, I don't want to live with a bunch of gringos, and I want to merge into the community, and I'm going to learn Spanish until I'm fluent, and I'm going to be the most well-loved gringo living in Nicaraguan society. Reality is it's not that easy to merge into. We are learning the language and everything, but we felt more comfortable being that there were other [foreign] people, that there were a few restaurants around, there were places to buy food and things like that...We liked Granada cause there was more people but also more gringos, more shops, more opportunities to buy things, more things for opportunities, and even the volunteer activities are more organized.

This quote demonstrates how many lifestyle migrants long to participate in the local Nicaraguan community, or rather, *wish they wanted* to participate in the local Nicaraguan culture. Many reluctantly concede that they actually prefer socializing with other lifestyle migrants due to their shared language and culture.

TENSIONS AMONG LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS

Although the lifestyle migrant community in Granada is small and not highly diverse, there is some animosity among the group. The most overt tensions are directed toward older foreign men interested in younger Nicaraguan women, as discussed in the previous chapter. Other tensions are more subtle and are often directed toward a general "Other" group of lifestyle migrants. Perhaps because there are not many lifestyle migrants who spend time in Granada, it seems that most foreigners try to downplay such problems.

Several gentrification scholars have written about tensions among different waves of gentrifiers (Brown-Saracino 2009; Douglas 2012). In his examination of gentrifiers in Sydney, Rofe (2003) provides a useful insertion in the debates concerning the character and motivations of gentrifiers. He highlights how in the same community, there can be conflict and competition between gentrifiers. This is useful for understanding lifestyle migrant gentrifiers in Granada in

several ways, including the importance of not essentializing actors and their lifestyles in gentrification research, as identities are fluid and unfixed (Rose 1984). Rofe describes the tensions between the motivations and goals of two different gentrifiying groups:

> [There is] the presence of a hierarchy within the gentrifying class. A fundamental basis of this hierarchy is the perceived lifestyle aspirations between what may be characterized as being related to the style of dwelling they occupy and length of residency. Essentially, production gentrifiers: 'are considered to differ from consumption gentrifiers in their motives for inner city residency. Production gentrifiers are considered to be investors in a pre-fabricated identity, rather than individuals actively constructing their own place-based identity' (2003: 2533 - quoting himself 2000).

The gentrification in Granada has created some animosity among gentrifiers with different motivations. Many of the first-generation organic entrepreneurs from the late 1990s and early 2000s seem to feel threatened, angered, and/or uncomfortable by the progression occurring along the gentrification lifecycle. Much of the negative transformation occurring in Granada, however, is a result of speculation initiated by early gentrifiers. As described earlier, the creation of the property boom is accredited to early realtors who maintain a mythic status. One British man in his 40s said:

> I use the analogy of the California gold rush. The pioneers out there, they're ripping the gold out of the ground. In this case it's buying property cheap and selling it for money. The early pioneers down here, all these sort of guys have made a great deal of money on the speculation of gringos coming here to buy property. Are they crooks? I don't know. They were mavericks. They saw a chance and they took it. I wouldn't do business with them.

One of the currently existing tensions among lifestyle migrants in Granada is aimed at the newer group of property speculators who rode the wave of the property hype that peaked around 2006. The lifestyle migrants who spend time in Granada talk about speculators disparagingly, but this primarily manifests in general malcontent, as most speculators are not present in Granada to face the blame.

Lifestyle migrant scholars (O'Reilly 2000; Truly 2002; McWatters 2009) have discussed the tensions between newer and older lifestyle migrants. They have reported that longer-term

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residents fear the newer ones are changing the character of the place. McWatters writes that "additional residential tourist growth and development threaten to shatter the images of the natural ideal and the authentic village, as well as the illusion of exclusive distinction" (2009: 103-4). There is similar anxiety about the transformation of the character of Granada, although few interviewees spoke directly to this. As the newer population of lifestyle migrants are more mainstream, there is disagreement among lifestyle migrants about how the city should be. The non-conformists don't like newer arrivals because of the attention they bring to the city, the corresponding rising costs, as well as the new "mainstream" tenor of the group. Some newer arrivals dislike many of the older men because they perceive them to be sexual perverts and pedophiles. Some have told me that they want to exclude older men with young Nicaraguan women from certain establishments. This relates to discussions of how some expatriates in their circles create exclusionary boundaries against those who do not conform (Willis and Yeoh 2002).

Another dividing line is that lifestyle migrants want to be perceived as being "in the know" and this in some ways is juxtaposed against tourists, who are seen as fleeting and unknowledgeable about Nicaragua. Gustafson (2002) writes about retirement migrants' intense disassociation from tourists in Spain, insisting themselves to be residents, not tourists. This is the case with some lifestyle migrants in Granada. Several have mentioned that a particular restaurant, despite the mediocre food, has become the de facto lifestyle migrant hangout only because it is not on the popular Calle la Calzada, which they consider to be overrun with annoying tourists.

<u>COMMUNITY DEPENDENCY</u>

This research finds that almost all lifestyle migrants remain dependent on each other, yet they downplay this importance. The ways they are dependent upon each other, first and foremost, include exchanging information, but also with social exchanges based on shared cultural values and understandings. Similar to many lifestyle and transnational migrant communities (O'Reilly 2000; King *et al.* 2000; Smiley 2010; Huber and O'Reilly 2004; Gustafson 2001; Willis and

Yeoh 2002), lifestyle migrants in Granada are heavily dependent upon each other because of their limited Spanish language proficiency. Few lifestyle migrants speak conversational or fluent Spanish, which means that they are dependent upon each other and other English speakers to communicate. In my earlier research, I found that lifestyle migrants heavily depend upon other for sharing information to navigate life in Granada (Foulds 2005). "The interviewed expatriates noted that shared advice and recommendations are invaluable to dealing with life in Granada. Not only do they depend upon each other for sharing material resources (e.g. giving rides or lending money), the social networks offer a sense of emotional, social, and cultural support as well" (Foulds 2005: 29). In my 2007 research, I found that such knowledge networks continued to be very important for lifestyle migrants. An American female in her 60s said:

> I have to say I enjoy getting together with other expats here. But I'm not opposed to a Nica joining us too, but for me, speaking in Spanish, it takes a bit of effort. I love speaking Spanish to people and having the conversations and stuff. But in a really social thing, if I'm having to think about speaking Spanish, it's a little bit of a stress. It's easier just to be around people and speak English. I think the same thing happens in the US, that's why there's little barrios.

This woman finds respite in socializing with other English-speakers, as she needn't focus on her language. At the end of the day, many lifestyle migrants prefer to spend time socializing with their compatriots rather than with Nicaraguans.

LIFESTYLE MIGRANT KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS

An increasing number of people from the Global North think it easy and relatively unproblematic to purchase property in Granada. Upon inception, many find that cultural and structural differences between Nicaragua and the Global North are greater than had previously been considered. Navigating the various processes and procedures involved in gentrification require knowledge input and capital that necessitates transnational connections. Lifestyle migrant gentrification in Granada would not be occurring without the possibilities enabled by transnational capital and social networks.

One reason why lifestyle migrants are so dependent upon each other is because of the difficulties foreigners face in interacting with government agencies. In part, this is because Nicaragua is a Global South country with a relatively disorganized government and it is not easy for lifestyle migrants to visit government websites to learn about governmental structures or to decipher how to satisfy the requirements to get a permit, for example. Foreigners' difficulties are compounded by concerns about the notorious problem of corruption (Rogers 2012, Dec 5). In addition, frequent changes of government in local levels often result in government employees being replaced by new workers aligned with the incumbent party. The Global Northerners who are familiar with their own country's bureaucracies have difficulty in navigating the Nicaraguan governmental bureaucracy. One longtime lifestyle migrant said that foreigners like to complain about the bureaucracies in Nicaragua, but he finds them to be no worse than those in his native England. Many lifestyle migrants reported that they find the Nicaraguan government to be inconsistent and to lack transparency. One interviewee told me about his difficulties in dealing with the Nicaraguan government:

> To be eligible for [the pensioner visa], it's very easy. Basically any foreigners…over 45 years of age that can show that they earn a pension of $400 a month is eligible for it. The problem is the paperwork is difficult and it's not clear… I've had to renew [my work visa] and… the process is totally confusing because you talk to different people in the office and they give you different answers. And one person says, 'Okay it's approved, come back on this date.' You go back on that date and you're dealing with someone else and they say you're still missing this or that document. There's nothing clear and uniform about it. But the requirements as they're spelled out look like they're very easy. But the problem is getting all your t's crossed and your paperwork too.

Some lifestyle migrants seek advice from local Nicaraguans who may be able to explain the steps to reach an outcome (such as setting up utilities accounts), yet several lifestyle migrants reported that their experiences as foreigners often differ from those of Nicaraguans. Many interviewees relayed the trials they have faced dealing with various agencies, mostly involving being overcharged because, they claim, they are foreign. Such experiences are reportedly common to

lifestyle migrants and are generally not experienced the same way by Nicaraguans (although

Nicaraguans also deal with such inconsistencies). Lifestyle migrants recount their ordeals to each

other in order to share experiences and learn how the issues were (or were not) resolved.

Scholars have written about the advice and guidance offered by organized social

networks in established lifestyle migrant communities (O'Reilly 2000; King *et al.* 2000; Huber

and O'Reilly; Scott 2004; Beaverstock 2011, Willis and Yeoh 2002; Smiley 2010; Gustafson

2008). In Granada, however, there are few social clubs which offer formal recommendations

regarding such information as which businesses to patronize, or workers to employ, or advice

about gaining residency. Many lifestyle migrants are trying to buy property or receive residency

and most would be lost without the help of fellow foreigners (Stone and Stubbs 2007). Despite

their reliance, many interviewees did not appear to acknowledge how dependent they are upon

the guidance from other lifestyle migrants, except in the case of hiring Nicaraguan workers. It

was only through participant observation during both research periods in 2004-2005 and 2007

that I witnessed how vital lifestyle migrant knowledge transfers were.

Such information is usually exchanged informally at the personal level, oftentimes in

specific restaurants, bars, and cafés popular with lifestyle migrants. For this population, such

meeting spaces serve as important sites for knowledge transfer and several of these

establishments have bulletin boards on which fliers and notices can be posted. In these spaces,

lifestyle migrants offer social gossip, meet new people, strengthen social networks, and generally

exchange information (see Figure 7.2).

Lifestyle migrants discuss their transnational strategies, specifically regarding purchasing

and renovating properties. Lifestyle migrants learn how to gentrify from other foreigners in these

spaces, exchanging information about which government forms to fill out, where to pay which

taxes, or which lawyers to use. Global Northern property buyers look to their fellow expatriates to

learn how much certain items cost, or where to buy certain materials (e.g., beds or light fixtures),

Figure 7.2, A bar on Calzada popular with many lifestyle migrants.

or what kind of furniture works best (e.g., wicker or fabric).

Lifestyle migrants in Granada turn to each other for guidance for dealing with locals, especially regarding employment. For example, lifestyle migrants may consult with each other about appropriate costs for services or materials, or how to resolve a conflict with a Nicaraguan employee. Most interviewees mentioned that they hired Nicaraguan workers based on recommendations given by other lifestyle migrants. Referrals are especially important for the numerous employees needed for house renovations, including architects, contractors, and skilled artisans. Lifestyle migrants admit that they are not aware of many social nuances of Nicaraguan culture and because they want the jobs to be completed as quickly as possible, they don't want any confusions or conflicts with Nicaraguan workers or government agencies. They often hire a foreigner to oversee the projects. As discussed in the tensions section, there can be great problems with these people, especially because there are no credentials required for such a role among the foreign community in Granada.

Although conflict between homeowners and contractors is a widely acknowledged issue anywhere, for foreigners in Granada, this information and knowledge exchange is very specifically limited to the small group of lifestyle migrants. Further, there is limited recourse for lifestyle migrants in Nicaragua (Banks 2004) who feel that they have been wronged. For examples, there is no English-language better business bureau or a recommendation website like Angie's List. One interviewee recounted many problems she experienced with the renovation of her house conducted by Nicaraguan employees. One lesson she's learned, she told me, is that not only must a worker come with a recommendation, she must see that person's workmanship. She needs to see for herself the proof of the worker's quality. One wood worker was recommended by a fellow lifestyle migrant, but the woman was not granted entry to a house containing his work. Because she was not able to see the man's work, she did not hire him. She said:

> So I'm sure it was lovely. But I couldn't use him in the house because [the house owner] would never, ever talk with me or give me a recommendation. And he worked on this house and it's probably perfect inside and he could have done perfect right here, but I said to [partner], I am so wary now. I will only accept highly recommended through friends. Or like, who's going to rent our house. Or I want to go and see what they've done. I will not have anyone work on my house without personal recommendation now.

The lifestyle migrant went on to describe a boutique hotel-owning friend, a fellow lifestyle migrant whom she trusts:

> She's very careful about her, who she uses, her contractors… And she's very ecological. So she wants use local people. She's got local people doing the woodwork. She had load of problems with her plumbing. She's worked very hard to find people she can rely on and she's recommended some of those people to me. If someone came and banged on my door now and said, can I do your plumbing. And I'd say, No!

The lifestyle migrant who maintains a community listserv dealt with this issue directly, in one of his mass "Granada Events" emails, where he wrote about creating a "Black List of Workers?":

> One of our readers thought it would be of value to have a black list of workers where we would list workers and employees that have stolen or not performed on contracted duties. Examples include workers that have charged you to replace a

water valve then you find they did not do it. This would prevent an employee that was let go due to theft or something serious from being hired by an unsuspecting employer. I think it would be a good idea if we just listed people that have done serious crimes or cheats. I do worry that the list would also have workers that performed poorly or don't show up for appointments repeatedly in which case the list would be rather long. Hopefully we all know of the serious problems like [one person] and [another person] that should be avoided at all costs.
Let me know your opinions on this (personal communication 2012, November 26).

Although I am unaware of such a list actually being creating, the fact that such a list was suggested demonstrates the great value many lifestyle migrants place on the exchange of information among each other. It also highlights the increasing cohesiveness of the group, as it suggests a joint collaboration. Further, while I am unsure of the details, I believe that such a "black list of workers" would primarily include Nicaraguan workers, thereby potentially establishing a unified front of lifestyle migrants juxtaposed against specific Nicaraguans who could be blackballed.

NEW BUSINESSES GEARED SPECIFICALLY TO LIFESTYLE MIGRANTS

As described earlier in destinations populated by transnational and lifestyle migrants, there are commonly businesses catering to them (Gustafson 2008; Ehrkamp 2005; Smiley 2010; King *et al.* 2000; O'Reilly 2000; Benson and O'Reilly 2009). These often include ethnic restaurants and markets offering specific products, such as food goods or reading materials. In existent lifestyle migrant literature, the consumers of these businesses may be tourists or lifestyle migrants, as the destinations are popular among both groups.

One of the most notable developments occurring among the lifestyle migrants in Granada has been the creation of a local economy expressly serving lifestyle migrants. There are now businesses owned and operated by lifestyle migrants geared specifically toward other lifestyle migrants. While this is not unique to Granada, it is noteworthy because it demonstrates the evolution of the lifestyle migrant community: there is now a sufficient population to sustain such businesses. As the lifestyle migrant population has grown beyond entrepreneurs catering to

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mostly tourists to include numerous retirees with ample leisure time, the foreigners started the businesses they wanted to patronize. Now that such establishments exist, there are currently lifestyle migrants who maintain a relatively leisurely lifestyle. They may volunteer one day a week, go to the foreigner-owned gym, or meet their friends at the Friday night wine tasting at the art center.

Although most businesses owned or patronized by lifestyle migrants are geared towards multiple client types (e.g., tourists or wealthy Nicaraguans), there are a handful of enterprises geared to lifestyle migrants, and all of the ones I highlight here are run by lifestyle migrants. In the last year (since October 2012), various businesses and services have been advertised and mentioned in the Nica Nuggets blog (and the earlier newsletter), including dog walkers and vapor steam cleaning services. Since 2005, there are at least three new gyms and day spas offering yoga classes and massage treatments. Since 2012, UE Gourmet offers European food in Granada (UE Gourmet). "UE Gourmet is an exciting new concept offering a web-based home delivery service of food enjoyed within the 27 countries of the European Union. Each 3 week period will feature the food of one of those countries, prepared and cooked by a small team of European nationals, based in Granada. The emphasis is always on natural, healthy and fresh ingredients" (Nica Nuggets 2013, March 5). Granada residents can order food online and have it delivered to them the next day. According to their website, they have offered Greek, German, and British cuisine. While the businesses listed above are not necessarily geared exclusively toward Global North lifestyle migrants, they are advertised in English, on an English-language website, and designed to cater to the aesthetics and lifestyle preferences of lifestyle migrants. It is important to note, however, that elite Nicaraguans often do have similar interests, and may patronize these new businesses.

There are a handful of lifestyle migrant led businesses that are indubitably geared towards other lifestyle migrants, including property management and assistance services. One

business catering to the specific needs of lifestyle migrants is a general service assisting lifestyle migrants navigate various processes. Details Management offers various assistant services, including helping foreigners obtain their Nicaraguan Residency. According to its website, which no longer exists (Details Management 2007):

> Details Management assists newcomers to settle into Nicaragua by offering helpful, money-saving consultations and services suited to their needs. It's invaluable to have an independent, knowledgeable source when you are trying to figure out the dynamics of a new country.

These businesses services included assisting lifestyle migrants with tasks such as: "Nicaraguan Residency, Small Business Consultation and Registration with the Appropriate Authorities, Settling into Granada, Independent Personal Assistance, Crisis Management, and Property Management." This list offers a comprehensive survey of the services that are in demand among foreigners in Granada.

In 2007, I interviewed the lifestyle migrants who ran the most prominent property management companies, including one run by a woman and her male partner who is a realtor and a builder. Their businesses complement each other and I was struck by their ingenious business models. For example, in our interview, the woman mentioned that she rents and furnishes the houses for owners of properties sold by her partner. Another property manager said that she wants to help create properties of high standards which people will want to rent and she was very emphatic about having the "best" houses in Granada. She said:

> I've rented [a house] out for the [owners], but I'm also furnishing it. So that's what I'm doing it. I'm writing them an estimate. I walk through the house and this is how I see what furniture we need in there. And I write an estimate how much, what the furniture is, what I see, how much it's gonna cost. And then this is the bottom line, this is how much, the estimate on how much it's going to cost to completely furnish this house for rental. And then they usually say, oh okay, and they send me the money. And then I go out and I order the furniture and I purchase everything for the house and I get it all set up. And I charge a fee for that.

The people who enlist her services generally have little knowledge of comparable prices in Nicaragua. Property-owning lifestyle migrants utilize property managers because of the

convenience it offers. Property managers take care of everything for the busy Global Northerner who can only visit their house for a few weeks each year. The property management business will advertise lifestyle migrants' rental properties on its website, book rentals and receive payments, pay workers, outfits and clean the properties, and deal with any issues. It's ideal for those with lots of money but little time.

Another business catering specifically to property owners included one run by a European man. In 2007, he told me that he offered his services to lifestyle migrants who bought properties but needed help understanding how to successfully and cost-effectively renovate them. He said:

> I think most foreigners who come here come here with great aspirations. They're coming into a country where they know very little. My whole business that I run here is based on the fact that people come here and buy houses and then don't know what to do after. They spend vast amounts of money on builders that they have no idea what they want. I don't want to use the word ignorant because they're not ignorant. It's just they don't understand how to do things down here. Apart from the language it's a completely different process, everything you want to do.

He explained the service he provides:

> So you want a contractor to do the work on your house. I will help you find that right contractor. So we will find contractors, we'll bring them in. We'll interview them, we'll take you around and show you their work. We will do a proper evaluated preview. I'm not going to employ those people, you are. You're just paying me to help you do that.

He explained that for each project, he kept a blog so that the property owner living abroad would be kept abreast of the progress. Since then, however, despite numerous searches, I could find no evidence of him or his business online. I have never spoken with anyone who used his services, and no other interviewee ever mentioned his business. I mention this because it has not been uncommon for foreign business owners in Granada to suddenly close their businesses, and oftentimes they disappear. Regardless, when I interviewed him in 2007, this man was promoting his services geared precisely towards property-owning lifestyle migrants.

The inception of these businesses geared specifically to lifestyle migrants is noteworthy because it marks a change in the foreign population. I consider this transition into a different group of tourists and lifestyle migrants to be one of the significant findings of my dissertation research. When the research was conducted in 2007, a substantial population had formed that had previously not existed: foreigners who were full-time retirees and who could enjoy a leisurely, touristic lifestyle. The development of these new businesses specifically offering assistance to other lifestyle migrants to help make a new life in Granada signifies that there has been a transition in the lifestyle migrant population.

<u>CONCLUSIONS</u>

In this chapter, I have discussed the various interpersonal relationships among lifestyle migrants in Granada. Despite some reluctance to depend upon each other, many find that reproducing their livelihoods in Granada as foreign gentrifiers hinges on exchanging information with each other. This chapter has described how the lifestyle migrant population has moved from consisting primarily of "nonconformists" to include increasing numbers of retirees and "conventional" foreigners who actively cooperate to form organizations to enhance their lives in Granada. Further as the lifestyle migrant population has grown, there are increasing businesses geared specifically to resident foreigners to help facilitate their gentrifying existence.

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CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have analyzed the gentrification occurring in Granada, Nicaragua's historic center as a result of Global North lifestyle migrants utilizing their economic, racial, and mobility privileges in a comparatively disadvantaged Global South site. I have examined how lifestyle migrants are motivated to move to an idealized destination in order to manifest their desires to lead a new lifestyle, which involves purchasing and renovating an "authentic" colonial-style home. Many gentrifiers in Granada are influenced by the global real estate promotion fostering this dream of self-fulfillment through international property acquisition. Lifestyle migrants are only able to actualize this through their transnational status, as they depend upon maintaining international monetary, technological, and social connections with Global North people and economies.

The manifestation of gentrification in a Global South site by Global North lifestyle migrants provides a distinct example of the globalization of gentrification. Although scholars have examined the internationalization of gentrification (Atkinson and Bridge 2005), this dissertation contributes to scholarship by providing a qualitative study of the Global Northerners gentrification of a Global South city. More specifically, this case study analyzes the effects of relatively privileged, small-scale, independent gentrifiers on a small urban community in one of the poorest countries in the Western hemisphere. Lifestyle migrant gentrifiers are able to use their economic capital accumulated in Global North countries to take possession of many of Granada's historic center homes, as well as transform commercial and public spaces to service the new elite population. The escalation of property values resulting from the recent foreign demand has significant ramifications for local Granada residents, as most are now unable to afford owning a home in their own city.

In this dissertation, I have provided detailed descriptions of the material transformations made to colonial homes by gentrifying lifestyle migrants in Granada. Despite being drawn to the

colonial architecture, many foreigners have dramatically renovated their new homes to better accommodate their preferences according to their Global North lifestyles. For example, instead of orienting their interior home space outward toward the public street, as Nicaraguans have traditionally done, lifestyle migrants reconfigure the social space to center on the home interior courtyard. Such a reorientation reflects the general manner in which lifestyle migrants engage with the Nicaraguan people and landscape: lifestyle migrants prioritize interacting with each other and maintaining their own comfort, rather than adjusting to Nicaraguan culture and lifestyles. This is made possible due to their economic and white privilege.

I have demonstrated in this dissertation how lifestyle migrants perceive and interact with Nicaraguans. Although many espouse an appreciation of Nicaraguan people and culture, many lifestyle migrants actively view them in racist and neocolonialist terms, by positioning them as "backward" and "inferior". This framing allows lifestyle migrants to understand their retaking of the historic city center as not only unproblematic, but necessary and beneficial to the Nicaraguan people and economy. While some lifestyle migrants note that changes related to gentrification may harm Granada residents, they insist that these are necessary "growing pains" to "development". Further, they fear changes to the city more for how it may affect them and their relatively inexpensive livelihoods rather than how it impacts Nicaraguans. Similar to colonialists, missionaries, and other developers, lifestyle migrants overwhelmingly believe that their presence and influence in the city is positive for Nicaraguans, repeating the claims that foreigners infuse the local economy with foreign money which helps to create jobs and generate wealth.

In addition to economic development, lifestyle migrants believe that they can help teach Nicaraguans "better" ways of being and to socially and culturally "evolve". This includes teaching Nicaraguans how to care for their homes or about garbage disposal. Many lifestyle migrants, including some self-described "liberal" people, use overtly racist language to describe Nicaraguans and their lifestyles, whereby justifying their dominant influence as necessary for

"advancement". This perceived "need" has helped create an increase in volunteering during the past decade, as many tourists and lifestyle migrants in Granada seek self-fulfillment by "helping" Nicaraguans.

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated how many lifestyle migrants come to Nicaragua in pursuit of living an "authentic" existence. Many embrace a "cosmopolitan" worldview of accepting and appreciating various world cultures, yet in Granada, this is overwhelmingly enacted through consumption (Atkinson 2003; Bridge 2007; Binnie *et al.* 2006; Ley 2004). By purchasing a colonial home and restoring it to its "former glory" with the use of "traditional" construction and design materials, lifestyle migrant gentrifiers earn cultural capital among fellow lifestyle migrants, as well as among family and friends in their former lives. Lifestyle migrants in Granada delight in the fact that they are perceived by family and friends "at home" as being "bold" and unconventional for braving the frontier of Nicaragua.

Despite claiming to appreciate Nicaraguans, most lifestyle migrants rarely interact socially with Nicaraguans. Lifestyle migrants may live among Nicaraguans in the historic city center, but many interviewees acknowledged that they exist in a social enclave. Many lifestyle migrants speak minimal Spanish and they prefer to socialize in bars and restaurants which are prohibitively expensive for most Nicaraguans. In addition to offering culturally similar companionship, lifestyle migrants prioritize interacting with other foreigners in order to exchange information. This dissertation has documented how lifestyle migrants depend upon knowledge networks with other lifestyle migrants to facilitate their gentrification of Granada. They rely upon recommendations and advice offered by fellow lifestyle migrants to navigate buying and renovating property, as well as to how to generally live in a country which they find to be inefficient and corrupt.

This dissertation links gentrification, lifestyle migration, and tourism development processes. Scholars have examined the evolution of both gentrification and tourism site

development by describing stage models, and despite their limitations, such stage models help identify known indicators of these processes. There are similarities between gentrification and tourism site development models which prove useful for understanding the transformation of Granada. Sites of both gentrification and tourism are often first developed by pioneering, "explorer" type actors who often have limited economic capital, yet are drawn by the location's cultural and "authentic" characteristics. As the site develops and draws increasing investment, the types of gentrifiers and tourists also change from "social preservationists" (Brown-Saracino 2009), who wish to preserve much of the current "ambiance" of the location, to those who are "importing a lifestyle" (Truly 2002) and aspire to exist in an location chosen primarily for its climate and inexpensive living. Most lifestyle migrants in Granada continue to express their desire to live in the city specifically because they appreciate the local people, culture, and architecture. As the housing is increasingly purchased by Global Northerners and thereby prices rise, the city faces the threat of transforming into a site of privilege controlled by those who are interested in purchasing a specific colonial dream which may result in excluding that which is deemed undesirable (which may include many local Nicaraguans).

When conducting my Master's thesis research in 2004-2005, I posited that Granada was still in the first stage of development along the tourist resort cycle model. My current research finds that the tourist industry and the population of foreigners in Granada have advanced along the model and have unequivocally reached the "involvement" stage and have begun to enter the "development" stage. "Contact between visitors and locals can be expected to remain high" (Butler 1980: 7) when a destination has reached the involvement stage; a tourist season develops and the local governments must begin accommodating the tourism industry. A tourist site has entered the "development" stage when the tourist enterprises become larger and begin to offer definitive attractions. "Changes in the physical appearance of the area will be noticeable, and it can be expected that not all of them will be welcomed or approved by all the local populations"

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(Butler 1980: 8). A new type of tourist requiring more comforts and amenities is drawn to the destination. This has begun to occur in Granada, allowing for the argument that the city has now moved into the development stage. It is only at the beginning of this stage – which, according to Butler's model, can often have a long duration. The global economic situation has slowed growth, at least temporarily. Of course, Butler's stage model cannot be applied evenly to all destinations, but it has found wide applicability.

It was only when a tourist destination entered a "decline stage" when prices dropped that Butler predicted that the area would draw retirement investment. Foster and Murphy (1991) point out, however, that investment in developing a retirement community began not at the end of the life cycle, but alongside the development of the tourism industry. This process can be likened to the situation in Granada, although its development has some distinct characteristics unlike most other lifestyle migration destinations. Granada is a relatively new destination for international tourists, who are arguably drawn to the cultural and heritage attractions more than for the relaxing sun and sea. Many other lifestyle migration destinations already had an active tourist industry, attracting domestic vacationers in Canada (Foster and Murphy 1991) or Cape Cod, Massachusetts (Cuba 1989), or international tourists in coastal Spain (King *et al.*2000; Casado-Diaz 1999, 2006; O'Reilly 2000; Rodriguez 2001). This distinction is important because Granada's foreign visitors did not simply return to a former vacation destination. Instead, most Global North tourists and lifestyle migrants very purposefully have set out to "experience" the "exotic" culture and landscape of Granada.

Granada is developing along the stage models of gentrification and tourism site evolution as it draws more mainstream actors and this affects the future of the city in regards to its property market and the lifestyle migrant population. In addition to the contested reelection of Daniel Ortega in 2011, other factors affecting Granada's future include the general state of the global economy and perhaps more importantly, the US real estate market. The ensuing retirement of the

baby boom generation in the US may greatly impact Granada. This population is more internationally traveled and globally connected than those before, and together with the weak economic situation in the US, the result could be an increase of the US baby boomer generation seeking to live out their days in places such as Granada. As King *et al.* (2000) and Truly (2011) discuss, a significant foreign elderly population greatly changes a destination in terms of how to allot public services and, perhaps more importantly for Nicaragua with its low cost of living, a new populations greatly affects the development of corresponding business for the elderly, such as formal medical care, nursing homes, and service help for the elderly.

Will Granada develop further into a more "mainstream" destination, attracting new types of lifestyle migrants, as indicated in the destination lifecycle models described by Butler (1980) and Truly (2002)? Tourist and lifestyle migration destinations are often first populated by adventurous pioneer-types who claim to highly value the local culture, people, and landscape (Butler 1980; Truly 2002; Smiley 2010). This dissertation helps to fill the present gap in existent scholarship by providing a case study of a destination in the early stages of development. Because Granada does not attract large numbers of mainstream tourists, many lifestyle migrants report that the city remains untainted by undesirable elements perceived to be common in the US, such as a consumerist culture. While each lifestyle migration destination is unique and may not necessarily follow a predetermined trajectory of development, established settlements have often evolved to price out locals and earlier lifestyle migrants, as has been shown in Mexico's Lake Chapala region (Truly 2002; Otero 1997; Sunil *et al.* 2007). This research offers a unique perspective on a destination as this process unfolds.

This research suggests Granada and its lifestyle migrant population is indeed transforming. There are increasing numbers of full-time retirees, families, and single women. The city is becoming more comfortable for those who demand amenities such as air-conditioning, and grocery stores with familiar layouts and imported products. There are government incentives to

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encourage foreign pensioners to retire in Nicaragua. A new hospital in nearby Managua offers

services provided in English for the growing foreign population (Rogers 2005). These

developments correspond to progressive conditions akin to more established lifestyle migration

destinations, such as the Lake Chapala region. As this occurs, there are increasing fears that the

destination will transform into something that many interviewees claim they were escaping.

When asked about how she thought the city will change, one retiree said:

> The real estate just has sky rocketed. And I think in a few years, more and more
> people are going to move in. It's going to take some of the charm away from the old
> people like us that's been here since…forever… So yeah, there's gonna be change.
> Maybe in ten years from now, it won't be a getaway that we were looking for. You
> know, who knows?

Lifestyle migrants are very aware that, "Ironically, in the process of gaining a better way of life

that they seek, the migrants may effectively destroy their goal as their destinations become

increasingly developed" (Benson and O'Reilly 2009: 621). What will become of Granada if more

lifestyle migrants start 'importing a lifestyle'? Where will be the new frontier?

Figure 8.1, A new development on the outskirts of Granada.

While lifestyle migrants continue to live among Nicaraguans in the historic center, and pride themselves on this fact, there are new communities developing. There have been several housing developments on the outskirts of the city which are similar to US-style suburbs. These were starting to develop in accordance with the property boom which radically slowed in 2007 resulting from the global economic disaster and with Ortega's election (see Figure 8.1). There are also resort-style developments occurring along Lake Nicaragua, similar to the ocean-front developments, which have golf courses and swimming pools. As one interviewee pointed out, these will not occur in the city center due to its compact infrastructure. Further, they are arguably in another category since they have such a distinctly different character than the colonial homes.

There are, however, currently two condominium projects in the historic center. Condos Xalteva opened around 2005 and offers six condos built in a colonial-inspired building, with a community pool. In 2007, the condos were not sold and were being offered as rentals. The other project developing in 2007 was a luxury condo complex developed by the owner of a boutique hotel, which, I learned in a return visit in 2011, continued to lack investment (see Figure 8.2). These condo developments draw attention to the ongoing transformation of the city and will require future investigation of how such developments will impact the urban landscape, lifestyle migration, and local access to housing.

Besides these developments, sources tell me that as of 2013, many lifestyle migrants have chosen to rent from the many houses currently owned by Global Northerners which have been bought for speculation. In an email, one informant told me that this has resulted in rent prices rising significantly. Although these specific rentals appeal to lifestyle migrants, it has arguably increased rents for houses throughout the city, including for Nicaraguans. Just two years ago, my husband's family was able to rent a small house in the historic center for US$100. They are currently seeking to rent a new home, yet they have only been able to find houses for US$150 on the outskirts of the city. While this example is anecdotal, interviews with government officials in

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Figure 8.2, A luxury condominium project planned in Granada's *Centro Histórico*.

2007 and multiple informal conversations with local Nicaraguan residents over the course of the last decade have highlighted that rising rents and house sale prices is a serious concern for Granada residents.

This highlights the issue of foreign ownership of the historic center and accessibility for locals to retain ownership, whether it be actual home-ownership or in maintaining that the historic urban center be used in the interests of the local population, and not just for foreign and elite consumption (Kearns and Philo 1993). What does it mean for a historic city center to no longer house local residents or provide amenities geared towards the local population?

The global spread of gentrification has especially serious consequences when it is undertaken by Global Northerners in Global South sites. Scholars have written about the dangers of displacement and the expulsion of poorer citizens from accessing public spaces in locations where the gentrifiers are wealthier fellow citizens (Ley 1996; Smith 1996; Rofe 2003; Lees *et al.* 2008; Shaw 2005; Slater 2006), yet this dissertation provides a study of the severe implications when locals are completely shut out from accessing home ownership in their own city.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PROPERTY-BUYING LIFESTYLE MIGRANT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (LAST UPDATED 11-27-07)

What is your name? How old are you? Where are you from?
Are you a citizen of Nica? If not, where?
Permanent resident? If not, where? Why?
Do you live here? How much time do you spend in Granada?

Do you own property here?
Tell me about purchasing the property.
How much? From whom?
What were you looking for?

Have you sold property? To whom? Why?

Did you use a realtor?
Tell me about relationship with the realtor? Who approached whom?
Tell me about your experiences with the realtor?
What do you think about realtors effect on Granada? What about their motivations? What are their plans/visions for the future of the city?

Have you used a lawyer? Why? Nica? Tell me about experience.

Have you changed the state of your purchased property? How did you choose how you would change property?
How would you describe the architectural style of Granada and please be more specific than "Spanish colonial"?

Have you been concerned with keeping with the architectural aesthetic of Granada? How so? (Use diff materials?)
Do you think gringos and Nicas have different sense of how to refurbish their houses?
Different styles/aesthetics? What is difference?

Why did you buy property? Do you live in the property? If so, how long do you plan on living in property? What are factors that could influence this?
Why did you come to Nica? (Did you come to buy property?) Why Granada?
Did you come planning to buy a property?

Why Nicaragua and not somewhere else in Latin America? Why Third world? Why not global north?

Was your decision to come to Nica or Granada influenced by tourism or individual travelers? To buy?

Was your decision to buy property influence by governmental policies designed to lure foreign investment?
Does the government/laws or governmental organizations influence choices/decisions concerning your property?
Do you know about Law 306 (tourism dev incentives) and do use utilize it?
Do you know about Decree No 628 (Law of Res. Pensioners) and do you utilize it?

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Describe the history of expats in Granada. Who were the first? Why did they come? What was it like? Who next? Who now? Who in the future?

How is your life different here rather than at home?
What are the relationships between life in Granada and life in their former homes in another country for expats?
Is your social status different in Granada vs. home country?

How many foreigners live in Granada? How do you define this? How many own property?
Where are they from? Any demographics – lots of one age, or type of person.
Has the number of foreigners living here increased over the years? How so?

How have expats influenced decisions about your property – whether buying it (in a specific location), or who you work with (realtors or builders), or how you remodel the property (use of a certain wood)?

Do foreigners in Granada in live in an enclave?
How do you think gringos are changing the city?
How do you think they are changing the property scene? How do you feel about it?
Is it inevitable and why?

What is your relationship with your neighbors?
What do you think local Nicas think about the changes?
When foreigners buy properties, where do you think the Nicas go?
How do you think local Nicas are affected by gringos coming into the city?
What about the property market? Sale and rental prices? Who exactly do you think is affected?
Prices for other things?
Social relations?

What do you think is the future for Granada? Particularly in regard to housing? Any places like it?

What is the relationship, if any, between tourism and real estate?
Tourism questions?

Do you think a lot of people come here to retire?
Are these houses in Granada second homes?

Why did you choose not to invest in your home country?

Transnationalism means you maintain relations (money, homes, family) connections in two or more places at the same time. Do you think you do anything transnationally in any way?

Do you maintain any connections with your former/other place of residence or home country? i.e.:
Do you get any money from the other place? Explain.
Do you use media from the other place? (online news, online banking)

Do you own property in other place?
Do you regularly return to other place?
Do you plan to live here forever?

Would you be able to live/have a place in Granada if you did not get support from sources in your own country? E.g. social security, family.

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Tell me about how you got to Granada.
How did you get into real estate?
Why?
What was the first property?
How has it evolved?
What are some of the difficulties with being in the real estate market in Granada?
Some of the benefits?

Take me through the process of buying a property. What are the steps?
Where do you find the properties?
What is the relationship with the sellers?
Why do they sell?
Where do they go after they sell?

Who are the people who are buying? Any trends now? Trends before?
What are people looking for?
What do you suggest about remodeling?
Do you have people who you use?

Have you been concerned with keeping with the architectural aesthetic of Granada? How so?
(Use diff materials?)
Do you think gringos and Nicas have different sense of how to refurbish their houses?
Different styles/aesthetics? What is difference?

How do people feel about the city´s regulations?
Does the law affect real estate purchasing and selling in Granada?

What has been the result of Ortega in real estate market?
Seen anything about CAFTA?

How has the market changed over the years?

What do you think about realtors effect on Granada? What about their motivations? What are
their plans/visions for the future of the city?

Do people use Law 306 The tourism incentive law?
Decree No 628 (Law of Res. Pensioners)?
Do you suggest it?

How many properties have you transferred?

Describe the history of expats in Granada. Who were the first? Why did they come? What was it
like? Who next? Who now? Who in the future?
What are the relationships between life in Granada and life in their former homes in another
country for expats?
Is your social status different in Granada vs. home country?

How have expats influenced decisions about your property – whether buying it (in a specific location), or who you work with (realtors or builders), or how you remodel the property (use of a certain wood)?

Do foreigners in Granada in live in an enclave?
How do you think gringos are changing the city?
How do you think they are changing the property scene? How do you feel about it?
Is it inevitable and why?

What is your relationship with your neighbors?
What do you think local Nicas think about the changes?
When foreigners buy properties, where do you think the Nicas go?
How do you think local Nicas are affected by gringos coming into the city?
What about the property market? Sale and rental prices? Who exactly do you think is affected?
Prices for other things?
Social relations?

What do you think is the future for Granada? Particularly in regard to housing? Any places like it?
Retirement?

What is the relationship, if any, between tourism and real estate?

Transnationalism means you maintain relations (money, homes, family) connections in two or more places at the same time. Do you think you do anything transnationally in any way?

Do you maintain any connections with your former/other place of residence or home country? i.e.:
Do you get any money from the other place? Explain.
Do you use media from the other place? (online news, online banking)

Do you own property in other place?
Do you regularly return to other place?
Do you plan to live here forever?

APPENDIX C: NICARAGUAN OFFICIALS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE *(CENTRO HISTÓRICO)*

How many properties are there in the historic district?
Ages of properties?

Percentage owned by foreigners?

Is there any way to see the increase of foreigners owning properties in recent years?
AKA How many foreigners bought prop this year? Last year? 2005? Etc

Any sale restrictions for foreigners?

How has the historic district changed in recent years?
How do foreigners change properties?
What is the impact on city because of foreigners buying properties?
Any effect with UNESCO and conservation?

Where is the historic inner city?
How is that designated?
What are some of the rules that properties must abide by?
Who decides?
Exceptions?

What is city or national gov plans to develop the city?
What is the goal?
Does this include infrastructure - sewage?

UNESCO World Heritage site?
What is process to get this?
What is benefit to city?

What is the relationship between tourism and the historic center?
What about tourism development? (Anyone I should talk to?)

Is the city trying to bring in foreigners?
How?
Why?
What about Law 306 (tourism dev incentives)?
Decrees No 628 Las of Res pensioners?

How many foreigners are there? Who own prop in historic district?

How do foreigners benefit city?
How do hurt?

How have rents been affected?
Are there any gov policies to help Nicas who might be displaced?
Where do Nicas go?

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Zukin, S. (2009). Changing landscapes of power: opulence and the urge for authenticity. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 33(2), 543-553.

VITA

Abigail Foulds

Education

2009   Certificate in Gender and Women's Studies, Graduate School, University of Kentucky.

2009   Certificate in College Teaching and Learning, Graduate School, University of Kentucky.

2005   M.A., Geography. University of Kentucky. Lexington, Kentucky.
Thesis: "**Harbingers of Modernization: Expatriates and (Tourism) Development in Granada, Nicaragua**."

2000   B.A., Geography and Cross-Cultural Relations. Simon's Rock College of Bard, Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Senior Thesis: "*Bpai Tiew*: **The Experience of Travel**."

Book Reviews

2008. Book Review of *Adventures into Mexico: American Tourism beyond the Border,* Nicholas Dagen Bloom, ed. (2006, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield). *Social and Cultural Geography* 9 (4): 455-456.

Professional Experience

Aug 2009-   Research Coordinator, Institute for Evaluation Science in Community Health,
 Present   Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh.

Fall 2008   Teaching Assistantship, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky.
Full responsibility of introductory course, "Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World."

Spring 2008   Teaching Assistantship, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky.
Full responsibility of introductory course, "Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World."

Fall 2003-   Teaching Assistantship, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky
 Spring 2007   Assistant in courses such as: "Geographic Research Methods," "Cities of the World," "Earth's Physical Environment," "World Regional Geography," "Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World"

June 2002-   FEMA Flood Map Interpreter,
 Aug 2003   Flood Zone Determination Services, Carnegie, PA.

Grants, Awards and Honors

Mar 2009   Merit-based Representative of the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers as a participant in the World Geography Bowl at the Annual Meeting of the AAG, Award amount: $167.

Nov 2008   Top Female Participant in the Geography Bowl at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers.

Aug 2008   Student Support Travel Award, The Graduate School, University of Kentucky, Award amount: $800.

May 2008   Graduate Student Travel Grant, Latin American Studies, University of Kentucky, Award amount: $200.

Sept 2007   Withington Barnhart, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky, Award amount: $750

Sept 2007   Student Support Travel Award, The Graduate School, University of Kentucky, Award amount: $800.

Mar 2006   Student Support Travel Award, The Graduate School, University of Kentucky, Award amount: $400.

Mar 2006   Merit-based Representative of the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers as a participant in the World Geography Bowl at the Annual Meeting of the AAG, Award amount: $175.

Nov 2005   Top Female Participant in the Geography Bowl at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers.

Dec 2004   Student Support Travel Award, The Graduate School, University of Kentucky, Award amount: $1000.

Spring 2000   Honors Award for Senior Thesis: "*Bpai Tiew*: The Experience of Travel."

Professional Presentations

Apr 2011   **"The Cosmopolitan Allure of Granada, Nicaragua to Lifestyle Migrants."** Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Seattle, WA.

Oct 2010   **"Expatriates in Nicaragua: A Desire to Own in the Next Best Place."** Invited lecture at Bard College at Simon's Rock, Great Barrington, MA.

Mar 2010	**"Getting Busy While Abroad: Women Travelers and Sex with the Other."** Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Washington, DC.
Feb 2010	"**Women's Involvement in the Nicaraguan Revolution and Counter-Revolution**." Presented at the Latin American Graduate Student Symposium, Lexington, KY.
Mar 2009	**"Expatriate Gentrification in Granada, Nicaragua."** Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Las Vegas, NV.
Jan 2009	**"Entrepreneurial Expatriates in the Tourism Economy of Granada, Nicaragua."** Presented at the CLAG, Granada, Nicaragua.
Nov 2008	**"We help: we create jobs!" Entrepreneurial Expatriates and Tourism in Granada, Nicaragua."** Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers, Greensboro, NC.
April 2008	**"The Role of Foreigners in Tourism Development in Granada, Nicaragua."** Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Boston, MA.
April 2007	"**Expatriate Gentrification in the Global South**." Presented at the University of Kentucky Graduate Student Interdisciplinary Conference, Lexington, KY. Peer-reviewed abstract admission.
Mar 2006	"**Harbingers of Modernization: Entrepreneurial Expatriates in (Tourism) Development in Granada, Nicaragua**." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Chicago, IL
Nov 2005	"**I Want to Live in the Sun! Expatriates in the Contemporary Global Community**." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers, West Palm Beach, FL.
April 2005	"**Whose City is This? Impacts of Tourism and the Expatriate Community in Granada, Nicaragua**." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Denver, CO
Nov 2004	"**Backpacker Tourism: No Longer Alternative**." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Division of the Association of American Geographers, Biloxi, MS
Oct 2004	**"Backpacker Tourism in Nicaragua."** Presented at the Annual Meeting of the East Lakes Division of the Association of American Geographers, Athens, Ohio

Conference Sessions

Mar 2006	Chair and Co-Organizer, "Tourism and Development" session at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Chicago, IL

Apr 2005   Chair, "Tourism Geographies" session at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Denver, CO

Guest Speaker Presentations

"US Interventions in Nicaragua", Latin American Studies, Garrett Graddy, Fall 2008
"US Interventions in Nicaragua", Latin American Studies, Juli Hazelwood, Spring 2008
"US Interventions in Nicaragua", Latin American Studies, Lauren Martin, Spring 2007
"US Interventions in Nicaragua", Latin American Studies, David Walker, Spring 2006
"Bangkok and Southeast Asian Cities", Cities of the World, Dr. Stan Brunn, Fall 2006
"Central Asia and the Silk Road", Lands and Peoples of the Non-Western World, Dr. Gary
       Shannon, Fall 2004

Conferences Attended

Mar 2004   Centennial Meeting of the Association of American Geographers,
            Philadelphia, PA

Service

2008   "Microteach" Group Leader at Graduate School Orientation Sessions,
            Graduate School, University of Kentucky

2007 – 08   Graduate Student Representative, Undergraduate Committee,
            Department of Geography, University of Kentucky.

2006 – 07   Geography Graduate Student Representative, Graduate Student Congress,
            University of Kentucky.

2006 – 07   Graduate Student Representative, Undergraduate Committee,
            Department of Geography, University of Kentucky.

2005 – 06   Graduate Student Representative, Minority Recruitment Committee, Department
            of Geography, University of Kentucky.

2004 – 05   Facilitator, Geography Graduate Student Union (GGSU), Department of
            Geography, University of Kentucky.

2004 – 05   Graduate Student Representative, Minority Recruitment Committee, Department
            of Geography, University of Kentucky.

Professional Membership

2003 – AAG – Association of American Geographers
  present

2003 – SEDAAG – Southeastern Division, Association of American Geographers
   present

Languages
Spanish, High Intermediate Fluency
Thai, Basic Knowledge
Japanese, Basic Knowledge

Travel
Nicaragua: January 2011, January 2009, June 2008, Sep – Dec 2007, June 2006, Dec 2004 – Jan 2005, Dec 2003 – Jan 2004, Nov 2000 – Oct 2001.
Thailand: Dec 1999 – Jan 2000, Sep 1998 – Mar 1999.
Ukraine: May – June 1999.