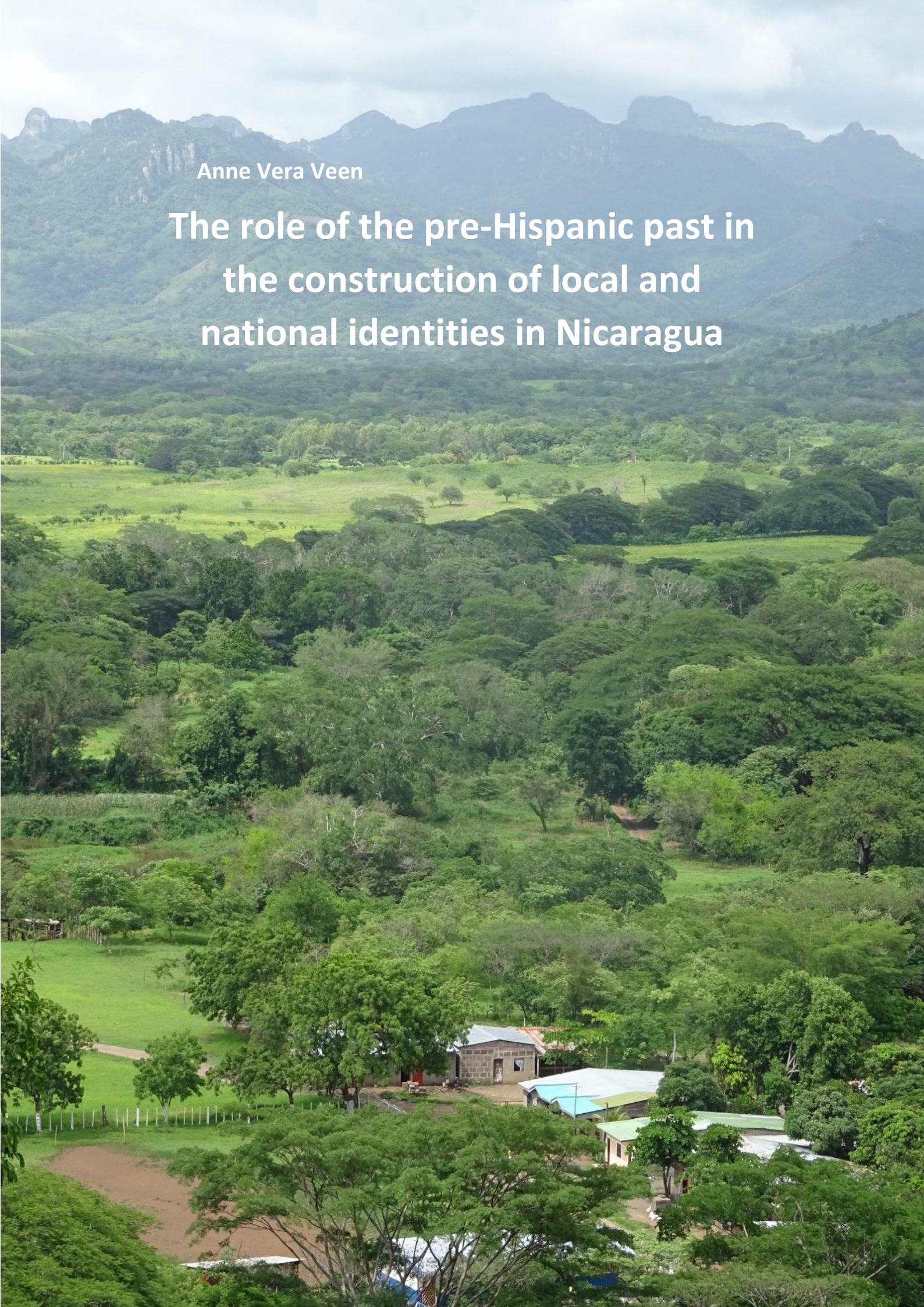
Anne Vera Veen

The role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of local and national identities in Nicaragua



Cover photo: View on the landscape of Chontales north of Juigalpa.

The role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of local and national identities in Nicaragua

Name: Anne Vera Veen

Student number: 1762346

Course: RMA Thesis

Course code: ARCH1046WTY

Specialization: Archaeological Heritage in a Globalizing World (Research)

Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University

Leiden, 15/12/2018

Chontales, donde los rios son de leche y las piedras de cuajada.

Content

Acknowledgements 9

I Introduction 11
1.1 Theory and research problem 11
1.2 Case-study 12
1.3 Research questions 14
1.4 Structure of thesis 14

II Theoretical framework 17
2.1 Community engagement in archaeology and heritage 17
2.2 Heritage studies 20
2.3 Identity 22
2.4 Identity and heritage 23
2.5 Nation-states and the past: national historical narratives 25
2.6 Conclusions 27

III Methods 29
3.1 Data collection 29
3.1.1 Selection of the research sites 29
3.1.2 Contact with the informants 31
3.1.3 Facilitator 31
3.1.4 Duration 33
3.1.5 Qualitative data gathering 33
3.1.6 Interview context 36
3.1.7 Third parties 36
3.1.8 Recording methods 37
3.1.9 Consent and ethics 39
3.1.10 Limitations 41
3.1.11 Reflection 43
3.2 Data analyses 44
3.2.1 Organization of the data 44

3.2.2 Considerations 45
3.2.3 Selection 46
3.2.4 Thematic analyses 47
3.2.5 Justification of the choice of themes 47
3.2.6 Literature review 48
3. 3 Conclusions 49

IV Research context 51
4.1 Geography 51
4.1.1 Pacific Zone 52
4.1.2 Central Nicaragua 53
4.1.3 Atlantic zone 53
4.2 History 54
4.2.1 Pre-Hispanic period 54
4.2.2 Colonization 59
4.2.3 Nicaragua as a nation-state 66
4.3 Conclusions 68

V Case-study 71
5.1 Central Nicaragua 71
5.2 Ethnographic setting of the informants 73
5.2.1 Livelihood 73
5.2.2 Living situation 75
5.2.3 Infrastructure 78
5.2.4 Religion 79
5.2.5 Education 80
5.2.6 Daily routines 81
5.2.7 Seasonal rhythms 82
5.3 Conclusions 83

VI Pre-Hispanic archaeological remains in central Nicaragua and their role in the present-day landscape 85
6.1 Mounds 85
6.1.1 Archaeological remains 85
6.1.2 Local views 87

6.2 Stone sculptures 90
6.2.1 Archaeological remains 90
6.2.2 Local views 93
6.3 Petroglyphs 96
6.3.1 Archaeological remains 96
6 3.2 Local views 97
6. 4 Ceramics and lithics 98
6.4.1 Archaeological remains 98
6.4.2 Locals views 98
6.5 Conclusions 99

VII Local heritage narratives 101
7.1 Introduction 101
7.2 Relationship of contemporary inhabitants of central Nicaragua with the pre-Hispanic past 101
7.2.1 Data 101
7.2.2 Interpretation 103
7.3 How pre-Hispanic peoples are seen 104
7.3.1 Data 104
7.3.2 Interpretation 106
7.4 Content of the identity category of 'indigenous' 106
7.4.1 Data 106
7.4.2 Interpretation 110
7.5 Conclusions 110

VIII National heritage narratives 113
8.1 Introduction 113
8.1.2 Nicaraguan national narratives 113
8.2 Vanguardia national narratives 113
8.2.1 The legitimation of the conquest 114
8.2.2 Interpretation 114
8.2.3 Harmonious *mestizaje* 115
8.2.4 Interpretation 116
8.3 Sandino and Sandinista narratives 116
8.3.1 Augusto César Sandino 116

8.3.2 Interpretation 116
8.3.3 Sandinista narratives 117
8.3.4 Interpretation 118
8.5 Promotion of national identity narratives today 119
8.5.1 Promotion of the Vanguardia national narrative 119
8.5.2 Promotion of the Sandinista national narrative 121
8.6 Conclusions 122

IX Discussion 125
9.1 Comparison national narrative and local narrative 125
9.1.1 Vanguardia elements in the local narratives 126
9.1.2 Sandinista elements in the local narratives 127
9.1.3 Interpretation 128

X Conclusion 131

Bibliography 133
List of figures 146
Abstract 149
Appendix 1: list with the locations and the names of the respondents 150

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the cooperation and hospitality of the people in central Nicaragua, who have accepted me into their houses and offered me delicious *tortillas* and *frijoles*. I thank especially Doña Nidia and Don Juan for their exceptional hospitality and great storytelling. This made the research a lot more pleasant. With great joy I think back to the warm conversations and adventurous excursions into the forest of Nawawasito with Felipito. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm.

I am greatly indebted to Carlos Villanueva, who has driven me to remote places in his car and on his motorcycle and introduced me to some of the informants of this research. Carlos' profound knowledge of the landscape and archaeology of central Nicaragua, in combination with his charming personality, made him not only a great facilitator, but also pleasant company. I thank Jelson Montaya, who took his job as the driver of the PACEN project very seriously: he was ready to pick me up and drop me off at any time at any place.

I owe much gratitude to my supervisor Alex. Thank you for the opportunity to visit central Nicaragua and to get to know its people. This experience has taught me much more than could ever be reflected in a thesis. I realize I am very lucky with a supervisor who gave me such liberty in designing and executing my research. The patience, tolerance and understanding you showed during the writing process are exceptional. I much appreciate your constructive advice over our skype conversations. Thank you for everything!

This research would have been a lonely road if it wasn't for the good company and mental support of my fellow students in Nicaragua and in Leiden. I especially want to thank Eva van Dosselaar for her companionship during the entire process. From sweaty walks in the outskirts of Juigalpa to group assignments in the much colder Leiden: I could always count on you! Lasse van den Dikkenberg deserves a special mention for his reassurance in critical moments.

My housemates in Leuven who have put up with my pyjama writing sessions in the living room: thank you for making sure the coffee was always hot! I am especially grateful to Matti for comforting me in stressful times. Your ability to put things in perspective has kept my head above the water at times that I could not see the end of this. My appreciation and gratitude goes beyond what is possible to express here.

Lastly I want to thank my family for their unconditional support and encouragement during this intensive process. My sister Esther has always been ready for joined study sessions, even on ‘holiday’ in France. You don’t realize how much that motivated me! I am very grateful for my mother and father who did everything to provide the right conditions for me to work on this thesis: a warm and comfortable house where I could lock myself up from distractions, a listening ear for my, sometimes confusing, thoughts, unlimited tea, snacks and hugs and above all immeasurable love. This would not have been possible without you!

I Introduction

1.1 Theory and research problem

Today, it is widely recognized that the past is used as a resource for the present (Ashworth 1994, 13-14; Smith 2006, 7). Under the influence of developments in postmodern and postcolonial studies, the existence of a singular objective historical narrative is questioned. Instead, it is realized that historical narratives are always subject to present-day interpretations of the past. This implies that accounts of the past are not neutral and objective reconstructions, but rather are subjective interpretations that reflect a certain viewpoint held in the present (Graham and Howard 2008, 2). These reconstructions of the past, as a product of present-day processes, are employed to negotiate, legitimate and naturalize present-day claims on identity (Smith 2006, 15). A narrative of the past is constructed in which certain historical events are included while others are ignored. As such, identity claims are sustained through the suggestion of continuity between the past and the present (Ashworth 1994, 14; Mason 2004, 18).

This mechanism is relevant for archaeology and heritage research. The archaeological remains of a site can be actively used in the construction of present-day identity through the perception of continuity between the producers of these remains and the present-day people. Contrarily, people could reject the archaeological remains as forming part of their historical precedents and thus deny their role in the formation of present-day identity (Chikure and Pwiti 2008, 476-478; Hodder 2010, 863, 869-876). Archaeological and heritage projects become increasingly aware of the importance of including these present-day narratives on identity and the past for the purpose of heritage management (Atalay 2007, 2010; Bender 1993; Chikure and Pwiti 2008).

Particularly, the people who live in the proximity of the archaeological remains, even if they do not strongly identify as descendant community, can have included the archaeological remains in their own narratives on heritage and identity (Hodder 2010, 863). If these narratives are not acknowledged and included in archaeological research and heritage management, conflict can arise (Chikure and Pwiti 2008, 476-478).

For example, in a case-study from Zimbabwe the local community was not involved in the archaeological research and the heritage management of the prehistoric rock paintings that were located in the Domboshava cave (Chikure and Pwiti 2008, 469 - 471). This cave was used by the contemporary community to communicate with their

ancestors in rainmaking ceremonies. They had thus included the archaeological remains in their own historical narratives. When the national authorities declared the rock paintings a national monument, the access to the cave was denied to the local community and they could no longer perform their rituals. As a reaction, local people vandalized the rock paintings and thereby countered the conservationist' objectives of the heritage managers (Pwiti and Mvenge 1996; Chikure and Pwiti 2008, 469). This case-study shows how the exclusion of local narratives on the archaeological remains can have negative results for both the community as well as the heritage managers.
The inclusion of the narratives of the people who live in the proximity of the archaeological remains is therefore employed in large-scale archaeological projects such as Çatalhöyük in Turkey and Stonehenge in England (Atalay 2007, 2010; Bender 1993).

This research contributes to this movement of including the local narratives on archaeological remains and how these play a role in the construction of present-day identity of the people who live in the proximity of these archaeological remains. As such, it aims to contribute to a multivocal and inclusive account of the past that can provide a first step towards better heritage management (Howard 2003, 147).

However, since the past is an important tool to legitimate claims made in the present, the control over historical narratives is subject to power relations (Smith 2006, 6). Powerful authorities often claim to have access to the true and objective historical narrative, which they represent as the only legitimate version of the past. In particular national authorities often employ narratives of the past for nation-building purposes (Smith 2006, 18). Through the manipulation of the representation of the past, the dominance of the ruling elite and of their political ideologies is justified, while a collective national identity is naturalized (Hooker 2005, 14-18). Therefore this research is also interested in how local narratives are related to national narratives on heritage and identity in relation to the archaeological remains.

1.2 Case-study

This research focusses on a case-study in central Nicaragua (see Figure 1). The area is located north-east of lake Cocibolca in a mountainous region.

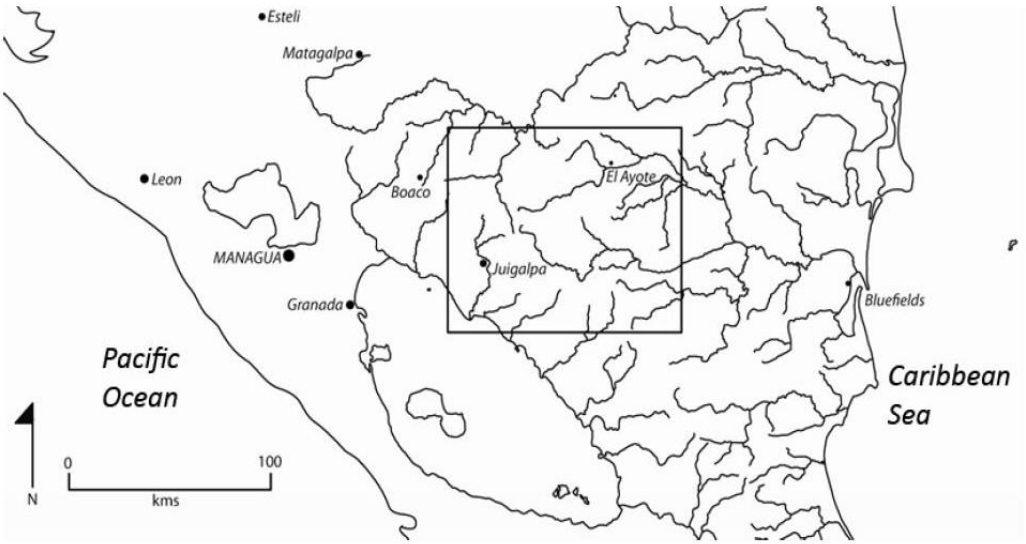


Figure 1 Map of Nicaragua with the research area indicated by the square. (Source: Geurds 2009b, 8, fig, 2a).

In central Nicaragua, visible pre-Hispanic archaeological remains such as earthen and stone mounds, stone sculptures, petroglyphs and ceramic and lithic fragments are spread over the rural landscape that is now inhabited by farmers and cattle ranchers. These archaeological remains are currently investigated by the *Proyecto Arqueológico Centro de Nicaragua* (PACEN), of which this research forms part.
The people who live in the proximity of the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains, engage with these remains on a daily basis. This makes them important stakeholders in archaeological research and heritage management projects (Hodder 2010, 863, 869-870). Insights into how the inhabitants of rural central Nicaragua view the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains and whether they perceive a biological and/or cultural continuity between themselves and the people who produced these remains, is helpful to make future heritage management projects successful (Chikure and Pwiti 2008, 469).

This research is not interested in whether there *is* a biological or cultural continuity, but rather in the subjective way in which the pre-Hispanic past is employed in present-day negotiations of identity. Therefore, this research wants to know what the role of the pre-Hispanic past is in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua.

Additionally, this research wants to investigate how these local narratives on identity and the role of the pre-Hispanic herein relate to authoritative narratives, in particular

the national narratives in Nicaragua. As a post-colonial state that has a past of hierarchical power relations between the colonized indigenous peoples and the colonizing Europeans, nation-building requires a particular effort (Marshall 2008, 347; Whisnant 1995, 54-103). Narratives on the past are manipulated in order to forge a collective national identity (Hooker 2005, 15-17; Gould 1998, 8). This research wants to investigate how the local narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity, as expressed by the people in central Nicaragua, relate to the authoritative national narratives.

1.3 Research questions

In order to conduct this investigation, an overarching research question is formulated:

> *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of Central Nicaragua and how does this relate to national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity?*

To answer this broad question, it helps to break it down into two sub-questions:

> *1) What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of Central Nicaragua?*
>
> 2) *What are the national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity?*

These research questions were investigated through the use of qualitative anthropological research methods such as participant observation and interviews with the people who live in the proximity of archaeological remains in central Nicaragua. The national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity as propagated by the Nicaraguan state were investigated through literature study.

1.4 Structure of thesis

The second chapter will elaborate on the theoretical frameworks that have inspired this research, after which the methodology that was used in this research is discussed in chapter III. The fourth chapter will give a general overview of the research setting in central Nicaragua: a geographical and historical contextualization is given. In the fifth chapter, the present-day situation in central Nicaragua is described, which gives insights in the living conditions of the informants. In chapter VI an introduction to the pre-

Hispanic archaeological remains that are present in the area is given, as well as how they relate to the contemporary landscape and people. In the seventh chapter the data from the interviews and observations are presented and analysed, this chapter will provide an answer to the first sub question. Chapter VIII looks into the national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity. In this chapter, the second sub question is answered. In chapter IX the local and the national narratives are compared. The tenth chapter will draw conclusions.

II Theoretical framework

This research draws on theoretical insights from many different fields of study. As it is conducted as part of the larger archaeological PACEN project, it follows the aims of community archaeology to engage the local community with the archaeological research. It also heavily draws on concepts from heritage studies, in particular following the twenty-first century Critical Heritage Discourse which favours a contextual and fluid understanding of heritage and questions authoritative conceptualisations of heritage. Furthermore, this research engages with the study of identity, in particular how perceptions and representations of the past are involved in the construction of identity in local narratives as well as in national identity politics.

2.1 Community engagement in archaeology and heritage

This research follows the aims of community engagement, as have been formulated in the subdisciplines of community archaeology and critical heritage studies (Marshall 2009; Smith 2006). Engaging communities in archaeological and heritage work has become gradually more prevalent since roughly the 1960s (Atalay 2012, 30). Particularly with the development of post-processual archaeology, collaboration with stakeholders gained importance as multiple understandings of the past became appreciated (Thomas 2017, 15). The practice of collaboration has emerged in different parts of the world, induced by different factors and leading up to different outcomes (Atalay 2012, 29-54; Thomas 2017, 15). This caused that the concept of community archaeology covers a wide range of different interpretations with varying degrees of collaboration (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2007, 116-118; Moshenska and Dhanjal 2012, 1). Despite its many forms, in essence it is always about the engagement of a community of interest in the archaeological or heritage project (Marshall 2009, 1079). Community engagement has become so prevalent in the twenty-first century that is has been called a paradigm shift in the disciplines of archaeology and heritage studies (Atalay 2012, 53-54; McAnany and Rowe 2015).

How the term ‘community’ is interpreted, varies among different authors (Watson and Waterton 2010, 1). A community can indicate a group of people who have certain things in common, such as common ancestry, culture, language, occupation or belief system. A community can consist of, but is not necessarily bound to, a group of people who

occupy the same locality (Appiah 2006; Johnson 2000; Marshall 2002). The term 'community' is misleading, because it suggests a homogeneous group with internal unity and the same interests and opinions. However, this definition of community probably only exists in theory. In practice, internal contradictions, different opinions and interests will exist within a community (Geurds 2007, 178; Waterton and Smith 2010, 1-3). Within community archaeology, Marshall (2002, 215-217) identifies that there are two types of communities that have constructed meaningful relations with the (archaeological) heritage: descendant communities and local communities. Descendant communities comprise those people who can or choose to identify as the descendants of the people who produced the archaeological remains, while the local community entails the people who live geographically in the proximity of archaeological remains. Although in many cases these two communities overlap, it remains important to specify which type of community is targeted (Marshall 2002, 216-217). In this research, the community that is engaged, consists of the latter group: the people who live in the proximity of the archaeological remains. This is the group of people that is referred to throughout this thesis with the terms 'local community', 'local residents' or 'inhabitants'.

The importance of involving the people who live near of archaeological remains has also been recognized by Hodder (2010). Hodder (2010, 869-870) argues that we should move away from an exclusive engagement of communities who identify as descendant communities, because "*there simply are no grounds for arguing that pots and peoples coincide through time."* (Hodder 2010, 869-870). Especially when the archaeological site dates from a remote past, it becomes very difficult to establish a link based on descendancy. Besides, as cultures are increasingly seen as fluid concepts that are constantly subject to change and transformation in relation to the context, the notion of cultural continuity becomes difficult and ambiguous to identify (Hodder 2010, 869). Instead of focussing exclusively on the identification of descendant communities, according to Hodder (2010, 863) we should focus on the involvement of the people who live in the proximity of the archaeological remains. He notes that through their residence in the same locality, they might have built interpretations of the archaeological remains that are meaningful in their construction of identity (Hodder 2010, 663). This insight is shared by Coen *et. al.* (2017, 213), who stress that people establish a feeling of belonging and identity with the place where they live, through engagement with the (tangible remains of) the history of this place. Even if they are not

descendants of the people who produced the archaeological remains, engagement with the archaeology in the landscape can cause that people incorporate these into narratives about their own social identity (Coen *et al.* 2017, 213).

Illustrative is how these insights are put into practice in the large-scale excavation in Çatalhöyük, Turkey (Atalay 2010). The prehistoric date of the site causes that no people clearly identify as descendant community, however the people who live around Çatalhöyük are considered important stakeholders. In the work of Atalay (2007, 2010) it becomes clear that involving the local residents in archaeological and heritage research is essential to pursue an inclusive research strategy. Atalay (2007, 2010) established a *community based participatory research* with the locals in Çatalhöyük: collaboration took place from the moment of formulating a research question until the interpretation of the data. Both the local residents, as well as the scientific research, benefitted from this collaboration. The local inhabitants were given the opportunity to forge relationships with the past which in turn can have an empowering effect (Atalay 2007; Chikure and Pwiti 2008, 468-472). The research project benefitted from the local knowledge of mud-brick architecture, that the locals possess because of their residence in the same landscape as the past societies under investigation. This knowledge was used to understand and interpret the mudbrick constructions from the past (Damm 2005).

The inclusion of local people in archaeological projects can be realized in various ways: their inclusion in decision-making processes, involvement in surveying and excavating, the inclusion of local knowledge in the interpretation of the results, the communication of research results in understandable publications, museum exhibitions and educational material and the acknowledgement of local understandings of the past, among others (Marshall 2002; Chikure and Pwiti 2008, 469; Geurds 2011, 87).

In this research, the focus is on the acknowledgement of the local understandings of the pre-Hispanic past and the existing narratives on identity and heritage of the people in rural central Nicaragua who live in the proximity of the archaeological remains. This study investigates if and how the pre-Hispanic past is incorporated in local narratives on identity. In this way, the local understandings of the pre-Hispanic past can form the basis for a more inclusive heritage management practice.

2.2 Heritage studies

Heritage studies is a relatively new discipline that combines insights from sociology, politics, geography, social anthropology, social psychology, archaeology and landscape studies, among others (Lloyd 2012, 35). Even within the discipline, heritage has become such a broadly understood concept that the scope of this thesis does not allow for an exhaustive overview of all the uses and understandings of heritage. Rather, this section will focus on the understanding of heritage that has informed this research and contextualize it in a broader theoretical movement.

In this research, heritage is understood as a socially constructed way of perceiving and valuing the past in the present. Therefore, it is contextual, fluid, heterogeneous, subjective and multi-stranded. It is based on the assumption that the way that people perceive and think about the past, is dependent on present-day values and is thus everchanging. This way of viewing heritage is shared with a number of authors who are dedicated to heritage studies. Among whom David Lowenthal, who is considered the founding father of heritage as an academic discipline. In *The Past is a Foreign Country,* Lowenthal (1985) describes heritage as a subjective way of giving value and meaning to the past. Graham and Howard (2008, 2) follow this constructionist understanding of heritage. They consider heritage as the way in which the past is selectively employed as a cultural, political and economic resource for the present. Since the interpretation and representation of the past is dependent upon the present, heritage studies is concerned with analysing the present rather than with uncovering the study of the past (Graham and Howard 2008, 2). Laurajane Smith (2006) has initiated a movement that is called *Critical Heritage Studies* with her publication of *Uses of the past* (2006). Within this movement, heritage is seen as a fluid, contextual and subjective concept and the co-existence of multiple narratives about the past is promoted (Smith 2006, 44-83). Especially previously marginalized peoples are encouraged to participate in the defining of, creating of and managing of heritage, so new understandings of heritage are created bottom-up (Smith 2006, 7). These views have inspired scholars such as Anico and Peralta (2009), Graham *et al.* (2005), Graham and Howard (2008), Peckham (2003), Watson and Waterton (2011), Winter (2014) and many more, which implies that is now an established theoretical domain.

The understanding of heritage as described above, has come into being in the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century as a critique on the

dominant perspective on heritage, referred to as the 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (Smith 2006, 85-114). The 'Authorized heritage discourse', as enacted by institutionalized heritage organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS, is critiqued to promote a single historical narrative (Waterton *et al.* 2006, 348). Even though recent efforts to include different perspectives into the heritage narratives as promoted by these institutes, single historical narratives continue to be promoted (Ashworth and van der Aa 2006, 38). When this single historical narrative becomes entangled in power struggles through the control by, for example, national authorities, heritage becomes a hegemonized political tool (Smith 2006, 6).

This gave rise to a question that remains dominant in heritage studies: *Who owns the past?* (Gathercole and Lowenthal 2004; Morell 1995). Since the past has already happened and cannot be 'owned' by anyone, this question refers to *who has the authority to represent the past?* Or in other words: *Whose version of the past has the legitimacy to exist?* The representation of the past is a politically powerful tool, because it can be employed to legitimate the dominance of ideologies in present-day society through a suggestion of continuity with the past (Ashworth 1994, 14; Smith 2006, 6). Especially nation-states use the promotion of a national historical narrative for legitimation of political discourses and to enhance a feeling of cohesion between its citizens (see section 2.5). In order to counter the singular employment of the past for the promotion of one political goal, we should engage critical with national historical narratives and incorporate local versions of the past (Anico and Peralta 2009, 1).

This does not necessarily imply that local narratives always counter the dominant way of seeing the past. The inclusion of multiple versions of the past simply signifies that the process of heritage production becomes increasingly democratized and multivocal (Anico and Peralta 2009, 2). This thesis attempts to contribute to this aim by incorporating the local central Nicaraguan narrative of the pre-Hispanic past. Through the comparison with the national Nicaraguan narrative on the pre-Hispanic past and its role in present-day national identity, the differences and similarities between the national and the local narratives are analysed.

2.3 Identity

This research is concerned with the notion of identity. Broadly, identity has to do with who we are and how we express ourselves (Lawler 2008, 1-3). In this section, the theoretical understanding of identity that is used throughout this thesis is specified.

There are broadly two large theoretical strands of understanding identity. The essentialist or primordial understanding of identity and the constructionist or instrumentalist understanding of identity (Gould 1998, 69; Lloyd 2012, 40). The essentialist notion regards identity as a primordial given in which one is born into. It is seen as a fixed and stable category that reflects who we are in an unchangeable fashion. According to essentialists, characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, nationality or class define our identity (Gould 1998, 69). Most scholars in the twenty-first century reject this notion of identity. However, essentialists concepts of identity are still prevalent in political discourses about identity (Abercrombie 1991, 111; Lloyd 2012, 40).
Under the influence of postmodern and poststructuralist social theories, increasingly more theorists regard identity as a fluid and everchanging social construct (Lawler 2008, 3-7; Lloyd 2012, 40). These constructionists argue that identity can be negotiated (Jenkins 2004). As can be inferred from the research question, it is a constructionist understanding of identity that informs this research as well.
Within the constructionist view, it is believed that identity is constructed through a process of *identification,* in which people situate themselves in the world through the identification with social categories. As such, identity does not stand alone, but is related to the world around us. It is *contextually* constructed in a particular place and time (Lloyd 2012, 40; Marshall 1998, 294). Therefore, identity cannot be studied without taking this place and time into account (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 585).

Constructing an identity is a process of *othering* (Howard 2003, 157-159; Lawler 2008, 7). The anthropological concept of *othering* refers to the act of defining an *other* as opposite to oneself. By ascribing negative characteristics to this *other,* your own opposite identity is defined as positive (Spivak 1988). In this way, the process of constructing an identity is not only a positive act of *identification* with certain categories, but also a negative act of defining who or what you are *not.* Or, as Anico and Peralta (2009, 1) put it into words: "*In order to identify with some, people also need to dis-identify with someone else."* This implies that constructing an identity is as much an including practice that can enhance group cohesion, as it is an excluding practice that

bans people from group membership (Graham and Howard 2008, 5). The basis on which an identity is constructed in opposition to an *other,* could be a for example a different lifestyle, belief system or ethnicity.

Identity can be pronounced on many different levels: the individual, local, national or global. As such, identity can be the basis of group membership: people who identify with the same social categories can have the feeling that they belong to the same group (Graham and Howard 2008, 5). As mentioned before, sharing an identity collectively, increases social cohesion within that group. This makes that group identity often becomes subject to top-down manipulation, referred to as *identity politics* (Muir and Wetherell 2010; Wetherell 2009; Muir and Stone 2007; Lloyd 2012, 40). This research engages with the local construction of identity of the people of central Nicaragua as well as with the national identity as constructed and propagated by the Nicaraguan state.

The constructionist conceptualisation of identity is embedded in the wider debate on structure and agency. Some authors argue that identity in the twenty-first century has become a personal choice (Bauman 1996, 18), while others emphasize the embeddedness of identity in external frameworks (Friedmann 1994, 140-141; Appiah 2005, 234). This research positions itself in between the two extremes. Identity is seen as something that is constructed through the interplay of internal and external factors (Appiah 2005, 234). This implies that identity is neither completely a bottom-up product, nor is it entirely constructed through top-down processes.

2.4 Identity and heritage

This research is located within a broader trend of investigating the relationship between heritage and identity. The last decades, the research on the relation between heritage and identity has expanded considerably. Among the authors who have published on this theme are Macdonald and Fyfe (1996), Ashworth and Graham (2005), Littler and Naidoo (2005), Rounds (2006), Ashworth *et al.* (2007), Mason (2007), Whelan and Moore (2007), Graham and Howard (2008), Anico and Peralta (2009), Mason and Baveystock (2009), Kaplan (2011), Aronsson *et al.* (2012), Macdonald (2013).
Anico and Peralta (2009, 1), in the opening sentence of their book *Heritage and Identity,* even state that the relation between the two concepts has become common knowledge. Heritage and identity are closely linked, as the past is often used in the construction,

negotiation and legitimation of identity (Anico and Peralta 2009, 1). As mentioned before, heritage in this research is understood as a subjective way of interpreting the past in the present. Certain aspects of the past are deliberately remembered and celebrated, while other aspects are forgotten or ignored. A selection of the past constantly takes place in the present, based on who we are or who we want to be (Anico and Peralta 2009, 1-2; Graham and Howard 2008, 2). As such, the past becomes a resource to draw upon in order to construct an identity (Graham and Howard 2008, 2). People tend to create a linear historical narrative in which they locate themselves and their identity as the logical culmination of past historical events (Anico and Peralta 2009, 1; Ashworth and Howard 2008, 6). Through the suggestion of continuity through time, identity claims are given credence (Mason 2004, 18).

The portrayal of the past in a certain way to sustain identity claims, has been employed extensively to forge collective identities (Anico and Peralta 2009, 1-2; Giddens 1991). By calling upon a long historical ancestry and a common past, the claim on a collective identity is sustained (Ashworth *et. al.* 2007). Generations of heterogeneous individuals are given the sense that they belong to the same collective, through a narration of the past as continuous in place and time. As such, the past is employed purposefully to enhance internal cohesion to construct a collective identity within a community (Anico and Peralta 2008, 1; Graham and Howard 2008, 49).

The historical narratives that are employed in the construction of identity, are often supported by tangible remnants of the past, among which archaeological remains. These tangible remains simultaneously function as a resource for the construction of an identity narrative, as well as a material demonstration of this narrative (Anico and Peralta 2008, 1). As such, these tangible remains can be inscribed with a meaning that is purposeful to the present (Geurds 2011, 88, 100; Hodder 2010). They can serve as symbols of community, nation, and history and as such give credence to heritage narratives and identity claims (Geurds 2011, 88). An example by Nicolas and Bannister (2010) clarifies my point. Nicolas and Bannister (2010, 599) noted how in North America, Native American groups have not used nor produced stone arrowheads for at least a century. However, representations of arrowheads are widely used in the logos of contemporary Native American groups. In this case, the arrowhead symbolizes the precontact past, and its use in contemporary media suggests that the Native American groups allude to the precontact past in the construction of their identity. Through the

use of the arrowhead, these contemporary groups suggest a continuity with precontact Native Americans (Nicolas and Bannister 2010, 559). Similar to narratives about the past, the tangible remains undergo a selection based on the present-day values: only few selected material remains are deployed in the construction of identity while others are dismissed (Geurds 2011, 88). In this research, the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains that are present in central Nicaragua are used as a starting point to discuss the historical narratives about the pre-Hispanic past with the inhabitants who live in their surroundings.

2.5 Nation-states and the past: national historical narratives

This research engages with the concept of national identity, nation-states and their employment of narratives about the past to construct a feeling of national identity and cohesion.

The definition of a nation-state as a territory that coincides with one homogeneous nation or ethnic group that has a common language, culture and descendancy, as it was propagated in the nineteenth century, is not accepted anymore. Since the publication of the influential monograph *Imagined Communities* by Anderson ([1983]2006), most scholars acknowledge the constructed nature of nation-states. In his influential monograph, Anderson ([1983]2006) described nation states as 'imagined communities'. He considers a nation-state as a political constructed entity that has no base in reality but rather is imagined by all the members of the nation-state. This national community, he argues, is imagined because the members of a nation-state will never meet in person. The basis on which the community is established does not exist in reality, rather a feeling of cohesion and shared identity needs to be artificially constructed (Anderson [1983] 2006, 6).

That this feeling of belonging to a political community is artificially constructed, does not make it less powerful. A strong sense of national identity has moved soldiers throughout recent history to sacrifice their life for this imagined community (Yuval-Davis 2006, 209). It is needless to say that for the government of a nation-state, it is beneficial if its citizens strongly identify as belonging to that nation-state. Therefore, attempts to enhance a feeling of community and belonging among the citizens of a nation-state are made by national governments (Smith 2006, 6; Yuval-Davis 2006).

Anderson ([1983] 2006, 224) identified that, through the invention of printing and the subsequent possibility of mass distribution of texts, nationalistic propaganda was spread and the idea of unity among citizens was injected in the minds of the inhabitants of the national territory. However, today many other media are employed to spread the message of a national identity. This ranges from national radio and television stations to national museums, but also the victory of national sports teams in international tournaments evokes a sense of community and belonging among citizens (Hall 2005, 24). Messages of a national identity are propagated through stereotypical images of what it means, in this case, to be Nicaraguan. However, in this research, the focus is specifically on how the past is manipulated for the political purpose of naturalizing a national identity in the present (Smith 2006, 22).

Smith (2006, 4) argues that the representation of the past has been subject to power relations. Through the representation of the past in a certain way, the present-day status quo is legitimated and naturalized. Therefore, it is a powerful tool to use for political purposes. Smith (2006, 7) notes how the interpretation and representation of the past, in traditional discourses, has been regarded as something that can exclusively be reached by experts. In this way, historical narratives which are represented as objective and therefore indisputable, are constructed by experts such as archaeologists and heritage interpreters. The people with the expertise are thus the people who have the privilege to build historical narratives. Not rarely are the powerful in the world the same people who have access to this expertise. Official historical narratives are thus often employed to serve the political agendas of the elites (Smith 2006, 299).

Nation-states in particular have actively manipulated representations of the past to naturalize their existence and to legitimize the dominant political position of the elite. A distinct strand of literature has developed which is devoted to the study of the role of the past in nationalist discourses and how this promotes a homogeneous national identity. Among the scholars who dedicate their research to this topic are Hall (2005), MacDonald (2013), Mason (2007), Whitehead *et al.* (2012), Fladmark (1999) and McLean and Crooke (1999).

Through the representation of the nation as formed through common descent and a common history through time, it is naturalized as a pre-existing community. This community is portrayed as having gone through a linear development towards progress which culminated in the present-day national identity. Particularly in post-colonial

nations, that deal with the legacy of multiple past identities, the construction of a national identity through a narrative on common history, is challenging (Marshall 2008, 347). The aim to modernize is an additional driving force for the establishment of a shared national identity in postcolonial nations (Whisnant 1995, 54-103). By means of manipulating historical narratives, a feeling of common ancestry, cohesion and belonging is enhanced among the inhabitants of a nation-state (Smith 2006, 6). Within these practices, distinct historical developments as well as the existence of subnational identities are ignored. Alternative versions of the past are discredited (Hooker 2005, 15).

To establish these historical narratives that serve the political agenda of the nation-state, various media are employed. National history books report on the history of the nation long pre-dating the establishment of the nation-state. These historical events are explained as the natural precursor of the present-day status quo. Such official historical narratives, in turn, percolate into school textbooks. Likewise, archaeologists have been employed to investigate the national past (Smith 2006, 4-7). The archaeological monuments and objects were interpreted as belonging to the descendants of the present-day inhabitants of the nation-state. Through the exhibition of these objects in national museums, the nation-state perpetuates an image of itself as having a great historical depth. The depiction of the nation-state as a natural entity that has existed since primordial times, legitimizes its existence (Bennett 1995; Smith 2006).

2.6 Conclusions

This chapter gave an outline of the theoretical basis on which this thesis is build. The type of community engagement that is targeted in this project was embedded in wider discussions on the role of communities in archaeological and heritage projects. In this research, the community that forms the subject of investigation consists of the people who live in the proximity of the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains. The inclusion of their narratives on heritage and identity in relation to the pre-Hispanic past, broadens the path for a more inclusive heritage management.

The theoretical conceptualization of heritage that is employed in this research is introduced and situated in a brief historical outline of the debates surrounding the definition of heritage. This study considers heritage as a contextual and subjective way of perceiving the past in the present. How the past is viewed, is dependent on present-

day values.

The concept of identity is discussed and the use of the term in this research is positioned in wider debates. A constructionists notion of identity is used in this research, which implies that identity is contextually constructed. The role of identity in *othering* mechanisms was discussed, as well as how it relates to group cohesion.

The connection between heritage and identity narratives was introduced. It was shown how the past is in important resource for the creation and legitimation of identity claims in the present. Archaeological remains as the material manifestations of these narratives, are important symbols to support claims.

Lastly, the use of the past in the promotion of national narratives on identity was discussed. It was shown how historical narratives are actively employed in the creation of national narratives and the manipulation of national identity.

III Methods

This chapter discusses the methods that were used to pursue answering the research questions. In the first part the methods of data collection that were used during the fieldwork in Central Nicaragua are discussed. A justification for the choice of these research methods in relation to the research objectives is given, as well as the challenges that were encountered during the research. The second part comprises of a detailed description of the methods of data analyses that were applied after the data collection was completed. A theoretical foundation of the analyses is discussed, as well as a detailed overview and argumentation of the practical choices that were made during this process.

3.1 Data collection

The data on which this research is based, was gathered during two field visits to central Nicaragua in January and June 2016. Through the use of qualitative research methods, specifically participant observation, walks, unstructured and informal interviewing, the perspectives of the local inhabitants on the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains, and the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of their identity, was investigated. This section provides a detailed overview of the process of data collection.

3.1.1 Selection of the research sites

The subjects of this research are the people who live in the proximity of the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains in central Nicaragua. Based on detailed survey maps of the pre-Hispanic archaeological artefacts (ranging from human-made mounds, stone sculptures, petroglyphs, sherds and lithic tools), research sites were selected in inhabited areas with a high density of archaeological remains (Flick 2007, 30-31). The locations that were selected are the communities of Aguas Buenas 1 and 2 (San Isidro), Piedra Grande 1 and 2, Sabana Grande 1, Güegüestepe, Santa Rita, all in the municipality of Juigalpa, and finca Santa Eduviges in Nawawasito, El Ayote (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). These areas are inhabited mainly by subsistence farmers who live in small communities or more isolated rural estates (*fincas* or *haciendas).*

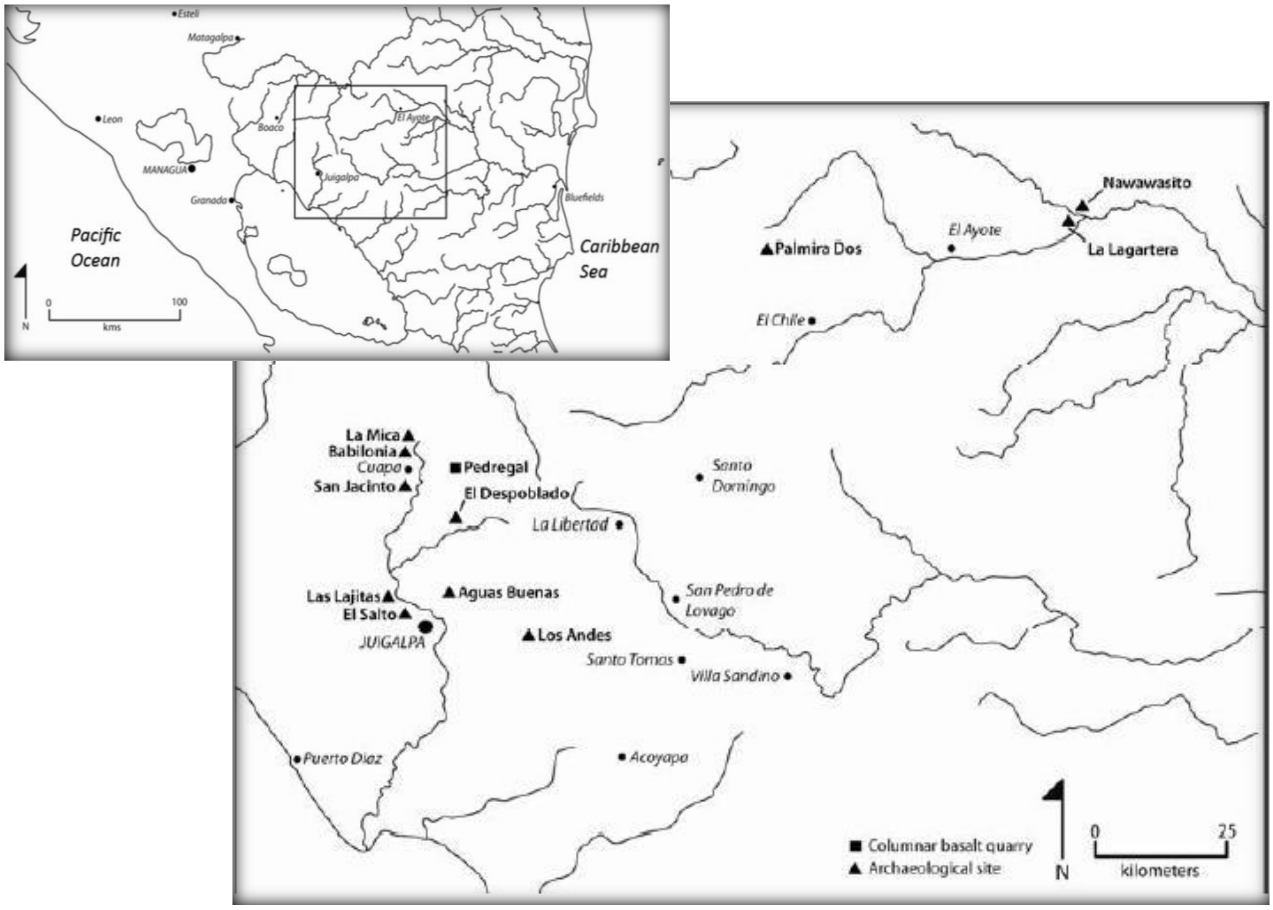


Figure 2 Map of the research area with the archaeological sites (as known in 2009) indicated. In the upper left corner, the research area is indicated in the square. Source: Geurds 2009b, 8, fig. 2a and 2b.

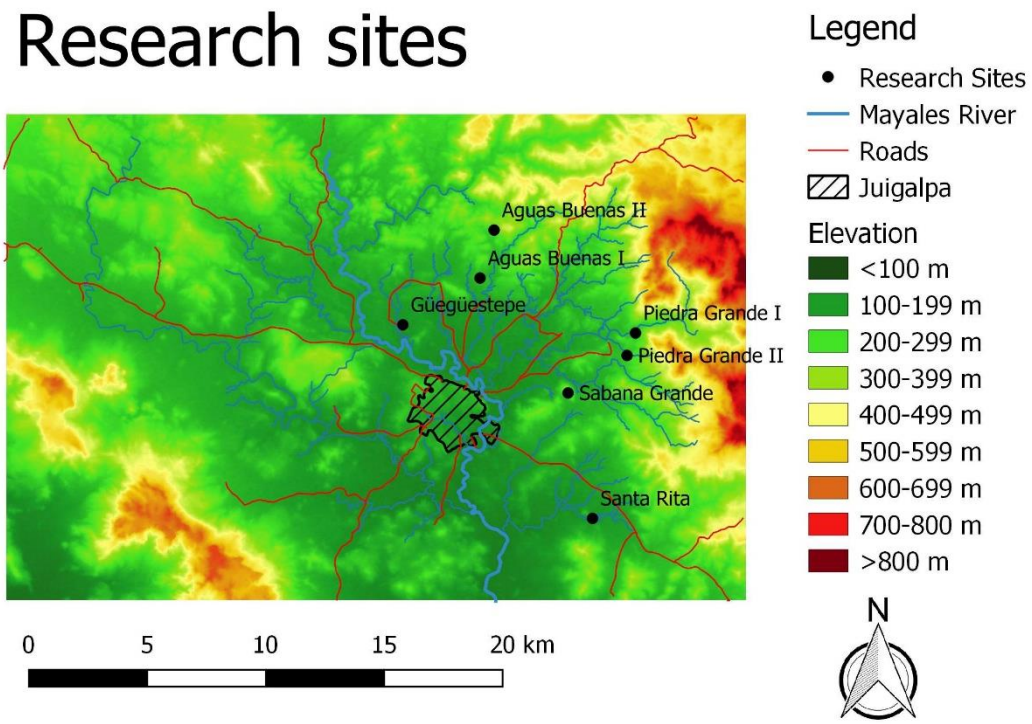


Figure 3 DEM of the area around Juigalpa (indicated in the arced section) with the research sites in the municipality of Juigalpa indicated. Geographical data: courtesy of A. Arteaga. Map made by Kwinten van Dessel and Anne Vera Veen.

3.1.2 Contact with the informants

Contacts with the informants were forged through three different approaches: 1) through the established relations with the PACEN project, 2) through the contacts of the local facilitator Carlos Villanueva, and 3) simply by knocking on doors and introducing myself. This combination of using established networks and simultaneously forging new relationships, has several advantages. With the contacts that were made through the PACEN project, my association with the project had already provided me with credibility and trustworthiness and facilitated the conversations with the informants. On the other hand, this same association might have influenced the responses (this is more elaborately discussed in the section 3.1.10.1). It was similarly easy to establish a bond of trust with the informants when I was introduced by the facilitator Carlos Villanueva, however in some cases his presence as a friend of the informants led the conversation to topics that were irrelevant for this research. This did not necessarily limit the research, as it fitted in the 'unstructured interview method' that was often applied in the beginning of an interview which aids in familiarizing with the respondents (Bernard 2006, 213-219). Nevertheless, at times it was necessary to take some individuals aside for a one-to-one conversation. In the last method, where respondents were found by knocking on doors or by being introduced by previous informants, the disadvantage of the deference effect caused by the preconception people might have about archaeologists and what they would like to hear, was less obviously limiting the research (Bernard 2006, 241-242). Of course, this effect cannot be avoided completely, especially since my appearance gave away that I am an outsider. In this method of approaching people without facilitator, suspicion sometimes caused people to refuse to talk to me. Each of these methods has particular advantages and disadvantages (Bernard 2006, 239-250; Flick 2007, 29-30) . It is through the combination of the three methods that the advantages and disadvantages of each method are balanced (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 41-62).

3.1.3 Facilitator

As mentioned above, during some research visits the facilitator Carlos Villanueva was employed to facilitate the contacts with the informants. As a facilitator is someone who both understands the perspectives of the informants, as well as the broad research objectives of the researcher, employing a facilitator is common practice in qualitative research methods (Van Willigen 2002). By working with a facilitator, it is considerably

easier to find and contact informants and building a bond of trust with them (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 58-62).

Carlos Villanueva is born and raised in Juigalpa and is acquainted with the rural areas in central Nicaragua as well as with the archaeological project. His family is involved in the management of the local *Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea* which exhibits, among others, pre-Hispanic stone sculptures from the Chontales region. Through the collaboration with this museum, Carlos became involved with the PACEN project from an early phase: since 2007 he participated in preliminary archaeological research throughout central Nicaragua. His inside knowledge of the local contexts, his large social network in the area and his affiliation to the PACEN project, made Carlos suitable for the job of facilitator. In this investigation, Carlos Villanueva introduced me to the informants in finca Santa Eduviges and Santa Rita. Working with Carlos Villanueva was beneficial for this research because in some remote contexts it would have been difficult to gain access and to build an atmosphere of trust without being introduced by a local facilitator. As Carlos Villanueva was familiar with the local vocabulary in Spanish, language difficulties were easily overcome. Practically, it was very convenient that Carlos Villanueva owns a motorcycle and a car to provide the transport to the more remote areas of research. Without his knowledge of the landscape and skilled experience in driving over unpaved roads in the rainy season, it would have been difficult to access these research settings (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Carlos Villanueva in front of his car. This photograph was taken after we came back from Finca Santa Eduviges, a bumpy five-hour drive from Juigalpa. (Photo by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016).

However, as Carlos Villanueva was friends with many of the informants, there was a likelihood that he would take the lead in the conversation, which made it difficult to guide the interview to relevant topics for this research (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 59). In such cases, informants were invited to go on a walk which provided the chance to have a one-to-one conversation.

As the sites of Aguas Buenas 1 and 2, Piedras Grandes and Sabana Grande were visited without facilitator, the disadvantage of Carlos Villanueva taking over the interview was

balanced to a certain extent. In these settings access was obtained through contacts with PACEN or by personally approaching informants. Transport to these areas was facilitated by the driver Jelson Montaya who was employed by the PACEN project.

3.1.4 Duration

The collection of data in the field was done during two field visits in January and June 2016. In January, a preliminary exploration of the field was undertaken and the first contacts were forged. However, as the interviews that were conducted in January had to be combined with other work in the archaeological excavation in La Pachona and the measuring of the archaeological features in Aguas Buenas, this research remained in a preliminary phase. The experience from January aided the preparation for the fieldwork in June. During this second visit to the field, a more structured schedule of visits to informants could be maintained and the time spent in Central Nicaragua could be arranged more effectively. However, doing qualitative research in a timespan of two months, could be considered a limitation of this research.

As multiple sites were addressed in this research, a trade-off between breadth and depth of the investigation had to be made, since the more settings that are studied, the less time can be spend in each setting (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 40). In finca Santa Eduviges five consecutive days were spent, with overnight stays in the farmstead. The community of Aguas Buenas 1, in particular the house of Juan and Nidia Suárez Villegas, was visited on several days in January and June 2016. In the other settings, the duration of the visits alternated from brief fifteen minute visits to a full day.

3.1.5 Qualitative data gathering

The qualitative research methods that were used are participant observation, engaged walks, informal and unstructured interviewing. These methods are all placed on a continuum that indicates the amount of control the researcher exerts over the situation (Bernard 2006, 210-211; Richardson *et al.* 1965; Gorden 1975; Ingold 2011; Spradley 1979).

3.1.5.1 Participant observation

In the settings where longer or frequently recurring visits were undertaken, a deeper understanding of the rhythms of daily life of the people and the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of their identity could be reached through participant observation. In these two settings, I was able to move beyond an exclusive focus on the research questions, to take part in the routines of daily activities. This allowed me to just

be there, which is an important research strategy (Bernard 2006, 345). Participation in daily activities such as horse riding, washing clothes, milking the cows, baking tortillas and fetching water from the river not only improves the bond of trust, but also helps to give the researcher an embodied experience (Ellingson 2008, 244-245). For example, the theoretical knowledge that the inhabitants of Aguas Buenas have to walk a distance of 0,5 kilometres with 10 litres of water at a time, is different from the embodied knowledge that I gained after actually doing this. Through my physical participation in these activities, I could move beyond a merely theoretical understanding and reach an embodied understanding that helped me to better relate to the life-worlds of the research participants and build an interpretative framework for the interviews. During the participation in daily activities, the pronunciation of identity of the informants could be observed, as well as how the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains are embedded in the daily lives of the informants. This method of participant observation helped to investigate the first subquestion as formulated in the introduction:

What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua?

3.1.5.2 Walks

Another similar method that was used to get more insight in the role of the archaeological remains in the landscape and in the lives of the people, was to go on walks with the informants through the landscape (De Leon and Cohen 2005, 202-203; Pink 2007; Pink *et al.* 2007). This method was applied with Juan Suárez Villegas in Aguas Buenas, Felipe Santiago Lopez Aleman in finca Santa Eduviges and Andrés Eliceo Baez Galleano in Santa Rita. During the walk, the informants guided me past their daily routes. Through this exploration of the landscape, feelings, thoughts and memories were recalled by the informants as we walked passed certain places that triggered these experiences. This led the conversation to topics that would have otherwise not come up. Passing the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains provided a good starting point to probe how the informants relate the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains to their own reality and subsequently if and how they use the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of their identity. The knowledge that was gained through this method about the role of the archaeological remains in the present landscape and the daily life of the informants is further discussed in chapter VI.

3.1.5.3 Informal interviewing

Informal interviewing was one the methods that contributed most to this research. In informal interviewing, the conversations with the informants were not steered towards a certain theme of interest. This makes it possible to get information on topics that the researchers could not even anticipate on in formal interview questions, but which could be valuable to the research (Bernard 2006, 221). By letting the conversation flow naturally, topics that are meaningful to the informant are addressed as well, instead of only topics that are meaningful to the interviewer (Winick and Bartis 2016, 21). To clarify this with an example: recurring themes in the conversations of informal interviews were matters concerning cattle raising and crop cultivation. Despite that this was not related to a concrete research objective, it did provide important insight in the way in which people identify themselves. This proved helpful in understanding the way that the past is used in the formation of their identity and whether the pre-Hispanic past plays a role in this identity construction.

3.1.5.4 Unstructured interviewing

The limited time and demarcated research questions made it necessary to ask direct questions to my informants, guiding the conversation towards a certain theme. This method is called unstructured interviewing (Bernard 2006, 211-212). Questions that specifically addressed my research interests, regulated the interview. Examples of questions that were asked are:

What do you think the mounds, sculptures and petroglyphs are? Who made them, according to you? What is your relation to the people who made them?

In this process, the questions were continuously reformulated and adapted to the way that people reacted to them, so the following interview would be more relevant. Special attention was given to keeping the questions open in order to avoid projecting my own opinions through the suggestion of a desired answer in the question.

3.1.5.5 Evaluation

The use of these four techniques were not strictly delineated in the field, but were rather used interchangeable, adapting the choice of method to each situation. The combination of methods in which the researcher exerts a minimum of influence on the situation and specified interviews that probed directly to the research objectives, results in data that both provide a broad understanding of the life worlds of the informants as

well as specific knowledge about their perspective on the archaeological remains. These complementary methods were indispensable for this research, as the local perspectives on the archaeological remains, their way of viewing the past and the use of the past in their construction of identity, could not be understood without in-depth knowledge of their situation.

A disadvantage of the use of these methods is that a lot of data that were collected, are not straightforwardly linked to the research objective. This caused that a lot of the time dedicated to the organization and analyses of data was spend on the selection into relevant and less relevant sections.

3.1.6 Interview context

The context in which the fieldwork was undertaken, influences the outcomes of the research considerably. If interviewees do not feel at ease in a certain interview context, this will affect their responses (Bernard 2005, 216). During the participant observation, participation in the daily activities of the informants was central. These activities took place inside their house or in the surrounding lands. The unstructured and semi-structured interviews mostly took place in or just outside the houses of the respondents. This interview context is advantageous to the research, as the respondents literally felt at home. Furthermore, the objects in sight and the surrounding landscape were a good conversation starter.

3.1.7 Third parties

A consequence of conducting interviews at the respondent's homes, was that there were often third parties present. Group conversations and interruptions by children and animals frequently occurred. As Bernard (2006, 232) affirms, interviewing in group is inevitable in small communities where everybody knows each other. The coming and going of respondents in a conversation could be regarded as an interruption, but also as an advantage, since interviews seamlessly passed on from one to another in a natural way, which enhanced the informal atmosphere that was necessary to make my informants feel comfortable. Because the topics of inquiry were not particularly sensitive, the presence of third parties has not heavily influenced the answers of my informants.

In the majority of the interviews, I was the only visitor. During the stay in finca Santa Eduviges and the visit to Santa Rita, the facilitator Carlos Villanueva accompanied me, although he was not always present during the interviews. The interviews that were

conducted in Aguas Buenas 1 and 2 were undertaken in the company of my fellow student Eva van Dosselaar.

3.1.8 Recording methods

3.1.8.1 Video

To document the information that forms the core of this research, the conversations and interviews were filmed with a video camera. There are several advantages of having audio-visual data instead of only audio recordings. As explained above, the interviews were often conducted in group and people joined and left throughout one interview session. In the resulting images, the person who is speaking is easily identified, in contrast with audio recordings. Regularly, informants made hand gestures and facial expressions that are crucial to understand the message that they articulate. Especially during the walks in the landscape, where the surroundings provoked certain emotions and memories, it is beneficial that the scenery is captured on video as well. During the analysis of the images, it is easy to relate to the situation and place the interview in context (Jewitt 2012, 4).

The informants were always explained beforehand what the objectives were with the video recordings and asked for permission to film the conversation. When people joined the interview before they had given their consent, permission to use the footage was asked afterwards.
Most informants agreed to be filmed. They enjoyed watching fragments of the videos and seeing themselves in the small screen of the camera after the interview was done. Sometimes permission was not given to film. The cause of the rejection often being the sensitive nature of the conversation (for example the war) or simply because of distrust.

The images were only made for the sake of recording the information for this research. The objectives did not include the public use of the audio-visual material and no permission was obtained for this. As the videos aimed at recording the information, no special effort was made to regulate the framing of the video through the use of a tripod or camera buddy. The camera was simply hand held by me, while eye contact was maintained during the conversation. This informal manner of filming was a conscious choice, as any setting that would be more formal would have risked making the informants uncomfortable (Winick and Bartis 2016, 21). Besides, during the conversations the informants would frequently walk around to engage in daily activities such as feeding the pigs, care for the children and prepare food. The use of a fixed

camera would either imply that the informants would walk in and out the frame, or that their mobility had to be limited, which would have a negative impact on the natural flow of the conversation (Barbash and Taylor 1977, 356; Bernard 2006, 229). Not all the conversations were recorded on video: a balance had to be found between recording relevant parts and leaving the camera off. Although extra batteries and SD cards were available, the use of the camera had to be selective in the more remote areas where no electricity was available to charge it.

Since a camera has the agency to influence a social interaction, people will adjust how they behave and what they say in the presence of this apparatus (Barbash and Taylor 1977, 16; Jewitt 2012). The effect of the camera presence on the behaviour of the informants was noticed occasionally, for example when an informant decided to change into different clothes before the start of the interview. However, no strong discrepancies were noted between the responses that were given off and on record.

3.1.8.2 Fieldnotes

A notebook was carried around at all times to document the names of my informants, experiences, insights and reflections. In some occasions, notes were made during the interviews. However, it soon appeared to be a distractive activity to write in front of the informants. Suspicion and curiosity about what I was writing often took the overhand in the conversation. As many of the informants are illiterate, the explicit demonstration of my writing skills could have come across as intimidating and could enhanced a perceived higher status. Additionally, the outsider-role of the researcher is emphasized through the taking of notes (Campbell and Lassiter 2015, 68). For these reasons, impressions and reflection journals were written up in the evening time or during breaks out of the sight of informants.

These field notes are an indispensable part of the research that is complementary to all other means of documentation (Bernard 2006, 387). Through daily journals, personal thoughts and experiences, fieldnotes allow to reflect on the role of the researcher in the interaction. The personal state of mind of the researcher will have an influence on the data that is collected. Therefore, it is better to acknowledge these subjectivities in fieldnotes, than to claim an objective view throughout the research. Qualitative research methods such as the ones applied in this investigation are not producing unbiased objective knowledge. It is common practice to acknowledge your subjective point of view (Campbell and Lassiter 2015, 66).

These fieldnotes were not intended to be made public, as much personal information about myself and about the informants is included in them. However, the experiences expressed in the fieldnotes are taken into account during the analysis of the data.

3.1.9 Consent and ethics

When working with human subjects, a certain ethical code needs to be employed. Ethical codes for qualitative research are formulated in many different publications (Bernard 2006; Campbell and Lassiter 2015, 36; Clifford 2011; Winick and Bartis 2016 among others), but they all come down to the same principles. This can be explained using the FPIC-principle: Free, Prior and Informed Consent (Goodland 2004, 66). This principle emphasizes the importance of informing your potential participants beforehand of the project and the possible consequences of their consent. The potential participants should be aware that they can object to cooperation without consequences and that they can withdraw at any moment. This informed consent minimally includes *"the research goals, methods, funding sources or sponsors, expected outcomes, anticipated impacts of the research, and the rights and responsibilities of research participants*", according to the American Anthropological Association's Code of Ethics (www.aaanet.org/provdef/ethics/; Campbell and Lassiter 2015, 38).

In this research, the potential participants were informed beforehand about the research: the research objectives to investigate their perspectives on the archaeological remains, the association with the PACEN project and Leiden University and the output of a written master's thesis that would attempt to reflect their view on pre-Hispanic heritage and its role in the construction of their identity as accurate as possible. After consent to participate in the research was granted, approval to film for the purpose of documenting was asked. In cases where this was not granted, notes were made during the conversation that were written in more elaborate form shortly after the interview. The consent of my respondents was not materialized in a release form, as is suggested in Winick and Bartis (2016) and Campbell and Lassiter (2015). Many of the informants are illiterate and could thus not even read a potential consent form. An informant declared that in the past rural, illiterate people had been tricked into selling their land for a very low price, because they had signed a form that they could not read. This has caused a widespread distrust of forms and formal writings.

The American Folklore Society's Position Statement on Research with Human Subjects argues that researchers "*guard the confidentiality of their consultants when such*

confidentiality is requested. In most instances, however, consultants want their contributions to research to be made known" (www.afsnet.org). The consideration between maintaining the anonymity of the informants and formally acknowledging their input has to be negotiated for each individual case (Campbell and Lassiter 2015, 38). In this investigation, it seems appropriate to give the informants formal recognition of their contributions by mentioning their names, on the premises that consent was given. However, in some instances sensitive information that could harm the informants was expressed. For example: when an informant talked about his experiences during the civil war in the 80s, he talked with a low voice and asked not to take any notes. He was scared that this information might end up in the wrong hands and that he would be persecuted for it. In this case, the informant will remain anonymous.

Reciprocity in social research is currently widely debated. What do research participants get back for their efforts? In the long run, a better understanding of the world is thought to benefit the 'common good' (Head 2009, 342). In this investigation, the inclusion of the voices of the research participants in the debate on heritage, historical narratives and identity will hopefully benefit them in some way. However, these long-term and abstract consequences are of little value in the short term.

The offering of monetary compensation to research participants in exchange for their time, energy and information has been practiced in some research projects as a short-term compensation (Bernard 2006, 209). Nevertheless, this practice has been critiqued for having several unwanted side effects. By offering money, the deference effect could increase as respondents feel that they are in debt to the researcher and that they therefore should say what the researcher wants to hear (McKeganey 2001, 1237). Monetary compensation could jeopardize the voluntary consent as people might agree to participate in the research because they need the money and not because they want to (Grady 2010). Moreover, in small communities it can place the informants in a negative position and disturb the relations between community members as some people receive money and others not (Descartes *et al.* 2011, 222). In this research, it was decided not to provide any monetary compensation to the research participants. However, making use of their time, energy and hospitality without any kind of retribution did not seem ethical. Therefore, food was offered to the research participants, in accordance to the time spent at the setting, both to compensate for my own consumption as well as a sign of respect and gratitude towards the informants. This

was greatly appreciated, as many informants had scarce food supplies due to the drought of the recent years.

3.1.10 Limitations

3.1.10.1 The deference effect

As Bernard (2006, 247) notes "[i]*nterviews are social encounters. People manipulate those encounters to whatever they think is their advantage*." Interviewing is a qualitative research method, it will not generate objective and neutral data, but rather is influenced heavily by the circumstances of the interview, the relation between the informant and the interviewer and the topics of conversation. Since this subjectivity cannot be overcome, it is better to identify the sources of bias than not to acknowledge them (Bernard 2006, 242).

The deference effect is a term used when respondents tell the interviewer what they think he or she wants to know, or when they agree to something the interviewer has said, because they perceive him or her as an authority (Bernard 2006, 242; Krysan and Couper 2003). Although the deference effect was limited in the interviews by asking open questions (for example: *"What do you think are important features in the landscape*?" instead of *"Don't you think that the mounds are important?"*), it was noticeable that the deference effect had probably affected the answers some of the informants formulated.

Because the research settings were all in the vicinity of visible archaeological remains, the informants consequently had been in superficial or intense contact with members of the archaeological research project PACEN. Some of the interviewees had only seen my colleagues briefly when they were asked for permission to pass their land for survey reasons, others had been collaborating more intensely with the archaeologists. This collaboration might have caused the informants to think that anyone who is associated with the project, wants to hear about the value of the archaeological remains. For example, during the interview with Juan Carlos Perez (23 June 2016), who had been employed by PACEN for several seasons to assist in the archaeological fieldwork, Juan continuously emphasized the value of the human-made mounds in Aguas Buenas. After further inquiry, he explained that he did not know the origin of the mounds before the archaeologists came to Aguas Buenas and that they did not care about it. In this particular case, his answer was influenced by what the thought was expected of him.

Another factor that might have enhanced the deference effect is that of perceived status. My light skin and hair, my ability to read and write (which occasionally was shown when I took notes), my ability to speak English and Dutch (which was occasionally shown when I communicated with my colleagues), the technological devices I used and my association to the research project, might have caused informants to perceive my status as higher than theirs. This can come across as intimidating and influence the interview negatively. Mainly in brief encounters this factor caused issues, as the relation with informants improved when more time with them was spent.

3.1.10.2 Gender and interviewing

In research that uses social encounters as the basis of data collection, the gender of the interviewer influences the investigation. In some contexts, the gender of the interviewer can make it difficult to approach potential informants. Responses to interview questions could be influenced by the gender-relations of the participants in the conversation as well (Bernard 2006, 242).

Gould (1998, 6), who conducted research in the highlands of Nicaragua in the 1990s using similar interview methods, notes that he, as a male, had problems approaching female informants and building relationships with them. This leads to the awareness that, as a female researcher interviewing both women and men from all ages, my gender was advantageous for this type of method. People seemed slightly more receptive to me because I am a woman. The role of social researcher fitted with the social expectations of women in Central Nicaragua: to be understanding, sensitive, interested in life histories and gossip. The reaction of female informants was generally receptive and less suspicious as Gould (1998, 6) described. Some of the men who had previously portrayed themselves as rough, opened up during private, unstructured interviews. The questions were not gender specific and did not require sensitive personal information to be exposed. During group conversations, women tended to be less talkative than men. This might be caused by a cultural difference in central Nicaragua between men and women in response to strangers that was observed: the men generally leave the house more often and have more interaction with strangers, while women stay closer to the house and are more suspicious of strangers.
Because many of the visits were made in the morning, during a part of the day that men generally are outside to work with the cattle or on the fields, opportunities to speak to

women alone were abundant and the above-mentioned gender imbalance was compensated.

3.1.10.3 Duration of the fieldwork

The relatively short duration of the fieldwork is a limitation to this research. In qualitative research methods such as participant observation, the practice of *being there* or *hanging out* is essential to build a bond of trust (Bernard 2006, 345). If the time that is spend in the research setting is short, the mutual trust that is build up will be limited and this will affect the quality of the data that is collected.

3.1.10.4 Language

Although my level of Spanish is reasonable good, not all the nuances of the local accent were immediately understood. Fortunately, this improved with time. However, small misunderstandings due to my lack of understanding the local expressions could have a negative influence on the research.

3.1.11 Reflection

In qualitative research, the outcomes of the study are considerably affected by the socio-historical background and personal characteristics of the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007, 14-19). Instead of claiming to present objective results in this thesis, it is better to acknowledge and reflect upon the inevitable subjectivity that is inherent in this type of research. As the data that forms the basis of this investigation is gathered through interviews and observations, this is the first aspect on which the researcher exerts influence. Meaning is created *in* the intersubjective encounters and conversations between me and the informants (Fabian 1971; Pels 2014, 212-214). Since this research deals with identity, it is particularly important to be conscious that the performance of identity of the informants is adapted to my presence as an audience (Goffman 1959).

Even in the selection, analysis and interpretation of the data, I cannot escape my own cultural subjectivity. The interpretation of the testimonies of the informants are inevitably influenced by my own gendered, social, historical, political, educational and class perspective (De Burgos 2006, 110; Haraway 1991). Therefore, this research does not claim to provide an objective account of the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua, the role of the pre-Hispanic past in it and its relation to national narratives. Rather, the subjective role of the researcher is acknowledged in the establishment of the research findings.

A particular sensitive point with which I struggled a lot during the research process, is the valid critique of Shepherd and Haber (2011) on the existing politics of knowledge in today's world. This politics of knowledge privileges knowledge produced in academia in the global north, to which the global south is "*either a dependent outpost or a field location*" (Shepherd and Haber 2011, 105 cited in Winter 2014, 6). The present research undoubtedly is part of this trend. Although acknowledging the role of this research in maintaining unequal knowledge politics is necessary, it does not make it any less true.

On the other hand, the resources that are available to me through Leiden University, precisely because of this politics of knowledge, can better be employed for research that benefits the local communities in these field locations in the global south. Therefore, I hope that this project, despite its contribution to the existing unequal politics of knowledge, can at least contribute to the inclusion of the local voices from central Nicaragua in debates about heritage and identity.

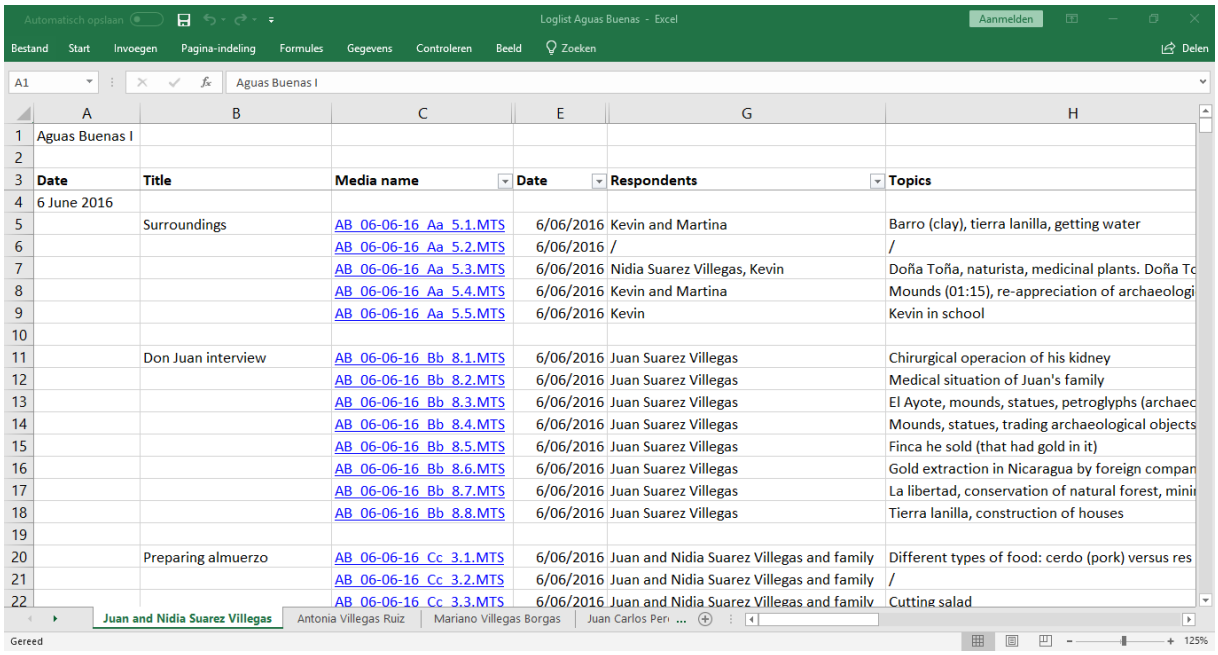
3.2 Data analyses

The data that form the basis of this investigation are the interviews and observations that were recorded during the fieldwork in January and June 2016. Therefore, the dataset consists of a collection of video files. The video files are organized in a database and analysed thematically using an inductive approach. The next section will discuss the approaches used in the data organization and analyses in function of the research questions.

3.2.1 Organization of the data

The video files were renamed and organized in folders based on the location and date of the recordings. In a Microsoft Excel database, the video files were arranged through a hyperlink to the original file. Contextual metadata was added to the database for each file: a descriptive title, date, media name, size, time, respondents, description of the situation, specific location, quotes and comments. The section 'description of the situation' was filled in using data from the fieldnotes and contains contextual information about the specific situation. In the section 'comments', noteworthy comments from the reflection journals were added. The most important parameter for the analyses is however the section *topics,* where the content of the conversations was summarized. In Figure 5 Print-screen of the Excel database that was built to organize the

data. a print-screen of the databased is added, the entire database can be requested to the author.



	A	B	C	E	G	H
1	Aguas Buenas I					
2						
3	**Date**	**Title**	**Media name**	**Date**	**Respondents**	**Topics**
4	6 June 2016					
5		Surroundings	AB_06-06-16_Aa_5.1.MTS	6/06/2016	Kevin and Martina	Barro (clay), tierra lanilla, getting water
6			AB_06-06-16_Aa_5.2.MTS	6/06/2016	/	/
7			AB_06-06-16_Aa_5.3.MTS	6/06/2016	Nidia Suarez Villegas, Kevin	Doña Toña, naturista, medicinal plants. Doña To
8			AB_06-06-16_Aa_5.4.MTS	6/06/2016	Kevin and Martina	Mounds (01:15), re-appreciation of archaeologi
9			AB_06-06-16_Aa_5.5.MTS	6/06/2016	Kevin	Kevin in school
10						
11		Don Juan interview	AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.1.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	Chirurgical operacion of his kidney
12			AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.2.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	Medical situation of Juan's family
13			AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.3.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	El Ayote, mounds, statues, petroglyphs (archaec
14			AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.4.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	Mounds, statues, trading archaeological objects
15			AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.5.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	Finca he sold (that had gold in it)
16			AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.6.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	Gold extraction in Nicaragua by foreign compar
17			AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.7.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	La libertad, conservation of natural forest, mini
18			AB_06-06-16_Bb_8.8.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan Suarez Villegas	Tierra lanilla, construction of houses
19						
20		Preparing almuerzo	AB_06-06-16_Cc_3.1.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan and Nidia Suarez Villegas and family	Different types of food: cerdo (pork) versus res
21			AB_06-06-16_Cc_3.2.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan and Nidia Suarez Villegas and family	/
22			AB_06-06-16_Cc_3.3.MTS	6/06/2016	Juan and Nidia Suarez Villegas and family	Cutting salad

Figure 5 Print-screen of the Excel database that was built to organize the data.

3.2.2 Considerations

Structured interviews are often transcribed, translated if needed, and added to the appendices of a work. However, for several reasons it was chosen not to transcribe the interviews in this research and instead analyse the data directly from the video files. By making a transcription of the conversations in the video files, a lot of contextual information is lost in the process of abstraction. Hand gestures, facial expressions and voice intonations cannot be transcribed to text without losing information. Therefore, the choice to analyse the videos directly instead of a transcription was motivated by a desire to include this contextual information in the analysis (Barbash and Taylor 1977, 355-357). The same argumentation is valid for the choice of not translating the original Spanish data to English. In the process of translation, nuances in the expressions of the informants would be lost and expressions in the local accent could easily be misunderstood when translated literally.

By analysing the video files directly, the contextual information was included in each review of the data. Use of the database considerably facilitated watching the videos, while simultaneously adding information to the database (see Figure 6).

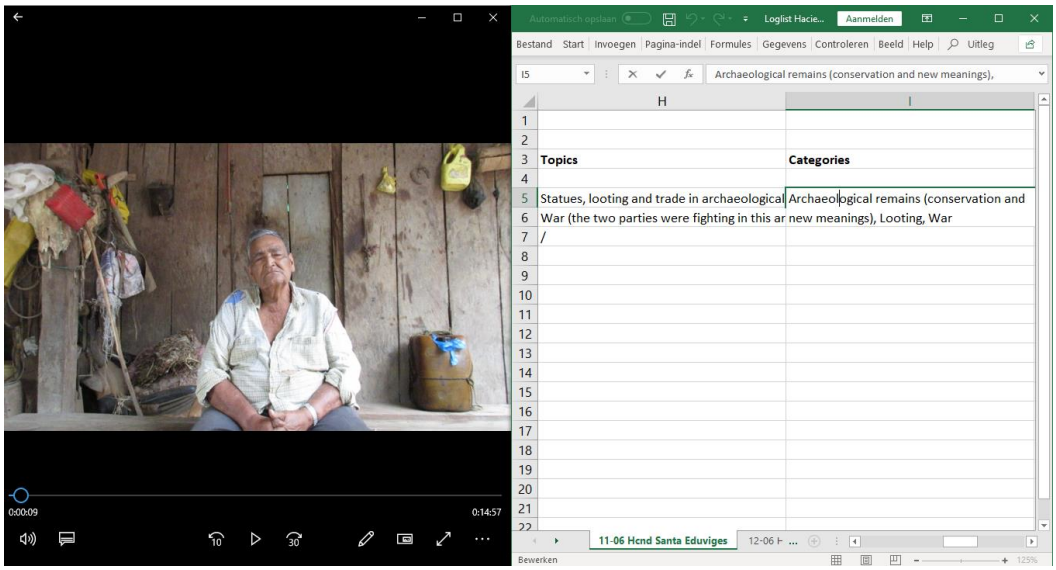


Figure 6 Screen-shot of the database while in use. On the left side the videos that constitute the data could be watched. The knowledge that is gained from these videos could be added to the database on the right side of the screen.

3.2.3 Selection

A categorization and selection of the data, which is in its nature complex and messy, is essential to reach to an understanding and interpretation of the data (Thomas 2006, 239; Miles and Huberman 1994, 10-11). The methods of data collection that were used, produced a lot of information that was only indirectly relevant to this research for purposes of establishing a bond of trust or understanding the life worlds of the informants. However, to isolate the data directly relevant to answering the first research question: *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua?,* a selection was made. Based on the information that was filled in in the section *topics* in the database, the conversations that directly engaged with the pre-Hispanic past, identity or identity categories were selected. The selection of this data follows a deductive approach, because it is based on its relevance for a pre-established research question (Strauss and Corbin 2008, 12). The analyses were further done on this selected data.

Undoubtedly the bulky data that was created by the open-ended methods of data collection has delayed the research process. However, the data that were collected are considered essential for a deeper understanding of the research context and the informants' life worlds, as is further discussed in chapter IV.

3.2.4 Thematic analyses

The content of the footage that was selected was analysed thematically, thereby following an established method in the analyses of qualitative data (Leininger 1985; Miles and Huberman 1994). In thematic analyses, meaningful themes are identified based on recurring topics in the data.

Concretely, the data that was used for the analysis of the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the local construction of identity, was analysed through the repeated viewing of the video files (Strauss and Corbin 2008, 12; Thomas 2006, 238). Each topic of conversation that was discussed in the video files was already coded in the section *topics* in the database. The second step in the analysis consisted of the grouping together of conversation topics to form themes, summarizing the data in the process. Three themes could be identified that organise the topics into meaningful units that will help in answering the research questions. The themes that were identified are: (1) the relation of the informants with the pre-Hispanic past, (2) their image of pre-Hispanic peoples and (3) their idea of the identity category 'indigenous'. The data was subsequently analysed *horizontally*: per theme instead of per interview, which allowed for a review of the nuances and internal contradictions within a theme. For each theme, quotes were generated from the video files and translated from Spanish to English. These quotes were written in the *quotes* section in the database. From the quotes, the narratives on identity and heritage of the informants were reconstructed in chapter VII.

The thematic analyses of qualitative data are an inductive approach. This means that all the themes derive from the data itself and not from preconceived ideas or hypotheses, as is the case in deductive research (Strauss and Corbin 2008, 12).

3.2.5 Justification of the choice of themes

It should be made clear that the classification of the data into themes is a subjective interpretation of the author, nevertheless motivated by the research questions. Therefore, it is necessary to justify the choices that are made during the process of analysis (Jewitt 2012, 19).

The first theme, which discusses the relation of the informants with the pre-Hispanic past, contains information that gives insight in the local historical narratives regarding the pre-Hispanic past, and how these historical developments are considered to have led up to the present-day identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua. For example, whether the informants consider themselves as descendants of the pre-Hispanic

peoples who produced the archaeological remains, gives insight in the way that they relate themselves to the pre-Hispanic past. Historical narratives of how the process of *mestizaje* took place in the colonial period, help to understand how the informants envision the role of pre-Hispanic peoples in the further historical developments and subsequently in their own identity.

The second theme encompasses accounts that express how the pre-Hispanic peoples are envisioned by the inhabitants of central Nicaragua. The images or associations that circulate of pre-Hispanic peoples, will influence whether and how the pre-Hispanic past is given a role in the present-day construction of identity of the informants. For example, if a very negative image of the pre-Hispanic peoples is expressed that stands far from the way that people like to see and identify themselves, it is more likely that the pre-Hispanic past has a limited role in present-day identity. Therefore, this theme brings further understanding to the way that the pre-Hispanic past is imagined by the present-day inhabitants of central Nicaragua and thus gives insight in the role the pre-Hispanic past is attributed in the construction of identity of the informants.

The third theme explores the local understanding of the content of the identity category of 'indigenous'. During conversations, it became clear that the informants see a continuity between the pre-Hispanic peoples and present-day indigenous people. In other words, the pre-Hispanic past is attributed a large role in the identity of present-day indigenous peoples. Therefore, it is useful to investigate how the identity category of 'indigenous' is envisioned by the informants through their image of present-day indigenous peoples. This theme helps to understand how the identity of the informants is constructed in relation to their image of 'indigenous peoples' in general and pre-Hispanic peoples in specific.

3.2.6 Literature review

The second sub question: *What are the national narratives on identity and heritage?,* was answered through an extensive literature review. The national narratives that were propagated by the Nicaraguan government, manipulate the pre-Hispanic past to establish a national identity. Roughly two different versions of a national narrative were articulated by respectively the Somoza dictatorship and later the Sandinista government, however remnants of both of these versions remain present in Nicaragua until today (Hooker 2005). These narratives, with a focus on the role of the pre-Hispanic

past in the construction of national Nicaraguan identity, are discussed in chapter VIII. Additionally, examples of the promotion of these narratives in popular culture are given.

3. 3 Conclusions

In this chapter, the methods of data collection and analyses that were employed in this research were discussed. The research questions were investigated through participant observation, walks, structured and unstructured interviews with the inhabitants of central Nicaragua who live in the proximity of the archaeological remains. This resulted in a collection of video recordings and notes, which were organized in a database. Through an extensive reviewing of the videos, information could be added to the database that allowed for a thematic analysis of the data. The results of this analysis are discussed in chapter VII, VIII and IX.

IV Research context

In this chapter, a general outline of the geography and historical developments of the research context is discussed. This is relevant for this thesis since identity is spatially and temporally constructed (Marshall 1998, 294), and this thesis deals specifically with how the past is used to construct identity.

A brief geographical overview of Nicaragua is given, so the place of central Nicaragua in relation to the rest of the country can be understood. As in other parts of the world, the geography of Nicaragua has influenced it's historical and geopolitical development (Newson 1987). An introduction to the geography will help the reader to understand the historical developments as outlined in section 4.2.

As this research looks into the ways that the pre-Hispanic past is viewed and how it is used in the construction of identity, a brief historical outline of what is known about the pre-Hispanic past of Nicaragua and in particular central Nicaragua is given. The following historical developments have drastically shaped the way that this pre-Hispanic past is looked upon, therefore this is discussed as well.

4.1 Geography

Nicaragua is a country in Central America, the isthmus that connects South- and North America. It is a relatively narrow strip of land, that is enclosed on the west side by the Pacific Ocean and on the east side by the Atlantic Ocean. It shares a border with Honduras to the north and with Costa Rica to the south (Healy 1980, 7). Nicaragua has a rich and varied geography, which has influenced population dynamics from pre-Hispanic times and continues to be of importance to understand the social geography. In order to get insight in how central Nicaragua relates to the rest of the country and how it developed historically, a basic understanding of the geography of Nicaragua is crucial.

The variety in geography, flora and fauna within Nicaragua is so diverse, that this section cannot claim to be exhaustive. The geography can be roughly divided in three distinct zones that run from west to east: the Pacific zone, the central highlands and the Atlantic coast (see Figure 7) (Healy 1980, 7-10; Merrill 1993, 53-59). The central highlands, in particular the region north east of lake Cocibolca, is the location of the case-study of this research. The following section gives an overview of the natural features of these zones.

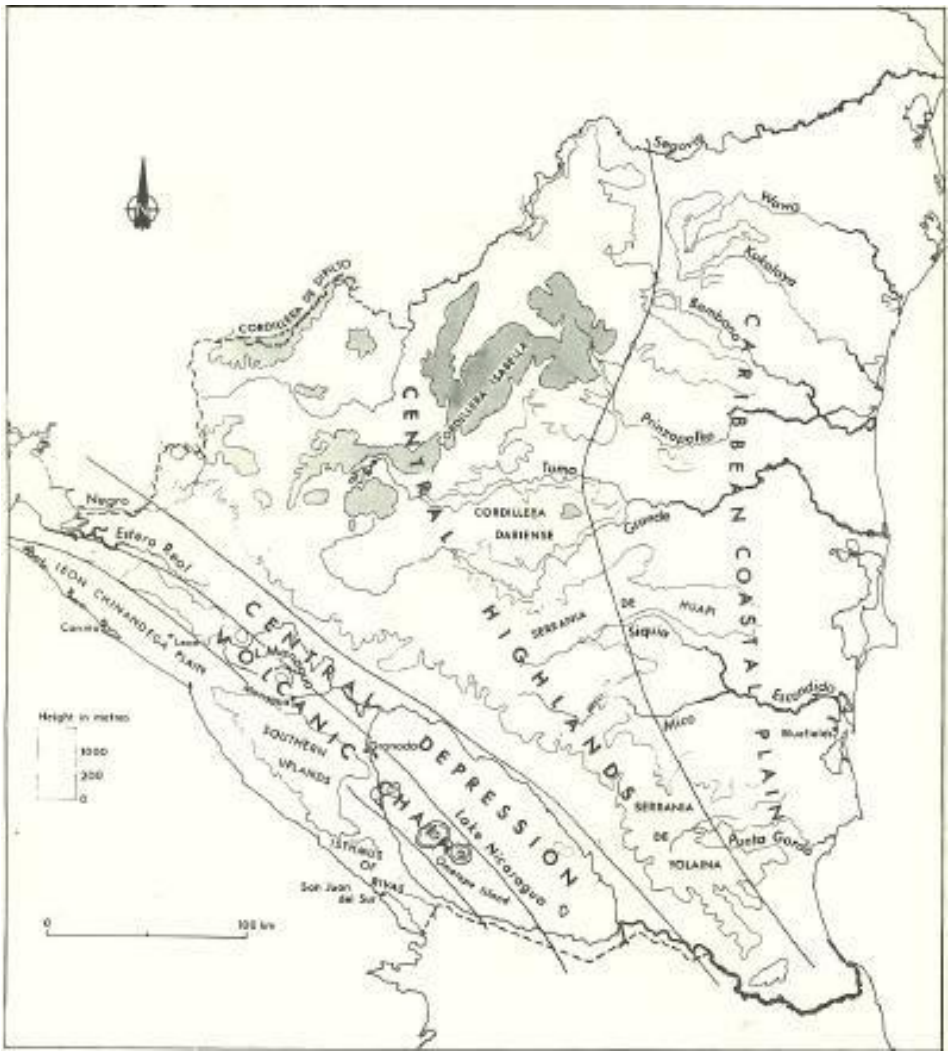


Figure 7 Map of Nicaragua with the geological zones indicated. (Source: Newson 1987, 42 (fig. 5)).

4.1.1 Pacific Zone

The Pacific zone includes the Pacific coast, the fertile lowlands, the volcanic chain that is located approximately 16 to 32 kilometres inland and the two large lakes which are part of the central depression (Merrill 1993, 56; Healy 1980, 9-10). The geography of this zone is due to tectonic activity: the Cocos plate is subducted under the Caribbean plate, on which the landmass of Nicaragua is located. At the point of subduction, a volcanic arc rises parallel to the coastline. East of the arc a rift valley is formed that is filled by Lake Xolotlán (or Lake Managua) and Lake Cocibolca (or Lake Nicaragua), the two largest freshwater reservoirs of Central America (Montenegro-Guillén 2003). Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunami's recurrently affect this area. Two major earthquakes in 1931 and 1972 almost entirely destroyed the city Managua, which has been the capital of Nicaragua since 1852 (Revels 2014; Merrill 1993, 56).

Despite the serious risks, the Pacific zone has been the most densely populated area in Nicaragua in pre-Hispanic times and up until now. The volcanic ash has made the soils of the Pacific lowlands very fertile (Lange *et al.* 1992, 4; Healy 1980, 13). This allowed for the production of maize, beans and squash from pre-Hispanic into recent times. The shores and islands of the lakes were popular places to settle in the pre-Hispanic period, as the archaeological evidence tells us (Lange *et. al.* 1992, 4; Newson 1987,41). The Spanish colonists settled in the Pacific zone. Until today this is the administrative and political centre of Nicaragua (Whisnant 1995, 30).

4.1.2 Central Nicaragua

The mountainous zone bordering Honduras in the north and extending down to central Nicaragua is called the Central highlands. It is part of the Central American Range. This mountainous terrain varies in height, flora and fauna. On the higher peaks in the north, pine and oak forest dominate the vegetation (Healy 1980, 7-10). These higher and therefore cooler areas are suitable for cacao and coffee production. The area of research is located northeast of Lake Cocibolca. These lower altitudes are covered by tropical rainforest, although increasing deforestation caused by mining-activities, cattle ranching and the production of maize, beans and sorghum are threatening the forest (Gourdji *et al.* 2015, 272).

The central highlands form a natural border between the Pacific coast and the Atlantic coast. This terrain was, and to a great extent still is, difficult to access. In the south of Nicaragua, the San Juan River, that originates in Lake Cocibolca and debouches into the Atlantic, forms a natural passageway between the west and the east of the country. On several occasions in history plans have been made to construct an interoceanic canal, however this has until thus far not been executed (Squier 1851). Besides this water route, west – east movement is difficult due to the mountainous geography and the lack of well-developed infrastructure.

4.1.3 Atlantic zone

The Atlantic zone or Caribbean lowlands in the east of the country comprise almost 45 percent of the surface of Nicaragua, but also host the lowest population density. In the northern area, the department of RAAN (Regíon Autónoma del Atlántico Norte) pine forests and palm savannas dominate. In the department of RAAS (Regíon Autónoma del Atlántico Sur) in the south, and along the river beds, tropical rain forests dominate.

People mainly live along the wide rivers or at the coast. The climate is hot and humid and the leached ground is less suitable for agriculture than in the west (Healy 1980, 7-12). As will be discussed briefly in the next section, this area developed separately from the rest of Nicaragua and therefore maintains a distinct cultural identity.

4.2 History

4.2.1 Pre-Hispanic period

This section will give a general outline of what is known about the pre-Hispanic period in Nicaragua in general and in central Nicaragua in particular. As this thesis looks into how the pre-Hispanic past is viewed by the inhabitants of central Nicaragua and how it is used in the construction of their identity, it is relevant to introduce the reader with information about the pre-Hispanic past.

The pre-Hispanic period in Nicaragua has been partly reconstructed by a combination of ethnohistorical sources, archaeological finds and linguistic evidence. Many different indigenous groups inhabited the territory that later became Nicaragua. These groups spoke different languages, had different subsistence strategies and social organizations (Lange *et al.* 1992, 13, 268-275). The Pacific area, where the Spaniards settled from the early sixteenth century, is relatively well-documented by Spanish chroniclers. In the central and Atlantic areas however, the reconstruction of the pre-Hispanic past is more difficult as the ethnohistorical sources are rare and provide confusing information (Van Broekhoven 2002). Archaeological research has remained in an initial phase in Nicaragua, especially in the central and Atlantic areas (Geurds *et. al.* 2009, 5). This contributed to the great lack of knowledge about the indigenous peoples who inhabited the area in the pre-Hispanic period.

4.2.1.1 Pacific zone

The percussion and woodworking tools in the archaeological record indicate that at least by 8000 BC humans occupied the Pacific area (Lange and Stone 1984, 341-380). Contacts between the peoples living in Pacific Nicaragua and those from Central Mexico increased around 800 AD. These groups are generally associated with Mesoamerican cultural elements (Newson 1987, 26). At the time of the conquest, the indigenous groups the Maribio, Nicarao and Chorotega inhabited the area (see Figure 8) (Newson 1987, 26).

The social organization of these groups was classified by the archaeologists Lange and Stone (1984) as chiefdoms. According to them, they had a socially stratified community organized around intensive agricultural production (Lange and Stone 1984, 56, 375-76; Whisnant 1995, 15). They subsisted on the production of maize, which required scheduled planting and harvesting and adequate storage facilities. Beans, manioc, sweet potatoes, cacao, cotton, tobacco, coca, calabashes and peppers were produced as well (Newson 1987, 48-57).

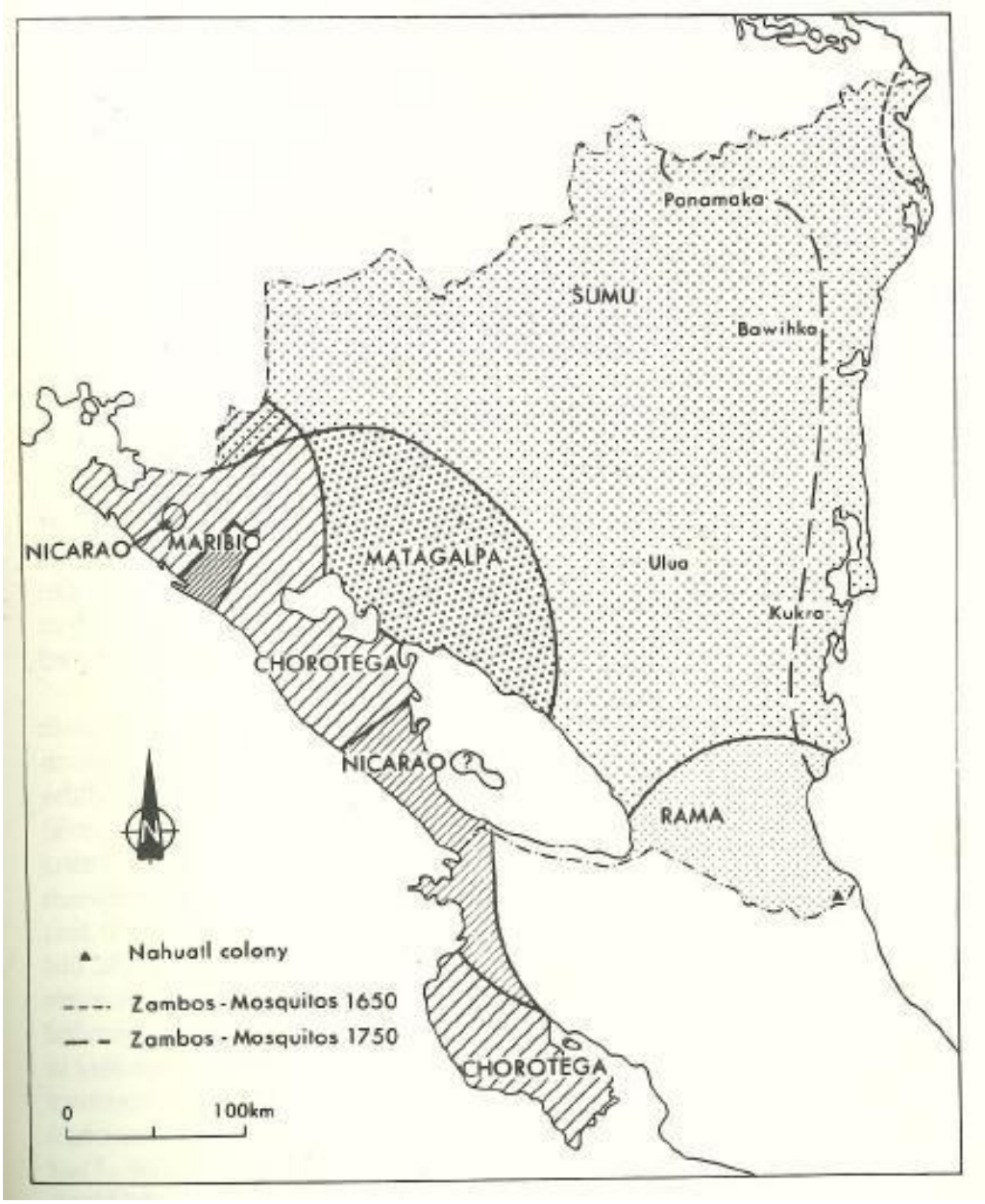


Figure 8 Map of the distribution of indigenous groups at the time of the Spanish conquest. The terms in capital letters represent the groups, while the other terms represent subgroups. Source: Newson 1987, 27 (fig.4).

4.2.1.2 The central and Atlantic zone

The indigenous groups from the central and Atlantic zones have elements that resemble groups from further south of the central American isthmus and even the South American mainland. Migration from these areas could be an explanation of these similarities, but in fact it is poorly understood (Newson 1987, 64-65). Van Broekhoven (2002, 344-346), based on a thorough study of ethnohistorical sources, identified that among the central Nicaraguan groups, Mesoamerican cultural influences were present as well. Among these influences were the occurrence of markets, plazas, the use of cacao as a currency, and indications of a trade route from the northern areas to central Nicaragua (Van Broekhoven 2002, 344-346).

Archaeologically it is determined that between 500 BC and 300 BC the population increased on the Atlantic coast. Lange and Stone (1984, 179, 195-232) speculate this might be caused by the adoption of maize agriculture. There are indications of trade between the Atlantic area, northwest Costa Rica and Mexico, but no trade or contact with the Pacific side of Nicaragua was present before AD 1200 (Van Broekhoven 2002, 344-345; Whisnant 1995, 49). According to Newson (1987, 64) these peoples lived in small, semi-nomadic groups and subsisted on hunting, gathering, fishing as well as on cultivated maize and manioc. Their social organization was considered more egalitarian compared to the groups in the Pacific zone. Newson (1987), among others, classifies the indigenous peoples in the central and Atlantic zones as tribes. However, this is an outdated socio-evolutionary term that places groups of people in a hierarchical relation, and therefore should be used with caution (Van Broekhoven 2002, 24). Van Broekhoven (2002, 24) warns that the definition of tribes is a negatively defined category, as it is based on the *absence* of certain elements such as plazas, temples, markets, the division of labour and a complex religious system. Based on historical sources, she identified that markets, plazas, temples and trade networks were actually present in the area that coincides with present-day Chontales, which contradicts the classification as tribes (Van Broekhoven 2002, 344-345). As mentioned before, the presence of calendars, cacao as a medium of exchange and the existence of trade routes with present-day Mexico, indicates that Mesoamerican cultural elements were present as well, in contrary to what was assumed by scholars such as Newson (1987). Therefore, the twofold classification in chiefdoms in the Pacific area and tribes in the central and Atlantic areas does not do

justice to the complexity of pre-Hispanic indigenous life (Van Broekhoven 2002, 24). However, it is relevant for this thesis to note the dominance of the socio-evolutionary discourse that has placed the central Nicaraguan indigenous peoples on a lower step on the evolutionary ladder in comparison to the peoples on the Pacific coast, as this continues to shape common perceptions of the pre-Hispanic past in central Nicaragua (see chapter VII and VIII).

Ethnohistorical sources mention the Matagalpa, Sumu and Rama indigenous groups (see Figure 8 for their distribution) (Newson 1987, 34, 64-65). From the mid seventeenth century, the Zambo-Mosquito group emerged out of the admixture of shipwrecked Africans and the indigenous Sumu peoples on the Atlantic coast. These Zambo-Mosquito raided and enslaved the indigenous peoples inland to trade them with the English who established trade posts on the Atlantic coast (Newson 1987, 201-202).
Sumu is a Mosquito term that is used to describe all indigenous peoples who are not Mosquito. It means 'uncivilized Indians' (Sollis 1989, 482). As the area that was inhabited by the Sumu, was only rarely infiltrated by Europeans before the eighteenth century, information regarding these peoples is dubious. The term Sumu has been adopted by chroniclers, however it hides the cultural and linguistic diversity within this group (Newson 1987, 34). Other terms to describe the indigenous peoples in this area also appear in ethnohistorical reports. Oviedo has referred to the peoples in the central area with the name *Chontales,* which falsely suggests that it was one group (Stanislawski 1983, 39-40). Chontales is a Nahuatl word which means 'they who cannot speak proper' Van Broekhoven 2002, 37). It was used by the Nahuatl-speaking indigenous peoples who lived in the Pacific zone and who informed the Spaniards to describe non-Nahuatl speakers. As the Nahuatl were in hostile relations with the groups they called the *Chontales,* the Spaniards already had prejudices against these peoples before they had ever entered the area (Van Broekhoven 2002, 10-12, 37). The term *Chontal* was generally used as a derogatory and demeaning word for what the Spanish considered uncivilized indigenous peoples (Newson 1987, 37). Historical sources also refer to the indigenous peoples of this area as *Caribs,* which is yet another term that suggests unity among probably very distinct groups (Newson 1987, 34; Van Broekhoven 2002, 47).

Van Broekhoven (2002) has analysed the historical sources of the central area that coincides with the present-day department of Chontales. The missionaries in these areas have left some scarce but valuable information. They did not attempt to understand the

indigenous peoples, but merely wanted to find the source of the diabolic practices they encountered in order to destroy it. Their reports are filtered through a Christian lens that regarded everything that was unfamiliar to them as witchcraft (Van Broekhoven 2002, 106).

Recurrent elements in the indigenous belief system and customs are mentioned by several of the missionaries and include the existence of powders, stones and roots that were used to manipulate situations such as making somebody fall in love, torturing and bullying someone or killing someone and beans that were used to tell fortune. These magical items could be obtained from *duendes,* small creatures who lived in enchanted caves and who would not show themselves to the Spaniards. According to the testimony of an indigenous informant, written down by a missionary, people would transform into animals by dressing like them during the ceremonies around the enchanted caves. Mention was made of four caves that were decorated with petroglyphs that represented wild animals such as snakes, monkeys and deer (Van Broekhoven 2002, 108-114). Reference is made of the *bulto de virgin,* an anthropomorphic sculpture that the indigenous peoples of Jinotega gave to the missionaries. The description of the object is unclear and ambiguous, but it could probably refer to the stone sculptures that are present in central Nicaragua and which are displayed in the local museum in Juigalpa (*Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea*). There are indications that the sculptures represent indigenous leaders or *caciques,* or deceased warriors, but they could also represent pre-Hispanic deities. These findings are indications of a complex religious system (Van Broekhoven 2002, 110-111), which contradicts earlier historical accounts as formulated by, among others, Newson (1987). These earlier accounts have heavily influenced the present-day perception of the pre-Hispanic peoples who lived in central Nicaragua, as is suggested by the testimonies of the informants of this study (see also chapter VII and VIII).

> *"(…) the legend goes, or in history it was said, that the people that lived here in the past were barbarian"* (Marta Villanueva, 29 June 2016, MGAB_29-06-16_A_2.1.MP4)

Therefore it is important for this research to address these historical narratives and to counter them with more recent findings.

4.2.2 Colonization

4.2.2.1 First contact

In the early sixteenth century, before the first Europeans set foot on what is now Nicaragua, the indigenous peoples in this territory were already exposed to Old World diseases that had spread along Central American indigenous trade routes (Stanislawski 1983, 11). Since they had no immunity to diseases such as smallpox, epidemics spread rapidly and considerably weakened the indigenous population (Crosby 1986, 94, 101, 196-201, 291-292; Stanislawski 1983, 11).

The first exploratory Spanish expedition started at the Gulf of Nicoya on the Pacific coast in 1519 (Andagoya [1945], 399-400, 405-406 in Newson 1987). A second, more extensive expedition was undertaken in 1522 by Gil González Davila and Andres Niño. During this expedition, the Spanish penetrated further inland and met with several indigenous caciques. Their experiences were documented partially by Andres de Cereceda, the treasurer of this expedition and by Gil González Davila himself (Martyr D'Anghera 1912, 211, 221-225 in Newson 1987). Since the explorers came back from the expedition with gold, which they had collected from the indigenous peoples, the territory of Nicaragua suddenly became an area of interest for many Spanish *conquistadores.* Pedrarias Dávila, who was the Spanish governor of Panama, ordered a third expedition in 1523 (Meléndez 1976, 33, 64, 69, 182 in Newson 1987). The expedition leader, Francisco Hernández de Cordoba, founded the cities of León and Granada in areas that were densely populated by the indigenous peoples (Andagoya [1945], 405 in Newson 1987). In 1526 Pedrarias Dávila, after defeating his competitors, had dominant control over the new colony. The area under Spanish control in the early sixteenth century was limited to the Pacific zone, as can be seen in Figure 9, which were the territories of the indigenous groups that became known in the ethnohistorical sources as the Chorotegan, Nicarao and Maribio indigenous peoples (Newson 1987, 26; Stanislawski 1983, 1-16).

Figure 9 Map of Nicaragua. In the large map the tectonic faults are indicated. The smaller map in the bottom left corner indicates in the arched section the area that was controlled by the Spanish in the sixteenth century (Source: Stanislawski 1983, fig. 1.)

4.2.2.2 First decennia of the conquest

Soon after Pedrarias Davila took control over the colony, it became clear that not as much gold was available in Nicaragua as he had imagined. Therefore, the Spaniards turned to the enslavement and trade of the indigenous peoples as a new source of quick profit (Borah 1954, 131; Stanislawski 1983, 13). Slave ships were traded with other colonies in Latin America (Radell and Parson 1971, 300). Mainly the indigenous peoples in the Pacific zone, in the direct surroundings of the first Spanish settlements, were exploited. Some indigenous peoples fled further inland to areas outside Spanish control in central Nicaragua, they were called *indios bravos* (Gould 1988, 79).

In 1550 the slave trade was abolished, mainly because there were not enough

indigenous people left in Nicaragua for the trade to maintain a profitable business (Stanislawski 1983, 11).

In the first 25 years after the Spanish arrived, the indigenous population in the Pacific lowlands decreased with approximately 97,5 percent (estimated by Bishop Antonia de Zayas in 1578), caused by a combination of newly introduced diseases, slavery, disturbed food supplies and decreased fertility (Crosby 1986, 196-201; Radell 1969, 77-80; Newson 1987, 239; Stanislawski 1983, 11).

4.2.2.3 Organized exploitation

Since the slave trade was no longer profitable in the mid sixteenth century, the Spaniards sought other ways to exploit the colony and accumulate wealth. They employed several methods to organize the indigenous peoples into settlements in order to control the labour and tribute payments which were demanded from them, and to impose a Spanish way of living on them (Stanislawski 1983, 48; Whisnant 1995, 23). To reach this goal, the encomienda and repartimiento systems were employed.

The *encomiendas* were settlements where the indigenous peoples were gathered to live in a sedentary way. These *encomiendas* were assigned by the governor to Spanish *encomenderos*, who were entitled to collect the tribute payments from their *encomiendas.* The amount of tribute that the indigenous people had to pay, was based on the number of *tributaries* or family heads that lived in the *encomienda.* A lot of information about this system derives from the *tasaciones,* an administrative document that listed the *encomenderos,* their *encomiendas,* the number of tributaries and the amount and type of tribute that was received each year (Stanislawski 1983, 16, 23; Romero Vargas 1988, 108). The types of tribute payments varied across the country, but the most important were: maize, beans, cotton, woven mantles, honey, beeswax, salt, chicken, mats, pottery, *hackamores* (horse harnesses), *alpargatas* (sandals) and *henequen* (cord made of fibres from the agave plants) (Newson 1987, 99-100; Stanislawski 1983, 26-45).

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, a system of forced labour was implemented, called the *repartimiento* system. In the *repartimiento* system, a percentage of the tributary indigenous peoples were required to work for fixed amounts of time for fixed amount of wages. Technically they got paid for their work, but the payments were low and instead of cash, often in cacao or goods (Newson 1987, 161-166, 278-279; Romero

Vargas 1988, 129-156; Sherman 1979, 85-128). The *encomiendo* system lay the basis for an economy that was based on land possession and agricultural production, while the *repartimiento* system was the precursor of wage labour in Nicaragua (Whisnant 1995, 24).

Life under the *encomienda* and *repartimiento* system was radically different from what the indigenous peoples were used to. The work that had to be spend to obtain the tribute payments, withheld them from their regular tasks and thus disturbed local economies. Their daily and seasonal rhythms were transformed, as were indigenous systems of food procurement, labour organization and other customs (Whisnant 1995, 24-26).

Encomiendas were established further inland in central Nicaragua as well, although the Spanish had less influence in these areas so remote from the Spanish urbanized centres in the Pacific zone (Newson 1987, 128-129). Often there was only sporadic contact between an indigenous representative and a Spanish official who was in charge of collecting the tribute, counting the number of tributaries or settle disputes (Van Broekhoven 2002, 98). Aside from a few dispersed *encomiendas* and *missions,* the Spaniards did not show real interest in colonizing central Nicaragua until the eighteenth century, as this region had less fertile grounds and the indigenous inhabitants were hostile towards the colonizers (Newson 1987, 129). This explains the scarce amount of ethnohistorical sources about the indigenous peoples from the central areas, and gives insight in the reasons why these sources portray them as simple and barbaric people (Van Broekhoven 2002, 30-64). A view that has pertained until today (see chapter VII). Since this study investigates how the pre-Hispanic past is used in the construction of identity in central Nicaragua, it is important to get insight into the origin and development of the historical narratives that have influenced this present-day view on the past.

4.2.2.4 Christianization

Efforts to convert the indigenous peoples to Christianity started immediately after the conquest, but only from the mid sixteenth century onwards, missions or *reducciones* were established. However, because of their short-lived and unstable nature, the adoption of Christianity only happened on a very superficial level (Newson 1987, 128 - 302).

The *reducciones* or missions were settlements that were established with the objective to instruct the indigenous peoples in the Christian faith and to expand Spanish influence. Christian ways of living were imposed upon the indigenous peoples: going fully clothed and performing Christian rituals such as baptism, marriage, confession, masses and the celebration of Saint's days (Newson 1987, 167; Whisnant 1995, 36). The indigenous peoples who lived in the missions had to trade their semi-nomadic lifestyle as hunter-gatherers for a sedentary lifestyle while cultivating maize and beans (Borges Morán 1960, 179, 205-206, 240; Whisnant 1995, 36; Newson 1987, 198-199). From the seventeenth century onwards, cattle became an increasingly important source of food (Newson 1987, 305). Similar to the *encomiendas,* the missions formed the basis of the agricultural estates that would later become so popular in the area (Newson 1987, 198-199).

The missionaries had no interest in understanding the local worldview and beliefs. Everything that was unfamiliar to them, was designated as witchcraft and had to be destroyed. Missionary reports indicate that indigenous peoples in the missions were severely punished when they were suspected of witchcraft. The missionaries undertook journeys to destroy enchanted caves and other things that were associated by them with the devil (Newson 1987, 191; Van Broekhoven 2002, 115-127).

Missions were established inland, on the frontier of the area that was controlled by the Spanish (Newson 1987, 128). This way they were the first to expand the Spanish influence eastward and to "civilize" the indigenous peoples who had until thus far not been in direct contact with European influence. Until the eighteenth century this contact was still limited, as the Spanish settlements were established in the valleys, while the indigenous peoples had retreated to the mountainous areas. These 'wild Indians' were described as hostile and many accounts report on attacks on the missions. Other accounts also testify that the indigenous inhabitants of the missions fled back into the highlands. The unpopularity of the missions among the indigenous peoples in addition to the uneducated and inexperienced missionaries, made that the missions were short-lived and unstable (Newson 1987, 193; 281-282, 305; Van Broekhoven 2002, 100).

4.2.2.5 Atlantic coast

As the Spanish colonizers were mainly present in the Pacific area, with some isolated settlements in the Central Highlands and a fort along the San Juan River, the people

living in the coastal area of the Atlantic did not experience direct European influence until the seventeenth century when the English and the Dutch established trade posts (Newson 1987, 201-203). The English established trade relationships with the Zambo-Mosquito and exchanged fire arms for turtle shells, cacao, honey, beeswax and slaves form the indigenous groups inland (Newson 1987, 201-202).

The Zambo-Mosquito raided indigenous settlements of other groups and enslaved their victims. These attacks affected the settlement patterns of the indigenous peoples in the Atlantic and central areas: they moved away from the riverbanks and some voluntarily joined the religious *reducciones* of the Spaniards, in the hope of protection. The *reducciones* also suffered attacks, although it is not entirely clear in the documentation whether the attackers were the Zambo-Mosquito or other hostile indigenous groups (Newson 1987, 202-203). The presence of the English at the Atlantic coast and the raids by the Zambo-Miskito provoked the Spaniards to expand their control further eastwards to the areas that they were previously not interested in, as they did not want to lose territory to the English (see Figure 10) (Newson 1987, 201-203).

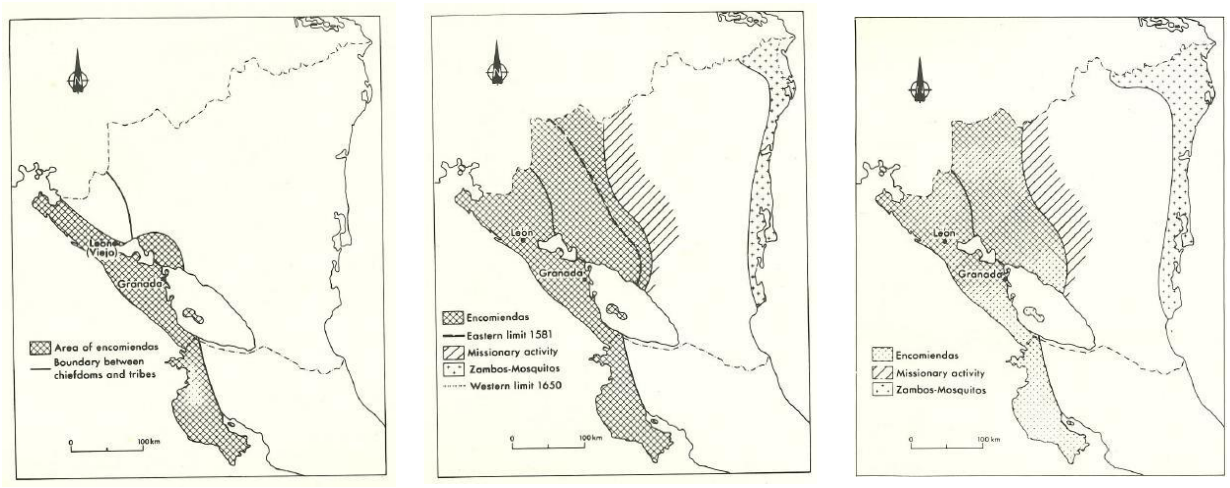


Figure 10. Three maps of Nicaragua that show the advance of Spanish influence from the west and the advance of the Zambo-Mosquito from the east in respectively 1550 (left), between 1550 and 1720 (middle) and between 1720 and 1821 (right). Source: Newson 1987, 16-17, fig.2.

4.2.2.6 Spanish expansion in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Several factors contributed to the expansion of Spanish influence to central Nicaragua in the seventeenth and eighteenth century: the retreat of the English who exerted influence from the Atlantic side, the increasing number of Spaniards and decreasing number of tributary indigenous peoples in the *encomiendas,* and the increasing demand

for cattle products for export (Newson 1987, 132, 153). These circumstances prompted the establishment of rural estates or *haciendas* in central Nicaragua where agriculture and cattle ranching were the main sources of income (Newson 1987, 295).

Cattle was introduced early by the Spaniards, from the mid sixteenth century the distribution of cattle rapidly expanded as demands for hides and leather products increased in Nicaragua and abroad. Cattle from ranchers based out of Granada was grazed seasonally on the year-round pastures of the central area of Nicaragua, but when demands increased towards the end of the seventeenth century, permanent *haciendas* or rural estates where established in the central areas to develop the agricultural business (Newson 1987, 138; Radell 1969, 150-155). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it became one of the most important agricultural activities. The meat was eaten locally while leather products were exported or traded internally (Newson 1987, 145, 196). This formed the basis of an economy based on cattle ranching in the Chontales area (Newson 1987, 295).

The establishment of *haciendas* posed a large demand on indigenous lands and labour (Newson 1987, 196). Large plots of land needed to be cleared in order to establish grazing fields and crop cultivation. The lands that the *hacendados* occupied often belonged to the semi-nomadic indigenous groups of central Nicaragua who communally made use of the lands for hunting and gathering activities or shifting cultivation. The Spaniards purchased the lands, usurped them illegally or simply declared that they were 'unused' (Newson 1987, 136). As more and more land in the central area was alienated from the indigenous peoples, it became hard for them to maintain their lifestyle based on hunting, gathering and agriculture and tribute demands could not be accomplished anymore. Many indigenous peoples had no choice, but to work in wage labour on the *haciendas* of the Spaniards (Newson 1987, 173-174, 178, 301).

4.2.2.7 Mestizaje

As more and more Spaniards moved inland and exchanged their lives in the towns for rural livelihoods, more and more indigenous peoples were forced to move to the urbanized areas or in the rural *haciendas* to work as wage labourers from the seventeenth century onwards, as they had lost their lands and found themselves unable to meet tribute demands (Newson 1987, 130-131).

In the urban areas in the Pacific zone, the indigenous peoples would live in their own residences scattered throughout the city or in the house of their Spanish employers as household servants. In the seventeenth century the Spanish authorities wanted to prevent the mixing of races, which they considered a degradation of pure Spanish blood, by establishing different neighbourhoods for the different races (Newson 1987, 131). Despite these regulations, many urban areas were a melting pot of people from different ancestries by the end of the seventeenth century. Not only biological, but also culturally the distinction between the Spaniards and the indigenous peoples became blurred (Newson 1987, 131). Some villages in the Pacific zone in which the inhabitants self-identify as indigenous, remain in existence until today, although this is largely ignored by official authorities (De Burgos 2006; Gould 1998; Hooker 2005).

In the rural areas, the *haciendas* were the location where Spanish and indigenous peoples cohabitated intensively and where *mestizaje* took place. Generally indigenous labourers worked for a Spanish landowner in exchange for shelter, food and perhaps a small wage in the peonage system, comparable to the feudal system of medieval Europe. Although the hierarchical power relations that characterized the *hacienda* remained intact, the ethnic distinctions between Spanish and indigenous converged. The indigenous way of life was transformed to the daily and seasonal rhythms of agriculture and cattle ranching (Newson 1987, 302). Chapter VIII provides a more elaborate discussion on the extend of *mestizaje* in Nicaragua and how this is used in the promotion of national identity.

4.2.3 Nicaragua as a nation-state

4.2.3.1 Independence and the nineteenth century

Since 1821 Nicaragua became an independent nation-state. The first decennia of independence were characterised by tumultuous civil wars. Power relations that marked the colonial period, continued after independence. The ruling elite lived in the urban areas in the Pacific zone and were out of touch with the working-class lifestyle in the rest of Nicaragua. Although the liberal elites from León competed with the conservative elites from Granada, they shared their strive towards modernization and economic progress. Agricultural export was stimulated and foreign companies were encouraged to start their businesses in Nicaragua (Hooker 2005, 16-17; Whisnant 1995, 57-59).

The focus on agricultural export increased the demand for agricultural land, which often resulted in the expropriation of indigenous lands, as was already prevalent in colonial times. Indigenous communities were disintegrated as they were forced to work as wage labourers in bad conditions. At several occasions in the nineteenth century, the indigenous peoples organised themselves and revolted against their oppressed situation. The largest protest was held by the indigenous peoples of Matagalpa in 1881. This protest, which was called the *War of the Indians,* against the expropriation of their lands and the forced labour for low wages under dangerous working conditions, was turned down violently (Gould 1998, 36; Wheelock 1974, 111-116; Whisnant 1995, 81-82).

Since independence, foreign travellers were able to enter Nicaragua, which resulted in numerous travel reports (Van Broekhoven 2002). A significant number of travellers from the United States passed through Nicaragua, most of whom in an attempt to reach the goldmines of California. US companies arranged the transport over the San Juan river and Lake Cocibolca and built American hotels along the transit route, which brought a lot of Nicaraguans in contact with north American culture (Whisnant 1995, 61-66). US influence intensified when in 1856 the American William Walker declared himself president of Nicaragua, after he had fought a filibuster war. His presidency only lasted for a year, in 1860 he was executed (Whisnant 1995, 75-81).

A period of relative political stability followed with a Conservative government (1857-1893) followed by a Liberal government (1893-1903). During this period, the first nation-building efforts materialized in the construction of a national anthem, a flag and national history books (Hooker 2005, 18; Herrera 2007).

4.2.3.2 Augusto C. Sandino and Somoza

US influence increased in the early twentieth century. The revolutionary Augusto C. Sandino stood up against the US military occupation of Nicaragua. He started a guerrilla war which eventually caused the United States to withdraw from Nicaragua in 1933. However, the US maintained control through the *Guardia Nacional,* led by Anastasio Somoza Garcia. Somoza Garcia assassinated Sandino and took power in Nicaragua in 1936. Backed up by United States' support, Somoza Garcia's two sons, Luis Somoza Debayle and Anastacio Somoza Debayle, succeeded him after his death in 1956. They held the Somoza family dictatorship in place until 1979. The dictatorial Somoza regime

gradually took control of the military, the juridical system, all national television and radio stations, public health, and other government-owned enterprises, which gave them absolute power. A focus on the export of agricultural products such as coffee, cattle, cotton, wood and gold, mainly to the United States, brought personal wealth to the Somoza family as they owned most of the companies. Enemies of the regime were tortured and murdered. When, after the 1972 earthquake near Managua, the Somoza government shamelessly took advantage of the ravage and suffer of the people affected, they lost support from the international community (Merril 1993, 19-49; Revels 2014; Whisnant 1995, 107-150).

4.2.3.3 Sandinista revolutionary war

A new political movement emerged in the 1960s, called the FSLN (*Frente Sandinista de Liberacíon Nacional*, or the National Sandinista Liberation Front). They started a guerrilla war against the dictatorship of Somoza. The US, who were anxious of communist movements in Latin America, supported a counter guerrilla group, called the Contra's.

The war succeeded for more than decade and many citizens who were caught up in the middle suffered, as both parties tried to collect fighters for their cause, often with bad consequences for those who declined (Horton 1998, 172). The FSLN received a majority of the votes at the end of the 1970s, but the fighting continued in the central Nicaraguan areas until the beginning of the 1990's when president Chamorro was elected (Horton 1998, 257-296). For an elaborate analysis of the Sandinista revolution and its aftermath I refer to Vilas (1986) and Close (2016), an account of the impact of the war for the central Nicaraguan areas is discussed by Horton (1998).

This section provides some, albeit limited, background to understand chapter VIII on the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the promotion of national identity by the different political regimes.

4.3 Conclusions

In this chapter, an overview of the geographical and historical developments of Nicaragua were given. After an introduction in the three broad geographical areas of Nicaragua, it was shown how these geographical areas have had distinct historical developments. Since this study engages with the historical narratives of the pre-Hispanic period, an introduction into the pre-Hispanic past of central Nicaragua is indispensable

in this thesis.

It has been shown how the high fertility of the Pacific area on the west coast in comparison with the densely vegetated mountainous areas in central Nicaragua, has contributed to the historical development that the Spaniards did not seriously attempt to colonize the central areas until the eighteenth century.

As a consequence, the ethnohistorical sources reporting on the central areas are scarce and portray the indigenous peoples of central Nicaragua as barbaric. This scientific discourse has percolated into popular narratives on the pre-Hispanic times in central Nicaragua, as will be discussed in chapter VII.

Section 4.2.3 provides a concise introduction to the political developments of Nicaragua since independence, which is important to better understand the discussion on how narratives of the pre-Hispanic past have been promoted in national identity politics in chapter VIII.

V Case-study

This chapter describes the present-day situation in central Nicaragua in general and the living conditions of the informants from the rural area in specific. This chapter will help to contextualise the present-day pronunciation of identity of the central Nicaraguans through a description of their everyday realities. The information in this chapter is in part based on literature and national statistics, but mainly on observations made by the author in the field and interviews with the informants.

5.1 Central Nicaragua

The research area is located towards the northeast of Lake Cocibolca, in the departments of Chontales and RAAS. The departments in Nicaragua are divided into municipalities, which are divided into small territorial units, called *comarcas.* All research settings are located in the rural areas of the municipality of Juigalpa in Chontales, except for one setting that is located in the municipality of El Ayote in the RAAS department. The choice of these research settings is based on the presence of pre-Hispanic archaeological remains in the landscape, this is further elaborated in chapter VI. Interviews were conducted in the *comarcas* of San Isidro, Piedra Grande, Sabana Grande, Güegüestepe and Santa Rita in the municipality of Juigalpa, and Nawawasito in the municipality of El Ayote.

Due to the mountainous geography and the historical developments that are described in the previous chapter, central Nicaragua remains in the periphery of the developed and urbanized Pacific zone (Radell 1969, 155; Alvey 2010, 9). The administrative and political centres that grew out of the Spanish colonial cities are all located in the Pacific zone, which contributes to the prioritization of this zone in all aspects of national decision-making (Whisnant 1995). Central Nicaragua, which is a predominantly rural area, has a lower population density and a higher poverty level than the Pacific zone (INIDE 2008a, 2008b; Alvey 2010, 1, 8). According to the national institute for developmental information (INIDE), the poverty index is low in Nawawasito (El Ayote) and Santa Rita (Juigalpa), high in Güegüestepe, Piedras Grandes 1 and 2 (Juigalpa) and severe in Aguas Buenas (Juigalpa) (INIDE 2008a). This means that many people in the region do not have access to basic needs such as clean water, appropriate toilet facilities, adequate house construction and access to education (INIDE 2008a, 2008b).

Central Nicaragua is connected to the rest of the country by a highway. Juigalpa, the departmental capital of Chontales, is located about halfway on this road from the capital Managua to the Atlantic inland port city of Rama, which in turn connects by river to the coastal town of Bluefields. This makes Juigalpa an important trade centre. Although the municipal capital El Ayote technically lies in the department of RAAS, the village is culturally more connected to Chontales, through its proximity, its connection with Juigalpa through a road and the recent immigration of *campesinos* (peasants) from Chontales since the 1990s (INIDE 2008b).

> *"Before my father bought this land* (finca Santa Eduviges in El Ayote, RAAS)*, it belonged to another peasant. But he did not cultivate the land, it was all primary forest! We, we came from Chontales. (…) So when we came here, we brought along our passion for cattle ranching. When we arrived, we did not come to develop the agriculture, we came as cattle ranchers. To create pastures and stables for the cows, that is the mentality we have!"*
> (Ramon Alberto Gutierrez Crobeto, former mayor of El Ayote and son of Marco Alberto Gutierrez Chavarilla, 12 June 2016, HSE_12-06-16_F_1.1.MTS).

The cultural identity of this central area is described in the literature as a *Cowboy Culture*, due to the prevalence of cattle ranching (Alvey 2010, 8-10; Horton 1998, 18-61). Cattle ranching or *ganadería* is the most important economic activity. As described in the previous chapter, this developed historically when in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries more and more *haciendas* were established in the region (Newson 1987, 295). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the agricultural frontier expanded even more eastwards which paved the way for an export boom of cattle products in the 1950s (Alvey 2010, 6). The higher altitudes in the mountain ranges provide a suitable climate for year-round grasslands on which the cattle can graze. Many farmers also cultivate maize, beans and sorghum.

The agricultural products from the cattle ranching and crop cultivation in the rural areas, are distributed in the urban centres on the market. These urban centres thus support the rural activities and celebrate the cattle culture. In almost every street a shop can be found that sells leather whips, horse saddles, leather and rubber boots, cowboy-like hats and bandanas. Murals depict muscular cattle in a romanticized landscape of green pastures. Bull fights are particularly popular: a special arena for this event has been built in Juigalpa. Each year the *fiestas patronales* are celebrated in the urban centres, which is

a celebration in devotion of the patron saint of the city. In Juigalpa, in devotion of the *Asunción de la Virgin Maria,* marches, fairs and bull fights are held. During several other celebrations throughout the year, cows and bulls dressed in luxurious ornamentation are paraded through the streets of Juigalpa.

These factors contribute to central Nicaragua being known as a *Wild West,* where liberal values of labour and independence are honoured. A strong work ethic and strive for self-sufficiency are part of the *modo de vivir* (way of living) that has developed since the second half of the twentieth century (Horton 1998, 18). The increase in agricultural exports from the 1960s onwards was accompanied by an increased class distinction, with large differences in wealth between the *patron* and his workers. Patriarchal relations and Christian family values characterize the social landscape (Alvey 2010, 1-8; Horton 1998, 18; Whisnant 1995).

5.2 Ethnographic setting of the informants

In this section, a more specific description of the living situation of the informants who provided the core information for this investigation is given. As this research is based on the use of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity, it is relevant to demonstrate the setting where the daily lives of the informants take place, as this will help in understanding their construction of identity. The information in this section is based on literature, observations in the field and oral accounts of the informants.

5.2.1 Livelihood

> *"Here the people dedicate to agriculture and cattle ranching, that is what the people of this area do. (…) Mainly the men dedicate to the agriculture and cattle ranching. They plant beans, maize, sorghum, fruits like watermelon and melon … and the other thing is the cattle ranching. You know that they say '*Chontales, donde los rios son de leche y las piedras de cuajada'. *(Chontales, where the rivers are filled with milk and the stones are made of cheese.) Because here in Chontales, that is the activity that stands out the most: the agriculture and the cattle ranching."* (Idania Mairena Cruz, 21 June 2016, PG2_21-06-16_D_2.1.MTS)

The most important economic activity in the rural area is cattle ranching and agriculture. All informants of this study were *campesinos* or peasants. According to studies conducted by the Inter-American Committee for Agricultural Development, there is a significant inequality in farm size in Chontales (Alvey 2010, 11). Twenty-one percent of

the farms are very small family-based rural estates that together occupy less than 0,5 percent of the land area for agriculture. While less than 0,5 percent of the farms occupy 39 percent of all farmland. This implies that there are large differences in economic class within central Nicaragua: dispossessed peasants on one side of the spectrum and wealthy landowners or *finqueros* on the other side (Alvey 2010, 8-9).

The Inter-American Committee for Agricultural Development made a classification of three types of farms, based on their surface area which is in congruence with the mode of production. The small farms are generally owned by an extended family who provides in its own needs through the cultivation of maize, beans and sorghum, supplemented by fruit trees. Occasionally surpluses of the profits of their land can be sold on the market in the nearby urban centre. All family members contribute to the work on the farm. The division or labour is based on gender and age. The men are generally responsible for planting and harvesting the crops, milking the cows and walking them to the pastures (see Figure 11). The women and children fetch the water from the river or the well, process the harvested crops, make *cuajada* (milk curd) out of milk to preserve it longer, cook and take care of the young children.

Medium-sized farms with a larger herd of cattle are generally run by multiple families or have employed wage labourers. These farms often have deals with a milk company that collects the milk on a daily basis on the premise that the farmstead is accessible by car. Sometimes milk is brought to a near milk plant by the peasants (Artola and Davide Parrilli 2006, 47).

Figure 11 Felipe Santiago Lopez Aleman, milking the cows in the coral of finca Santa Eduviges, where he works as a wage labourer. Photograph taken by Anne Vera Veen on 12 June 2016.

Large rural estates are owned by a *patron* who might live in the farmstead, but also often owns a house in the urban area. In these estates, the legacy of the peonage system can be seen. Landless *peons* work on the farm in exchange for shelter, food and perhaps a small wage. They are economically dependent on the owner of the farm and often suffer exploitation (Alvey 2010, 7-9, 11). These large *haciendas* produce diary and meat products that are

distributed nationally or are exported (Artola and Davide Parrilli 2006, 52-57; INIDE 2012, 9).

People who do not own land might work as daily labourers, doing jobs in the rural area such as *macheteando,* (clearing the land from excessive vegetation with a machete), or in the urban area as factory workers or miners.

Any surplus of the agricultural or dairy products can be sold on the market in the urban centre. Additionally, some peasants engage in craft production such as pottery, which is distributed locally. This practice is declining however with the increasing metal and plastic kitchen utensils that can be bought cheap in the city (Esperanzah Perez, 23 June 2016, AB_23-06-16_C_5.1_EP.MTS).

5.2.2 Living situation

Figure 12 Photograph of the landscape in Aguas Buenas with a farmstead in the bottom left. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

Farmsteads are built on the farmlands, close to water sources or rivers and often near a road or path (see Figure 12). Landless people build their house along the road or live in the farmsteads of their *patron.* A few decades ago, territorial demarcations were indicated by stones. Now fences of wooden poles and barbed wire demarcate the lands.

The distance between the houses of different farms depends on the extend of the territory and the population density. In the municipality of Juigalpa there are smaller farmsteads and a relatively higher population density in comparison with the rest of the area (INIDE 2008a). Here the houses in a *comarca* are generally placed less than a kilometre distance to each other. In the municipality of El Ayote, with larger farms and a low population density, the farmsteads are located at greater distances (INIDE 2008b). This influences community feelings. In the denser populated areas, inhabitants of a *comarca* regularly visit each other and get together on Sundays near the chapel.

> *"There you see a chapel* (points to the valley) *(…) where we celebrate the Word of God. (…) We go there with our family and the people from the community, every Sunday we go."*
> (Juan Suarez Villegas, 17 June 2016, AB_17-06-16_A_5.2.MTS).

On the larger *haciendas,* the community is limited to the people living and working on the farm and is characterized by hierarchical relations (Alvey 2010, 8).

In the small- and medium-scale farmsteads, people generally live together in one house with their extended family. As people tend to marry young (INIDE 2008a), the extended family can exist of three or four generations. Newlywed couples move into the house of the man's family or build their own house a bit further on the lands of their parents.

Figure 13 Small residence in Santa Rita. This house is constructed directly on the stamped earth. The walls consist of wooden posts. For the roof, metal corrugated sheets are used. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

The houses are often constructed directly on the bedrock or on a surface of stamped earth. The walls are made of wattle-and-daub or wooden posts, which are often available in the direct surroundings. Recently bricks that are purchased in the urban centres are also used. The roofs used to be constructed with tiles, however more recently corrugated sheet metal roofs have quickly started to dominate the landscape (see Figure 13). In the municipality of El Ayote, roofs made of reeds are still present, although the people do not use it anymore to build new houses. The houses have one or several bedrooms. Sometimes a bed is present, however the custom to sleep in hammocks or *tijeras* (a type of stretcher) is widespread. The kitchen is located in a separate room, to diminish smoke in the living areas (see Figure 14). On a raised platform of wattle-and-daub, a fire is made on which ceramic or metal cooking pots are placed. As there is no running water, a ceramic *cantaro* or plastic bucket with water provides the kitchen with a daily reservoir for drinking, cooking and washing dishes. A wooden platform near a window is used to wash the dishes. The used water is thrown outside. People bath and wash their clothes in the river or streams in the vicinity of their houses. When there is no stream or it carries no water in the dry season, water from a water well is carried to the house to use for washing. A latrine stands separately from the house. Farms that own cattle have a corral for the cows close to the house, while the pastures and agricultural fields are further away.

Figure 14 Kitchen of Doña Epifania who lives on finca Santa Eduviges in Nawawasito, El Ayote. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

5.2.3 Infrastructure

Infrastructure in the rural areas is largely lacking, although continued efforts to develop public works are made. The roads in the rural areas are unpaved. Sometimes they are broad enough for a car to pass. However, many farmsteads are only accessible through a small path that can be traversed on foot, horse or motorcycle (Alvey 2010, 3). As motorized vehicles are rarely owned by the *campesinos,* transport to the urban centres can cost a lot of effort. In some areas, people have to walk long distances carrying heavy loads, to reach the market. However, public transport becomes more and more available in the accessible and more densely populated areas in the municipality of Juigalpa and along the connecting road with the RAAS department.

No running water infrastructure is present in the rural areas. Houses are historically built close to water sources or rivers. Hence for example the toponym *Aguas Buenas,* which

means *good waters*. The government has installed water wells in many rural communities to ensure the access to clean water.

Electricity is not available in the rural comarcas. Some people have a battery on solar panels to charge small electric devices such as a mobile phone. However, in many of the observed cases these solar panels did not work properly. In those cases, mobile phones were taken and charged whenever someone in the house goes to the nearest urban centre. Flashlights on batteries are necessary to navigate in the dark. Some families owned a radio on batteries.

5.2.4 Religion

The census of 2005 indicates that the majority of people in the rural area of Chontales adhere to the Christian religion: mainly Catholic and to a lesser extent Evangelic (INIDE 2006, 230). This was affirmed by the observations made in the field. All informants of this research declared to be Christians. It is common to use the term *Cristiano* (Christian) interchangeably with the term *person,* which indicates how widespread the religion is (Antonio Cuadra 1987, 78). The following excerpt from an interview with Don Pedro Pablo illustrates this use of the term. After some confusion from my side, I asked him for clarification about his use of the word *Cristiano*.

> Pedro Pablo: *"A person, I mean. You understand? I say '*Cristiano' *when I mean a* 'person'*. Because, well, we are all Christians, right."*
>
> Interviewer: *"Are there no persons who are not Christians?"*
>
> Pedro Pablo (looks puzzled): *"No, no, no, this does not exist."*

(Pedro Pablo, 18 June 2016, AB2_18-06-16_A_4.1.MTS).

Many people are illiterate and therefore cannot read the Bible. On Sundays clergy personal, generally a local farmer who has dedicated to reading the Bible, passes by the farmsteads of a community to read the Bible out loud and pray together. In some communities, there is a communal chapel. Individual houses often have an altar which is dedicated to a specific saint.

5.2.5 Education

Education in the rural areas was scarcely available before the Sandinista government. This explains why most of the adult informants are illiterate (INIDE 2006, 37). Since 1979 primary schools are installed in the rural districts by the national government as well as with foreign financial help (see Figure 15). Depending on the size of the *comarca,* the school consists of one or two classrooms. Children of all different ages sit together and get tasks based on their level. The textbooks that are adapted to different levels and subjects, are published by the national government and are distributed nationally (nicaraguaeduca.mined.gob.ni).

The age to attend primary school is roughly between 5 and 12, although whether the children actually attend, depends on the families. After the age of 12, the children generally start working on the farm to help their families. A formula exists that allows teenagers to follow secondary schooling in the weekends, so they can help on the farm during weekdays.

Figure 15 Primary school in the community of Aguas Buenas 1. Photograph taken by Eva van Dosselaar, January 2016.

5.2.6 Daily routines

> *"It is a peaceful place here. Every day the same routine, but I never get bored. You get used to it."* (Alberto Gutiérrez Chavarilla, the *patron* of the finca Santa Eduviges, 13 June 2016; HSE_13-06-16_B_4.1.MP4)

The farming activities require daily routines to be carried out. The *campesinos* get up before dawn to work before the heat of midday. The men get the cows from the pastures and lead them to the corral near the farmstead. The cows are milked before they are reunited with their calves.

> *"At two in the morning we leave from the farmstead to get the cows, and we start milking at four in the morning. (…) It takes two hours because the distance is long and, remember, we have to gather seventy animals... It takes a long time to lead the cattle to the stable, making sure they don't spread out to the other*

fields."

(Felipe Santiago Lopez Aleman, 13 June 2016, HSE_13-06-16_D_3.3.MP4).

The milk that is collected is processed for domestic use or sold to a milk company. Work on the fields such as planting, spraying pesticides, harvesting or *macheteando* is done in this part of the day as well. The women fetch water from the nearby stream or well. They light a fire in the kitchen to prepare a meal that generally exists of beans and maize tortillas. School for the children begins early in the morning and ends before noon. Around noon, the hottest part of the day, everybody gathers in the house. A meal is eaten and perhaps a *siesta* is taken. In the afternoon, the cows are brought to the pastures. Tasks such as mending a fence, feeding other domestic animals such as pigs and washing clothes in the river are done during this part of the day. The sun sets around 6 PM. As there is no electricity, people gather in the farmstead before sunset to eat and share stories before they go to sleep around 8 PM.

"In the countryside, life still is quite simple. (…) Have you ever slept in the countryside? Have you noticed how there is no noise from traffic, phone calls, … like in the city? One feels more peaceful here in the countryside. People go to sleep early, around 8 'o clock when it is dark. We close the doors and go to bed. (…) This is the time we tell each other stories. I like to tell stories to my grandchildren (…).
Early in the morning we get up, because in the countryside you have to be up before dawn to start the work."

(Nidia Suarez Villegas, 23 June 2016, AB_23-06-16_A_5.4.MP4).

5.2.7 Seasonal rhythms

The activities of the *campesinos* vary with the seasons, as this depends on the agricultural cycle. In Nicaragua, there is a rainy season roughly between May and November and a dry season between December and April (Lange 1984,46). During the rainy season, maize and beans can be planted and harvested.

"This (planting the maize) *we do two times per six months, in the rainy season, because in the dry season we cannot grow anything because there is no rain. It takes a little more than two months for the maize to grow. And from this, we*

make the tortillas that we bake in the comales (ceramic griddle)*."*
(Nidia Suarez Villegas, 17 June 2016, AB_17-06-16_C_1.1.MP4).

During the rainy season the cows can graze on the grasslands surrounding the farmstead, as everything is green. The streams fill up with water.
The peasants, especially those at the self-sufficient farms, suffer during the dry season. As crops do not grow, they have to subsist on their supplies from last season. Smaller streams dry up, so if there is no well in the area, considerable distances have to be traversed to fetch water. Cattle has to be taken to higher altitudes to supply them with enough food and prevent starvation.

5.3 Conclusions

In this chapter, the reader is introduced to the present-day living conditions of the rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua. Based on literature, interviews and observations, it was shown how the focus on agriculture and, primarily, cattle ranching plays a large role in the life of the rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua. Cattle ranching determines the rhythms of daily and seasonal life. Therefore it comes as no surprise that this area has been described as having a cowboy culture (Alvey 2010, 8). Liberal values are held high: the hardworking self-made and self-sustained cattle rancher figures as an ideal. As was illustrated in this chapter, Christianity is widespread and plays an important role in the lives of the people. In daily life, weekly gatherings in the community chapel or visits by a priests, faith is put into practice.
This chapter gave a brief yet indispensable introduction to the *modo de vivir* (way of living) of the inhabitants of rural central Nicaragua. As such it gives the reader a background that will facilitate the interpretation of the interview data as presented in chapter VII on the role of pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua.

VI Pre-Hispanic archaeological remains in central Nicaragua and their role in the present-day landscape

In the central Nicaraguan landscape, pre-Hispanic archaeological remains are visible in many locations. Mainly earthen and stone mounds, petroglyphs, stone sculptures, ceramic sherds and lithic tools are found. The rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua who practice their agriculture and cattle ranching in this landscape, engage with these pre-Hispanic archaeological remains on a daily basis. As has been argued by Geurds (2011, 88, 98-100), archaeological remains as the material manifestations of the past, can be actively employed in the construction of local as well as national identity. Considering the topic of this investigation, it is thus relevant to introduce the prominence of the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains in the current landscape to the reader.

In this chapter, an introduction is given to the most prominent and visible pre-Hispanic archaeological remains in central Nicaragua, as this formed a starting point for the interviews regarding the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the informants. This chapter emphasises the place of the archaeological remains in the contemporary landscape, how the local people interpret the remains and how they engage with them in their daily lives.

6.1 Mounds

6.1.1 Archaeological remains

Throughout central Nicaragua human-made mounds are found. These mounds are constructed from earth and/or stones and vary in height and diameter. Smaller mounds can be just a few decimetres high and a few meters wide, while large mounds of four meters height, measuring thirty meters in diameter have also been documented (Geurds *et. al.* 2016, 6). Several nineteenth century travellers mention the mounds in Chontales and interpreted them unanimously as burial mounds (Belt 1874; Boyle 1866; Pim and Seeman 1869). The few archaeologists who have been active in central Nicaragua have noted the mounds as important archaeological features (Gorin 1989; Hasegawa 1998; Rigat 1992). Since 2007 the *Proyecto Arqueológico Centro de Nicaragua* (PACEN), within which this research takes place, has conducted systematic surveys to map the distribution of the mounds in the landscape. In several mounds test pits have been excavated and samples dated to gain understanding of their age, function and meaning.

The latest radiocarbon dates indicate that the sites with the mounds were in use between AD 600 and AD 1365 (Donner and Geurds 2018, 724).

In Aguas Buenas there is a particular unique congregation of mounds, as can be seen on Figure 16. Six concentric circles of in total 372 mounds are located in the area of approximately one square kilometre. In the centre, a rectangular shaped structure is formed by the mounds. Thus far this is the only known site where the mounds show this type of spatial organization (Auzina 2017).

Figure 16 Map of Aguas Buenas with the mounds indicated with green dots. The circular organization of the mounds is clearly seen from this birds-eye view. Source: Auzina 2017.

Test excavations by PACEN in the mounds of El Gavilán, Aguas Buenas and La Pachona indicate that the mounds might have different uses depending on the context. In the case of El Gavilán the finds in the mounds led to the interpretation that they might have served as habitational platforms. While in La Pachona one mound was used as a burial mound for the inhumation of an infant. The test pits in five mounds in Aguas Buenas yielded relatively little material, which led to the interpretation that the action of building the mounds might have been more important than the mounds in itself. More

research is ongoing to better understand the meaning of the mounds (Donner and Geurds 2018, 724; Geurds in Dosselaar 2017, 93-94; Geurds *et al.* 2010, 7).

6.1.2 Local views

As the mounds are found all over central Nicaragua, in many occasions they are located on the lands that are currently in use for agriculture or cattle ranching by the rural peasants (see Figure 17). Many of the farmers who were interviewed, accounted that they thought the mounds were a geographical phenomenon.

> "*We did not know that the mounds were things made by humans, we thought it was the nature that God created."*
> (Juan Suarez Villegas, 17 June 2016, AB_17-06-16_A_5.1.MTS).

Figure 17 Juan Suarez Villegas gives a tour of his land in Aguas Buenas. On the right side behind the tree, an earthen mound is visible. Photo taken by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

> "*We used to call the mounds* lomitas (hills) *and not* montículos (mounds) *because we thought that they were natural."*
> (Nidia Suarez Villegas, 6 June 2016, AB_06-06-16_Dd_2.2.MTS).

Through several seasons of collaboration with the archaeological research team of PACEN, in which some of the local inhabitants were employed by the project, the rural peasants have learned about the pre-Hispanic origin of the mounds.

> *"Before we did not know what [the mounds] were. (…) The archaeologists from the city came to explain that to us. Before they came we did not know the indigenous peoples lived here. (…) When I worked with Natalia* [Natalia Donner,

one of the archaeologists of the PACEN project] *I learned a lot.*
(Juan Carlos Perez, 23 June 2016, AB_23-06-16_D_2.1_JCP.MTS).

The archaeological site of Aguas Buenas overlaps with the territories of three different landowners: Juan Suarez Villegas, Lazaro Villegas and his son Mariano Villegas Borgas and Rolando Suarez. Except for Rolando Suarez, who lives in Juigalpa, the landowners live with their extended families in farmsteads and engage in subsistence farming, cattle ranching or occasionally wage-labour in the nearby city Juigalpa. A walking path that passed through the circular mounds agglomeration, was broadened by the municipal government at the end of the twentieth century. During the construction of this infrastructure, some of the mounds were cut in half by the bulldozers (Nidia Suarez Villegas, 6 June 2016, AB_06-06-16_Dd_2.2.MTS). The remaining parts of the mounds that were bulldozed are visible besides the road (see Figure 18).

Figure 18 Photograph of a mound that has been cut in half due to the broadening of the road through Aguas Buenas in 1999. Photograph taken by Eva Lauren Van Dosselaar, January 2016.

The farmsteads, sheds for the cattle, a local school building and a family cemetery are also located in the middle of the archaeological site. On Figure 19 the present-day architectural features are added to a preliminary map of the mounds in Aguas Buenas.

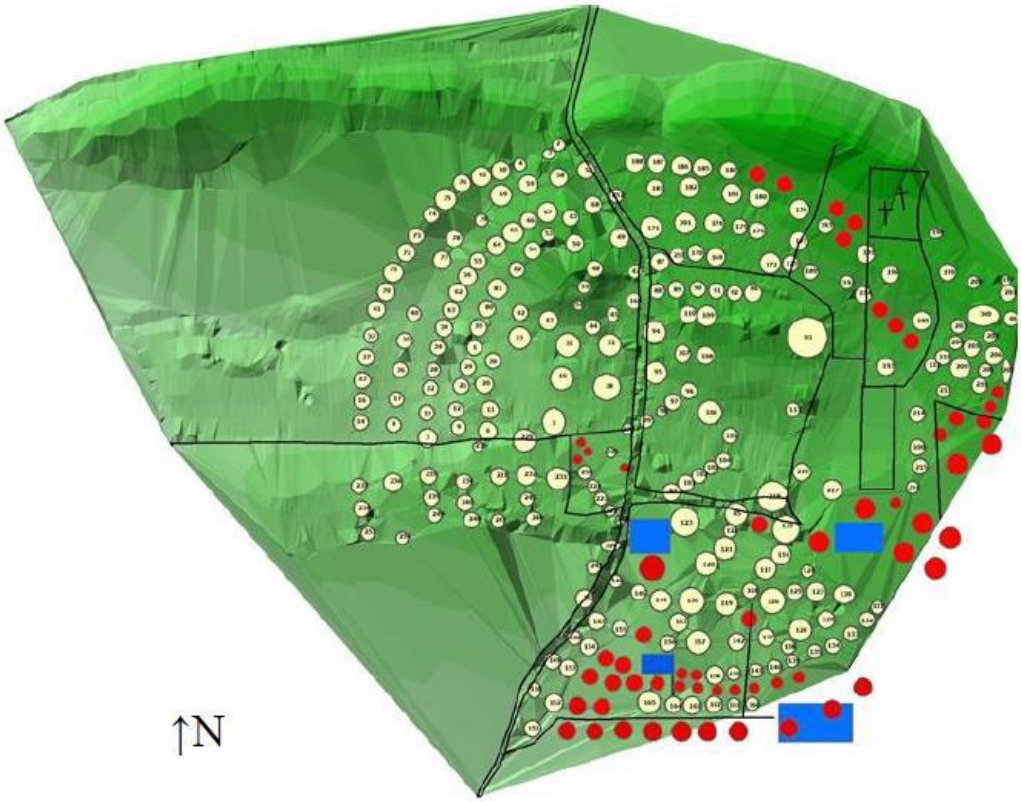


Figure 19 Preliminary map of Aguas Buenas from 2014 showing the mounds that were mapped so far in yellow and red and the modern site features. The roads are indicated with double black lines, the fences are indicated with single black lines. The farmsteads and the school are indicated with blue rectangles. The cemetery is indicated with cross signs (made by Dita Auzina and Denise Terpstra 2014).

Some of the rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua asserted that the mounds have a pre-Hispanic origin. A popular belief circulates that the mounds are pre-Hispanic graves in which gold and other riches are hidden. As a result, some mounds show remnants of looting pits (see Figure 20).

> *"A lot of people believed that in the mounds gold was buried. A lot of people who came here and searched for it. But there was nothing in it. They have excavated it"* (Juan Suárez Villegas, 17 June 2016, AB_17-06-16_A_5.4.MTS).

Figure 20 Looting pit in mounds 272, photo taken by Eva Van Dosselaar, January 2016.

"It looks like various curious people have come here to dig. To see what they could find. (…) Explorers have always come here, (…) most likely to look for gold" (Andres Eliceo Báez Galleano, 5 July 2016, SR_05-07-16_B_4.1.MTS).

6.2 Stone sculptures

6.2.1 Archaeological remains

Figure 21 Photograph of a carved sculpture at the Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea. Source: Geurds et. al. *2010, 4, fig. 1.*

Stone sculptures, anthropomorphic monoliths carved from basalt or andesite, are spread over central Nicaragua (see Figure 21). The sculptures vary in height between one and five meters and generally have a quite small circumference (Geurds *et al.* 2010, 4).

According to the north-American diplomat and collector Squier (1852), stone sculptures were present in abundance in central Nicaragua in the nineteenth century. However, several of them have been shipped to museums abroad in the nineteenth and twentieth century by European and north-American collectors. The Smithsonian institute in the United states houses several sculptures while the Ethnological Museum in Austria exhibits one statue from Chontales (Geurds *et al.* 2010, 4). The National Museum in Managua exhibits one statue as well. However, by far the largest number of sculptures

are located in the local museum *Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea* in Juigalpa that has actively been collecting them from the surrounding region since the 1960s (see Figure 22) (Geurds *et al.* 2010, 5; Geurds 2011). Consequently, of the corpus of approximately 120 stone sculptures that have their provenance in central Nicaragua, the majority is located in the *Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea* or still *in situ*, some are in Managua and few are located in museums abroad. The popularity of the stone sculptures among museums and art collectors, has caused the sculptures to be a target of looting practices. Presumably many looted sculptures circulate in illegal market networks (Geurds *et. al.* 2010).

Figure 22 Photographs of the exhibited sculptures in the Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea in Juigalpa. Photograph courtesy of Marta Villanueva.

As a result of this extensive collecting practices, almost no sculptures are located *in situ* in the landscape. Since the examples in the museum only have very general contextual information, investigating the function and meaning of these sculptures becomes a challenge. The museum collections did give rise to extensive stylistic analysis and the classification of a 'Chontales style' based on stylistic features (Baudez 1970; Haberland

1973), which differentiates these sculptures from the Zapatera style sculptures that are found on Zapatera and Ometepe island in Lake Cocibolca and in the surroundings of Granada (Zelaya-Hidalgo et al. 1974; Bruhns 1982).

The only sites in central Nicaragua known thus far where stone sculptures are found *in situ*, are El Cóbano and El Gavilán. Although preliminary surveys have indicated the presence of *in situ* sculptures near the towns of Tortuguero and Antonio Kukarawala (Geurds *in press).* In El Cóbano one fragment of a stone sculpture has been found and, based on associated ceramics, has been dated to 800 CE (Rigat 1992, 501-504).

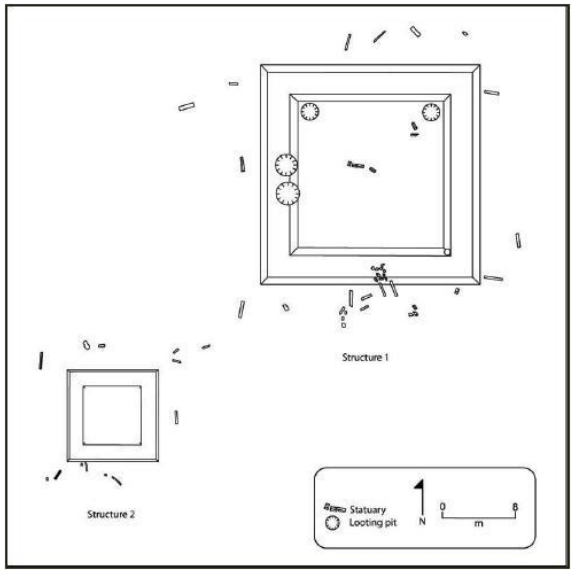


Figure 23 Visual representation of the archaeological finds at El Gavilan, Source: Geurds et. al. *2010, 7, fig. 3.*

In El Gavilán, Nawawasito, El Ayote twenty -three stone sculptures and twenty uncarved monoliths are found. Archaeological research by the PACEN team in 2009-2011 found that the sculptures are located around the corners and edges of two square, stepped platforms of 24x24 meters and 16x16 meters (see Figure 23). Additionally, there are approximately forty mounds on the site, finds from archaeological test pits suggest that they were used for habitational purposes, however it is not excluded that some mounds, especially the exceptionally large ones, had a different use (Geurds *et al.* 2010, 7). The association between the archaeological features, the location near the confluence of the river *Siquia* and the river *Nawawas,* as well as the necessary communal investment of time and energy, has led to the interpretation of the site as an important regional centre. It is hypothesized that hrough the communal effort that was necessary to build the site, which perhaps functioned as a public ceremonial space for the remembrance of ancestors, community identity was negotiated at a wider regional level (Geurds *in press)*.

This contextual information gives some insight in the use and meaning of the sculptures, however without comparable sites where sculptures are located *in situ*, any interpretation remains speculative.

6.2.2 Local views

Almost no sculptures are left in the central Nicaraguan landscape, as the majority is located in museums or in illegal trade networks. Most older informants did remember that sculptures were present in the landscape in their youth.

> Luisa Diaz: *"A sculpture they took here from our land. In the time of my grandfather. I think it is in the museum now. A sculpture of stone, that had drawings on it."*
>
> Juan Salamanca Guevara*: "They were working the field to plant crops, and then they found this sculpture. We gave it to these people... I do not know if it is in the museum or in somebody's house."*
>
> Luisa Diaz: *"I don't remember. We were small children in that time."*
>
> (Luisa Diaz and Juan Salamanca Guevara, 20 June 2016, SB_20-06-16_A_1.1.MTS)

The informants refer to the sculptures as *muñecos* (dolls) and they know it was made by the pre-Hispanic inhabitants of the area.

> "*These sculptures that you can find here belonged to the Indians. These sculptures that they call* muñeca de piedra *(stone dolls). (…) What people say, is that they prayed to them. Because in these times, they did not have the laws of… I mean like now, we read the Bible. They did not have this. So they made these dolls in order to venerate them. (…) They represent their Gods."*
> (Arturo Bermuda, 29 June 2016, GG_28-06-16_A_3.3.MP4).

The archaeological site El Gavilán, Nawawasito (El Ayote, RAAS) overlaps with the property of the *finquero* Marco Alberto Gutiérrez Chavarilla. His finca *Santa Eduviges* specializes in cattle ranching on a medium to large scale and has employed several peasants who work and live at the farm. Marco Alberto Gutiérrez Chavarilla discovered the sculptures when they practiced slash and burn techniques to clear the land that he had purchased in 1978 as a forested area. He has taken two sculptures to stand at his house as gatekeepers (see Figure 24) (Ramon "Albertito" Alberto Gutierrez Crobeto, 12 June 2016, HSE_12-06-16_F_1.1.MTS; Marco Alberto Gutierrez Chavarilla, 11 July 2016, HSE_11-06-16_A_3.1.MP4).

Figure 24 Ramon Alberto Gutierrez Crobeto points at the stone sculptures that are displayed behind him against the walls of the farmstead of his father, finca Santa Eduviges, Nawawasito, El Ayote. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

The archaeological site is located on the route between the farmstead of Alberto Gutiérrez Chavarilla and the farmstead of his grandson (and son of Ramon Alberto Gutierrez Croberto, who is shown in figure 21) Ramon Alberto. Generated by the frequent crossing of the same route by foot or horse, a path emerged that runs beside the mound and right over a fallen statue that is broken in half (see Figure 25 Figure 25). According to the grandson Ramon Alberto this is the most cost-efficient route to move from his farmstead to that of his grandfather. This land is also a pasture where the cattle grazes (see Figure 27).

Figure 25 and 26 Facilitator Carlos Villanueva shows the path that has emerged next to the mound (on photographs on the right) and over the fallen monoliths. Photographs by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

Figure 27 Fallen sculpture on finca Santa Eduviges, Nawawasito, El Ayote. The cow dung indicates that cattle has passed here. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

Uncarved monoliths, which are interpreted by archaeologists as the preparatory phase of the stone sculptures, but which might not be recognized as such by the local residents, are used in everyday contexts (Geurds *et. al.* 2010, 6). In the field, it was observed that these monoliths were used to harden a muddy road (see Figure 28 Figure 28). In Santa Rita, a monolith served in the past as territorial marker (Andres Baez Eliceo Galleano, 5 July 2016, SR_05-07-16_B_4.1.MTS). Museum employees observed that the stone sculptures were used "*to make bridges in muddy areas, as pillars for gateways to their land, to hang and dry their clothes on, or to tie the cows and the chickens so they cannot run away."* (Marta Villanueva, 29 June 2016, MGAB_29-06-16_A_2.1.MP4).


Figure 28 and 29 The use of uncarved monoliths to harden muddy passageways is illustrated in these photographs. Photographs by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

6.3 Petroglyphs

6.3.1 Archaeological remains

Petroglyphs, motives carved into rocks or protruding bedrock, are found throughout Nicaragua (Baker 2008, 266). Mention is made of petroglyphs in the Pacific area and along the rivers of the northern highlands and the Atlantic zone, however the richest petroglyphs sites are found in the islands of lake Cocibolca and the central part of Nicaragua (Matilló Villa 1968; Baker 2008, 31-32).

Rigat (1992, 537-561) documented five petroglyph sites in Chontales, among which Aguas Buenas. In Aguas Buenas more than 150 petroglyphs are carved in the protruding bedrock in between the mounds. A more elaborated database of the petroglyphs of Aguas Buenas was built by Vlaskamp (2012). The site Piedras Pintadas near Villa Sandino has more than 1500 petroglyphs (Oporta Fonseca 2013).

The petroglyphs that were documented in central Nicaragua have been categorized according to different criteria by the different researchers, however the same elements are returning: anthropomorphic figures, zoomorphic figures, abstract motives including spirals, crosses and other geometric figures. Some petroglyphs belong in multiple categories because they exhibit for example both humanoid as well as animal-like features. Each researcher has a category for unidentifiable motives, which again reminds us of the constructed nature of these categories and our limited capacity of understanding the petroglyphs (Vlaskamp 2012, Rigat 1992, Gorin 1989, Baker 2008;

Matilló Villa 1968). On Figure 31and Figure 30 some examples of petroglyphs from Aguas Buenas are shown and their categorization made by Vlaskamp (2012).

Figure 31 Photograph of a spiral petroglyph in Aguas Buenas. Source: Vlaskamp 2012, 9, fig.1.

Figure 30 Photograph of anthropomorphic petroglyph at Aguas Buenas. Source: Dosselaar 2017, 85.

The petroglyphs are believed to be of pre-Hispanic origin, however, it is difficult to correctly estimate a date and duration of use as the petroglyphs cannot be dated directly (Baker 2010, 226). Based on the association with ceramics in Aguas Buenas, it is estimated that the site was in use between AD 400 and 1600 (Geurds *et. al.* 2009).

6 3.2 Local views

The petroglyphs are distributed all over central Nicaragua, but in some areas, such as Aguas Buenas and Piedras Pintadas, dense agglomerations are present.

In Aguas Buenas the inhabitants walk past the petroglyphs, which they call *dibujos* (drawings), on a daily basis (see Figure 32). Most informants said that the petroglyphs have a pre-Hispanic origin.

Figure 32 Photograph of Kevin pointing at a spiral petroglyph that is carved in the bedrock near his house in Aguas Buenas. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

6. 4 Ceramics and lithics

6.4.1 Archaeological remains

As Lange *et. al.* (1992, 263) have noted already, the density of archaeological surface finds such as ceramic sherds and lithic tools is low to medium (Geurds *et. al.* 2009, 5). However, in some locations sherds and lithics appear in high densities, visibility is particularly enhanced after heavy rain on places where the land has been cleared of vegetation. This is the case for example in Santa Rita (see photo) (Vlaskamp 2012, 50-51).

Figure 33 Photograph of the ground in Santa Rita. Sherds and lithic artefacts are seen on the surface. Photograph taken by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

6.4.2 Locals views

Figure 33 and Figure 34 are photographs taken in the garden of a house of landless peasants in Santa Rita. Through contacts with representatives of the local *Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea* and the archaeologists, the inhabitants know that the pieces are pre-Hispanic artefacts. Apart from that, they do not have more information about it. According to the inhabitant Juan Francisco Hernandez Baéz, a popular pass-time among children from the area is to throw the archaeological pieces in the river (Juan Francisco Hernandez Baéz, 5 June 2016, SR_05-07-16_A_8.7.MP4).

Figure 34 Carlos Villanueva posing with two lithic spearheads that he had just spotted on the ground. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016.

6.5 Conclusions

The information outlined in this chapter indicates that there is not much known about the pre-Hispanic archaeology of central Nicaragua, although this is beginning to change as a result of recent research in this region. From the observations, it can be concluded that the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains are prominently present in the current landscape. Since the present-day agricultural and cattle ranching activities overlap with the locations of the archaeological remains, the rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua engage with these pre-Hispanic remains on a daily basis. However, in some cases the residents did not realize the pre-Hispanic origin of the archaeological remains, especially regarding the earthen- and stone mounds. Signs of neglect, destruction and looting of the archaeological remains was witnessed in the field.

In chapter VII, the local construction of identity and the role of the pre-Hispanic past herein is further analysed, starting from the relation of the people with the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains.

VII Local heritage narratives

7.1 Introduction

The information in this chapter is based on the testimonies of the informants that were gathered during the fieldwork in 2016. The local views on the pre-Hispanic past and how the informants position themselves in relation to this past, were probed, which enabled an understanding of the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua.

This chapter will thus provide an answer to the first research question:

What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua?

To answer this question, the testimonies of the respondents are organized around themes that will help to understand the local perspectives on their relationship with the producers of the archaeological remains, their image of the pre-Hispanic peoples and their conceptualisation of the content of the identity category 'indigenous'. Eventually this will lead to insights in how they construct their identity and what the role of the pre-Hispanic past is in it.

7.2 Relationship of contemporary inhabitants of central Nicaragua with the pre-Hispanic past

This section explores how the informants position themselves in relation to the pre-Hispanic people who have produced the archaeological remains with which they engage on a daily basis. Specifically, the informants were asked whether they consider themselves as the descendants of the indigenous peoples who produced the archaeological remains.

7.2.1 Data

The majority of the informants gave a positive answer on the question whether they considered themselves the descendants of the people who produced the archaeological remains. The family of Nidia and Juan Suarez Villegas has been living for generations on the land that is located in the community of Aguas Buenas 1, which is also the location

of the archaeological site with the same name. When asked if they feel related to the people who produced the mounds and petroglyphs in the past, Nidia Suarez Villegas answered:

> *"Yes, yes, it is our family because we are native of this place."* (Nidia Suarez Villegas, 23 June 2016, AB_23-06-16_A_5.3.MTS)

Similarly, Luisa Diaz and Juan Salablanca Guevara consider themselves as the descendants of the pre-Hispanic peoples who produced the archaeological remains.

> *"Yes of course, we carry some of the same blood."* (Juan Salablanca Guevara, 20 June 2016, SB_20-06-16_A_1.1.MTS)

This form of invoking a biological continuity between the pre-Hispanic peoples from the past and the current inhabitants of central Nicaragua is expressed by multiple informants. Mariano Villegas Burgos expressed that the pre-Hispanic peoples lived too long ago to call them forefathers, however he does acknowledge that they must be related by blood.

> "*Well, they say that we are mixed with the Indian race, that we have Indian roots. And that we mixed with the Spanish when they came. But that's all I know… everybody says it but I wouldn't know."* (Mariano Villegas Burgos, 23 June 2016, AB_23-06-16_B_2.1_MVB.MTS).

Mariano Villegas Burgos is not the only one who tells this narrative of biological *mestizaje*. Arturo Bermuda also acknowledges that this genetic mixture has taken place in the past and concludes that he therefore is probably related to the pre-Hispanic peoples who are responsible for making the archaeological material. To the question whether Arturo Bermuda believes he has Indian ancestors, he answered:

> *"Yes, yes, and Spanish as well. Because when Christopher Columbus came, he brought along other Spaniards and they started to conquer Indian women. The kids that came out of these relations were a mixture. So yes."* (Arturo Bermuda, 29 June 2016, GG_28-06-16_A_3.3.MP4).

Arturo added that he is glad that the Spanish came, because otherwise it would be "*full of Indians (laughs)."* From the rest of the conversation it became obvious that Arturo Bermuda regards the colonization and *mestizaje* as a good thing. He says that when Columbus came to Nicaragua to look for gold, it was just business. He is grateful that the

Spaniards have introduced the Bible and cities, like Juigalpa (Arturo Bermuda, 29 June 2016, GG_28-06-16_A_3.3.MP4).

Other informants who likewise acknowledged a biological relation with the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples, distanced themselves more actively from them culturally. For example, Juan Carlos Perez, when asked whether he felt he was a descendant of the indigenous peoples who made the archaeological remains, answered:

> *"Well, in this moment… I don't know if we have the same face but we do have a little of Indian mestizaje in us, of the indigenous peoples. But… the problem is the following: the way of living of the indigenous peoples is not our way of living. For example, in that time in the past, I imagine that they had their beliefs, their way of living. (…) We have distanced ourselves from them. (…) But yeah, I do still have a vein with indigenous blood, I will not deny that, no. Because they say we still have that blood. I will accept that. (…) But now we are more developed, more advanced."* (Juan Carlos Perez, 23 June 2016, AB_23-06-16_D_2.1_JCP.MTS).

The idea that the people now are more developed resonated with other informants as well. Andres Eliceo Baéz Galleano answered to the question whether he felt like a descendant of the indigenous peoples:

> *"I don't invent this, but the people are saying that we descent from the indigenous peoples. Only now we are a bit more civilized. (…) My grandfather told me that they are like persons, but wild. (…) They were not civilized. Like now, we live in villages, but they just lived in the forest and hunted."* (Andrés Eliceo Baez Galleano, 5 July 2016, SR_05-07-16_B_4.1.MTS).

7.2.2 Interpretation

From the data it can be inferred that the rural residents of central Nicaragua often acknowledge their biological ancestry with the pre-Hispanic peoples who produced the archaeological remains. However, in the same conversation the cultural differences between those past peoples and the contemporary residents is often emphasized. This leads to the interpretation that the local inhabitants acknowledge a biological link with the producers of the archaeological remains, but deny any cultural continuity with the past indigenous peoples.

7.3 How pre-Hispanic peoples are seen

In order to understand the perspective of the present-day inhabitants of central Nicaragua regarding their relation to the pre-Hispanic peoples who produced the archaeological remains, it is necessary to know how they imagine these pre-Hispanic peoples to be. This section presents quotes that are related to the image that the informants have of pre-Hispanic peoples.

7.3.1 Data

Arturo Bermuda describes pre-Hispanic times as follows:

> *"In those times, there was just forest. The Indian was like an animal, living in the forest. They made shelters of leaves, that's where they lived, between the roots of the trees. That were their houses.* (…) *And those people, they didn't wear clothes like we do. They only wore small shorts of animal skin to cover their genital area, Taparau it is called. And they walked barefoot. They didn't even have any weapons, only these kinds of spears with stone spearheads, to hunt. Because they hunted for animals*." (Arturo Bermuda, 29 June 2016, GG_28-06-16_A_3.3.MP4).

The image that is expressed about the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples is that of a savage, almost animal-like creature. This image was confirmed by Claribel Rivera, the schoolteacher of the primary school in Aguas Buenas 1. When she was asked what the schoolchildren think of the mounds and petroglyphs in the area and how they imagine their producers, she answered that they think of them as "*the homo sapiens from prehistory, people with a lot of hair on their bodies* (while making a hand gesture that indicates hairy arms and faces) (Claribel Rivera, 1 July 2016, AB_01-07-16_A_1.1.MTS).

When Ramon Alberto Gutierrez Crobeto was asked who he thought made the stone sculptures that were found on his father's finca, he said: *"I think that these were the people that we call the primitives. The indigenous people who lived here."* (Ramon Alberto Gutierrez Crobeto, 12 June 2016, HSE_12-06-16_F_1.1.MTS).

In the testimonies mentioned above, the emotions that were expressed indicated that the informants felt a repulsion towards the way of living of the historical indigenous peoples and actively distanced themselves from them culturally. The pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples who produced the archaeological remains are imagined as animal-

like savages.

However, some informants expressed a more positive image of the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples. For example, Juan Salablanca Guevara said:

> *"They lived better than we do now. There were more things before. There were no chemicals, no nothing. Nature was better. It was different then, there was more forest, dense forest. (…) They made spearheads to kill a deer. There was an abundance of fish… Now it's not like that anymore. (…) Now we cannot grow maize for four years in a row because it is too dry."* (Juan Salablanca Guevara, 20 June 2016, SB_20-06-16_A_1.1.MTS, 00:05:00)

This is a rather romanticized image of the pre-Hispanic peoples as noble savages who live in harmony with nature. Other accounts envision the indigenous people in a more heroic manner, especially in the historical context of the first encounter with the Spanish conquistadores. Idania Mairena Cruz and Juan Suarez Villegas told me, separately from each other, the story of Cacique Diriangén when they were asked about the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples. This history originates from the ethnohistorical sources that reported on the expedition of Gil González Davila in 1522 and his encounter with several indigenous caciques in Nicaragua. Now this story is narrated orally in many different versions (Van Broekhoven 2002, 33).

According to my informants, Diriangén was a cacique in the Amerrisque region of central Nicaragua. In the first encounter with the Spanish expedition leader Gil González Dávila peaceful arrangements had been made and Diriangén had given the impression that he was willing to convert to Christianity and to subordinate to the Spanish crown. However, several days after this meeting, Cacique Diriangén attacked the Spaniards with an army of indigenous soldiers and forced them to flee (De Burgos 2006, 60). The Spaniards returned to capture cacique Diriangén, but *"they say that from the Cordillera Amerrisque, the cacique Diriangén threw himself when he was chased by Spaniards. Before they could capture him, he jumped and died. (…) They were going to take him as a prisoner, but he did not want that so he preferred to kill himself by jumping of the heights."* (Idania Mairena Cruz, 21 June 2016, PG2_21-06-16_D_2.2.MP4).

In this account, the resistance of the historical indigenous peoples is emphasized. In contrary to the other accounts, the indigenous peoples are attributed with agency in this

story and are portrayed as brave and rebellious warriors, defending themselves against the Spanish intruders.

7.3.2 Interpretation

From the accounts, roughly two different ways of imagining the historical indigenous peoples can be identified. On the one hand, they are imagined in a derogatory way as animal-like savages. On the other hand, the historical indigenous peoples are characterized more positively as noble savages or self-defending warriors.

What is constant in the accounts, is the emphasis on the cultural otherness of the historical indigenous peoples in relation to the informants. In both the derogatory as well as the positive representation of the historical indigenous peoples, the informants stress the distance between the way of living of these past peoples in comparison to their own.

7.4 Content of the identity category of 'indigenous'

To get more insight in the associations surrounding the category 'indigenous' from the viewpoint of the informants, and to understand why they distanced themselves so actively culturally from the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples, it is useful to look into the views and ideas around the present-day indigenous people in Nicaragua. What, according to the informants, is the content of the identity of 'indigenous'? The following testimonies represent the perspective of the informants on present-day indigenous peoples.

7.4.1 Data

A stigmatized image of indigenous people is also applied to the present-day indigenous peoples that are living in Nicaragua. It was observed how the term *Indio* (Indian) is used as an insult among the informants. The general low esteem and stigmatized image that the informants have of indigenous people is demonstrated by the following testimonies.

> *"In the Atlantic zone, close to Puerto Cabezas, there are still indigenous people who live in the forest. They call them the Miskito. (…) They only live in the forest and in the bends of the rivers. They don't work like the people work here to harvest their cultigens, no, they live from the fish and the animals they hunt in*

> *the forest. (…) They only live in the forest in between the trees. There in the forest the trees grow very big. So, there they put their leaves, that's where they live."* (Arturo Bermuda, 29 June 2016, GG_28-06-16_A_3.3.MP4)

Arturo Bermuda envisions the present-day indigenous peoples as living in the forest and subsisting on hunting and fishing, thereby he emphasizes the difference with himself as a farmer. The view that Arturo Bermuda expresses of present-day indigenous peoples is shared with Juan Suarez Villegas.

> *"There is this place where the indigenous peoples live, they call them the Sumo.* (…) *They do not have contact with the people, only among themselves. At the riverbanks, they make shelters of leaves and when they see people like you or me, they flee away into the forest*. (…) *Pretty weird people.* (…) *They live from the things of the forest.* (…) *They make a kind of food that you would not eat, food from the forest, animals from the forest. They make horrible food with it. They add armadillo, deer, … things that God does not even know. And if you decline their offer of food, they put diseases in your body.* (…) *It is dangerous to decline their food.* (Juan Suarez Villegas, 17 June 2016, AB_17-06-16_G_1.1.MP4)

The image that circulates about present-day indigenous peoples among the inhabitants of central Nicaragua is that they walk around naked and subsist on hunting and fishing. This way of living is judged negatively, as is indicated by the emotions that were expressed when this topic was discussed. As Juan Suarez Villegas expresses, the eating habits of the indigenous peoples are heavily disapproved. This opinion is shared with Urania Martinez.

> *"They eat simple food, because they don't eat it with salt. If you walk around with salt, they don't like that, you make enemies, because they eat simple."* (Urania Martinez, 21 June 2016, PG2_21-06-16_B_5.4.MTS)

The following quotes show that the indigenous peoples are associated with witchcraft and sorcery.

> *"The Indians never did me any harm. (…) But there are people who are afraid of them because they say that they do things. (…) Things that they do that scare people. They never really explained what kind of things. (…) There are people who say that they [the indigenous people] steal children. (…) But they don't steal.*

> *If someone wants to stay, it is because they want to themselves. "*(Urania Martinez, 21 June 2016, PG2_21-06-16_B_5.4.MTS)

Don Juan is more specific about the kind of harm that is believed to be done by the contemporary indigenous peoples.

> *"They do harm. They can put diseases in your body. It is dangerous!* (…) *They can take a long, flexible plant from the forest, and when they throw it, it becomes a snake. Anything that they take to do you harm and put on your skin, could cause horrible, uncurable diseases. Only they can cure it.*" (Juan Suarez Villegas, 17 June 2016, AB_17-06-16_G_1.1.MP4).

The same story was told by Alberto Gutiérrez Chavarilla. He affirmed that a Christian, in opposition to the indigenous peoples with their own beliefs, cannot learn how to transform a plant into a snake (Alberto Gutierrez, 12 June 2016, HSE_12-06-16_A_2.1.MP4).

> *"As a Christian, one cannot practice this. (…) How to transform a plant into a snake. (…) It is dangerous. If this snakes bites someone, only the person who has created the snake, can cure the bite."* (Alberto Gutierrez, 12 June 2016, HSE_12-06-16_A_2.1.MP4).

As the data show, the present-day indigenous peoples are seen as dangerous because they practice witchcraft that can make plants turn into animals and they can evoke diseases that only they can cure, additionally it was expressed by several informants that they use roots to make potions that can make someone fall in love and that once you go there, you cannot come back.

> *"If they approve one of our women, of our family, they never let her go again.* (…) *They can make a man or a woman fall in love by using the roots of a plant. (…) They cut off three roots and give it to you in a drink. (…) And then…"* (Alberto Gutiérrez Chavarilla, 12 June 2016, HSE_12-06-16_A_2.1.MP4).

> *"If you fall in love with a man or a woman of that race, you never leave again. You cannot go back to your home. Because they do things to you."* (Juan Suarez Villegas, 17 June 2016, AB_17-06-16_G_1.1.MP4).

In addition to these testimonies that associate the present-day indigenous peoples with witchcraft, stories about sorcery in relation to the archaeological remains left by the

pre-Hispanic peoples were told. The following story, told by Alberto Gutierrez Chavarilla, confirms the association between indigenous peoples and witchcraft.

> *"So, they were constructing the highway from Managua to el Rama. On the place where the road was meant to be constructed, a heap of stones and earth-, how to they call this? – a*[n archeological] *site was located, with mounds and stone sculptures. In order to construct the road, the tractors split the mound in two. (…) So, the person who operated the tractor discovers a ceramic cantaros* (vessel), *which broke into pieces. In the inside, a treasure appeared. The things that were inside the cantaros were a frog, a crocodile, a snake… little figures of gold. So he took all the figures and buried them somewhere, not telling anybody, so he could later dig them up. Eventually he took the figures to a goldsmith and asked how much they were worth. The goldsmith said: I will buy it from you for this price. The man thought it was a good price and sold it to him. (…) He made a fortune. So he stopped working as a tractor driver and he bought himself a hacienda, complete with cattle, because he had a lot of money. And he bought a car, each year he bought a new car. Instead of a labourer, he was now an owner, a* patron, *and one with a lot of money. One day, -and this is just a story, I do not know if it is true-, but one day something exploded in his car. Boom! The car turned upside down and ended with the tires in the air. The man survived and reflected on what had happened. Maybe he drove over a mine? Specialists investigated the scene, but there was nothing. This surprised the man. So he went to a priest and explained the situation from the beginning. 'Ah', said the priest, 'the treasure of the ancient* (pre-Hispanic) *people is the cause of all of this. The ancient people bury it and put a spell on it, this is forbidden to touch. Sell your cows and your hacienda and go and bury these golden figures where you have found them!', said the priest. 'Because otherwise, something can happen to you and you could die! These things cannot be touched'.*
>
> *This is a story that people have told me. From what I know, what I have seen and what I have experienced, I can assure you, it is true."*
> (Alberto Gutiérrez Chavarilla, 13 June 2016, HSE_13-06-16_B_4.3.MP4)

In addition to the moralistic undertones of this story, that praises Christian values and liberal notions of labour, the message which is relevant here is the association between pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples and witchcraft. The pre-Hispanic people are attributed

with the supernatural power to enchant the objects that are now found as archaeological remains.

7.4.2 Interpretation

These testimonies indicate that the informants have quite a negative and stereotypical image of present-day indigenous peoples. The informants not only distance themselves from the indigenous peoples, they actively construct their own identity in opposition to the image they have about indigenous peoples. In this sense, they portray the indigenous peoples as an Other (Spivak 1985). This is indicated by various informants regarding various themes. The way of living in the dense forest wearing only a loin cloth is juxtaposed with the informant's daily life surrounded by open grasslands and agricultural fields, while fully clothed (Arturo Bermuda). The diet of forest food that Juan Suarez Villegas and Urania Martinez disapprove so heavily, is contrasted with the farmer's diet based on cultivated food such as maize tortillas and beans. The sorcery that is attributed to the present-day as well as pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples is placed in opposition to the Christian belief system (Alberto Gutiérrez).

In this way, the informants construct an image of the indigenous peoples as the Other, in order to identify themselves in opposition to this negative image as positive. The interpretation is that the informants construct their own identity as Christian mestizo farmers in opposition to the image they have of indigenous peoples as sorcerers who walk around nearly naked and eat nasty food from the forest. An emphasis on the otherness of the indigenous peoples is made.

7.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, the view of the informants on their relation with the pre-Hispanic producers of the archaeological remains is discussed, what their perspectives are on the pre-Hispanic peoples, how pre-Hispanic peoples are seen, how the identity category of 'indigenous' is imagined and how the informants position themselves in relation to this identity category. This provides insights that help to answer the research question *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the local inhabitants of central Nicaragua?*

The conclusions that were drawn from the testimonies are given in this section. Firstly, the informants make clear that they consider themselves as the descendants of the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples who produced the archaeological remains. This relation however is limited to a biological ancestry, as the informants reject any cultural connection with the pre-Hispanic peoples. Second, the different accounts of the informants indicate that they see the pre-Hispanic peoples in a stereotypical way, either negatively as primitive savages or positively as romanticized noble savages or brave warriors.

Thirdly, the image that the informants have of indigenous peoples is that they live, practically naked, in the forest, subsisting on hunting, fishing and gathering, and practicing witchcraft. This stands in stark opposition to the image that the informants propagate about themselves as Christian farmers who live in houses surrounded by open grasslands and agricultural fields and have a diet of cultivated foods such as maize tortillas and beans. This leads to the conclusion that the informants construct their identity in opposition to the identity they attribute to indigenous peoples. They use *othering* techniques to portray indigenous peoples as everything they are *not* (Spivak 1985).

These insights allow for answering the first research question: *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the local inhabitants of central Nicaragua?*

A biological relation with the pre-Hispanic peoples is acknowledged, however any continuation of pre-Hispanic cultural elements is rejected. The image that the informants have constructed about pre-Hispanic peoples is juxtaposed to the identity that is pronounced by the informants themselves. The role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the informants is that of biological ancestor, but cultural *Other*.

VIII National heritage narratives

8.1 Introduction

8.1.2 Nicaraguan national narratives

In this chapter, the national narratives on Nicaraguan identity and the role that has been attributed to the pre-Hispanic past is explored. Thereby this chapter aims to provide an answer to the second research question:

What are the national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity?

Since the early twentieth century, different versions of the national narrative have been propagated, stimulated by different political discourses. Because traces of the different varieties of the narratives on national identity are still present in Nicaraguan popular culture today, all these versions will be discussed.

8.2 Vanguardia national narratives

The task of creating a national narrative that promoted a unified identity, was not easy in the newly-established nation-state in 1821, as colonial power relations continued to characterize the Nicaraguan population in the nineteenth century. The first national narrative was only formulated in the early twentieth century by the poets of the Vanguardia movement, a group of intellectuals who had a prominent position in Nicaraguan politics (Hooker 2005, 19; Whisnant 1995, 152-155). Their unifying narrative imagined that the population of Nicaragua was entirely mestizo, descendants of both indigenous peoples and Spaniards. By promoting Nicaraguan identity as homogeneously mestizo, subnational indigenous identities were denied existence and internal conflicts were negated. Groups of people who self-identified as indigenous, thereby contradicting this narrative, were systematically ignored through the rejection of their claim based on the lack of indigenous markers (Gould 1998b, 52-54). The manipulation of the past, in order to naturalize this narrative on national identity, portrayed the colonization and the process of *mestizaje* as a biological miscegenation in which the Spanish cultural influence was dominant. By some Vanguardia intellectuals the conquest was portrayed as a violent enterprise, while other prominent figures in Nicaraguan politics emphasized the harmonious nature of the conquest. In all accounts however, the process of *mestizaje* is portrayed as a purely biological mixing, after which Spanish civilization and faith was adopted while all indigenous cultural elements were lost.

8.2.1 The legitimation of the conquest

The respected poets of the Vanguardia movement formulated the basis of what later would become the national narrative (Gould 1998, 8; Hooker 2005, 23). This is shown in the account of José Coronel Urtecho, one of the most prominent intellectuals of the Vanguardia movement:

> "*Our culture was born with the Conquest. By hook and by crook our Spanish ancestors subjugated the Indian who was sunken in savagery, and set themselves the still incomplete task of incorporating the Indian into a superior culture. They elevated him blood-wise through mixture; they gave him a redemptive religion and a vast and almost perfect language. Since then the Indian, the* criollo, *and the pure Spaniard were on the way to the same inexhaustible culture.* (Urtecho 1929, cited in Jorge Eduardo Arellano 1969, 10).

A gendered metaphor of the union between an indigenous woman and a Spanish man is used to illustrate the process. In this rhetoric, that was formulated by the conservative politician and intellectual Carlos Cuadra Pasos, the Spanish conquistadores *"penetrated jungles, killed caciques, fought against Indian men and impregnated Indian women."* (Cuadra Pasos 1987, 53, quoted in Hooker 2005, 22). In this portrayal, the indigenous woman only fulfils the role of passive vessel who ensures biological reproduction, while the Spanish man is the provider of culture and civilization. The mestizo children that are the result of this union are thus portrayed as having indigenous blood, but their culture is a Spanish adaptation to local circumstances (Cuadra Pasos 1987; Hooker 2005, 21-23).

8.2.2 Interpretation

These Vanguardia national narratives portray the colonial past as a violent process. However, in these accounts the Spanish violence is not only legitimated, but even celebrated, through the portrayal of the indigenous inhabitants as inferior savages with no agency. These accounts portray the process of *mestizaje* mainly as a biological mixture of indigenous and Spanish blood and an incorporation, if not elimination, of indigenous culture. The resulting national mestizo identity was thus promoted as having mainly a Spanish cultural background. This is also suggested by Urtecho, who clearly regards himself predominantly as a descendant of the Spanish colonial masters. Although indigenous ancestry is acknowledged, it is not promoted as something to be proud of. Rather the Spanish ancestry, of whom the present-day mestizos have supposedly inherited their culture, language and religion, is the basis of pride in the

past. In these accounts, pre-Hispanic culture has a marginal role in the construction of the present-day mestizo identity.

8.2.3 Harmonious *mestizaje*

In other instances, the colonial past is represented as a harmonious process instead of a one-sided conquest. This can be observed, for example, through the popularized ethnohistorical account of the encounter between the Spanish conquistador Gil Gonzáles Dávila and the Nicarao Cacique Nicaragua in the early days of the conquest. This story has been uncritically perpetuated by Vanguardia poets such as Pablo Antonio Cuadra and has become a symbolical metaphor for the harmonious nature of the entire conquest (Hooker 2005, 28). According to the account, that was documented by the treasurer of the expedition in 1522, Gil Gonzáles Davila was invited by the Nicarao Cacique Nicaragua (hence the name of the country). After González Dávila was welcomed generously by Cacique Nicaragua, they sat down and engaged in a lengthy philosophical conversation (Fowler 1986, 43). The cacique asked the conquistador questions related to the world, the stars and the moon and Christian religion. Eventually cacique Nicaragua agreed to convert to Christianity (De Burgos 2006, 58). This encounter was later popularized as *Dialogo de los siglos* (dialogue of the centuries) and is promoted in popular culture as the pacific beginning of the colonial episode (De Burgos 2006, 59). On Figure 35 a mural is seen that is located in Rivas, which depicts this encounter. The text on the scroll refers to the topics of conversation.

Figure 35 Photo of a mural in Rivas that depicts the dialogo de los siglos. This photo was tweeted by Visita Nicaragua on 17 June 2016 (Source: twitter.com/visitanicaragua/status/743917435854544896).

8.2.4 Interpretation

In this narrative, the conquest is portrayed as a peaceful encounter. This story serves as a metaphor for the entire colonization: it is presented as a pacific and reasonable dialogue that culminated in the voluntary submission of the indigenous peoples upon realizing the superiority of the Spanish civilization and Christian faith (De Burgos 2006, 58-59). The indigenous peoples are depicted as inferior and submissive. Meanwhile, the Spanish are represented as peaceful bringers of culture. No cultural contributions of the indigenous peoples are acknowledged in the present-day mestizo identity, as *mestizaje* is represented as the complete adoption of Spanish civilization. The role of the indigenous peoples in the mestizo identity is limited to a biological contribution.

8.3 Sandino and Sandinista narratives

8.3.1 Augusto César Sandino

The revolutionary Augusto César Sandino, who rebelled against the US military occupation in the late 1920s and early 1930s, presented his identity as a Nicaraguan, and the role of the indigenous and Spanish actors in it, as follows:

> "*I am Nicaraguan, and I feel proud because in my veins circulates, more than anything else, Indian blood… My highest honour is to have arisen from the bosom of the oppressed, who are the soul and nerve of the Race"* (quoted in Ramirez 1981, 144; Field 1995, 437)
>
> "*I used to look with resentment on the colonizing work of Spain, but today I have profound admiration for it… Spain gave us its language, its civilization, and its blood. We consider ourselves the Spanish Indians of America."* (quoted in Ramirez 1981, 48; Belausteguigoitia 1981, 200).

8.3.2 Interpretation

Although Sandino's narrative is different from that of the Vanguardia intellectuals in that he expresses pride in his indigenous ancestry, the narratives have in common that they only ascribe a biological role to the indigenous peoples in the process of *mestizaje*. The Spanish civilization remains the origin of the culture of the present-day Nicaraguan. Sandino portrays the indigenous peoples as an oppressed group, and thereby acknowledges the injustice of the Spanish colonizers.

Sandino was murdered by his political opponents before he could use this narrative about *mestizaje* for nation-building purposes. However, aspects of his version of this narrative have inspired the Sandinista discourse from the 1960s onwards.

8.3.3 Sandinista narratives

Since the emergence of the revolutionary Marxist political party FSLN (Frente Sandinsta de Liberación Nacional) in the 1960s, signalling a radical break with the previous political governance of the Somoza dictatorship, the national narrative was also profoundly re-invented. Although the promotion of Nicaraguan identity as homogeneous mestizo was adopted from the Vanguardia version of the narrative, the nature of the process of *mestizaje* and the role of indigenous culture herein was portrayed radically different by the FSLN (Hooker 2005, 20). The following excerpt from a speech given in 1981 by the Sandinista Daniel Ortega, who would later become president of Nicaragua, demonstrates the profoundly different role that is attributed to pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples and the contrasting way that the colonization is portrayed.

> "*From the moment when that clash took place in the colonial era between the conqueror who came to dominate and colonize… in our countries since then a heroic, titanic struggle has been taking place, a resistance in order not to be crushed by the different colonizing currents that have hurled themselves continually against our population, colonizing currents that have sought to negate our identity… The conqueror was not able to crush us and make our own identity disappear, instead, our own identity imposed itself over the colonizer and in spite of his presence, our people were able to maintain a permanent presence of our roots."* (Daniel Ortega in Bayardo Arce 1982, 88).

As the political opponents of the Somoza regime, they fiercely contradicted the narrative of harmonious *mestizaje* that, according to the FSLN, served as a political strategy to conceal the cruelty of colonization and to legitimize the power of the elite (De Burgos 2006, 58; Hooker 2005, 26; Wheelock 1974). The Sandinista's promoted a counter-narrative emphasizing the violent nature of the conquest and the importance of indigenous ancestry in the formation of the present-day mestizo (Hooker 2005, 26). The political legacy of Sandino (after whom the party was named) is noticeable in the pride the FSLN expresses in their indigenous ancestry. This pride is based on an image of the historical indigenous ancestor as a fierce rebel against the colonial occupation.

The historian and Sandinista Jaime Wheelock published the Sandinista version of the history of colonization and *mestizaje* in his book *Raíces Indígenas de la lucha anticolonialista* (1974). In this historical account, Wheelock portrays the indigenous peoples during the colonial era as brave and heroic defenders of their land, who resisted courageously against the foreign Spanish intruders. In the colonial context, he celebrates the bravery of the indigenous peoples: "*They could not have fought with more heroism and sacrifice"* (Wheelock 1974, 36, cited in Hale 1994, 90).

However, Wheelock places the demise of the indigenous peoples in the nineteenth century. After the violent repression of the indigenous protests in Matagalpa in 1881, the indigenous peoples lost their lands and were coerced into wage labour, which resulted in the dismantling of indigenous communities and, according to Wheelock, the loss of their identity. The absorption of indigenous peoples into the working class, gave rise to a shift in the nature of the struggle. The ethnic struggle between indigenous peoples and colonial oppressors had shifted to a class-based struggle between the working class and the bourgeois (Wheelock 1974, 89). Since the end of the nineteenth century, Wheelock considers all inhabitants of Nicaragua mestizos. These mestizos, in particular the hardworking peasants and wage labourers who are exploited by the bourgeoisie, are considered descendants of the indigenous peoples (Hooker 2005, 30).

8.3.4 Interpretation

This narrative supported the revolutionary agenda of the FSLN. In their emphasis on the heroic struggle of the indigenous peoples against the foreign oppressor, an analogy is made with the Sandinista resistance against US paternalism and their revolutionary struggle is legitimized. The claim on power of the Somoza dictatorship is discredited as they are historically portrayed as the oppressive bourgeois elite. In the Sandinista version of national mestizo identity, the historical indigenous peoples are celebrated as heroes. They are romantically portrayed as brave rebels who resisted the violent Spanish invaders. Indigenous ancestry now became a source of pride for the present-day Nicaraguans. As Hale (1994, 92) analysed: "*To be Nicaraguan Mestizo now meant having Indian roots, celebrating survivals from this Indian past, and actively making use of them to construct a revolutionary future."* Especially the hardworking mestizo peasants, who were the target audience for the Sandinista narrative, could relate to the representation of the historical indigenous peoples as oppressed victims who resisted domination (Hooker 2005, 30). The indigenous contribution to the present-day mestizo identity is

represented mainly as the continuation of struggle, and less as a continuation of culture (Hale 1994, 89-91). Although different degrees of inheritance of indigenous cultural elements into present-day mestizo identity are acknowledged by different Sandinista's, the focus remains on the inheritance of the rebellious nature. The role of the pre-Hispanic past in the Sandinista narrative on national identity is that of a rebellious and romanticized ancestor.

8.5 Promotion of national identity narratives today

Traces of both the above described versions of mestizo nationalism are present today in Nicaragua and are promoted through a range of different agents. In this section, examples of present-day media that ensure the promotion of this national narrative are given. In this way, it provides evidence that both versions of the national narrative are still found today.

8.5.1 Promotion of the Vanguardia national narrative

8.5.1.1 El Baile del Toro Venado

The dance of the *Toro Venado* (Bull Deer) is performed each year in Masaya, Nicaragua (Palma 2004, 66). Men in costumes of a jaguar, a deer and a bull dance in a carnivalesque procession. The dance symbolizes the conquest by portraying a gendered *mestizaje* and celebrating the adjacent shift in power relations (Palma 2004, 64-67). The character of the jaguar, an animal indigenous to Nicaragua, symbolizes the indigenous man. This character is associated with brute natural force (Palma 2004, 67). The deer, an indigenous animal who was a popular prey for the jaguar in pre-Hispanic times, symbolizes the indigenous woman. The deer is quick and suspicious and symbolizes a mystical natural beauty (Palma 2004, 67-68). The bull, who was introduced by the Spaniards, stands for the Spanish conquistador. This character embodies values of manliness, self-control and strength (Palma 2004, 66).
In the dance, the jaguar and the bull compete with each other to conquer the deer. The jaguar makes attempts by dancing around her, but the deer character does not show interest. Subsequently the bull succeeds in conquering her.

The dance of the *Toro Venado* is analysed by Palma (2004) to be a celebration of mestizo identity and a gendered re-enactment of the conquest and *mestizaje*. The couple of the bull and the deer, that stand for the Spanish conquistador and the indigenous woman,

are celebrated as the origin of the present-day mestizo culture in Nicaragua. The shift in power from the indigenous world to the Spanish dominated culture is celebrated. Through this dance, present-day mestizo identity is promoted, while the demise of the indigenous men is celebrated. The Vanguardia national narrative on mestizo identity is thus promoted by the *Toro Venado*. The gendered portrayal of *mestizaje* as the relation between a passive indigenous woman who is conquered by an active Spaniard, resonates the Vanguardia version of *mestizaje* and the passive role of pre-Hispanic culture in it.

8.5.1.2 Primary education textbooks

The schoolbooks that are distributed nationally reflect the way that the state portrays the indigenous past and its role in the present-day Nicaraguan identity. In a textbook on social sciences for children in the 6th grade the process of *mestizaje* is described as "*one of the most notable phenomena of the Spanish colonization, almost exclusively caused by sexual relations between Spanish men and Indigenous and African women*" (MINED (Estudios sociales) 2014, 136).

In this statement, the Vanguardista metaphor on *mestizaje* as a gendered relation is obvious and the focus remains on the biological miscegenation, ignoring any cultural mixing in the process.

The textbooks acknowledge regional variations in the national identity between the Pacific, central and Atlantic parts of Nicaragua. However, the identity of the central Nicaraguan is presented as being constituted mainly of European descent:

"(…) in the mountainous regions of the north and central parts of Nicaragua more than anything the European legacy is observed that is contributed by the Spanish and the German settlers in the region" (MINED (Convivencia y civismo) 2014, 32).

The indigenous peoples are granted a minimum role in the present-day identity of Nicaragua, as propagated by the state. The Vanguardia narrative is clearly reflected in the sense that only a biological mixture is acknowledged and mainly the European legacy in the mestizo population is celebrated, while the indigenous legacy is ignored.

8.5.2 Promotion of the Sandinista national narrative

8.5.2.1 El Güegüense

El Güegüense (also referred to as *Macho Ratón*), is a sixteenth century drama that is interpreted as an early expression of *mestizaje*. The theatrical performance is still executed every year on the Saint's day of San Sebastián in Diriamba in a street procession with masked actors in colourful costumes.
UNESCO has declared the drama as a *Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* in 2008 (UNESCO 2008).

The *Güegüense* is an elderly travelling merchant who speaks Spanish as well as Nahuatl and is thus regarded as a mestizo. When he is summoned by colonial officials to pay his taxes, he pretends to misunderstand the Spanish and mocks the Spanish colonials. This drama is thus seen as an early expression of opposition against colonial rule and as the emergence of the mestizo (Arellano 1984, 36; Cuadra 1987, 38; Gould 1998, 8).

Through this performance, the Sandinista mestizo nationalism and the role of the indigenous legacy in the mestizo identity is promoted. The opposition against colonial rule is in line with the imagery of the rebellious Indian, with whom the Sandinista's like to identify, while the character of the Güegüense could be interpreted as the embodiment of the process of *mestizaje* and the continuation of struggle.
In this way, an ambiguous stance of the nation-state where the indigenous roots of the mestizo is celebrated and exploited for touristic purposes, while the contemporary indigenous peoples are stigmatized and ignored, is perpetuated (De Burgos 2006, 160-161).

8.5.2.2 Diriangén

Pride in the indigenous past is expressed and promoted as well in the name and logo of the successful Nicaraguan Football team Diriangen F.C.

Cacique Diriangén is described in Spanish ethnohistorical sources as an insubordinate and rebellious cacique, who led an attack on the Spaniards. When he was later chased by the Spaniards out of

revenge, he chooses to throw himself off a cliff, rather than to be captured by the Spaniards (De Burgos 2006, 60).

The historical figure of Diriangén has acquired a reputation of a fearless and brave cacique who resisted Spanish control. The Nicaraguan football team exploits the fearless reputation of cacique Diriangén to complement their own status. Hereby they celebrate the heroicness of their pre-Hispanic ancestors. The Sandinista national narrative is recognized in the appropriation of the cacique's name: the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples are celebrated as the fearless and brave ancestors of the present-day mestizo population. The Sandinista discourse has made explicit use of the figure of cacique Diriangén as well: in their representation of the historical developments, cacique Diriangén is presented as a direct ancestor of Augusto Sandino (Cuadra 1987, 100). This statement emphasizes how the rebellious nature of the pre-Hispanic peoples lives on in contemporary Nicaraguans.

8.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, the different national narratives were discussed in the light of the role they ascribed to the pre-Hispanic past in the formation of national Nicaraguan identity. As such, this chapter gives an answer to the second sub question of this study, namely: *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the national narratives in Nicaragua?*

Is was found that different political discourses, particularly the Vanguardia and the Sandinista ideologies, propagated different versions of the Nicaraguan national identity in which the pre-Hispanic past has varying roles. Traces of these different versions are still present and actively promoted today through different mediums. This chapter explored how the pre-Hispanic past was imagined to contribute to the present-day Nicaraguan identity in the Vanguardia and the Sandinista national narratives, as well as how these narratives continue to be promoted today in popular culture.

In the narrative that was formulated by the poets of the Vanguardia movement in the second quarter of the twentieth century, the true Nicaraguan identity was imagined as mestizo. This mestizo identity was the result of a biological mixture between indigenous peoples and Spaniards, however culturally the mestizo was portrayed as having completely adopted Spanish culture and civilization. The historical indigenous peoples

that are seen as the biological contribution to present-day mestizos, are depicted either as wild savages or noble and submissive savages.

The narrative on identity that the Sandinista's formulated, similarly imagined the true Nicaraguan as mestizo. However, the contribution of the historical indigenous peoples to present-day mestizo identity was acknowledged not only in blood, but also in the form of character traits such as a rebellious nature. The historical indigenous ancestors of the mestizos were portrayed in a romanticized manner as heroic fighters, which caused that the indigenous ancestry of mestizos is now proudly celebrated.

It was illustrated through examples from primary education textbooks, sports teams, folkloric dances and theatre plays, how traces of both of these narratives are still promoted through popular media today.

IX Discussion

In this chapter the findings from chapter VII and VIII regarding the local and the national heritage narrative and the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of present-day identity, are compared in order to answer the research question: *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua and how does this relate to national narratives on heritage and identity?* First the local and the national heritage narratives are compared, thereafter the theories about identity that were discussed in the theoretical chapter are applied to the data.

9.1 Comparison national narrative and local narrative

From the accounts of the informants the conclusions were drawn that they acknowledge a biological relation between themselves and the pre-Hispanic peoples who produced the archaeological remains. These pre-Hispanic peoples are imagined in a stereotypical way either as animal-like savages or as romanticized savages. The informants construct their own identity in opposition to the image they have of indigenous peoples. The pre-Hispanic peoples thus have the role of biological ancestor and cultural Other in the construction of identity of the present-day inhabitants of central Nicaragua.

The national narratives on mestizo identity that were promoted in Nicaragua were formulated differently by the different political governments, however, traces of all these versions are still present in Nicaragua. The Vanguardia narrative only acknowledges a biological descendance from indigenous peoples, who are portrayed negatively as primitive savages or as submissive and passive people who voluntarily adopted Spanish customs and religion. The culture, religion and language of present-day Nicaraguans is completely attributed to Spanish influence. The role of the pre-Hispanic peoples in the present-day identity is thus limited to that of biological ancestor.

In the Sandinista narrative, the indigenous peoples from before the end of the twentieth century are portrayed as heroic rebels. In addition to a biological contribution, this rebellious nature is thought to have survived into the present-day Nicaraguans. The pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples are regarded as biological ancestors as well as the origin of the rebellious nature of the present-day mestizo Nicaraguans.

It becomes clear that the national narratives and the local narratives have much in common. In the following sections, the Vanguardia and the Sandinista national narratives on identity and the role of the pre-Hispanic past herein are compared to the accounts of the informants. With concrete examples, similarities between the local and the national narratives are identified.

9.1.1 Vanguardia elements in the local narratives

Elements of the Vanguardia national narrative are reflected in the accounts of the informants: the gendered representation of the process of *mestizaje*; the passive role that is attributed to indigenous peoples; the reduction of the role of indigenous peoples in the formation of mestizos to a biological contribution; and the conviction that the adoption of Spanish culture has elevated the mestizo population from savagery.

The gendered representation of the process of *mestizaje* which was expressed by Arturo Bermuda, corresponds to the Vanguardia narrative on *mestizaje*. Arturo Bermuda narrates the conquest and *mestizaje* as "[the] *Spaniards (…) started to conquer Indian woman. The kids that came out of these relations were a mixture"* (Arturo Bermuda, 29 June 2016, GG_28-06-16_A_3.3.MP4). This narration is very similar to the idea that the Spaniards *"penetrated jungles, killed caciques, fought against Indian men and impregnated Indian women."* (Cuadra Pasos 1976, 53, quoted in Hooker 2005, 22), as was formulated by the ruling Vanguardia elite and promoted through popular dances such as the *Toro Venado* (Palma 2004).

The idea that the process of *mestizaje* was generated through the relations of Spanish men and indigenous women is shared in both the national as well as the local narratives. In these accounts, the indigenous women have a passive role, they are "*conquered"* or "*impregnated",* and have no agency in this action. This symbolizes the passive role that the indigenous peoples fulfilled in the process of *mestizaje* in these narratives.

The Vanguardia narrative limits the contribution of indigenous peoples to the present-day mestizo identity to biological ancestry, no indigenous cultural influence is acknowledged. All informants shared the conviction that they have indigenous blood: *"I still have a vein with indigenous blood, I will not deny that."* (Juan Carlos Perez, 23 June 2016, AB_23-06-16_D_2.1_JCP.MTS). However, many informants distance themselves from the historical indigenous peoples by emphasizing that they are now "more developed, more advanced and more civilized" (Juan Carlos Perez, 23 June 2016, AB_23-

06-16_D_2.1_JCP.MTS; Andrés Eliceo Baez Galleano, 5 July 2016, SR_05-07-16_B_4.1.MTS). The positive consequences of the colonization are likewise celebrated by the informant Arturo Bermuda, who praises the introduction of the Bible and cities, like Juigalpa (Arturo Bermuda, 29 June 2016, GG_28-06-16_A_3.3.MP4).
These convictions resemble the ideas of the influential intellectual José Coronel Urtecho, who praises that the Spaniards have *elevated* the indigenous peoples, both blood-wise and through their incorporation in a *superior* culture. The adoption of the Spanish language and religion and their rejection of indigenous customs, has caused the mestizos to advance culturally, according to Urtecho (Urtecho 1929 in Jorge Eduardo Arellano 1969, 10).

From the above analysis it can be concluded that the Vanguardia national narrative is reflected in the local narrative on the role of pre-Hispanic heritage in the present-day identity. Both narratives share that the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples are seen as savages, who, through the biological mixture with the Spanish, the adoption of Spanish civilization and rejection of indigenous customs, became the superior and civilized mestizo people that they are now. The role of the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples in the formation of identity is thus limited to a biological contribution in both the Vanguardia as well as in local narratives.

9.1.2 Sandinista elements in the local narratives

Elements of the Sandinista national narrative are reflected in the local accounts as well. The Sandinista portrayal of the historical indigenous peoples as brave warriors who resisted the Spanish intruders is reflected in the story of cacique Diriangén. In this section, these Sandinista elements in the local narrative are discussed.

The story of cacique Diriangén, as told by Idania Mairena Cruz and Juan Suarez Villegas, provides a direct relation to the Sandinista narrative (Idania Mairena Cruz, 21 June 2016, PG2_21-06-16_D_2.2.MP4; Juan Suarez Villegas, 17 June 2016). In this story, which is based on the written accounts of the expedition of Gil González Dávila in the early days of colonization, cacique Diriangén is represented as a brave warrior who resists the Spaniards. The figure of cacique Diriangén has been actively employed by the Sandinista discourse to promote their own political agenda. Augosto Sandino, who has served as principal inspiration for the FSLN, was represented as the descendant of cacique Diriangén (Antonio Cuadra 1987, 100). In this case, a direct relation can be found

between the local narrative and the Sandinista narrative, as the same story that was promoted by the FSLN is circulating among the inhabitants of central Nicaragua. It must be said however, that only in these two accounts expressed by Idania Mairena Cruz and Juan Suarez Villegas, the historical indigenous peoples were portrayed as heroic warriors. It can thus be concluded that the Sandinista image of the historical indigenous peoples as heroic warriors is present, but not wide-spread among the rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua.

This analysis indicates that elements of the Sandinista national narrative can be found in local narratives. The story of cacique Diriangén, which is promoted by the Sandinistas to emphasize the heroic role of the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples, although it is not widespread, is retold among the inhabitants in central Nicaragua.

It can be concluded that elements of the Sandinista narrative on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity are present in the local narratives. Only the story of cacique Diriangén indicates that some informants celebrated their indigenous roots, similarly as is promoted in the Sandinista narrative.

9.1.3 Interpretation

From the comparison between the national narratives and the local narratives, it becomes clear that both Vanguardia as well as Sandinista elements are present in the local narratives.

The accounts of the informants reflect the Vanguardia national narrative in several aspects. The representation of the process of *mestizaje* as a gendered relation in which the woman represents the passive indigenous people and the man represents the dominant Spanish conquerors, is common both in the Vanguardia narrative as well as in the testimonies from the informants. The Vanguardia conviction that the indigenous peoples have only contributed biologically to the present-day mestizo Nicaraguans, who have received their culture, civilization and language from the Spanish is a shared idea between both narratives. Additionally, both the local as well as the national Vanguardia narratives propagate the idea that the mestizos, thanks to the adoption of Spanish culture, now have a superior culture than the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples from the past.

Traces of the Sandinista national narrative are, although limited, represented in the local narratives. The recounting of the story of cacique Diriangén by the informants reflects

the popularity of this history, promoted by the FSLN, because of the heroic role of the indigenous cacique. However, since only two informants expressed an envisioning of the historical indigenous peoples as brave warriors, the Sandinista influence on the local narratives can be interpreted as limited.

It can thus be concluded that the local central Nicaraguan narratives regarding the role of the pre-Hispanic past in their identity show considerable overlap with the national narratives, in particular the Vanguardia narrative. In this case, the local perspectives on the role of the pre-Hispanic past in their identity do not narrate a counter-narrative, but are rather similar to the national narrative. The Christian mestizo farmer identity that was expressed and emphasized by the informants, coincides with the imaginings of national Nicaraguan identity as propagated by the state. This identity is placed firmly in opposition to the historical as well as present-day identity category of indigenous peoples.

As explained in the theoretical chapter, identity is regarded in this thesis as being constructed through the interplay of internal and external factors, or in other words, in the interaction of bottom-up and top-down mechanisms. This framework is used to analyse the dynamics between the local and the national narratives on identity and heritage in Nicaragua.

National narratives on heritage and identity are projected onto the citizens of a nation-state. It is a powerful top-down mechanism that seeks to forge a collective identity among the inhabitants of the state. However, through this narrow demarcation of national identity, it is also an exclusive mechanism that stigmatizes everyone who does not comply with the national identity as imagined by the state.

As argued in the theoretical chapter, identity does not stand alone, but rather is a relational process of locating yourself in the world you are born into to. As such, local narratives on heritage and identity are constructed and negotiated in relation to the existing narratives. If these existing narratives portray a certain identity as negative, it is less likely that people will adopt this identity. As Dombrowski (2001, 183) notes, if adopting a certain identity will cause stigmatization, exclusion and a lack of opportunities to the person, he or she is likely to actively reject this identity and adopt an identity that is more beneficial for themselves in the world they live in (in Martinez Novo 2006, 3).

In the case-study in central Nicaragua, centuries of colonial rule and subsequent national governments that perpetuated colonial power hierarchies, caused indigenous identity in Nicaragua to be surrounded by heavy stigmatization. Both in the Vanguardia as well as in the Sandinista narrative, people who identify as indigenous in Nicaragua suffer discrimination and exclusion, while people who identify as mestizos are celebrated as embodying the essence of Nicaraguan-ness (Hooker 2005). The inhabitants of central Nicaragua negotiate and construct their own identity in relation to these pre-existing narratives. They can embrace the national mestizo identity as propagated by the state, or they can counter this identity narrative. This research has shown that the inhabitants of central Nicaragua have actively chosen to adopt the mestizo identity as promoted by the state and to reject any contribution from the pre-Hispanic past that goes beyond biological ancestry. As such, the local narratives on heritage and identity secure that the inhabitants of central Nicaragua do not face exclusion.

To conclude this chapter, an answer is given to the research question *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua and how does this relate to national narratives on heritage and identity?*

The role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua is that of biological ancestor and cultural *Other*. This local heritage narrative is similar to the national narratives on the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of national identity. Particularly many elements are shared with the Vanguardia national narrative. The local narratives are similar to the national narratives, because they are constructed in relation to these existing identity narratives, which favour mestizo identity and stigmatize indigenous identity. As such, the local pronunciation of identity can be interpreted as the result of the adoption of the perspectives from national narratives.

X Conclusion

In this thesis, the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua was investigated, as well is how this is related to national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity.
In rural central Nicaragua, pre-Hispanic archaeological remains in the form of stone- and earthen mounds, stone sculptures, petroglyphs and ceramic and lithic artefacts, are visible in many locations in the landscape, which is presently inhabited by peasants who specialize in cattle ranching.

The research question that informed this research was: *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua and how does this relate to national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity?*

Through participant observation, walks, informal and unstructured interviews with the rural inhabitants of central Nicaragua who live in the proximity of the archaeological remains, the local narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity were investigated. This resulted in the findings that the informants acknowledge a biological relation between them and the pre-Hispanic peoples who produced the archaeological remains. They thus identify as the descendants of the pre-Hispanic peoples. However, as the image that the informants have of pre-Hispanic peoples is that of either a wild or a noble savage, they do not identify as culturally connected to these peoples. On the contrary, it was analysed that they construct their identity in opposition to the image they have of indigenous peoples. The indigenous identity, as imagined by the inhabitants of central Nicaragua, entails walking around naked, eating food from the forest that is hunted or gathered and perform harmful sorcery. These elements are placed in opposition to their own expression of identity as fully clothed Christian farmers who eat cultivated maize and beans. It was thus concluded that the pre-Hispanic peoples are seen as the biological ancestors of the present-day inhabitants of central Nicaragua, but as cultural *Others.*

Subsequently, the promotion of national Nicaraguan identity and the role that is attributed to the pre-Hispanic past herein was analysed through literature study in chapter VIII. It was found that there are broadly two different national narratives on heritage and identity that were propagated by governments of different political strands: the Vanguardia narrative and the Sandinista narrative. The Vanguardia national

narrative was formulated in the early twentieth century and remained the dominant narrative until the revolutionary war, however elements of this narrative are still present in Nicaragua today. In the Vanguardia narrative, the pre-Hispanic peoples are seen as passive and inferior to the Spanish colonizers. The national Nicaraguan identity is imagined as homogeneously mestizo, which resulted from a biological miscegenation between the pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples and the Spaniards. The culture, language and civilization of the present-day Nicaraguan however, is attributed as purely of Spanish origin. Therefore, it is concluded that the Vanguardia narrative sees the pre-Hispanic peoples as biological ancestors, but does not acknowledge any cultural continuity.
In the Sandinista national narrative, Nicaraguan identity is also promoted as mestizo. However, the role that is attributed to the pre-Hispanic past is different. In the Sandinista narrative, the pre-Hispanic peoples are portrayed as heroic rebels who resisted Spanish subordination. The pre-Hispanic ancestry of the present-day population of Nicaragua is celebrated, in particular the rebellious nature that is ascribed to the pre-Hispanic peoples is thought to have continued into the present-day Nicaraguans.

In chapter X the local narrative is compared to the national narratives. It is found that the local narratives show elements of both the Vanguardia as well as the Sandinista narrative, however Vanguardia elements are most prominently represented. It is thus concluded that the local narratives and national narratives are similar.

These findings allowed to formulate an answer to the research questions: *What is the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua and how does this relate to national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity?*

The role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the inhabitants of central Nicaragua is that of biological ancestor but cultural *Other.* This local narrative is similar to the Vanguardia national narrative on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity. In this case, the local narratives do not counter the national narratives on pre-Hispanic heritage and identity, but rather agree with them.

Bibliography

Abercrombie, T., 1991, To be Indian, to be Bolivian: 'ethnic' and 'national' discourses of Identity. In *Nation-states and Indians in Latin America.* (eds) G. Urban, and J. Sherzer. Austin: University of Texas Press, 95-130.

Alvey, J.E., 2010. *Of Roads and Revolutions: Peasants Property and the Politics of Development in La Libertad, Chontales (1895-1995).* Philadelphia (unpublished Ph.D. thesis Temple University).

Anderson, B., 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* (Revised edition), London: Verso.

Anico, M., and E. Peralta (eds), 2009. *Heritage and Identity: Engagements and Demission in the Contemporary World.* London: Routledge.

Appiah, A.K., 2006. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in the World of strangers.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Arellano, J.E., 1969. Introducción a la Cultura Nicaragüense. *Revista de Temas Nicaragüenses* 111, 69-85.

Aronsson, P., S. Knell, A.B. Amundsen, B. Axelsson, F. Bodenstein, A Bounia, J. Dodd, L. Eilertsen, C. Iordachi, C. Jones, K. Kuutma, I. Porciania, D. Poulot, A. Sawyer, S. Watson, and E. Weiser, 2012. *National Museums Making History in A Diverse Europe.* Linköping: Linkköping University Electronic Press.

Artola, N., and Davide Parrilli, M. 2006. *The Development of the Dairy Cluster in Boaco and Chontales, Nicaragua*. In Pietrobelli, C., and R. Rabellotti (eds). *Upgrading to Compete. Global Value Chains, Clusters, and SMEs in Latin America.* New York: Inter-American Development Bank, 43-70.

Ashworth, G.J. and B.J.M. van der Aa, 2006. Strategy and policy for the World Heritage Convention: goals, practices and future solutions, in A. Leask and A. Fyall (eds), *Managing World Heritage Sites.* Oxford: Elsevier, 147-158.

Ashworth, G.J., 1994. From History to Heritage: From Heritage to Identity: In search of concepts and models. In Ashworth, G.J., and P.J. Larkham (eds.). *Building a new Heritage. Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe.* London, Routledge, 12-30.

Ashworth, G.J., and B. Graham, 2005. *Senses of Place: Senses of Time.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Ashworth, G.J., and P.J. Larkham (eds.), 1994. *Building a new Heritage. Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe.* London, Routledge.

Ashworth, G.J., B. Graham, and J.E. Tunbridge, 2007. *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies.* London: Pluto Press.

Atalay, S. L., 2007. Global Application of Indigenous Archaeology: Community Based Participatory Research in Turkey. *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 3(3), 249-270*,* DOI 10.1007/s11759-007-9026-8.

Atalay, S. L., 2010. 'We don't talk about Catalhöyök, we live it': sustainable archaeological practice through community-based participatory research, *World Archaeology* 42(3), 418-429, DOI: 10.1080/00438243.2010.497394.

Atalay, S., 2012. *Community-based archaeology: research with, by, and for indigenous and local communities.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Auzina, D., 2017. Monumentality by communities. Mapping the spatial logic of the pre-Hispanic site Aguas Buenas (AD400-1600) in Central Nicaragua. Leiden. *Unpublished master thesis.*

Baker, S.M., 2008. *The Rock Art of Ometepe Island, Nicaragua: motif classification, quantification, and regional comparisons.* Johannesburg. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand).

Barbash, I. and L. Taylor, 1977. *Cross-Cultural Filmmaking: A Handbook for Making Documentary and Ethnographic Films and Videos.* Berkely: University of California Press.
Baudez, C.F., 1970. *Central America.* London: Barrie and Jenkings.

Bauman, Z., 1996. From pilgrim to tourist – or a short history of identity. In Hall, S., and P. DuGay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity.* London: SAGE Publications.

Bayardo Arce, C., 1982. *Hacia una política cultural de la revolución popular Sandinista.* Managua: Ministerio de Cultura.

Belausteguigoitia, R., 1981. *Con Sandino en Nicaragua: la hora de la paz.* Managua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua.

Belt, T., 1874. *The naturalist in Nicaragua. A narrative of residence at the gold mines of Chontales: journeys in the savannahs and forests; with observations of animals and plants in reference to the theory of evolution of living forms.* London: J.M. Dent & Sons LTD.

Bender. B., 1993. Stonehenge: Contested landscapes (medieval to present day). In *Landscape, politics and perspectives,* ed. B. Bender, 245-280. Oxford: Berg.

Bender, B., 1993. *Landscape, politics and perspectives.* Oxford: Berg.

Bennett, T., 1995. *The Birth of the Museum.* London: Routledge.

Bernard, R., 2006. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. Oxford: Altamira Press.

Borah, W.W., 1954. *Early Colonial Trade and Navigation Between Mexico and Peru.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Borges Morán, P., 1960. *Métodos misionales en la cristianización de América.* Madrid: Departamento de Misionología Española.

Boyle, F., 1866. The ancient tombs of Nicaragua. *The Archaeological Journal* 23, 41-50.

Bruhns, O.K., 1982. *A view from the bridge: intermediate area sculpture in thematic perspective.* Bessler-Archiv Neue Folge XXX, 147-180 Museen für Völkerkunde, Berlín.

Bucholtz, M., and K. Hall, 2005. Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse studies* 7(4-5), 585-614, DOI: 10.1177/1461445605054407.

Campbell, E. and L.E. Lassiter, 2015. *Doing Ethnography Today: Theoretical Issues and Pragmatic Concerns.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Chikure, S., and G. Pwiti. 2008. Community Involvement in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Management. An Assessment from Case Studies in Southern Africa and Elsewhere. *Current Anthropology* 49(3): 467- 485, DOI: 10.1086/588496

Chomsky, A., and A. Lauria-Santiago (eds), 1998. *Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: the Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Clifford G.C., 2011. Ethics and Politics in Qualitative research. in Denzin N. K., and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) 2011. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research (4th edition).* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Ltd.

Coen, S., J. Meredith, and J. Condie, 2017. Place-based Social Identity, and Intergroup Relations Within Local Communities. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 27, 212-225, DOI: 10.1002/casp.2299.

Colwell-Chanthaphonh, C., and T.J. Ferguson, 2007. *Collaboration in Archaeological Practice. Engaging Descendant Communities.* New York: Altamira Press.

Corsane, G., 2005. *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader,* London: Routledge.

Crosby, A.W. 1986. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cuadra Pasos, A. 1987. *El Nicaragüense.* San José: Libro Libre.

Damm, C., 2005. Archaeology, ethnohistory, and oral traditions: Approaches to the indigenous past. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 38(2): 73-87.

De Burgos, H. 2006. *Indigenous Medicine and Identity in Nicaragua.* Edmonton (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alberta).

De Leon, J.P. and J.H. Cohen, 2005. Object and Walking Probes in Ethnographic Interviewing. *Field Methods* 17(2), 200-204, DOI: 10.1177/1525822X05274733.

Descartes, L., M. Asencio, and T.O. Blank, 2011. Paying Project Participants: Dilemmas in Research with Poor, Marginalized Populations. *Advances in Social Work* 12(2), 218-225.

Dombrowski, K., 2001. *Against culture: development, politics, and religion in Indian Alaska.* London: University of Nebraska Press.

Donner, N.R., and A. Geurds, 2018. The valley of Juigalpa, Mayales river subbasin microregion (Chontales, Nicaragua) Date List I. *Radiocarbon* 60(2), 717-726. DOI:10.1017/RDC.2017.147

Dosselaar, E.L., 2017. *Determining the Outstanding Universal Value of Archaeological Heritage. The case of the pre-Hispanic site of Aguas Buenas, Chontales, Nicaragua for UNESCO World Heritage.* Leiden. (Unpublished RMA thesis, Leiden University).

Ellingson, L.L., 2008. Embodied Knowledge, in L.M. Given. *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 244-245. DOI: 10.4135/9781412963909.

Fabian, J., 1971. Language, history and anthropology. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 1, 19-47.

Fanon, F., 1963. *The wretched of the earth.* New York: Grove Press.

Field, L., 1995. Post-Sandinista Ethnic Identities in Western Nicaragua. *American Anthropologists* 100(2), 431-443.

Fitzhugh, W.,, S. Loring, and D. Odess (eds), 2002. *Honouring our elders, a history of Eastern Arctic Archaeology.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.

Fladmark, J.M. (ed.), 1999. *Heritage and Museums: Shaping National Identity.* Aberdeen: Donhead Publishing Ltd.

Flick, U., 2007. *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE publications Inc. DOI: 10.4135/9781849208826.

Fowler, W. R. Jr., 1985. Ethnohistorical Sources on the Pipil-Nicarao of Central America: A Critical Analysis. *Ethnohistory* 32 (1), 37-62,DOI: 10.2307/482092.

Fowler, W.R., 1986. Ethnohistoric Sources on the Pipil-Nicarao of Central America: A Critical Analysis. *Ethnohistory* 32(1), 37-62.

Friedmann, J., 1994. Global Crises, the Struggle for Culture Identity and Intellectual Porkbarrelling: Cosmopolitans Versus Locals, Ethnics and Nationals in an Era of De-Hegemonization, In Werbner, P., and T. Modood (eds) *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism.* London: Zed Books, 70-89.

Gathercole, P., and D. Lowenthal (eds), 2004. *The Politics of the Past.* London: Routledge.

Geurds, A., 2007. *Grounding the Past. The Praxis of Participatory Archaeology in the Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca, Mexico.* Leiden: CNWS Publications.

Geurds, A., 2009. La historia y el patrimonio en el departamento de Chontales. Resultados de la primera temporada del Proyecto Arqueológico Chontales. *Mi Museo y Vos* 3(8). Granada, Nicaragua.

Geurds, A., 2009b. *Proyecto Arqueológico Centro de Nicaragua. Temporarda 2009. Informe Técnico Final.* Juigalpa. Internal report PACEN.

Geurds, A., 2011. Dual of Dualistic Collaboration? Competing Imaginings of Archaeological Heritage in Central Nicaragua. *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 26(2), 87-104.

Geurds, A., *in press.* Monumental Stone Sculpture.

Geurds, A., J. Zambrana, and C. Villanuava, 2010. Escultura de piadra en el centro de Nicaragua: Logros y desafíos. *Mi Museo y vos* 4(13), 4-7.

Geurds, A., J.E. Zambrana, and L.N.K. Van Broekhoven, 2009. La historia y el patrimonio el el departamento de Chontales. Resultados de la primera temporada del Proyecto Arquelógico Chontales. *Mi Museo y vos* 3(8), 4-7.

Geurds, A., N.K. Donner, and A. Arteaga Saucedo. 2016. *Proyecto Arqueológico Centro de Nicaragua. Reporte Preliminar.* Juigalpa. Internal report PACEN.

Giddens, A., 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* New York: Doubleday & Company.

Goodland, R., 2004. Free, Prior and Informed Consent and the World Bank Group. *Sustainable Development, Law and Policy* 4(2), 66-74.

Gorden, R. L. 1975. *Interviewing: Strategy, techniques, and tactics.* Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey.

Gorin, F., 1989. *Archéologie de Chontales, Nicaragua* (3 vols.). Université de Paris I. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation).

Gould, J.L., 1998. *To die in this way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1965.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Gould, J.L., 1998b. '"!Vana Ilusión!": The Highlands Indians and the Myth of Nicaragua Mestiza, 1880-1925', in *Identity and Struggle at the Margins of the Nation-State: the Laboring Peoples of Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean.* Chomsky, A., and A. Lauria-Santiago (eds), Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 52-93.

Gourdji, S., P. Läderach, A. Martinez Valle, C. Zelaya Martinez, D.B. Lobell, 2015. Historical climate trends, deforestation, and maize and bean yields in Nicaragua. *Agricultural and Forest Meterorology* 200, 270-281. DOI: 10.1016/j.agrformet.2014.10.002.

Grady, C., 2001. Money for Research Participation: Does It Jeopardize Informed Consent? *American Journal of Bioethics* 1(2), 40-44, DOI: 10.1162/152651601300169031.

Graham, B.J., and C. Nash (eds), 2000. *Modern historical geographies.* Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Graham, B.J., G.J. Ashworth, and J.E. Tunbridge. 2005. The uses and abuses of heritage. In G. Corsane (ed.), *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader,* London: Routledge, 26-37.

Graham. B., and P. Howard (eds), 2008. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity.* Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Haberland, W., 1973. Stone sculpture from Southern Central America. In *The Iconography of Middle American Sculpture.* (ed.) D.T. Easby, 134-152. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Hale, C.R., 1994. *Resistance and contradiction: Miskitu Indians and the Nicaraguan State, 1894-1987.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hall, S., 2005. 'Whose Heritage? Un-settling 'the heritage', re-imagining the post-nation', in Littler, J. and R. Naidoo (eds), *The Politics of Heritage: The legacies of race.* London: Routledge.

Hall, S., and P. DuGay (eds), 1996. *Questions of Cultural Identity.* London: SAGE Publications.

Hammersley, M. and, P. Atkinson. 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice.* London: Routledge.

Haraway, D.J., 1991. *Simians, cyborgs and women: the reinvention of nature.* London: Free Association Books.

Hasegawa, E., 1998. Informe del Proyecto Arqueológico Chontales II. Unpublished report, Managua: Instituto Nicaragüense de cultura.

Head, E., 2009. The ethics and implications of paying participants in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 12)4), 335-344, DOI: 10.1080/13645570802246724.

Healy, P.F., 1980. *Archaeology of the Rivas Region, Nicaragua*. Waterloo (ON): Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Herrera, M.A., 1992. Nacionalismo e historiografía sobre la Guerra del 56: Nicaragua, 1850-1889. *Revista de Historia* 2, 27-39.

Hodder, I., 2010. Cultural Heritage Rights: From Ownership and Descent to Justice and Well-being. *Anthropological Quarterly* 83(4), 861-882.

Hooker, J., 2005. "Beloved enemies": Race and Official Mestizo Nationalism in Nicaragua. *Latin American Research Review* 40(3): 14-39.

Howard, P., 2003. *Heritage: management, interpretation, identity.* London: Continuum.

Incer, J., 1990. *Nicaragua: viajes, rutas y encuentros.* San José: Libro Libre.
Ingold, T. 2011. *Being Alive.* New York: Routledge.

Instituto National de Información de Desarollo 2006, *VII Censo de Población y IV de Vivienda.* Nicaragua, November 2006. http://www.inide.gob.ni/censos2005/VolPoblacion/Volumen%20Poblacion%201-4/Vol.I%20Poblacion-Caracteristicas%20Generales.pdf, accessed 4 July 2018.

Instituto National de Información de Desarollo 2008b, *El Ayote en Cifras.* Managua, March 2008.

http://www.inide.gob.ni/censos2005/CifrasMun/RAASTPDF/El%20Ayote.pdf, accessed on 4 July 2018.

Instituto National de Información de Desarollo 2012, *IV Censo National Agropecuario.* Nicaragua, July 2012. http://www.inide.gob.ni/Cenagro/INFIVCENAGRO/IVCENAGROINFORME/assets/basic-html/index.html#1, accessed 4 July 2018.

Instituto National de Información de Desarollo, 2008a. *Juigalpa en Cifras.* Managua, March 2008. http://www.inide.gob.ni/censos2005/CifrasMun/Chontales/juigalpa.pdf, accessed on 4 July 2018.

Jenkins, R., 2004. *Social Identity (2nd edition).* London: Routledge.

Jewitt, C., 2012. *An introduction to using video for research*. London: National Centre for Research Methods.

Johnson, N., 2000. Historical geographies of the present. In B.J. Graham and C. Nash (eds), *Modern historical geographies.* Harlow: Prentice Hall, 251-272.

Johnson, S., 2012. National Trust: SNP will not hijack Bannockburn Anniversary, *The Telegraph,* 25th April 2013.

Kaplan, F.E.S., 2011. Making and Remaking National Identities. In MacDonalds, S. (ed), *A Companion to Museum Studies.* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 152-169.

Krysan, M., and M.P. Couper. 2003. Race in the live and virtual interview: Racial deference, social desirability, and activation effects in attitude surveys. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66, 364–83.

Lange, F.W., 1992. *The Archaeology of Pacific Nicaragua.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Lange, F.W., and Stone, D.Z., 1984. *The Archaeology of Lower Central America.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Lange, F.W., P.D. Sheets, A. Martinez and S. Abel-Vidor, 1992. *The Archaeology of Pacific Nicaragua. Albuquerque* (NM): University of New Mexico Press.

Lange, F.W., P.D. Sheets, A. Martinez and S. Abel-Vidor. 1992. *The Archaeology of Pacific Nicaragua.* Albuquerque (NM): University of New Mexico Press.

Lawler, S., 2008. *Identity: Sociological Perspectives.* Cambridge: Polity.

Leask, A., and A. Fyall (eds), 2006. *Managing World Heritage Sites*. Oxford: Elsevier

Leininger, M.M., 1985. *Qualitative research methods in nursing.* Orlando: Grune & Stratton.

Littler, J., and R. Naidoo, 2005. *The Politics of Heritage: The legacies of 'race'.* London: Routledge.

Lloyd, K., 2012. *Narratives of Belonging and Exclusion: The negotiated of heritage and place in young people's conceptualisations of national identity in Scotland.* Newcastle. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Newcastle University).

Lowenthal, D., 1985. *The Past is a Foreign Country.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lowenthal, D., 1996. *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Industry and the Spoils of History*. New York: Free Press.

Macdonald, S., 2009. Reassembling Nuremberg, Reassembling Heritage. *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2(1-2), 117-134.

MacDonalds, S. (ed.), 2011. *A Companion to Museum Studies.* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Macdonald, S., 2013. *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Macdonald, S., and G. Fyfe (eds), 1996. *Theorizing Museums.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Malinowski, B. 1996 [1922]. Argonauts of the Western Pacific. New York: Dutton.

Marcus, G. 1955. Ethnography In/Of The World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography. *Annual Reviews Anthropology* 24, 95-117.

Marshall, G. (ed.), 1998. *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology.* Oxford: Oxford University.

Marshall, S., 2008. The Heritage of Post-colonial Societies. In Graham, B., and P. Howard (eds). *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity.* Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 347-363.

Marshall, Y., 2002. What is community archaeology? *Word Archaeology* 34(2), 211-219, DOI:10.1080/0043824022000007062

Marshall, Y., 2009. *Community Archaeology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Martinez Novo, C., 2006. *Who defines indigenous?: Identities, development, intellectuals, and the state in northern Mexico.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Mason, R., 2004. Conflict and Complement: An Exploration of the Discourses Informing the Concept of the Socially Inclusive Museum in Contemporary Britain. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 10(1), 49-73.

Mason, R., 2007. *Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and its National Museums.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Mason, R., 2013. National Museums, Globalisation and Postnationalism: Imagining a Cosmopolitan Museology. *Advances in Research: Museum Worlds* 1(1), 40-64.

Mason, R., and Z. Baveystock, 2009. What role can digital heritage play in the re-imagining of national identities?: England and its icons. In Anico, M., and E. Peralta (eds) *Heritage and Identity.* Abingdon: Routledge, 15-28.

Matilló Villa, J., 1958. El Arte Rupestre en Nicaragua. *Nicaragua* 2(22), 29-30. Organo del Insituto Indigenista Nacional, Managua.

McAnany, P.A., and S.M. Rowe, 2015. Collaborative archaeology as paradigm shift. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 40(5), 499-507, DOI: 10.1179/2042458215Y.0000000007.

McKeganey, N. 2001. To pay or not to pay: respondents' motivation for participating in research. *Addiction,* DOI: 10.1046/j.1360-0443.2001.96912371.

McLean, F., and S. Cooke, 1999. Communicating Identity: Perceptions of the Museum of Scotland. In Fladmark, J.M. (ed), *Heritage and Museums: Shaping National Identity.* Donhead St. Mary: Donhead Publishing Ltd.

Merril, T., 1993. *Nicaragua, a country study.* Washington DC: Federal Research Division.

Meskell, L, M., 2007. Falling walls and mending fences: Archaeological ethnography in the Kruger National Park. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33(2): 282-400.

Miles, M.B., and M. Huberman, 1994. *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook.* London: SAGE publications.

MINED, 2014. *Convivencia y civismo.* Managua: MINED, nicaraguaeduca.mined.gob.ni/libros-de-texto/, accessed 6 July 2018.

MINED, 2014. *Estudios sociales.* Managua: MINED, nicaraguaeduca.mined.gob.ni/libros-de-texto/, accessed 6 July 2018.

Montenegro-Guillén, S., 2003. *Lake Cocibolca/Nicaragua: Lake Basin Management Initiative Experience and Lessons Learned. Brief, USAID*. Washington, D.C: World Bank.

Morell, V., 1995. Who Owns the Past? *Science* 268(5216), 1424-1425.

Moshenska, G.(ed.), 2017. *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology.* London: UCL Press.

Moshenska, G., and S. Dhanjal, 2012. *Community Archaeology: Themes, Methods and Practices.* Oxford: Oxbow books.

Muir, R. and L. Stone, 2007, *Who Are We? Identities in Britain, 2007.* London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Muir, R., and M. Wetherell, 2010. *Identity, Politics and Public Policy.* London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Newson, L.A., 1987. *Indian Survival in colonial Nicaragua*. Norman (OK): University of Oklahoma Press.

Nicolas, G.P., and K.P. Bannister, 2010. Copyrighting the Past? Emerging Intellectual Property Rights Issues in Archaeology. In Preucel, R.W., and A.S. Mrozowski (eds.), *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: The New Pragmatism.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 593-617.

Oporta Fonseca, D.M.O., 2013. Huellas ancestrales de Piedras Pintadas: Una estrategia de gestion cultural en Villa Sandino-Chontales. *Revista Universidad y Ciencia, UNAN-Managua* 7(11).

Palma, M., 2004. Memoria nicaragüense> El carnaval del toro venado en Nicarragua: simbolismo del mestizaje y representation de la relation de géneros. *América: Cahiers du CRICCAL* 31, 63-70, DOI: 10.3406/ameri.2004.1644.

Peckham, R.S. (ed), 2003. *Rethinking Heritage: Cultures and Politics in Europe.* New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

Pels, P., 2014. After objectivity. An historical approach to the intersubjective in ethnography. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4(1), 211-236.

Pietrobelli, C., and R. Rabellotti (eds), 2006. *Upgrading to Compete. Global Value Chains, Clusters, and SMEs in Latin America.* New York: Inter-American Development Bank.

Pim, B.C., and B. Seeman, 1869. *Dottings on the roadside in Panama, Nicaragua, and Mosquito.* London: Chapman and Hall.

Pink, S., 2007. Walking with video. *Visual Studies* 22(3), 240-252.

Pink, S., P. Hubbard, M. O'Neill, and A. Radley, 2007. Walking across disciplines: from ethnography to arts practice. *Visual Studies* 25(1),1-7, DOI: 10.1080/14725861003606670.

Pwiti, G. and G. Mvenge. 1996. Archaeologists, tourists, and rainmakers: Problems in the management of rock art sites in Zimbabwe, a case study of Domboshava national monument. In *Aspects of African archaeology: Papers from the 19th Congress of the Pan-African Association for Prehistory and Related Studies,* ed. G. Pwiti and R. Soper, 817-824. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Pwiti, G., and R. Soper (eds), 1996. *Aspects of African archaeology: Papers from the 19th Congress of the Pan-African Association for Prehistory and Related Studies.* Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Radell, D.R., 1969. *An Historical Geography of Western Nicaragua: The spheres of Influence of León, Granada, and Managua, 1519-1965.* Berkeley (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California).

Radell, D.R., and J.J. Parsons, 1971. Realejo: A Forgotten Colonial Port and Shipbuilding Center in Nicaragua. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 51, 295-312.

Ramirez, S., 1981. *El pensamiento vivo de Sandino.* Managua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua.

Revels, C.S., 2014. Placing Managua: a landscape narrative in post-earthquake Nicaragua. *Journal of Cultural Geography* 31(1), 81-105.

Richardson, S.A., B.S. Dohrenwend, and D. Klein, 1956. *Interviewing: its forms and functions.* New York: Basic Books.

Rigat, D., 1992. Préhistoire au Nicaragua: Région Juigalpa Vol. 3. Université de Paris I. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation).

Romero Vargas, G., 1988. *Las estructuras sociales de Nicaragua en el siglo XVIII.* Managua: Editorial Vanguardia.

Rounds, J., 2006. Doing Identity Work in Museums. *Curator* 49(2), 133-150.

Rountree, K., 2007. Archaeologists and Goddess Feminists at Çatalhöyük: An Experiments in Multivocality. *Journal of Feminist Studies* 23(2), 7-26.

Rowley, S., 2002. Inuit participation in the archaeology of Nunavut: A historical overview. In *Honouring our elders, a history of Eastern Arctic Archaeology,* ed. W. Fitzhugh, S. Loring, and D. Odess, 261-272. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution.

Shepherd, N., and A. Haber, 2011. What's up with WAC?: Archaeology and 'Engagement' in a Globalized World. *Public Archaeology* 10(2), 96-115.

Sherman. W., 1979. *Forced Native Labor in Sixteenth-Century Central America.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Smith, L., 2006. *Uses of Heritage.* London: Routledge.

Sollis, P., 1989. The Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua: Development and Autonomy. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 21(3), 481-520, DOI: 10.1017/S0022216X00018526.

Spivak, G.C., 1988. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the history of an idea.* (ed) R.C. Morris. New York: Columbia University Press, 21-80.

Spradley, J.P., 1979. *The ethnographic interview.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Squier, E.G., 1852. *Nicaragua: Its People, Scenery, Monuments and the Proposed Interaceanic Canal.* New York (NY): D. Appleton.

Stanislawski, D. I., 1983. *The Transformation of Nicaragua, 1519-1548. Berkeley: University of California Press.*

Strauss, A.L., and J.M. Corbin, 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* (3rd edition) Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. DOI: 10.4135/9781452230153.

Thomas, D.R., 2006. A general inductive approach for analysing qualitative evaluation data. *American journal of evaluation* 27(2), 237-246, DOI:10.1177/1098214005283748.

Thomas, S., 2017. Community Archaeology. In G. Moshenska (ed.). *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology.* London: UCL Press, 14-30.

UNESCO, 2008. Representative list of Intangible and Cultural Heritage of Humanity. 3.COM. Istanbul, 2008. https://ich.unesco.org/en/decisions/3.COM/1, accessed on 12th August 2018.

Urban, G. and J. Sherzer, 1991. *Nation-states and Indians in Latin America.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Van Broekhoven, L.N.K., 2002. *Conquistando lo Invencible: Fuentes históricas sobre las culturas indígenas de la region Central de Nicaragua.* Leiden: CNWS Publications.

Van Willigen, J., 2002. *Applied anthropology: An introduction.* (3rd edition). London: Bergin & Garvey.

Vlaskamp, R., 2012. *Rock Solid: Roch Art Analysis and Documenting Methods and Techniques at Aguas Buenas (AD 400-1600), Nicaragua.* Leiden (Unpublished BA thesis, University of Leiden).

Waterton, E., and L. Smith, 2010. The recognition and misrecognition of community heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16(1-2), 4-15.

Waterton. E., L. Smith and G. Campbell, 2006. The Utility of Discourse Analysis to Heritage Studies: The Burra Charter and Social Inclusion. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12(4), 339-355, DOI: 10.1080/13527250600727000.

Watkins, J. 2005. Through wary eyes: Indigenous perspectives on archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34: 429-494.

Watson, S. (ed), 2007. *Museums and their communities.* New York: Routledge.

Watson, S., and E. Waterton (eds), 2011. *Heritage and Community Engagement: Collaboration or Contestation?* New York: Routledge.

Watson, S., and E. Waterton, 2010. Heritage and community engagement. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16 (1-2), 1-3, DOI: 10.1080/13527250903441655.

Werbner, P., and T. Modood (eds), 1994. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multi-cultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-Racism.* London: Zed Books.

Wetherell, M., 2009. *Identity in the 21st Century: New Trends in Changing Times.* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wheelock, R.J., 1974. *Raíces indígenas de la lucha anti-colonialista en Nicaragua.* Managua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua.

Whelan, Y., and N. Moore (eds), 2007. *Heritage, Memory and the Politics of Identity: New Perspectives on the Cultural Landscape.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Whisnant, D.E., 1995. *Rascally Signs in Sacred Places: The Politics of Culture in Nicaragua.* Chapel Hill (NC): The University of North Carolina Press.

Whitehead, C., S. Eckersley, and R. Mason, 2012. *Placing Migration in European Museums: Theoretical, Contextual and Methodological Foundations.* Milan: Politecnico di Milano DPA.

Winick, S., and P. Bartis, 2016. *Folklife & Fieldwork: An Introduction to Cultural Documentation.* (4th edition). Washinton, DC: American Folklife Center.

Winter, T., 2014. Heritage Studies and the Privileging of Theory. *International Journal of Heritage Studies,* 20(5), 556-572, DOI:10.1080/13527258.2012.736403.

Winter, T., and E. Waterton, 2013. Critical Heritage Studies. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19(6), 529-531, DOI: 10.1080/13527258.2013.818572.

Yuval-Davis, N., 2006. Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice* 40(3), 197-214, DOI: 10.1080/00313220600769331.

Zelaya Hidalgo, G., K. Olsen Bruhns, and J. Dotta, 1974. *Monumental Art of Chontales: A Description of the Sculpture Style of the Department of Chontales, Nicaragua.* San Francisco: San Francisco State University.

Websites

American Anthropological Association, "Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibility", http://www.aaanet.org/profdev/ethics/upload/Statement-on-Ethics-Principles-of-Professional-Responsibility.pdf (accessed 13th January 2017).

American Folklore Society, "AFS Position Statement on Research with Human Subjects," http://www.afsnet.org/?page=HumanSubjects, accessed 13th January 2017.

Oral History Association, "Principles and Best Practices for Oral History," http://www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-hisotry/principles-and-practices/, accessed 13th January 2017.

www.aaanet.org/provdef/ethics/, accessed 10th August 2018

www.afsnet.org, accessed 10th August 2018

www.icomos.org, accessed 29th of October 2017.

List of figures

Figure 1 Map of Nicaragua with the research area indicated by the square. (Source: Geurds 2009b, 8, fig, 2a). 13

Figure 2 Map of the research area with the archaeological sites (as known in 2009) indicated. In the upper left corner, the research area is indicated in the square. Source: Geurds 2009b, 8, fig. 2a and 2b. 30

Figure 3 DEM of the area around Juigalpa (indicated in the arced section) with the research sites in the municipality of Juigalpa indicated. Geographical data: courtesy of A. Arteaga. Map made by Kwinten van Dessel and Anne Vera Veen. 30

Figure 4 Carlos Villanueva in front of his car. This photograph was taken after we came back from Finca Santa Eduviges, a bumpy five-hour drive from Juigalpa. (Photo by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016). 32

Figure 5 Print-screen of the Excel database that was built to organize the data. 45

Figure 6 Screen-shot of the database while in use. On the left side the videos that constitute the data could be watched. The knowledge that is gained from these videos could be added to the database on the right side of the screen. 46

Figure 7 Map of Nicaragua with the geological zones indicated. (Source: Newson 1987, 42 (fig. 5)). 52

Figure 8 Map of the distribution of indigenous groups at the time of the Spanish conquest. The terms in capital letters represent the groups, while the other terms represent subgroups. Source: Newson 1987, 27 (fig.4). 55

Figure 9 Map of Nicaragua. In the large map the tectonic faults are indicated. The smaller map in the bottom left corner indicates in the arched section the area that was controlled by the Spanish in the sixteenth century (Source: Stanislawski 1983, fig. 1.) . 60

Figure 10. Three maps of Nicaragua that show the advance of Spanish influence from the west and the advance of the Zambo-Mosquito from the east in respectively 1550 (left), between 1550 and 1720 (middle) and between 1720 and 1821 (right). Source: Newson 1987, 16-17, fig.2. 64

Figure 11 Felipe Santiago Lopez Aleman, milking the cows in the coral of finca Santa Eduviges, where he works as a wage labourer. Photograph taken by Anne Vera Veen on 12 June 2016. 74

Figure 12 Photograph of the landscape in Aguas Buenas with a farmstead in the bottom left. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 75

Figure 13 Small residence in Santa Rita. This house is constructed directly on the stamped earth. The walls consist of wooden posts. For the roof, metal corrugated sheets are used. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016..... 77

Figure 14 Kitchen of Doña Epifania who lives on finca Santa Eduviges in Nawawasito, El Ayote. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 78

Figure 15 Primary school in the community of Aguas Buenas 1. Photograph taken by Eva van Dosselaar, January 2016. 81

Figure 16 Map of Aguas Buenas with the mounds indicated with green dots. The circular organization of the mounds is clearly seen from this birds-eye view. Source: Auzina 2017. 86

Figure 17 Juan Suarez Villegas gives a tour of his land in Aguas Buenas. On the right side behind the tree, an earthen mound is visible. Photo taken by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 87

Figure 18 Photograph of a mound that has been cut in half due to the broadening of the road through Aguas Buenas in 1999. Photograph taken by Eva Lauren Van Dosselaar, January 2016. 88

Figure 19 Preliminary map of Aguas Buenas from 2014 showing the mounds that were mapped so far in yellow and red and the modern site features. The roads are indicated with double black lines, the fences are indicated with single black lines. The farmsteads and the school are indicated with blue rectangles. The cemetery is indicated with cross signs (made by Dita Auzina and Denise Terpstra 2014)..... 89

Figure 20 Looting pit in mounds 272, photo taken by Eva Van Dosselaar, January 2016. 90

Figure 21 Photograph of a carved sculpture at the Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea. Source: Geurds et. al. 2010, 4, fig. 1. 90

Figure 22 Photographs of the exhibited sculptures in the Museo Arqueológico Gregorio Aguilar Barea in Juigalpa. Photograph courtesy of Marta Villanueva. 91

Figure 23 Visual representation of the archaeological finds at El Gavilan, Source: Geurds et. al. 2010, 7, fig. 3. 92

Figure 24 Ramon Alberto Gutierrez Crobeto points at the stone sculptures that are displayed behind him against the walls of the farmstead of his father, finca Santa Eduviges, Nawawasito, El Ayote. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 94

Figure 25 and 26 Facilitator Carlos Villanueva shows the path that has emerged next to the mound (on photographs on the right) and over the fallen monoliths. Photographs by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 95

Figure 27 Fallen sculpture on finca Santa Eduviges, Nawawasito, El Ayote. The cow dung indicates that cattle has passed here. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 95

Figure 28 and 29 The use of uncarved monoliths to harden muddy passageways is illustrated in these photographs. Photographs by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 96

Figure 30 Photograph of anthropomorphic petroglyph at Aguas Buenas. Source: Dosselaar 2017, 85. 97

Figure 31 Photograph of a spiral petroglyph in Aguas Buenas. Source: Vlaskamp 2012, 9, fig.1..... 97

Figure 32 Photograph of Kevin pointing at a spiral petroglyph that is carved in the bedrock near his house in Aguas Buenas. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016... 98

Figure 33 Photograph of the ground in Santa Rita. Sherds and lithic artefacts are seen on the surface. Photograph taken by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 98

Figure 34 Carlos Villanueva posing with two lithic spearheads that he had just spotted on the ground. Photograph by Anne Vera Veen, June 2016. 99

Figure 35 Photo of a mural in Rivas that depicts the dialogo de los siglos. This photo was tweeted by Visita Nicaragua on 17 June 2016 (Source: twitter.com/visitanicaragua/status/743917435854544896). 115

Abstract

In central Nicaragua pre-Hispanic archaeological remains are visible throughout the rural landscape that is presently inhabited by farmers. However, no research has been done on whether these contemporary inhabitants perceive a continuity between the producers of the pre-Hispanic archaeological remains and themselves, nor how this is influenced by top-down national narratives on heritage and identity. Nevertheless this has important consequences for the way that heritage management projects could be effectively managed.

Therefore, this thesis explores the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the construction of identity of the present-day inhabitants of rural central Nicaragua, and how national narratives on heritage and identity are related to this.

Through anthropological methods including participant observation and structured and unstructured interviewing with the inhabitants of rural central Nicaragua, the role of the pre-Hispanic past in their construction of identity is investigated. Through literature research, the different ways in which the national narratives ascribe the role of the pre-Hispanic past in the formation of national Nicaraguan identity is explored. As such, this thesis can provide important information for future heritage management project.

Appendix 1: list with the locations and the names of the respondents

Aguas Buenas 1, San Isidro	Juan Suárez Villegas, Nidia Suárez Villegas, Martina, Yarixa, Antonia Villegas Ruiz, Bismar, Mariano Villegas Borgas, Juan Carlos Perez, Esperanzah Perez, Claribel Rivera
Aguas Buenas 2, San Isidro	Pedro Pablo, Maria La Cruz Perez Silva
Piedra Grande 1 & 2	José Roberto Martinez, Heladia Diaz, Urania Martinez, Maria Luisa Gundan Amador, Idania Mairena Cruz
Sabana Grande	Luisa Diaz, Juan Salablanca Guevara, Angela Salablanca
Güegüestepe	Arturo Bermuda, Irene Sequeira
Santa Rita	Andrés Eliceo Baez Galleano, Juan Francisco Hernando Báez
Finca Santa Eduviges, Nawawasito	Marco Alberto Gutierrez Chavarilla, Ramon Alberto “Albertito” Gutierrez Crovetto, Ramon Alberto, Felipe “Felipito Matute" Santiago Lopez Aleman, Anayeli Karina Lopez Alvarez, Maria Diaz Blandon, Cleydin Ixamara Martinez Diaz, Doña Epifania, Reya.
Juigalpa	Marta Villanueva