

An Immigrants Journey:

Understanding the context of a
Journey + an
Network of Support

Ferdinem Bartolon



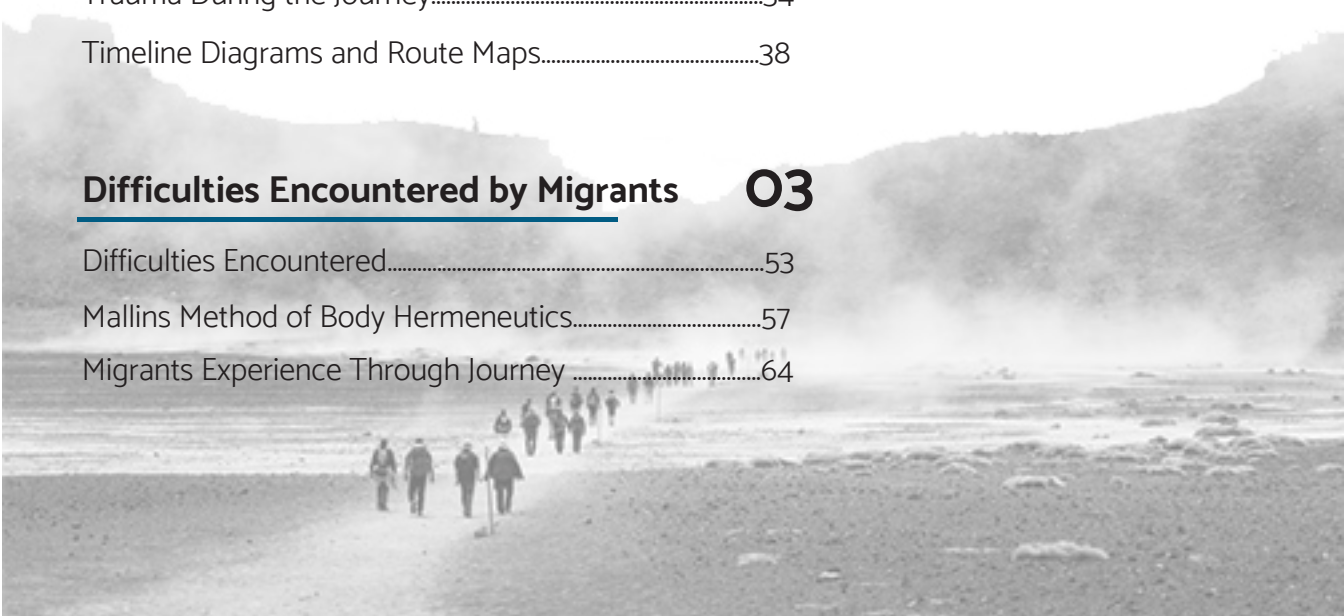
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ABSTRACT:

A person who changes his place of residence for a distinctive one is called a migrant. A migrant tries to search for a new place, where he or she can find better conditions to live. According to the International Organization of Migrants (IOM), the definition of a migrant is not defined under international law, but it is a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence.

This can be within a country or internationally. They either move away temporarily or permanently. The IOM defines the term migrants as a “well-defined legal category of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.

Every year thousands of migrants try to cross to Mexico in hope of immigrating to the US. In a journey, which can last up to 30 days, migrants face one of the most diverse dangers. Migrants face the most onerous travel conditions such as hunger, thirst, discrimination, corrupt authority, and even death. Immigrating to another country can also be considered a traumatic experience where a migrant begins to feel a complete loss of identity and familiarity, they are also often left without the proper tools or resources to help them cope in an unfamiliar environment.

In a state of unknowing and desperation, migrants look for support throughout the journey but sometimes will not receive any. The migration journey, even if it ends well, can leave deep scars.

THESIS STATEMENT:

“Although Migration has deep historical roots in humanity, it could be said that at present, the migratory phenomenon is a contemporary form of temporary or permanent nomadism generated from a globalized social crisis and values of contemporary society.”

-Arquitectos con La Gente .

An immigrant is someone who puts their life at risk in exchange for a better one. It is someone who searches for better conditions in which to live. It is the search for a place that offers the conditions of peace and security in which that their home country does not offer. There are many factors that cause people to make this journey. The most common reasons are food insecurity, political instability, violence, lack of economic opportunity, or a combination of thereof.

Every year thousands of migrants decide to make their journey through Mexico in hopes of immigrating to the United States. In a journey which can last up to 30 days, migrants can suffer hunger, thirst, discrimination, corruption, and even death. In a state of desperation, migrants look for support throughout the journey but oftentimes will not receive any. Through the phenomenological analysis,

I want to explore how this journey is experienced through the eyes of a migrant. To understand the journey of a migrant it is essential to study migration as an action of temporary nomadism and deterritorialization. It is important to study these concepts in order to then be able to implement actions of addition and improvements all along the routes that a migrant takes.

The goal of this thesis project is to understand how the migrant journey in Mexico impacts the physical and mental state of an immigrant and how this journey can be improved through a series of modular mobile hubs located all around the travelling routes to better improve the migrants journey experience.

Nomadism: way of life of peoples who do not live continually in the same place but move cyclically or periodically. It is distinguished from migration, which is noncyclic and involves a total change of habitat. Source: Britannica.com

Deterritorialization: Defined by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as the movement by which one leaves a territory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

This book is dedicated to the migrants who have experienced this onerous journey, to those who are currently experiencing the journey and to those who didn't make it. This book is also dedicated to my family who also experienced this journey. Especially my father and mother. Without them risking their lives for a better opportunity, I would not be where I am today.

No puedo agradecerles lo suficiente por todo esos sacrificios por lo que ustedes han pasado. Los Amo.

I also want to thank those who have helped me throughout my thesis project. Especially my thesis advisor, Christoph Ibele and to those who I have interviewed. Without the guidance and interviews I would not thoroughly understand what migrants experience in their journey and ways I could have implemented a system of support.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

The author of this thesis is a Guatemalan American named Ferdinem Bartolon, who was born and raised in Southwest Detroit, Michigan. His parents are Guatemalan migrants who decided to take on this journey at a young age. The author is a first-generation student who faced many obstacles especially when attending college. Since he is a first-generation student, he was not sure what to expect, he had no idea if he was going to make it through college without any guidance.

Despite those obstacles he was able to succeed and excel in a system that does really benefit a student like him. While the author has been able to overcome these obstacles, he has now decided to work towards becoming a licensed architect in the state of Michigan and plans to help those that are in need (through design) in Guatemala.



WHY THE MIGRANT JOURNEY?:

There are many reasons why the author decided to go on with this thesis. His personal experience as an immigrant child inspired him to do research on the journey that a migrant takes. Growing up, the author always heard about the unpleasant stories of his parents and family members experiences when they migrated through Mexico. Hearing their experiences from his friends and family, has inspired him to do research on why migrants decide to risk their lives in this journey and what they experienced throughout the journey (physically and mentally).

Through design, the author intends to apply a system of support that makes the journey a much better experience. He plans to design a series of modular hubs that supplies several types of support for migrants for them to have a much better experience. He hopes to continue with this project after graduation because it really means a lot to him.



“Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

-Emma Lazarus, The New Colossus (1883)

HISTORY OF MIGRATION

C H A P T E R O N E



CHAPTER 1 : HISTORY OF MIGRATION

Brief History of Migration

The history of the human migration does not necessarily have a beginning. Humans have been on the move since the beginning of time. If we go back to prehistoric times, there are many studies that show that the migration of humans began with the movement of *Homo erectus* migrating from Africa and into Eurasia about 1.7 million years ago.

The years are not exact since it is extremely hard to trace. *Homo Sapiens* began to migrate out of Africa approximately 100,000 years ago. According to Khan Academy, it states, “that between 70,000 and 100,000 years ago, *Homo sapiens* began migrating from the African continent and populating parts of Europe and Asia.

They reached the Australian continent in canoes sometime between 35,000 and 65,000 years ago.” This is considered the “out of Africa” theory. During the Ice age, approximate 15,000 years ago many humans migrated to North America via land bridge that connected Asia and North America. Where eventually humans began migrating towards South America. About 2,000 years ago there has also been a lot of human migration still happening. For example, humans settling in the Pacific Islands, where humans began to settle

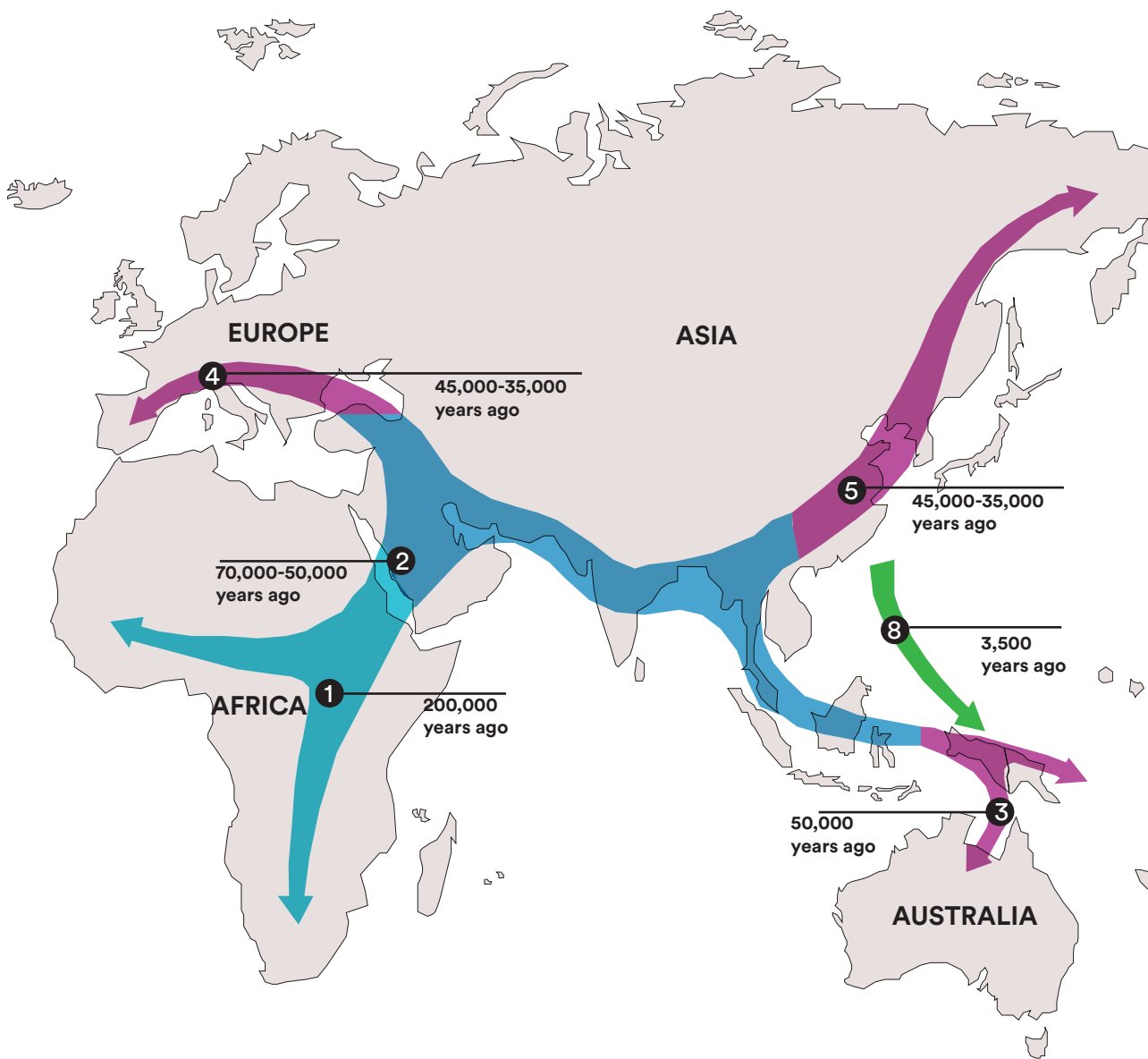
in the Pacific Islands, where humans began to settle in East Polynesia.

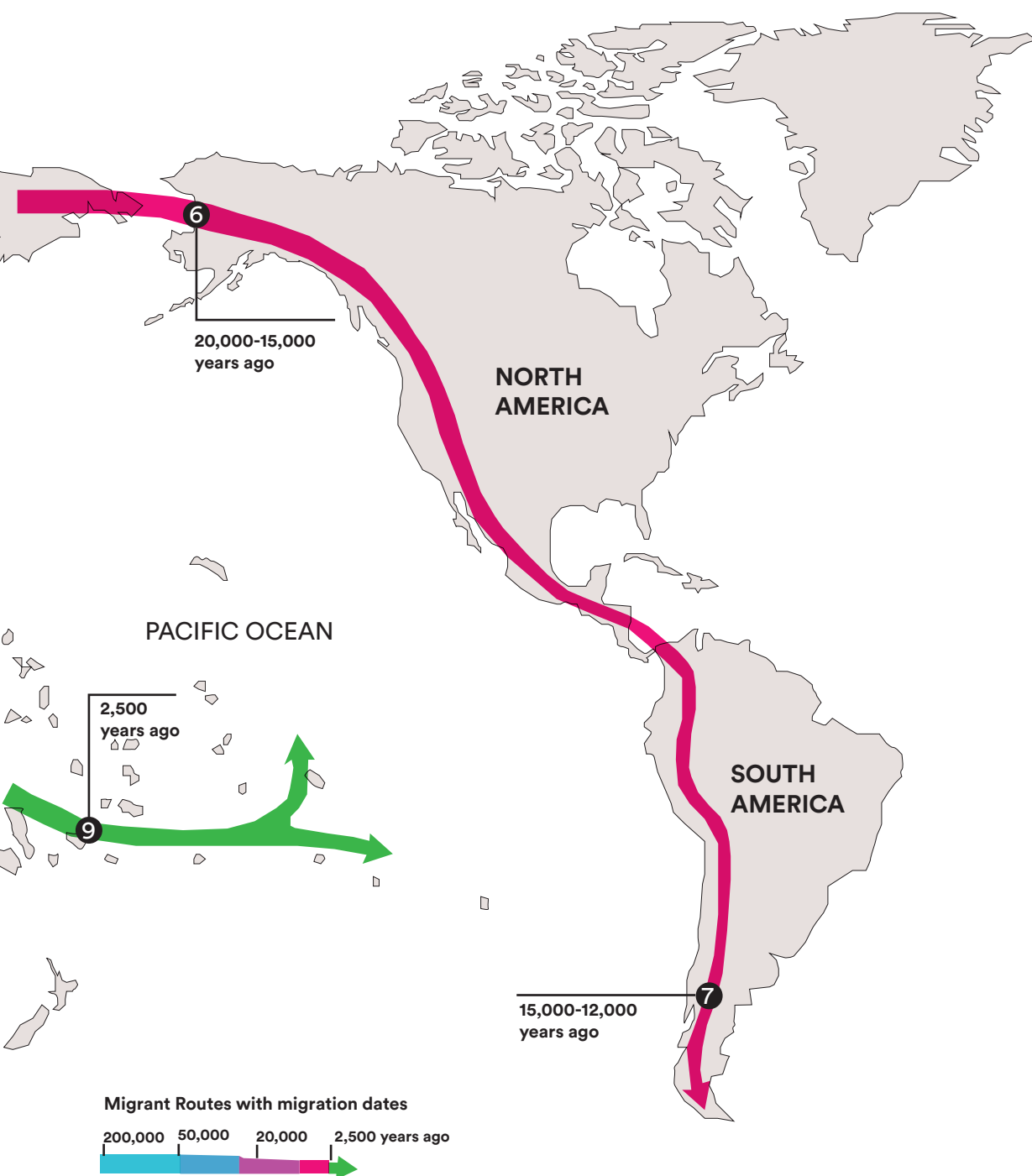
By looking at the early human migration, humans have always been migrating, either in groups or individually. Most of the times humans tend to migrate to have a much better lifestyle. They migrate to escape war and conflict, to escape poverty, hunger, better economic opportunities, persecution, climate change or to meet/ explore unfamiliar places.

As time passed, humans became less nomadic, and began to start wars and colonialism, which also caused migration of people. For example, the ancient Greeks, Romans, China began to expand their dynasty with colonies scattered everywhere. Which caused the migrations of people to newly conquered land.

For example, when Ancient Rome conquered Britain, it sent its citizens towards Britain. Khan Academy states that “humans are the only known species to have successfully populated, adapted to, and significantly altered a wide variety of land regions across the world, resulting in profound historical and environmental impacts.”

Throughout the modern times, there has also been major population migration such as the increase of migration





Source: London Natural History Museum

such as the increase of migration in Industrialization era. An example of this increase of migration in the industrial era is what Britain experienced in the 18th century. The industrialization caused several types of migration such as labor migration, refugee migrations, and urbanization.

Also, millions of agricultural workers left the countryside and moved to the cities causing unprecedented levels of urbanization. Industrialization has also caused an increase on migration wherever it appeared. In the 19th century, millions of Europeans decided to migrate to the Americas.

According to Britannica.com, “in the course of 400 years—from the late 16th through the 20th century—the Americas, Australia, Oceania, the northern half of Asia, and parts of Africa were colonized by European migrants. The overseas migration of Europeans during this period totaled about 60 million people.”

During the first world war and the second world war there has also been major migration movements, which involved migrants from developing countries to migrate into more industrialized zones. Because of the world wars happening in Europe, millions of people decided to migrate to the United States.

Root Causes of Migration to the United States

The United States has always been considered a nation of immigrants for a long time. The U.S has a lot of history on migration, starting out with the first immigrants that arrived in North America through the land bridge that was created through the Ice Age.

Thousands of years later, Europeans decided to migrate to the Americas. Most of them were Spanish and French who began their journey by crossing the Atlantic Ocean by ship and settling into new land that would later become the United States.

Most of the European migrants came to the United States to seek greater economic opportunities while others came for religious freedom. For example, the pilgrims who migrated from Europe, arrived in search for religious freedom.

Unfortunately, there were others who were forced to migrate to the United States. Throughout the 17th to 19th centuries, thousands of enslaved Africans came to America against their wills. During the early 1800's, the United States also experienced another wave of migration. It experienced an Irish immigrant wave, where one-third of all immigrants that migrated to United States were Irish. During the same period, millions of Germans began migrating to the United States.



Migrant Mapping

According to a report from the Secretary of the Government of Mexico, in the beginning of 2019 (The first 4 months), 53,544 migrants were reported in Mexico. 45,543 migrants were from Central America, 3,489 were from the Caribbean, 1,934 from Africa, 1,544 from Asia, and 953 from South America.



Another important time in the U.S immigration history was when the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882, which prevented Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S. This was the first time the U.S placed broad restrictions on certain immigrant groups.

This was not the only law that placed restrictions on immigration. The U.S also introduced the Immigration Act of 1924, which also limited the number of immigrants allowed into the U.S. However, this did not stop encouraging people to migrate to the U.S.

According to History.com, “More than 12 million immigrants would enter the United States through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954.” During the same period there was also an increase on Mexican migrants due to labor shortages during World War II. The United States came up with a program called the Bracero Program, which temporarily allowed Mexican

agricultural workers to work in the U.S. During the 1950’s, United States began seeing an increase in migration due to refugees from countries that were at were during the Civil War era. From there on forward, immigration begun to be much more complex.

Because of the global change that was happening all over the world, The U.S began to change it laws in response to the increase in migrants. Today, immigration has become a major force in the increase of population in the United States.

According to the US National Library of Medicine (NLM), it states that “throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, it accounted for about a third of annual population growth and almost half of labor force growth.” Most of the migrants that immigrated to the United States in the 1990’s till today are migrants that come from Latin American countries.

Central America and the Cold War

I believe one of the main causes on why the U.S is experiencing a major migrant crisis today is because of the affect that Cold War has had on many of the Latin American countries. Although most of the Cold War was mostly about the political tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union in parts of Europe, political issues in Latin America were also well known.

During the Cold War era (1950s-1990's), the U.S was concerned about the political interests that were happening in Latin America. The United States was concerned about the perceived Soviet proxies in Cuba, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Chile, Venezuela, and many other countries. To prevent the spread of communism in these countries, the U.S used interventions and containment policies in these countries which had a devastating effect on the people..

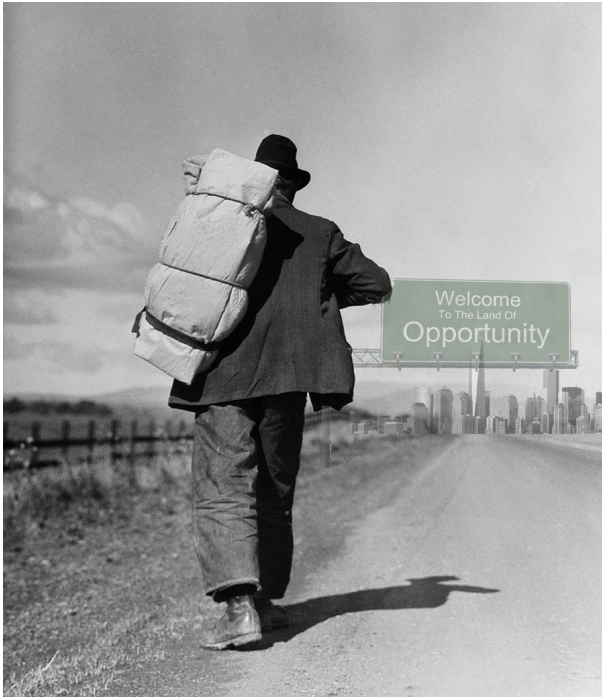
According to an article called, "American Foreign Policy in Latin America: The Containment Policy and the Perceptions of Threat," by Benjamin Reed, Reed states, " the intervention and containment policies targeted its ideological opponents in the Western Hemisphere, regional anticommunist regimes encouraged, installed, or supported by Washington employed implements of repression against subversives real and imagined: campesinos, dissidents, innocents, leftists, politicians and political parties, students, and workers bore the brunt

of these efforts, often with devastating effects." Some of the examples of the U.S interventions in Latin America is the U.S intervention in Guatemala in 1954, in which a brutal military dictatorship was established or when the U.S intervened in El Salvador, which also caused a brutal dictatorship.

Having the U.S intervene in these countries damaged the country's economies and the lack of any possibility for political dissent, which caused the development of guerilla movements, whose purpose was to overthrow the current government. This resulted in many civil wars in Latin American countries, which also caused extreme violence such as genocides. For example, the massacre of Mayan indigenous in Guatemala. This caused a massive social dislocation and the beginning of large-scale Latin American migration to the U.S.

Many historians and policy experts are quick to point out that much of the troubles in Central America were created or at least helped by the US's interference in those countries going back decades. In other words, the foreign policy of the past has profoundly shaped the present immigration crisis.

Thus, the way in which the United States expressed its political and economic interests in Latin American countries affected the country's economic and political situation which caused people to migrate to the United States.



Reasons Why People Migrate

There are many reasons why people decide to migrate to the U.S through Mexico. Most of the causes of migration is related with the troubles that Latin American countries faced when the U.S interfered in these countries during the cold war era. Having the U.S intervene in these countries, severely damaged their economy which resulted many people to migrate to the U.S.

Every year, thousands of people decided to migrate to the U.S, in the search for a better place that offers the conditions of peace and security in which that their home country does not offer. There are many factors that cause people to make this journey. The most common reasons are food insecurity, political instability, violence, lack of economic opportunity, or a combination of thereof. I will talk about some of the reasons they

decide to risk their lives in a journey for a better future. One of the reason people decide to migrate to the U.S is for better living conditions. For many migrants, they see the U.S as the land of opportunities. A place where they can have better living conditions compared to the ones back home. A place where the government gives help to its people.

Another reason people migrate to the U.S is for safety. According to justiceforimmigrants.com, it states that “persecution and discrimination based on nationality, race, religion, political beliefs, or membership status in a particular social group will prompt people to move large distances in search of a safer living location where they can have freedom over their lives.” Many migrants experience some sort of danger at home that forces them to flee their country.

This can be from war, violence, assault, organized gangs, and other influences. According to a study done by the Council on Foreign Relations, it states that in 2018, the Northern Triangle, composed of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, were ranked in the bottom quartile for gross domestic product (GDP) per capita among Latin American states. This causes a complex criminal ecosystem that plagues those countries today.

People also tend to migrate for economic reasons. People tend to move from poorly developed areas into more developed areas where more jobs are available, and the wage is much better.



Photo Credit: REUTERS



Economic Prosperity



Safety



American Dream



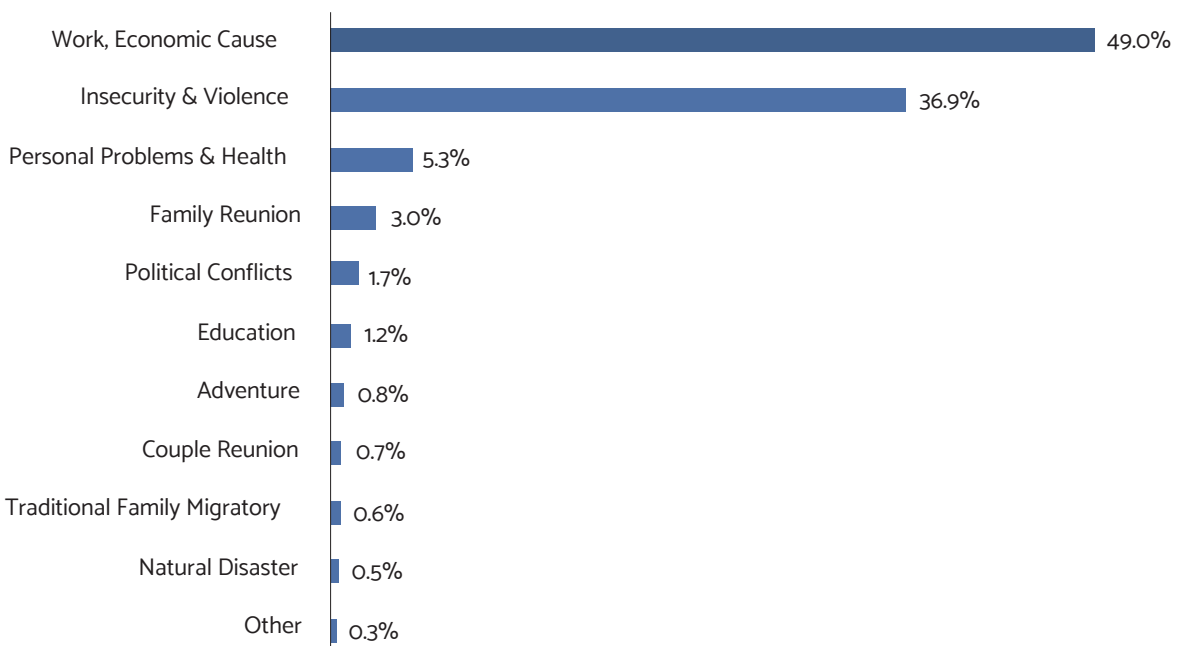
Standard of Living



Quality of Life



Photo Credit: Kim Kyung-Hoon



Source: [ReporteIndigo.com](https://reporteindigo.com)

An example is the seasonal Mexican farm workers who come work in the United States each year, as they make a much better wage compared to the wage in Mexico. Another reason people migrate is because of the environmental factors in their countries. The result of climate changes and natural disasters forces people to become much more displaced.

An example is the devastation that hurricane Eda had in Honduras. The hurricane affected half a million people and caused many people to be displaced. Most of the people could not be helped since the government's economy is bad, which forced people to migrate.

Social factors also motivate people to migrate. People often migrate to ensure better opportunities for themselves or for their families. For example, parents who decide to migrate to the U.S for their children, in hopes for them receiving better health care, education, or to better support their families back home. Often, people migrate in search of services that they do not have back home such as special medical treatment / surgery.

In 2018 there was a study that was conducted called, "The Challenges of Migration and Shelters as Oasis", which is a national survey of migrants in transit through Mexico that was conducted by the National Commission



Photo Credit: Delmer Martinez)

for Human Rights Mexico. In the study they interviewed migrants that were crossing through Mexico. They were asked the reason they were migrating. In the study, it showed that 46.6 percent of migrant women who pass through Mexico do so due to insecurity in their countries, while the 32 percent do so for financial reasons.

For male migrants traveling through Mexico, the situation is reversed, as 51 percent responded having left their country for economic and work reasons, while 35.7 percent showed that they did so due to insecurity. While most men migrate to find a better job, women see migration as a way out of the context of insecurity and violence that puts their lives and that of their family at risk.

“Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more.”

-Pope Francis, World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014)

MIGRANTS JOURNEY THROUGH MEXICO

C H A P T E R T W O



CHAPTER 2 : MIGRANTS JOURNEY THROUGH MEXICO

Traumas That Migrants Experience

What is trauma? According to Domick LaCapra, trauma is “a shattering experience that distorts memory, rendering it thereby vulnerable and fallible in reporting events. Testimonies, then, are authenticated or validated through their continued display of the wounds left by the symptomatic effects of trauma.” Prior to the journey, many migrants face a lot of traumas in their home country that forces them to migrate to another country.

In “Painful Passages: Traumatic Experiences and Post-Traumatic Stress among Immigrant Latino Adolescents and their Primary Caregivers,” it states that the economic hardships from the home countries and previous experiences with migration to the US, can critically shape migration and settlement experiences. For example, many immigrants who lived in poverty in their home countries, such as countries in Central America, have lived under chronic stress because of the economic problems they must endure. The results of living under poverty also leads migrants to being exposed with rampant violence, chronic poverty, and failed harvests due to environmental degradation and climate change, which forces people to flee from their homes and migrate to the U.S. An example is the country of Honduras

Honduras is one of the top countries of origin for migrants on the U.S southern border. Some of the reasons Honduras is a top country of origin for migrants is because recently the country was hit with two violent thunderstorms that impacted hundreds of thousands of people. There has also been a steady rise in poverty that was caused by the pandemic which leads the rapid increase of violence from criminal groups. The country is struggling with a very corrupt government that little to no help to its people, thus forcing people to migrate to the U.S.

Another example of migrants experiencing trauma prior to the journey are children who are forced to immigrate to the U.S without their parents. Some of the traumas they experience prior to their journey is the separation from parents who have immigrated earlier. This can add to the trauma of not having a parent figure taking care of them as they continue to grow. Most of the times, the parents who are already in the U.S force their children to take on this journey alone, which can also traumatize them. These traumas experienced prior and during migration and can result in family conflict when children are re-united with their parents in the U.S.



Trauma During the Journey

When migrants decide to take on this journey to the southern border, they have already experienced trauma prior to the journey. This affects their migration experience. The reason this affects the migrants experience is because their memory begins to get distorted as they are passing through Mexico.

For example, in the article “Memory Distortion for Traumatic Events: The role of Mental Imagery” it states, “Memory distortion for traumatic events appears to follow a particular pattern: people tend to remember more trauma than they experienced, a phenomenon referred to as “memory amplification.”

Unfortunately, memory amplification carries real consequences: the more amplification people demonstrate, the more likely they are to report the “re-experiencing” symptoms

associated with PTSD, such as intrusive thoughts and images.”

These memory amplifications begin to reappear to the migrants as they begin to reexperience similar traumas. For example, in one of the interviews I conducted, there was a migrant who was traveling through “La Bestia,” which is a freight train that migrants use to get from southern Mexico to the U.S. border, (they often tend to use this method of transportation when they cannot afford other methods of transportation, or they want to avoid immigration checkpoints)

and told me his traumatic experience he had there. When he was back home, this migrant had experienced trauma of being robbed at gun point and was threatened to get killed if he did not pay to a local gang. This forced him to take on the journey to the U.S as his life was in danger. When he was on top of the train, he kept thinking about that incident that happened back home as

as it permanently scared him. As he was travelling through the northern part of Mexico, he re-experienced the similar trauma. Him and group of migrants were robbed at gunpoint on top of the train. Till this day those traumas still affect them.

This person is not the only one that experienced memory distortion, most migrants do. In a study done by the Latino Adolescent Migration, Health and Adaptation Project (LAMHA) in 2006, it states that 50% of the immigrant families that were interviewed, either the parent or child, reported experiencing trauma. In 13% of families, both the parent and child reported experiencing trauma.

Overall, 29% of youth had had a traumatic experience either in the year prior to immigrating or during their migration to the US. Some of the reasons why migrants experience trauma is because of the time they frequently separated from a family member or the group they are travelling with, which makes the vulnerable to being robbed, witness torture or killing, extortion, rape members and endure extremely harsh environmental conditions.

When a migrant goes through a traumatic experience in their journey, they sometimes begin to sense a loss of hope, limited expectations about their life, fear of the unknown future, etc. An example of this shattering experience is based on an interview that I conducted with

with a migrant. The migrant was telling me about his journey and experiences in Mexico and of the difficulties he encountered. He talked about the different level of traumas that he encountered and that one of the worst traumas he experienced was someone dying in the desert.

This migrant was telling me about his experience in the desert and how this person had died. This really affected him as it shattered his experience where it got to the point where he began to lose a sense of hope on making it out alive, and the fear of the unknown future. After his journey, this person continued to be affected by this unfortunate event.

He would always have nightmares about the incident and experienced, trouble sleeping, this is considered intergenerational trauma which occurs after completing the journey.

Compulsive Repetition of Posttraumatic Effects

After completing the journey, immigrants can still experience hardships which can also cause the reexperiencing of trauma. This can lead to Posttraumatic symptoms such as sleep disorders, startle reactions, overreactions, etc. According to Domick LaCapra, "Trauma brings out in a striking way the importance of affect and its impact on memory, pointing both to traumatic memory in the form of post-traumatic effects (repetition compulsions, startle reactions, overreactions, severe sleep



Photo Credit: Getty Images

disorders, including recurrent nightmares, and so forth) and to the challenge to work through them in a viable but perhaps never totally successful fashion (page 83).” Some of the examples where an immigrant begins to receive similar traumas after completing the journey is when they arrive to the U.S.

If the migrant decides to cross the border illegally and gets caught, the migrant can be detained for an indefinite period of time. This can have an effect on the migrant who is detained. By not knowing when this person is going to be released, it causes them to have a lasting impact on the development and mental health.

Another example is when they come to an unknown country where they have no idea where to go or where to start their new journey. Not knowing

anybody or how to communicate in a foreign language, immigrants begin to feel helpless and powerless which becomes a stressor which begins to promote trauma. There also many factors that causes the repetition of trauma after the journey such as racial discrimination, intergenerational trauma, where the migrant parents tell the experiences they had with their children, which can lead up to trauma.

Another example is a migrant who decides to migrate to the U.S because of the increase of gang violence in his hometown. He leaves his country because he was brutally attacked by gang members. Arriving in the U.S he experiences a similar trauma, where he gets robbed at gun point.

Overall, migrants always tend to experience trauma throughout their life. They experience trauma prior to the journey, where they are always in a constant stress because of the economic problems they must endure. They are exposed to violence, poverty, economic hardships, which forces people to flee from their homes and take on this journey. During the journey, they face similar traumas from back home which is considered memory amplifications. They experience similar traumas such as being robbed, witness torture or killing, extortion, rape members and endure extremely harsh environmental conditions, only to experience more trauma when they arrive to their destination.



Photo Credit: Sandy Huffaker, New York Times



Photo Credit: Stanford Center for Health Education



Route Maps + Timeline Diagrams

Now that we know the different traumas that migrants go through prior to the journey, during the journey and after, it is important to also know how these migrants travel through to Mexico. Most of the time since these migrants are fleeing from poverty and violence, they don't have documents or money to reach the U.S Southern border safely or on time.

They mostly rely on methods of transportations that are inexpensive but can also be unsafe. These migrants travel in a variety of transportation methods such as by bus, by train, by boat, and by foot. These migrants travel on what is known The Migrant Trail. According to Arcgis.org, the migrant trail is a 2,000-to-3,000-mile journey, in which, migrants risk their lives to reach the US. When taking on the migrant trail, migrants risk their lives to seek safety in the U.S. They cross through miles of violent

areas in Mexico and reach the border only to be turned around. In a study done by Data Macros, it states that about 1,060,707 migrants crossed through Mexico in 2019, and out of that 1,060,707 only 15% made it to the U.S. With recent activities and attitude of the United States government and Mexican government, the border has become less welcoming and more of a challenge.

The top method of transportations that migrants take is actually a variety of each one. Migrants don't necessarily stick with one method. They often use whatever they can find. For an example a, migrant that is coming from Central America can come to Mexico by Boat, Car, or on foot. From there they either travel through by bus, by foot, or by train. One of the most dangerous transportation methods is the train route. In Mexico the most used train route is called "La Bestia". Which means the Beast Train or the Train of Death. Over the years, hundreds of migrants have fallen off the train or have been

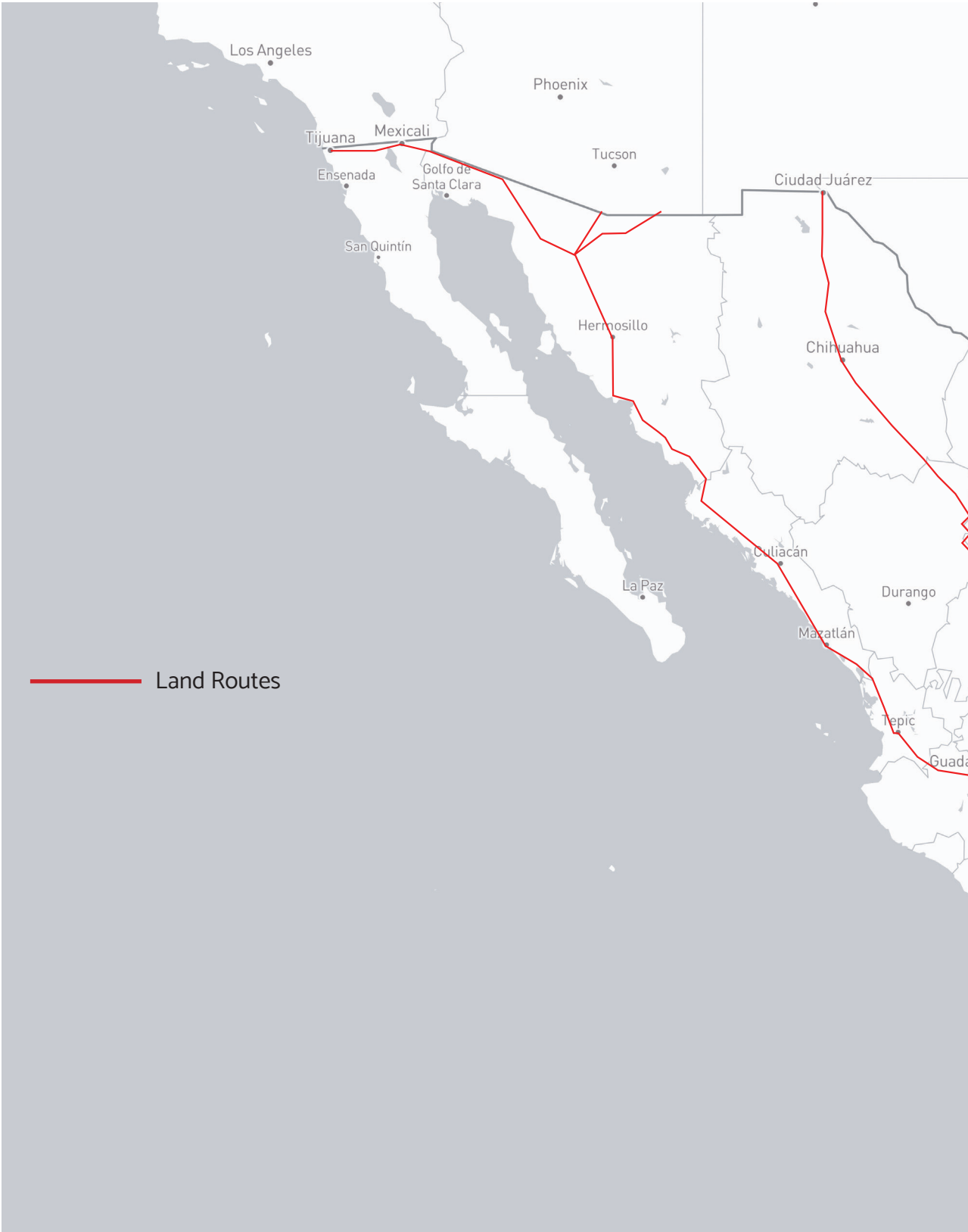
caught beneath the train wheels, which causes them to lose their limbs or possibly their death. Although the train is one of the most dangerous method of Transportation, it also the most used. It much used because migrants don't have to pay to get on the train, it's easier to avoid Mexican immigration, and it is much faster to reach the U.S Southern border.

In the following pages, I will be showing the different routes that these migrants take and the different routes that each transportation method takes. Like I said before, migrants don't necessary tend to follow one specific route throughout the journey. They tend to use all of them. So having a map that shows all of the routes together, gives the reader an idea on how complex this journey can be.

It also interesting to know that each point is associated with a city or town that the different transportation methods intersect. I want to finish the chapter by showing a timeline diagram of a migrant and the different transportation the migrant has taken as well. The timeline diagram shows how far and how much time it takes the migrant to reach one of the city or towns and how long it takes them to reach one of Mexico's Northern border cities, which is approximately 15-20 days.



Photo Credit: TIME Magazine



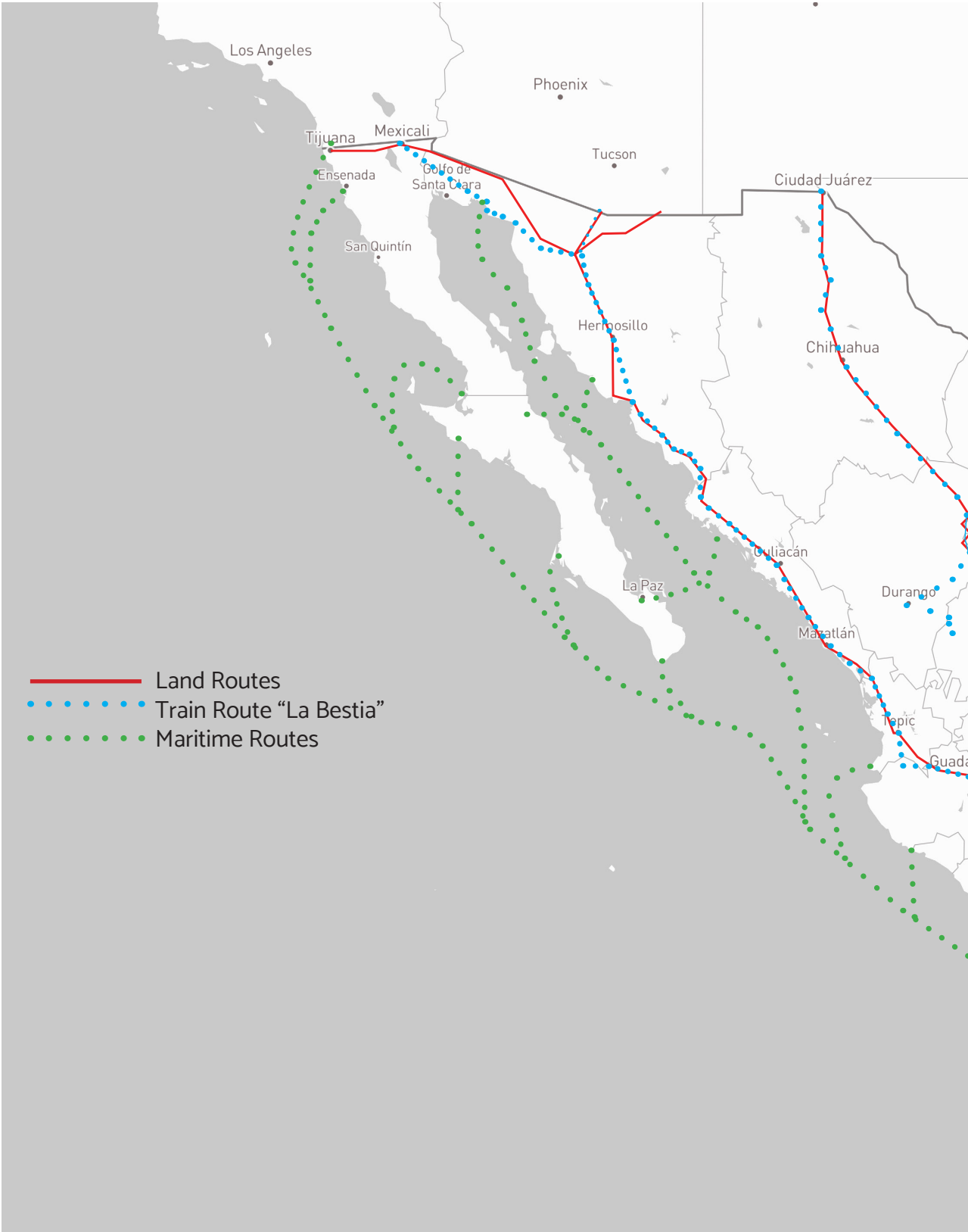




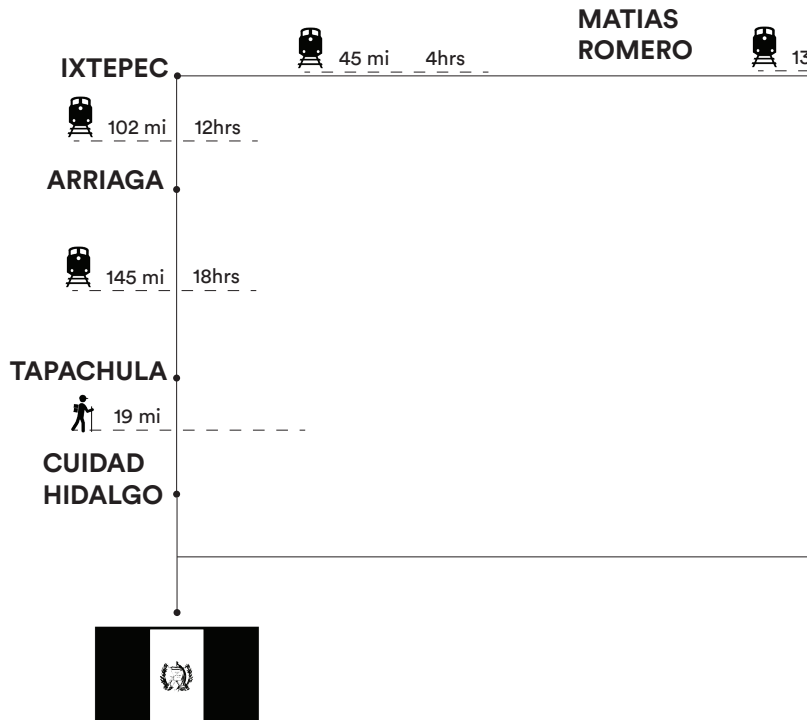
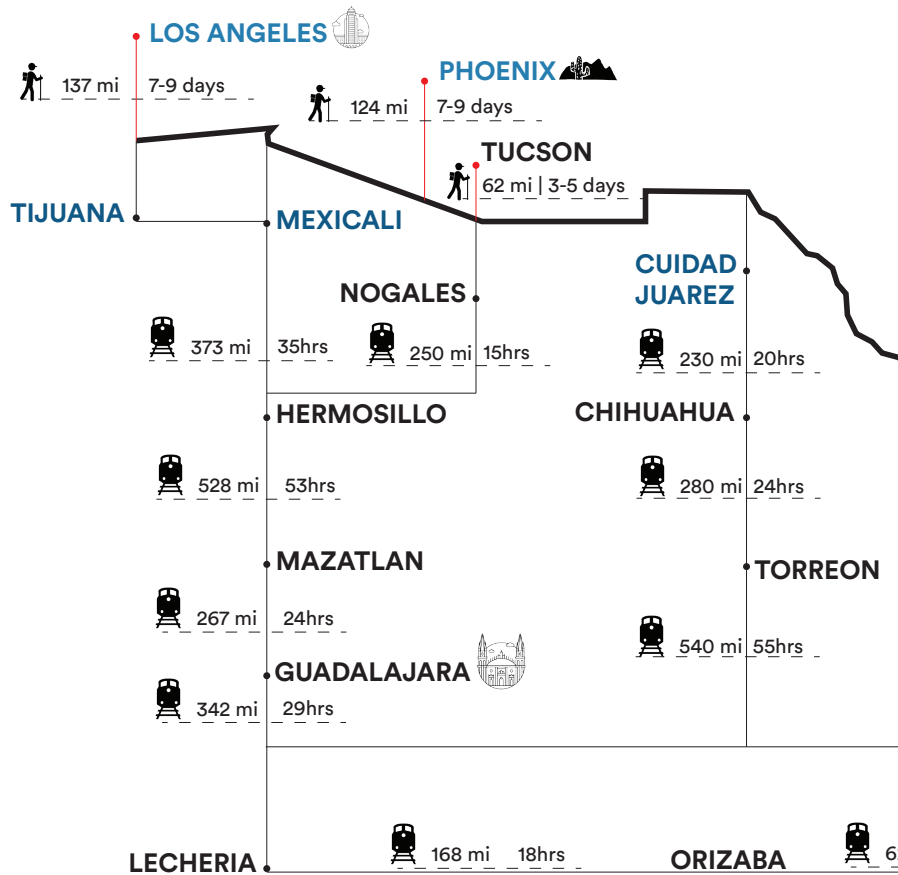


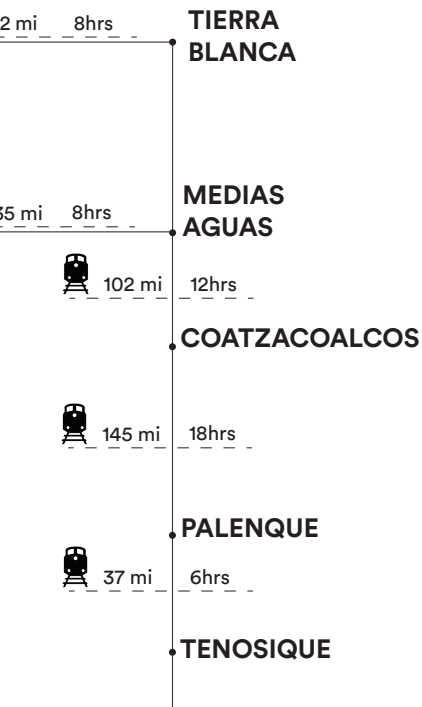












DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY MIGRANTS

C H A P T E R T H R E E



CHAPTER 3 : DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY MIGRANTS IN THE JOURNEY

Difficulties Encountered

The journey through Mexico is one of the toughest decisions a migrant must take. For people coming from Latin American countries, they usually travel through several countries before travelling through Mexico and then reaching to the U.S-Mexico border. Since most of the migrants travelling through Mexico are usually undocumented and with little to no money, they are much more vulnerable to criminal organizations and Mexican authorities. Throughout the recent years, the increase of organized criminal groups such as cartels in Mexico, has also added a layer of danger to the journey trip.

According to an article called, “A Dangerous Journey through Mexico: Human Rights Violations against Migrants in Transit” by Maureen Meyer. Meyer states that migrant shelters, civil society organizations, Mexico’s National Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos, CNDH) and others have witnessed and documented how the kidnapping of migrants is on the rise in the country.” Migrants are considered to be easy target for kidnapping, assault, deportation, and for cartels and gangs. Because of the limited routes they take to travel through Mexico, migrants tend to cross territories for which drug cartels are

and gangs. Because of the limited routes they take to travel through Mexico, migrants tend to cross territories for which drug cartels are battling, especially in the northern part of Mexico. This makes them an attractive target for cartels.

Phenomenology of Perception, Analysis of the Body-Subjects

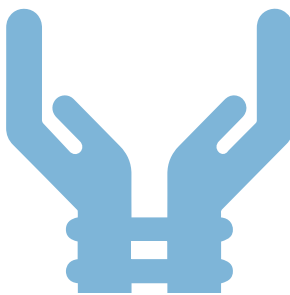
What is phenomenology? According to Merleau-Ponty, “Phenomenology is the study of essences through a direct and primitive contact in the world” (Page 7). It is a matter of describing the perception, as defined by Merleau-Ponty, it is the background form which all acts stand out and is presupposed by them. Like consciousness, perception is always a perception of something. Phenomenology of perception is how the body-subject co-constitutes meaning in dialogue with the world, not only through perception but also through the experience of space and motility. This means that the body cannot be viewed solely as an object, or material entity of the world.

The essence of a migrant is not the migrant itself, but its relationship of the world itself. It is how a migrant experience a space through its essence. Phenomenology also describes essences, and not facts. The factual part of a

Many Obstacles Include:



CARTEL & GANGS

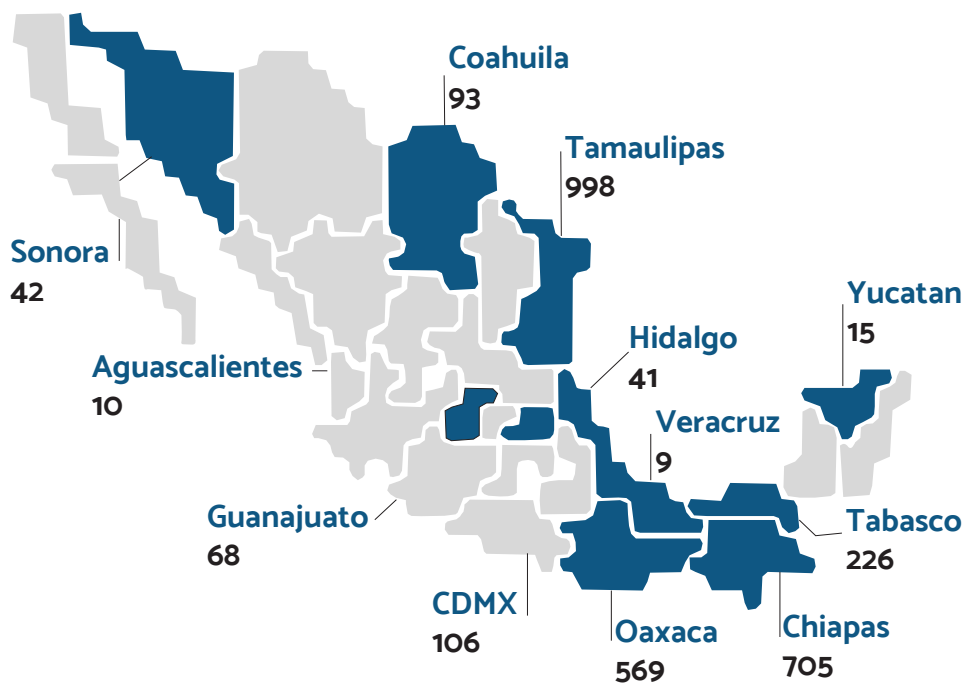


KIDNAP



DEPORTATION

MOST REPORTED CITIES



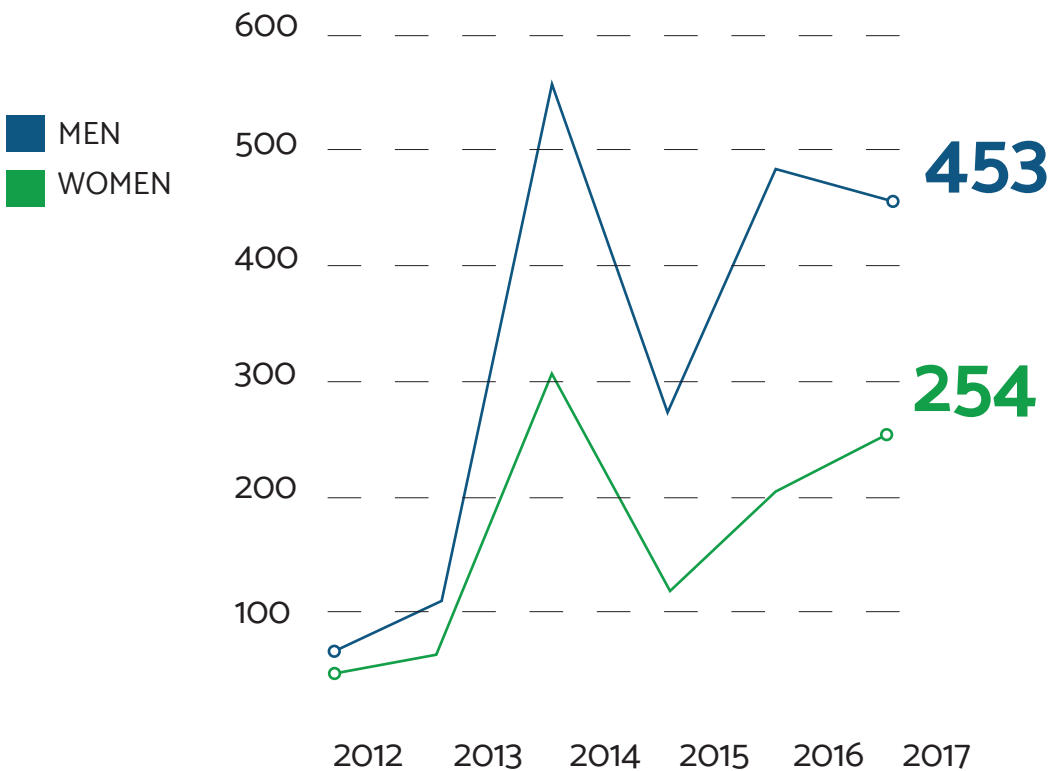


ASSAULT



BANDITS

VICTIMS: BASED ON SEX





migrant is that a migrant is a person who leaves their home country in search for a better place. But if we take away the factual aspects of a migrant, a migrant is someone who is experiencing an unfamiliar environment.

An unfamiliar environment where they are overwhelmed. Most often this is a foreign environment that conveys information in a new way. Since everything is foreign, the immigrant is stuck in a sort of a fog, where they are constantly trying to understand what they are perceiving. Hence, perception involves the perceiving subject in a situation, rather than positioning them as a spectator who has somehow abstracted themselves from the situation.

A migrant might still think the same way, but their way of thought might not fit in this unfamiliar environment. For example, a person who is migrating from a religious environment to a scientifically backed environment, it forces the migrant to

question their environment. Another change for a migrant is their social realm. When moving into a new social environment a migrant is forced to interact with people. This could be through food, language, music, social gatherings, etc. An example of a migrant forcing to interact with other people is when they are in a migrant shelter. In a migrant shelter, the shelters draw immigrants from all over the world.

Mexican migrant shelters are receiving a growing number of migrants, including children, women, and family units who are increasingly hurt and in need of protection. Migrant shelters are places where, in the midst of worries, provides migrants entertainment, games, songs, prayers, music, sports and crafts. So if a person who chooses to stay in a migrant shelter is forced to interact with other people. Over time, these elements will begin to be less foreign, and the immigrant will slowly adapt to the local social conditions.

Mallin's Method of Body Hermeneutics: Journey

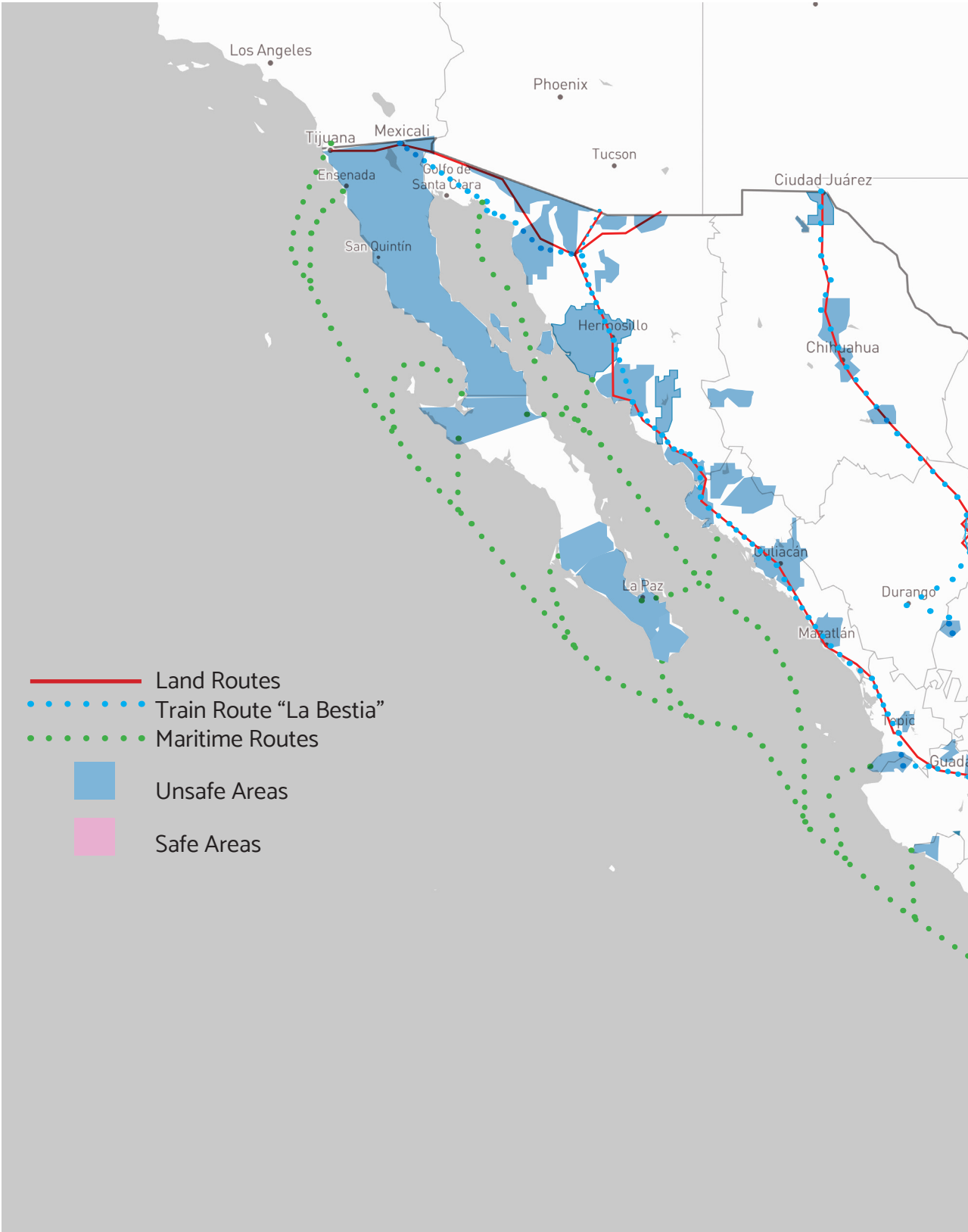
Samuel Mallin uses Merleau-Ponty's theory of phenomenology of perception, to rely on the bodily existence. According to Neimanis, "Mallin relies primarily on Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception to articulate four regions of bodily existence: cognition, perception, sociality-affectivity, and motility" (Page 4). This means that our experiences are always being interpreted as our body moves through the world encountering phenomena.

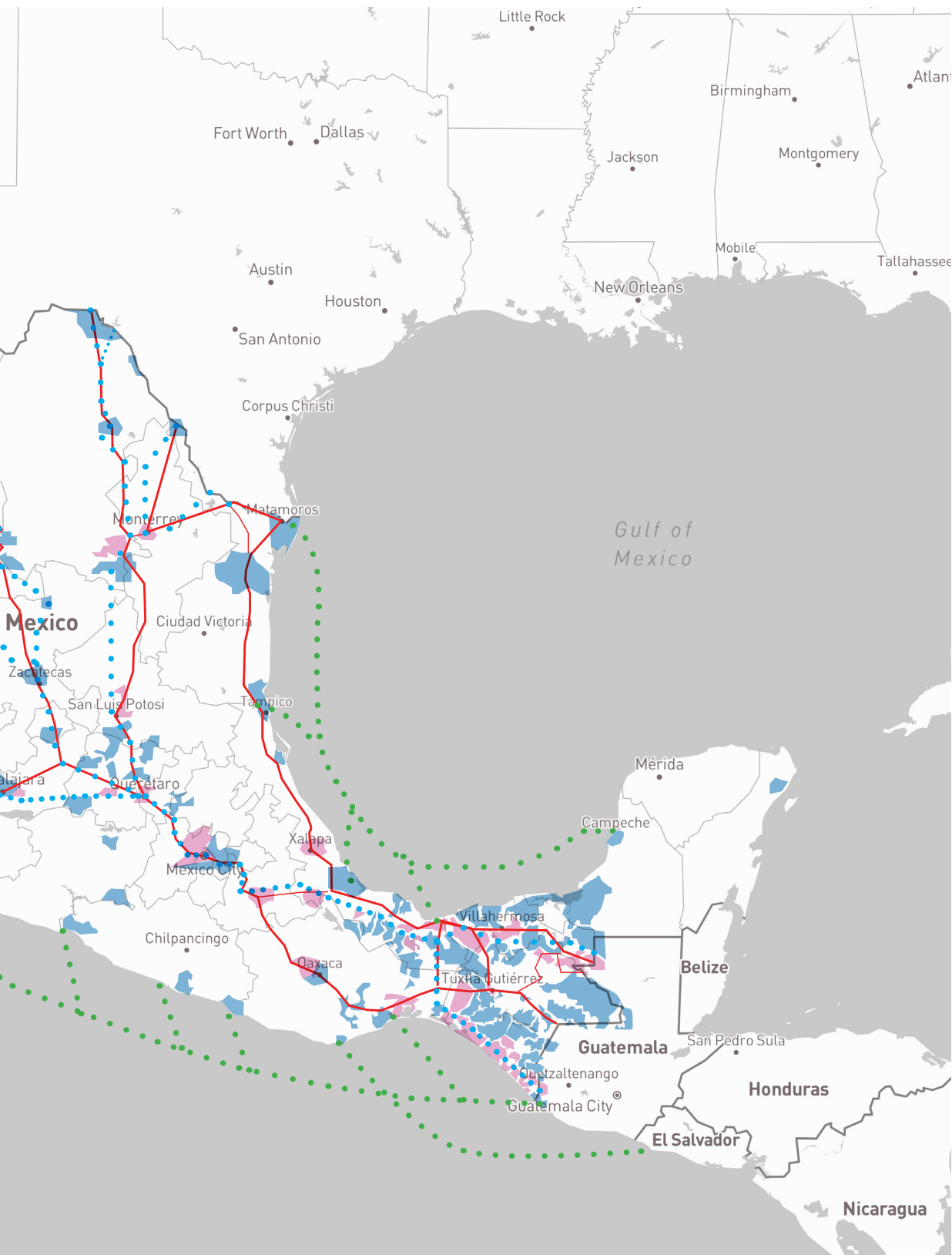
For migrants, their experiences are always being interpreted as their body moves through the journey. When traveling throughout the journey their bodies will experience cognition, perception, sociality-affectivity, and motility. To analyze the migrant's perceptions, we must ask: What can they see, hear, feel, taste, smell as they are going through the journey? For many who are traveling they sometimes hear a new language that might sound foreign. Migrants also hear different noises such as the wind hitting their ear, the sound of their footsteps as they are walking throughout their journey, they feel the climate of the place they are traveling as it also affects them. They also see cities that cannot compare to the cities that they have been to, or taste food that they have never tried before.

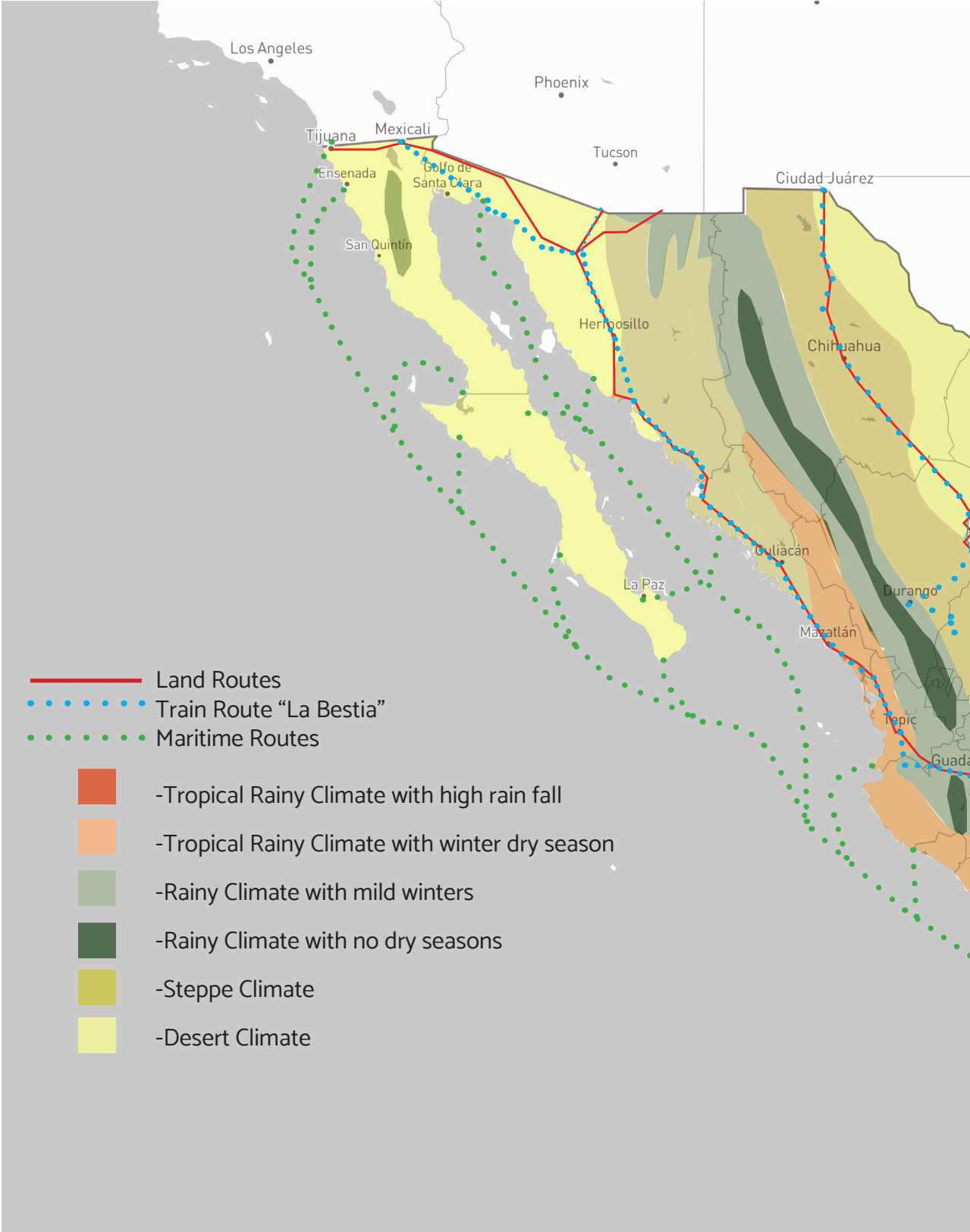
Physically the immigrant needs to move from one location to another.

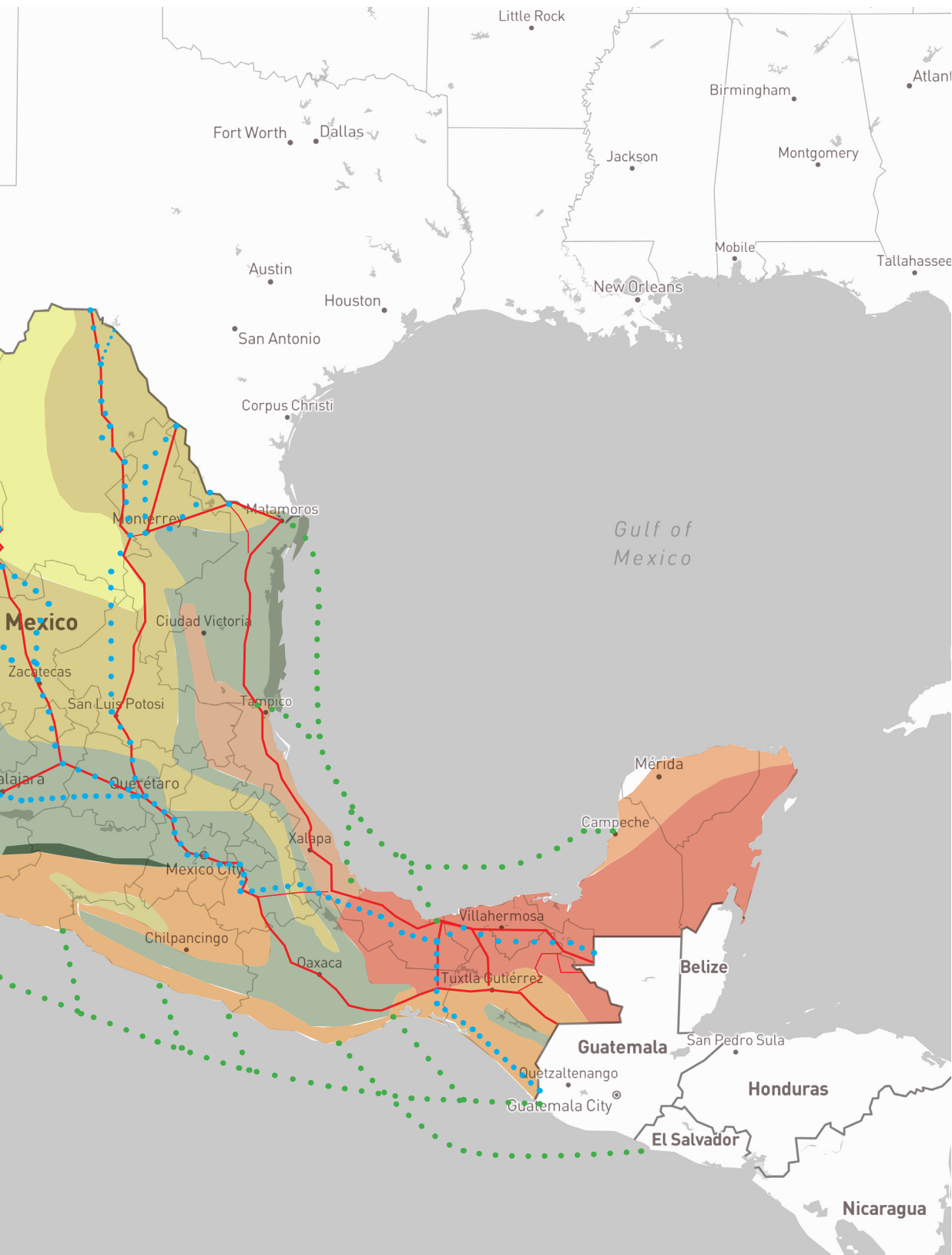
Often this journey can be exceedingly difficult, either financially, emotionally, or physically. The movement of a migrant during this journey can be simple as sitting on an airplane and navigating transportation hubs. Other times it can be difficult as it entails a long physical journey across land or water. This journey has an interesting sense of time. There are times when a migrant feel that their time is immediate since they are fleeing a location. Others are caught waiting and time seems to be an unending concept. This has a physical impact on the immigrant, in each scenario the body is in motion, moving from one place, or caught in one place waiting to move.

Regardless of the situation, the immigrant's four regions of the body are affected. There will always be this sense of motion, social change, perception and personal cognition. It is important to note that some of the largest changes come from a change in movement. By relocating into an unfamiliar environment, the migrants must adjust to the phenomena of new people from diverse cultures and lifestyles. An immigrant provides a new identity, while also learning of the identity of their new home. Every phenomenon affects the migrants, intrigues them, interests them, in some way.

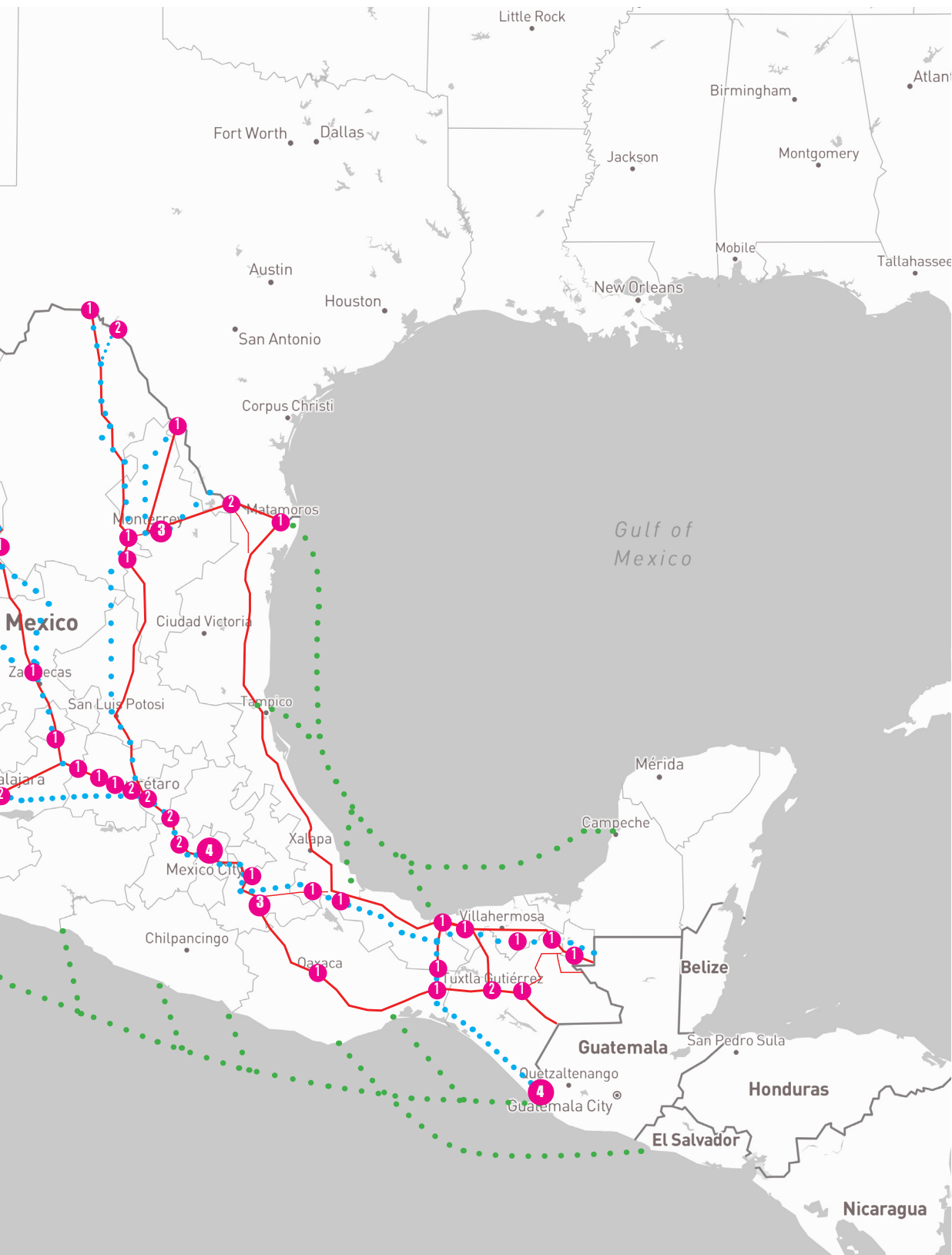














Migrants Experience Through Different Transportation Methods

Throughout the journey, an immigrant would experience many encounters and would feel several types of emotions when travelling through different transportation methods. An example would be an immigrant crossing a river via a float tube. When crossing the river, the immigrant might feel scared. The fear of drowning as their life depends on that tube.

The sense of happiness as they are getting closer and closer to their destination, sadness as they are leaving their loved ones behind. Perceptually, this person feels the freezing water hitting its body. As they struggle to stay afloat on the tube, they might taste the nasty water of the river. They can hear the rapid water hitting the tube, or the sound of the river making its way down. All their perceptions are being used in this journey.

Another example is when traveling through “La Bestia,” which is a freight train that migrants use to get from southern Mexico to the U.S. border when they cannot afford a bus ticket or a smuggler and those who want to avoid the immigration checkpoints that are placed throughout the journey. When a migrant is on top of the train there is always a fear of the unknown. The unknown of what will happen next.

When riding atop of the moving trains, migrants travel on top of the train with nothing to hold on, so they have a fear of facing physical dangers from amputation to death if they fall or get pushed. There is a sense of fear of not knowing when they will get extorted by gangs and organized-crime groups.

Perceptually, migrants feel the cold or warm air hitting their body as the train begins to speed up. They feel the sun hitting their faces as they have no shade, sometimes they will feel the heavy rain hitting their ponchos. Their body begins

to feel tired as they are on the train for several hours. They see the tracks of the railroad going for many miles ahead. They hear other migrants talking, crying, or laughing. They taste the food that is being thrown at them by volunteers. La Bestia is a space that migrants really want to avoid but sometimes can't. It is a space where they know they risk getting hurt or killed but have no choice but to ride the train. Like a boat or river tube, migrants experience the same perceptions in the different transportation methods.

By comparing a migrant with the phenomenology of perception, it has come to my conclusion that the essence of a migrant is not the migrant itself, but its relationship of the world itself. It is how a migrant experience a space through its essence. Migrants experience an unfamiliar environment where they are overwhelmed. When overwhelmed, they are constantly trying to understand what they are perceiving and tend to look for help.

They are also forced to change their social realm as they are moving throughout the journey. When moving into a new social environment a migrant is forced to interact with people. This could be through food, language, music, social gatherings, etc. I believe that by forcing a migrant to interact with other different people they would become less foreign and the migrant will slowly adapt to the local social conditions.



INVESTIGATIONS

C H A P T E R F O U R



IMMIGRATION



CHAPTER 4 : INVESTIGATIONS

Eidetic Images / Sound

What is an eidetic operation? Eidetic operation is an extension of a mapping exercise of an image that has layers of broad range of ideas that can produce an appearance of what is otherwise not visible. By making an eidetic operation, one can understand how a space works. According to Corner, "Through rendering visible multiple and sometimes disparate field conditions, mapping allows for an understanding of terrain as only the surface expression of a complex and dynamic imbroglio of social and natural processes" (Corner 214). In this eidetic operation exercise, I want to produce an appearance of what is otherwise not visible.

In the image, I want to show the emotions of what a migrant goes through out the journey, which is sometimes not visible to us. On the right of the image there is a silhouette of a person sitting down and thinking. Although it is very visible that the person sitting down is thinking, what is not visible is what the person is thinking about. The migrant can think of many things.

For example, the migrant might be imagining what the city would like since this would be their first experience of a city or they are thinking about the different terrains they must go through to make

. it to the city. It is the thought of the unknown, that I believe, most migrants think about. The thought of their unknown future, if they can make it to the city or make through the different terrains. This eidetic image begins to unfold a serious of questions to further investigate. For example, how does the thought of an unknown future impact their journey? Will it cause them to be in constant state of desperation?

Eidetic operations also allow images to create, unfold, enable, and take part in emergent realities. In the image it shows the different emergent realities. One of the emergent realities in the image is the different typologies that a migrant goes through. Throughout the journey a migrant would go through a city or different landscapes such as mountains, rivers, grasslands, etc. Another emergent reality in the image is the different climate that a migrant goes through out the journey.

The eidetic image depicts a green living landscape while the other side shows a dead dry landscape. Although this not eidetic image does not show all the different climate zones that migrants go through it does help understand how the climate affects the migrant. By learning the different affects that the climate has on a migrant we than can implement actions of support all along the routes



that a migrant take. Thus, eidetic images can also function as means of both discovering and creating meaning in space

Sketch Problem

To better understand the migrant's experience and the type of support they need, a series of investigations and studies were done to better understand and improve the journey. To better understand what the migrants feel and what they go through, I did a series of sketch problems. In the following pages, I did a sketch problem, that is an eidetic image where I wanted to find out what a migrant goes through throughout the journey, what they see when they see a new terrain or what they feel when going through the different methods of transportation and what they hear throughout the journey.

I enjoyed working on this eidetic image because as I was combining the

I began to learn more about what they went through. I started of the sketch problem by figuring out what was one of the transportation methods that a migrant use. The first image shows an image of an ocean, followed by a silhouette of a boat and the rest of the images show the different transportation methods such as the train route, a bus, and walking on foot.

Aswell, as the different terrains that a migrant goes through such as the ocean, the desert, a city, and an environment and the silhouette of people reacting to those environments. I also produced a video where you can hear the different noises that a migrant hears. This can be through the different environments and methods of transportations.

During the sketch problem I noticed that the journey is not always depressing or frightening. There are times where it is peaceful and quiet and times where it is chaotic. There are places where, in the midst of worries, there are moments of entertainment, games, prayers. music, sports and crafts.



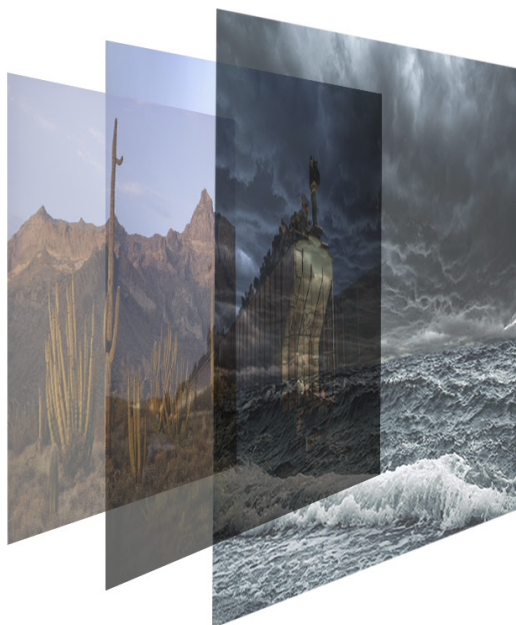
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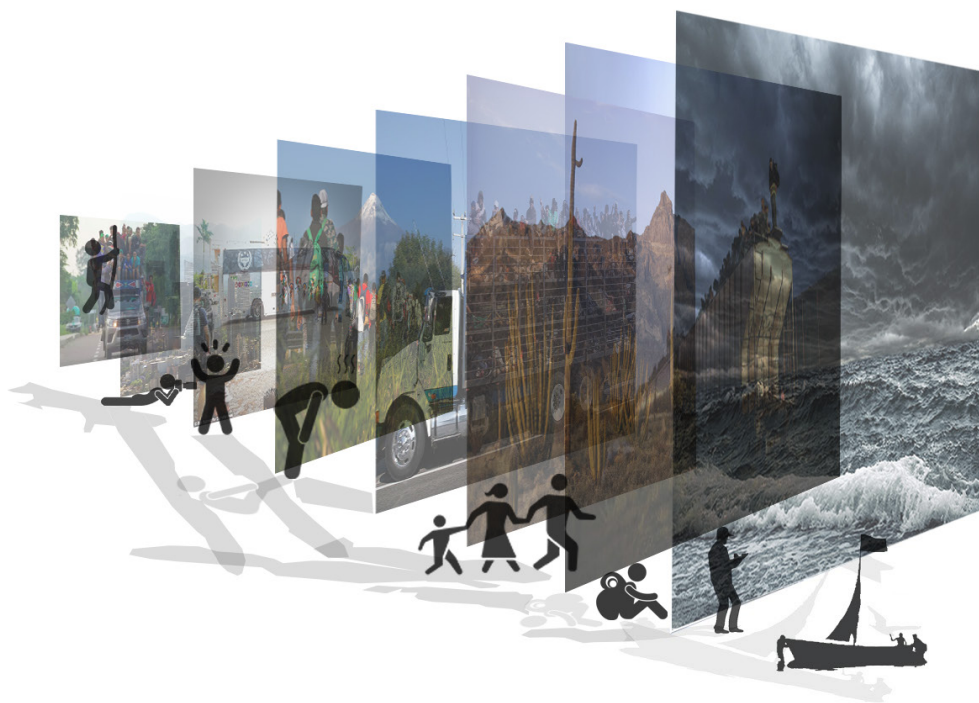














Interviews:

To understand this journey better, I have done a series of interviews with people who have experienced this journey. The goal of the interviews was to determine what migrants faced daily throughout their journey and the support they need. Through this exploration I want to begin to understand how migrants experience their own journey on a day-to-day basis. How they define their identity and how their experience as immigrants influences them to form their own migrant identity.

I want to be able to understand how and why they decide to take on this journey, why do they take a specific route. How do they maintain their cultures and customs of their homeland as they go through this journey? What challenges do they face in their journey, how has this experienced changed them? Questions like this helps me understand how this journey can

be a life changing experience for these migrants and help me determine the different problems they have and ways these problems can be solved through design.

The interview process consists of several migrants that have completed the migrant journey. Some of the migrants that were interviewed completed their migrant journey 8 years ago while others just recently completed theirs. This is immensely helpful to compare the contrasting times. It helps me determine if the migrant journey has changed over the years or has it been the same.

The interviewees have also taken on this journey at different ages. The youngest interviewee that made this journey was only 14 years old when they took on this journey. The oldest was 22 years old. The intention of the interviews was also to get an understanding of how everyone sees their migrant experiences and compare it with the other interviewees. After completing the interview, a much more

detailed interview was done. I will go much more in depth in the next steps.

From the interviews, there was a general trend that these migrants decided to go through this journey for economic reasons. Some of them decided to migrate to the U.S to support his/her parents back home. Others wanted a better lifestyle for their family back home so therefore, they decided to take on this journey. Another common general trend is that the migrant journey for everyone was extremely hard for them. Overcoming this journey has changed them.

For them, completing this journey has made them a much stronger person. From these interviews and their examination, it was clear that many different element factors contributed to migrant's journey experience which begins to define their identity within their societal context including physicality of context, the people within the context, as well as their personal experience in the context.

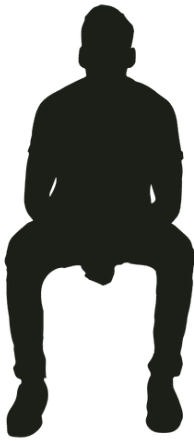
Each journey experience is incredibly unique. Hearing them personally has given me a much better understanding in what migrants feel in this journey and how they overcome it. Although this interview was a bit difficult for the interviewee because it was very personal, I am thankful for them opening up and tell me about their amazing journey experience. This has helped me learn more about what others with similar experiences go through.

Interviews:



Name: Cecilia
Sex: Female
Age: 20 years old
Ethnicity: Guatemalan
Age During Journey: 14 years old
Journey Length: 15 days to border

Name: Omar
Sex: Male
Age: 21 years old
Ethnicity: Guatemalan
Age During Journey: 20 years old
Journey Length: 14 days to border



Name: Milton

Sex: Male

Age: 17 years old

Ethnicity: Guatemalan

Age During Journey: 16 years old

Journey Length: 10 days to border



Name: Erick

Sex: Male

Age: 28 years old

Ethnicity: Mexican

Age During Journey: 22 years old

Journey Length: 13 days to border

Elizabeth's Interview

Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

My name is Elizabeth, I am 20 years old, I was born in Guatemala and I am currently living with my sisters and currently working to go back to school.

How old were you when you left??

I was 14 years old when I left Guatemala.

What was the most difficult part about leaving?

For me the most difficult part about leaving is not be able to visit my mother's grave like I used to before.

Why did you decide to come?

Had family living here in the US already so I had no reason to stay home. I've never met my sisters, they all left before I was born so I never had opportunity to see them. But meeting them was dream come true.

Do you remember anything special about the trip itself?

Something special about my journey is that I got the opportunity to see the ocean which was one of my dreams.

What was your journey to this new country like? / What was the most difficult part of coming here?

It was a terrible journey for me because it was hard for me, you know how you had to suffer throughout the trip. You risk dying in so many ways

such as getting lost in the desert or being the risk of getting kidnapped because I was a minor. I had no one to protect, I was very vulnerable.

Migration can be hard. Where did you find strength in difficult times?

To be honest, I do not know how I got here. I feel like God gave me the strength to continue my journey. I wanted to die when I was back home because I had no one in my life, all my sisters were already here, and my father was with his new family back home. So, I felt like I had no purpose in life

How do you think that migration has changed you?

It has completely changed my life. Risking my life for something better compared to what I was going through back home, for me I feel like it was very much worth it. It has made me a stronger woman.

What was the best thing about your immigrant experience? What has been most challenging or difficult about your experience?

The best immigrant experience is getting to know more about other countries, such as Mexico and here. I am more of a adventurous type of person. So, knowing more about Mexico's culture and the people living there was really special to me. The difficult part of my experience is that I was so close to giving up on my journey that I almost decided to stay in Mexico and work with the person I did not know. Turns out that person was

into prostitution. Another difficult experience is that since I was young girl, with no family, I was scared something bad was going to happen to me especially when crossing the border.

What was the hardest thing you had to face when you first came to America?

The hardest thing had to face when I first got here was to actually meet my sisters. I've never met them, so I did not know who they were and how they look liked. When I got to meet them, I wanted to leave because I felt like they weren't my actual real family.

What had you heard about America before you came? What expectations did you have?

To be honest, I didn't even know America existed. I was still a young girl, so my world was much smaller. I also did not have any expectations. I didn't want to come here but I was starting to become depressed and suicidal. I don't know why I came here all I knew was that I had a family here, but I didn't know who they were. But my dad decided to send me here because he believed it was the right thing to do and I am very grateful he did that.

How do you maintain the culture and customs of your homeland?

One of the cultures and customs I still maintain from my homeland is my native language. I speak a Mayan dialect with my sisters. The dialect is something that means a lot to me because of reminds

me of my ancestors. We also maintain our cultural tradition by celebrating our traditional holidays and dress up in our traditional clothes.

Are there specific cultural traditions that you have brought with you? What is it and why is it important to you?

My Mayan dialect, it is important to me because like I said before it reminds me of my home country and my ancestors

As time has passed, how does your experience compare to what you expected?

My experience is much better than what I was expecting. I believed my life would have been the same as it was back home. But that's not the case, I have a family that actually cares about me and loves me.

What have been your biggest challenges?

One of my biggest challenges was to arrive here with my family with of risk being sent back home or even worse, die.

Overall, how do you think you family is doing after the migration?

My family is doing much better after my migration. My grandma and father are much more happy. They said they are happy that I'm not there and that I am here. They didn't want me to suffer. My dad and grandmother couldn't take care of me at the time but they're happy they took the right decision.

Erick's Interview

Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

My name is Erick, I was born in Chiapas, Mexico. I am currently 32 years old. I got married last year and I currently have a new-born child and I have been living here for 14 years.

Who did you come with and who did you leave behind? Did anyone come ahead of you? How old were you when you left?

I came with one of my neighbors from back home and I left my grandparents all alone. I had no family here, so I decided to take this trip all alone. I was 18 years old when I decided to take this life changing decision.

What was the most difficult part about leaving?

Difficult part of leaving is being independent and to be prepared for what's to come. I was going to a new unknown place that I have never visited with no family.

Do you remember anything special about the trip itself?

A special moment of the trip is when I was crossing the border, you know in the desert, I helped someone who was at the brink of death. He was a very old person who could not walk anymore. Keep in mind we had been walking for four days and four nights with no food and water. I know he wasn't going to make it to his destination, and I did not just want to leave him there to

die so I took the courage and carried him on my back. Thinking about that really makes me happy. I really saved a life. I hope he is doing ok.

What was your journey to this new country like?

It was something new and challenging. It was very challenging for me because I had no idea where to go, or where to stay. Not knowing English was also very challenging because I could not communicate with others.

What was the most difficult part of coming here?

The difficult part of coming here is when I had to cross the border. I had to walk in the desert for 4 days and 4 nights without eating or drinking anything. I also had that fear that this is either life or death for me. I couldn't just stop and take a break, I had to follow the coyote because he did not care about our lives. He sees us as just a profit. So, if I was to stay behind, he will not wait for me and would just leave me there to die.

Migration can be hard. Where did you find strength in difficult times?

The necessity of my family gave me that strength. When there is a necessity, it does not matter the challenges that gets thrown at you. You just want to make it to your destination so you can provide a better life for your family back home.

How do you think that migration has changed you?

Because of the migration I learned

how to value the importance of my life, family, helping others, value each culture of each country, especially now that I am here.

What was the best thing about your immigrant experience? What has been most challenging or difficult about your experience?

The best thing about my immigrant experience is saving someone's life in the border

What had you heard about America before you came? What expectations did you have?

The hardest thing I had to face when I first came to America was the language barrier, I did not know any English and because of that I could not find help and I could not find a job. Also, when I first arrived, I did not know anyone, so I really had no idea on where to go.

How do you maintain the culture and customs of your homeland?

You never lose your culture and customs from home. Although being in a country that you do not belong and not welcomed, you always remember your values and culture of your family back home.

Are there specific cultural traditions that you have brought with you? What is it and why is it important to you?

Specific cultural traditions that I have brought with me Our festivity traditions song which I celebrate every year with

my family and it's really important for me because celebrating these cultural traditions reminds me of my family and back home.

As time has passed, how does your experience compare to what you expected?

My expectations at first was that this country was going to help me, not a financial support, but help me feel like I am treated equal. A place where I can have the same rights and responsibilities as others, within the area of work and society.

What have been your biggest challenges?

One of my biggest challenges is still learning English. Also, I'm still trying to learn the laws of this country, and to continue my immigration case, it is very difficult because the immigration system is very broken.

What have been your greatest sources of joy?

First of all, my greatest source of joy is having my own family, and throughout time and perseverance, I'm starting to feel like belong in this country, and to have a better future with my family.

Overall, how do you think you family is doing after the migration?

My family that I left are being benefited with the help I send them.



Interview day-to-day

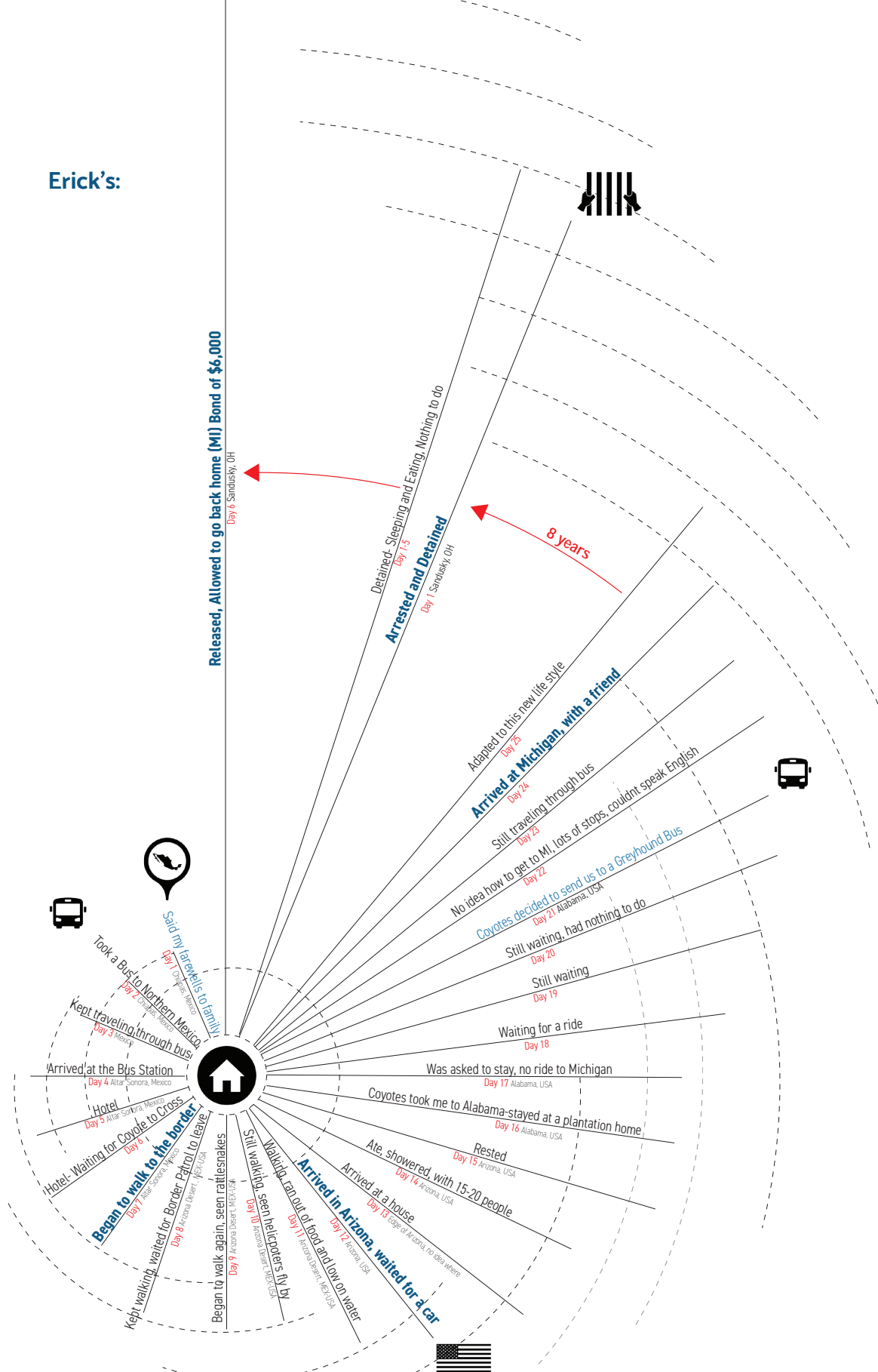
After conducting the initial interview, I wanted to better understand what interviewees experience was on a day-to-day basis. The purpose of this interview was to figure out similarities and differences between each migrant's journey. After conducting the interviews, I came up with a diagram that shows the important moments that a migrant did in a day. For example, for one of the interviewees, one of the most memorable moment is when she crossed to Mexico via boat and when she was detained in the Southern Border.

This diagram has helped me determine the kind of transportation methods that the migrants take, how long it takes them to reach the border and the difficulties they encountered throughout the journey. The process of this interview was relatively easy to ask but hard to answer. I would ask each interviewee to tell me how

their journey went on a day-to-day basis. For example, I would ask them to tell me what their first day would look like, what they did, what was their location, etc. I would continue to ask about each day till they finally arrived at their final destination. Like I said before, this was relatively easy to ask but it was difficult for them to answer. The reason why it was difficult for them to answer is because it was hard to remember the activities they did each day. Toward the end of the final spiral diagram, I have another diagram that shows a day in the life of a migrant. This diagram goes much further into detail about what the migrant did in a day. In the diagram, I decided to ask one of the Interviewees what it was like to spend a day inside a migrant shelter.

Some of the key findings from these diagrams during the interviews, there would be moments where migrants felt unsafe during their journey, but at the same time comfortable (physically). During the interviews/mappings there would be a big fear of the unknown as migrants begin to cross the Northern part of Mexico.

Erick's:



AN IMMIGRANTS JOURNEY:

Milton's:



Taken to the airport, arrived in Michigan

Brentwood, New York

4 months

Transferred to la "Casa Hogar"

Day 15 Brentwood, New York

3 days

Applied for Asylum - Detention Center

Day 11 Nogales, Arizona

Crossed the Border

Day 10 Nogales Border MEX-US

Arrived at a Migrant Shelter

Nogales, Sonora, Mexico

Arrived at Nogales

Day 9 Nogales, Sonora, Mexico

Deadly Accident, waited for the train to move

Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico

Train departed to Hermosillo

Day 8 Los Mochis, Sinaloa, Mexico

Rested on the tracks, bought food and water

Los Mochis, Sinaloa, Mexico

Train stopped at Los Mochis

Day 7 Los Mochis, Sinaloa, Mexico

Sitting down on top of the train all day

Day 5-6 Pacific Coast, Mexico

Hopped on the Train (La Bestia)

Day 5 Pacific Coast, Mexico

Went to Mazatlan via Bus

Day 5 Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico

Arrived at a Migrant Shelter (100+ people)

Day 4 Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico

Went to Puebla via car (1 am)

Day 4 Puebla, Mexico

Arrived at a Migrant Shelter

Day 3 Puebla, Mexico

Went to Oaxaca via car

Day 3 Oaxaca, Mexico

Arrived at a Migrant Shelter

Day 2 Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tuxtla Gutierrez via car

Day 2 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Made it to Tapachula, Mexico via car

Crossed to Mexico

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Walked to the Border

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Said my farewells to family

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tapachula, Mexico via car

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tapachula, Mexico via car

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tapachula, Mexico via car

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tapachula, Mexico via car

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Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tapachula, Mexico via car

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tapachula, Mexico via car

Day 1 Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico

Went to Tapachula, Mexico via car

Omar's:



Arrived in Michigan to meet family

Day 34 Detroit, MI

3 weeks

1 Month

Sent to Atlanta via bus

Day 40

Atlanta Georgia

Taken to a Migrant Shelter

Day 16 Laredo, Texas

Waited in the border for hours (in a field)

Day 15 Laredo, Texas

Crossed the Rio Bravo, Arrived

Day 14 Laredo, Mexico

Arrived to Nuevo Laredo

Nuevo Laredo, Mexico

Travelled to Nuevo Laredo via taxi

Day 13 Nuevo Laredo, Mexico

Relaxed

Day 10-12 Monterrey, Mexico

Bought clothes and groceries in the city

Day 8-9 Monterrey, Mexico

Arrived to a Migrant Shelter

Arrived to Monterrey

Monterrey, Mexico

Travelled to Monterrey via taxi

Day 7 Puebla, Mexico

Showered, Made Food (Shelter)

Day 5-6 Puebla, Mexico

Arrived to a Migrant Shelter

Puebla, Mexico

Went to Puebla via a truck

Day 4 Puebla, Mexico

Arrived to a Migrant Shelter

Oaxaca, Mexico

Went to Oaxaca with 30 people

Day 14 Oaxaca, Mexico

Arrived at a Migrant Shelter

Day 3 San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas

Arrived in Mexico

San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas

Walked through a Mountain

Day 2 Huelvetepango, Guatemala

Crossed to Mexico

Day 1 Huelvetepango, Guatemala

Arrived at the Border

Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

Said my farewells to family

Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

Arrived at the Border

Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

Said my farewells to family

Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

Arrived at the Border

Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

Said my farewells to family

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Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

Said my farewells to family

Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

Arrived at the Border

Day 1 San Marcos, Guatemala

A DAY IN THE LIFE

WAKE-UP TIME:
8:00 a.m.



LOCATION:
NOGALES, MEXICO

A day in the life of a migrant that is in a migrant shelter in Nogales, Mexico. Based on the interview with this person, he was in a shelter for at least a month waiting till he was able to continue his journey to the U.S

BREAKFAST
10:00 a.m.



CLEAN HOUSE (2 PEOPLE)
9:00 a.m.



WATCH TV
11:00 a.m.



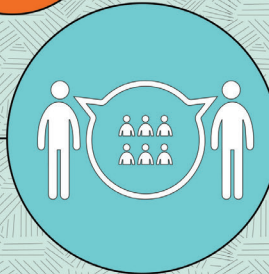
PLAY CARDS
4:00 p.m.



PLAY DOMINO
6:00 p.m.



TALK WITH OTHERS (10 OTHERS)
5:00 p.m.



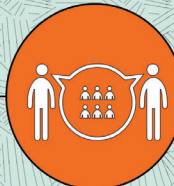
EVERYBODY CLEANS
7:00 p.m.



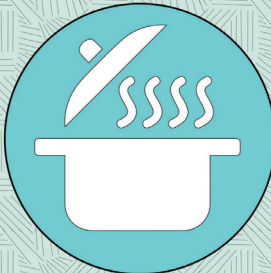
WATCH TV
7:30 p.m.



TALK WITH OTHERS
9:00 p.m.



EVERYBODY COOKS DINNER
8:00 p.m.



SHOWER
10:00 p.m.



BEDTIME:
10:30 p.m.



AVERAGE NIGHT SLEEP:
8-9 hours

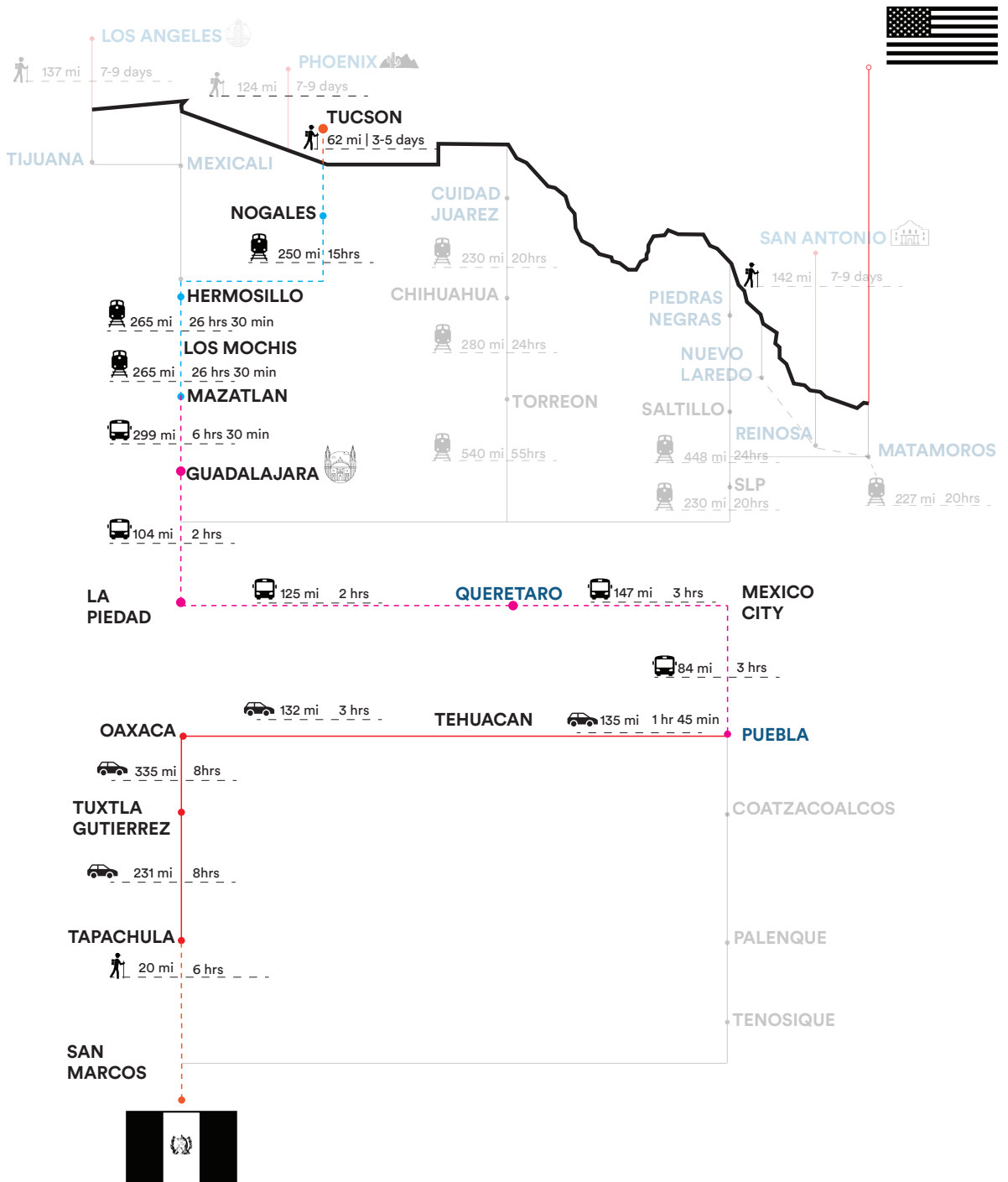


Individual Route Maps / Timeline

After finishing up the interviews and finishing the day-to-day diagrams, I began to individually route each interviewee's journey based on the interviews and diagrams. During the interview, they would tell me the city they arrived, what method of transportation they've taken, how many people they travelled with, areas where they felt safe and unsafe. For the following maps, I individually mapped Elizabeth's Route. She would tell me the cities she would stop at and the different type of routes she took. This was helpful because it was easier to find the distance and time it took her to get to a city in Mexico. Hence, the timeline diagrams.

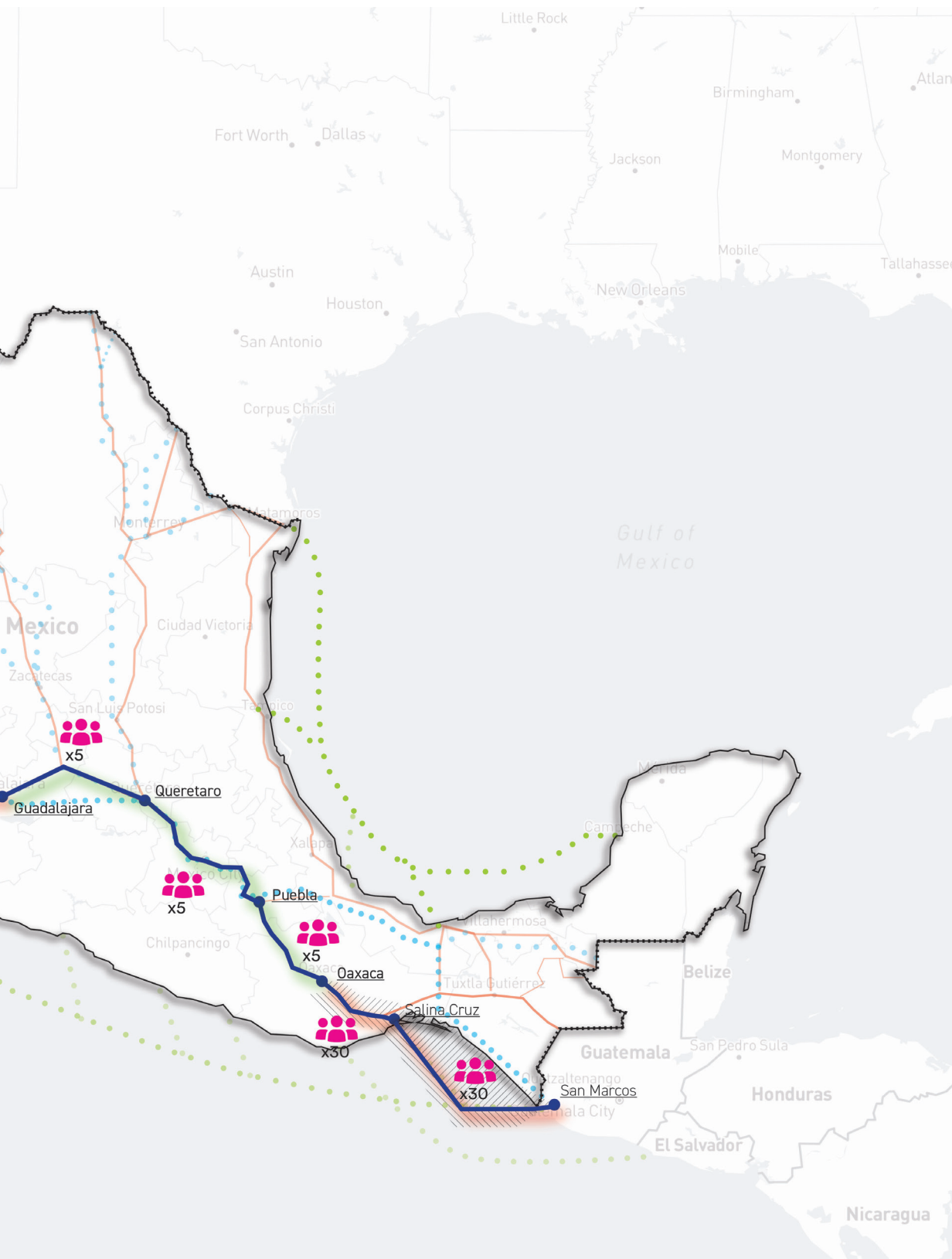
While mapping the migrant routes, I noticed similar similarities between all the individual maps of the interviewee. For example, I noticed common cities where the migrants would stop by to rest or change routes. It

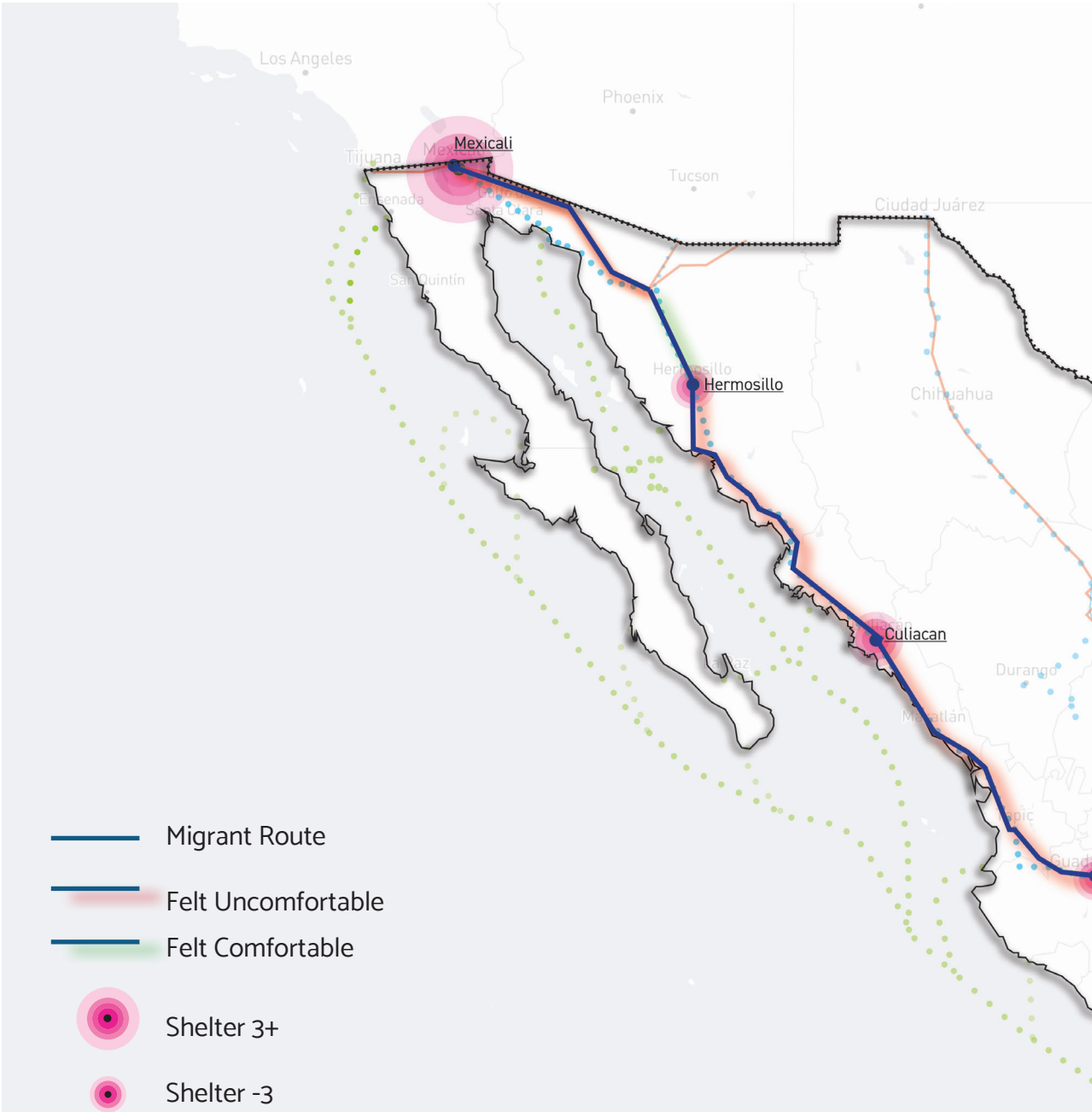
turns out most of the stops that these migrants took are major cities where others stop by also. Another similarity is that different routes intersect in these major cities and that most of the major cities that migrants stopped by at had few migrant shelters. Another finding is that in mappings that showed safe and unsafe areas, the migrants would start to have a fear of the unknown as they begin to cross the Northern part of Mexico, which is cartel territory



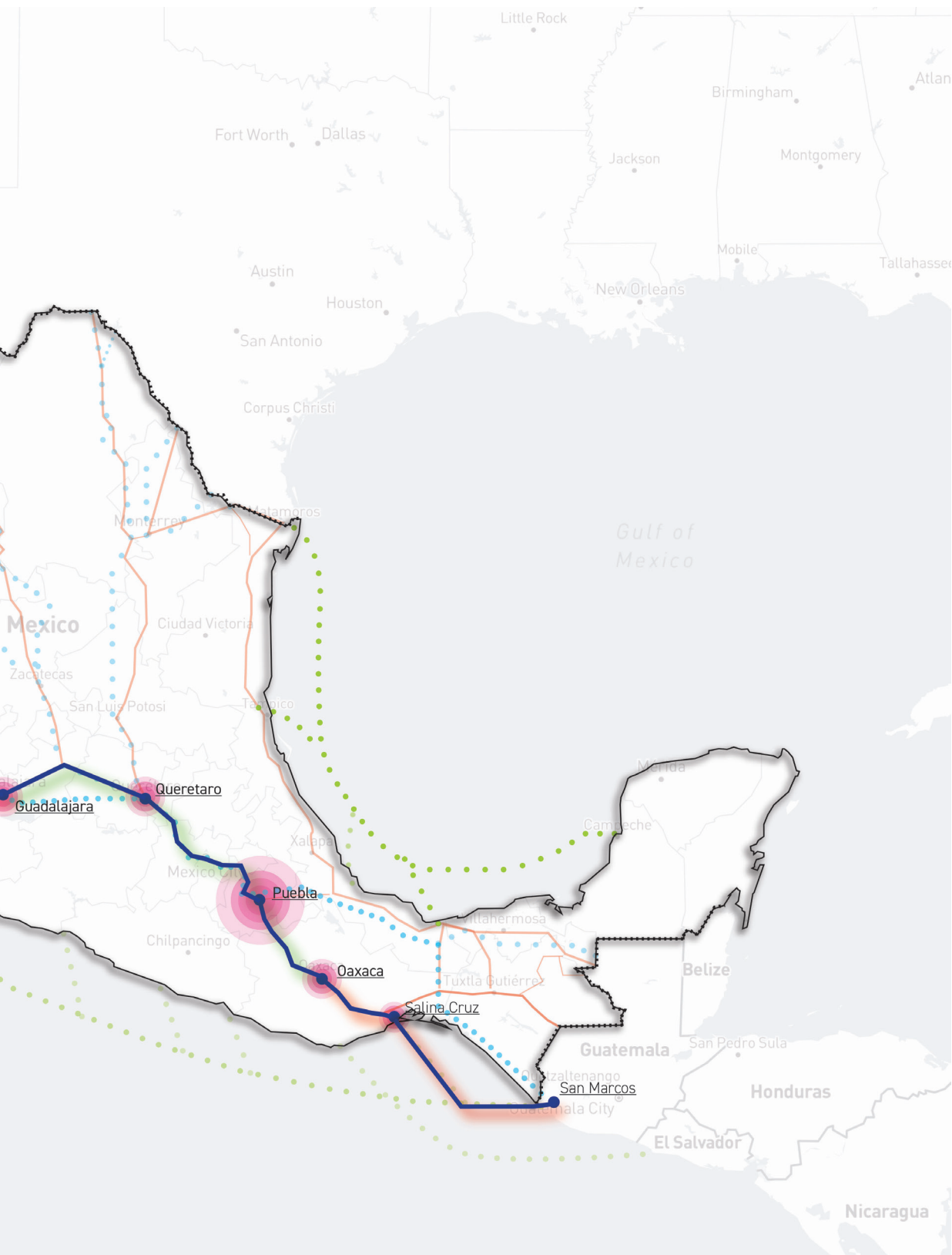


Safe/Comfortable Map Diagram





Migrant Shelter Map Diagram



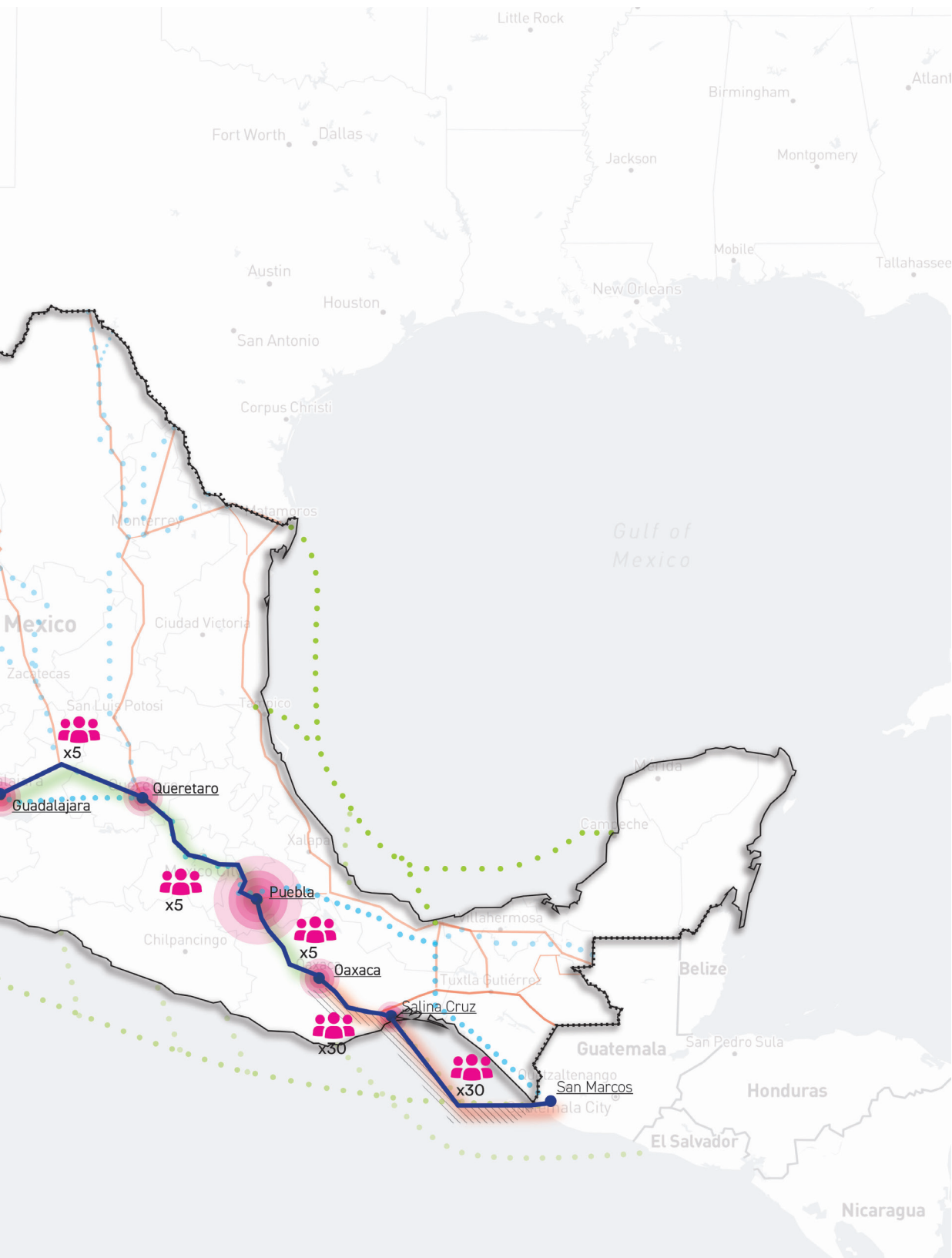


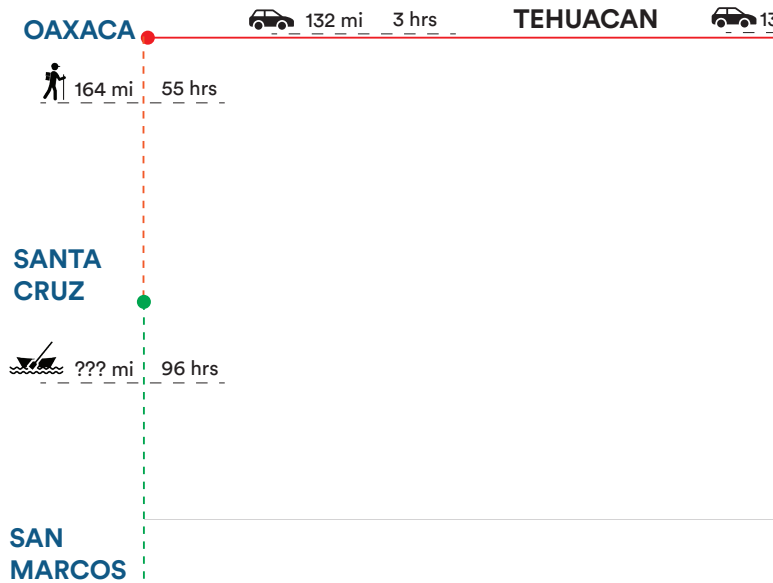
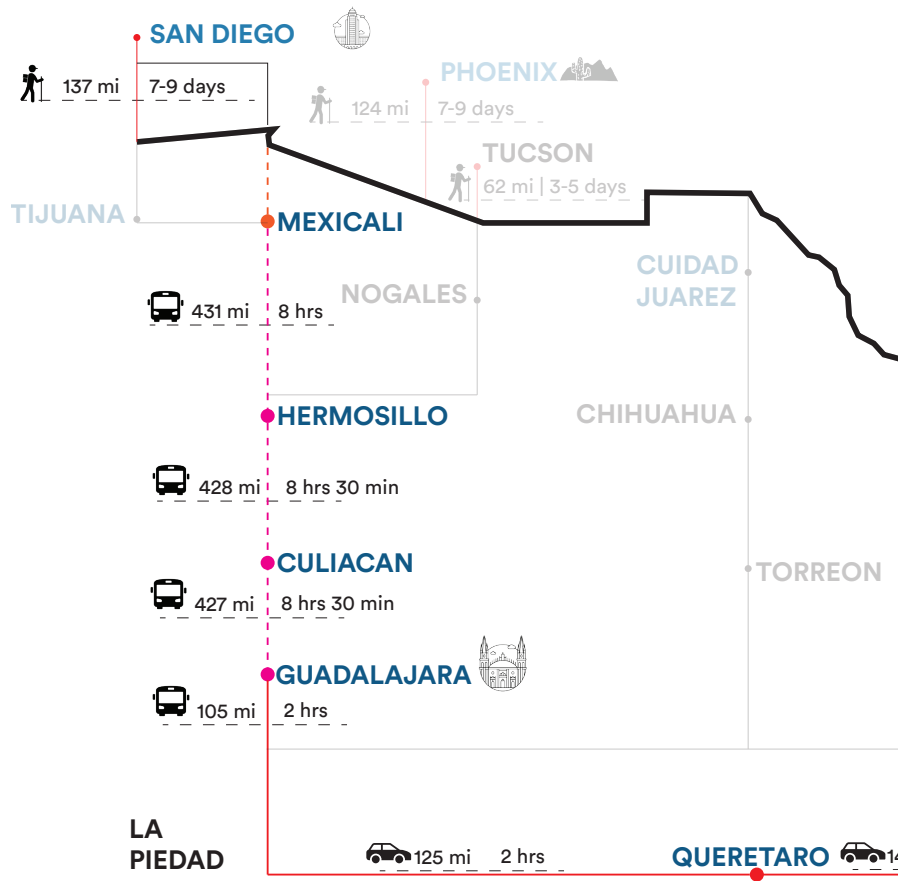
Transportation Map Diagram



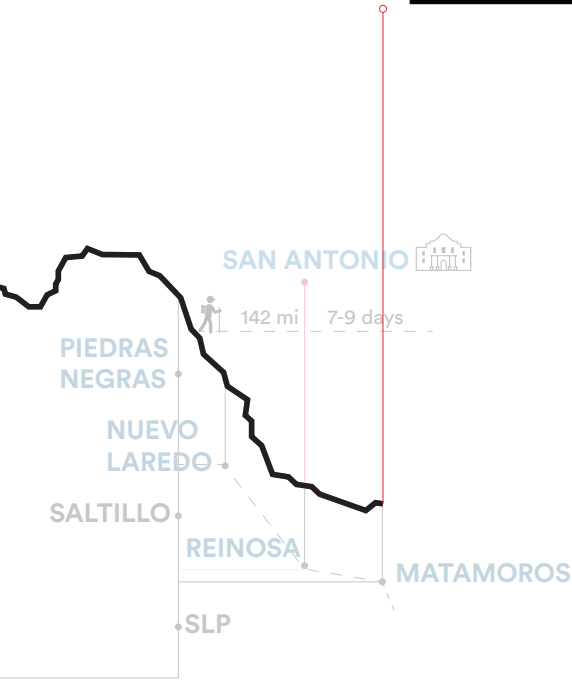
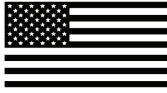


Combined Map Diagram





Timeline Diagram



47 mi 3 hrs

MEXICO CITY

84 mi 3 hrs

35 mi 1 hr 45 min

PUEBLA

12hrs

COATZACOALCOS

18hrs

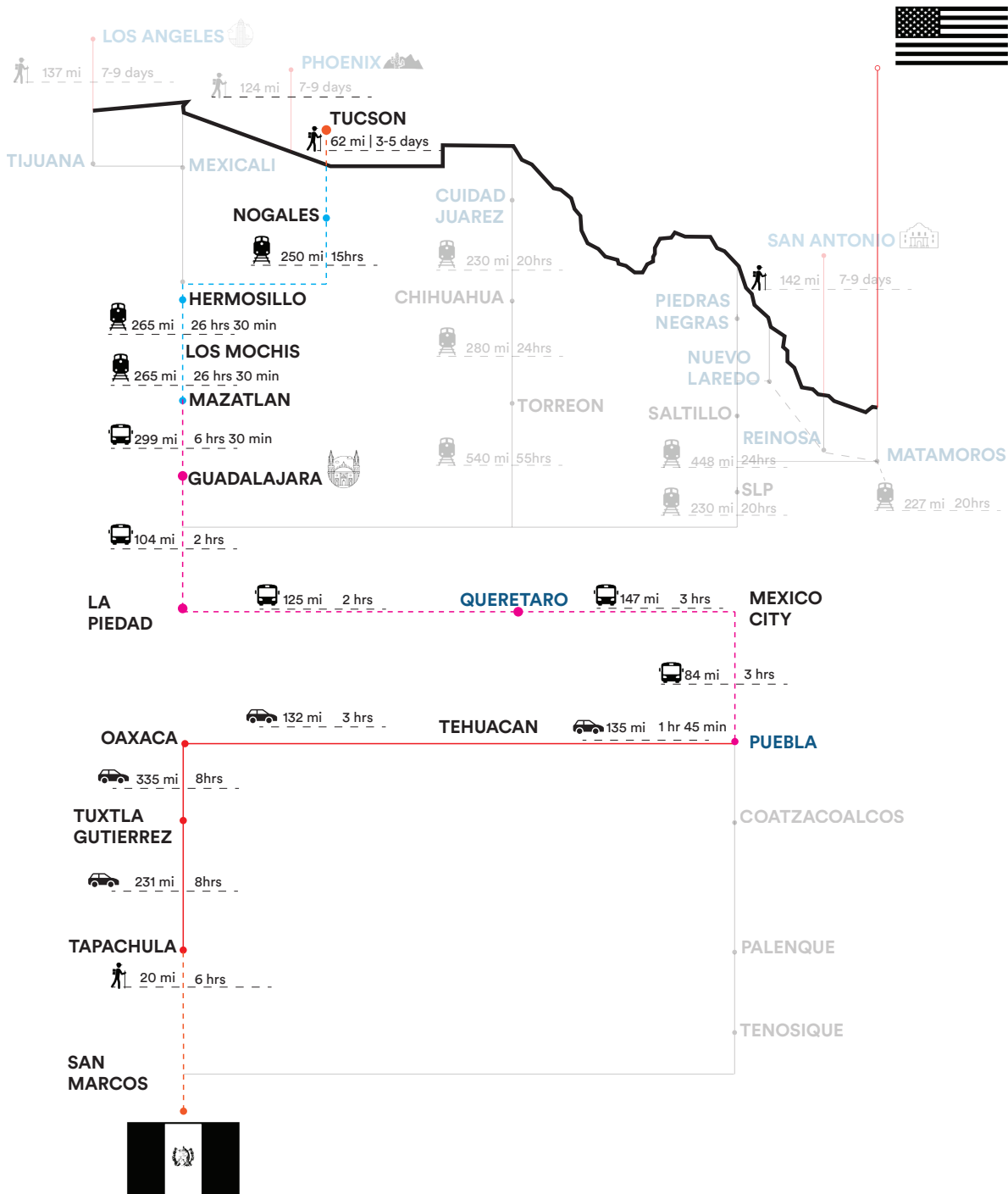
PALENQUE

TENOSIQUE









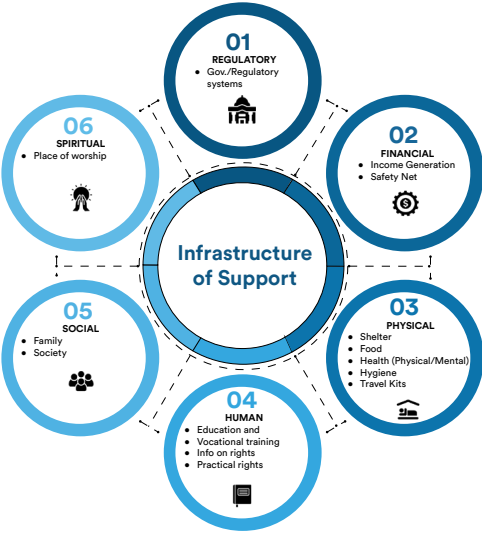
FINAL DESIGN

C H A P T E R F I V E



**AYUDA
MIGRATORIA**

CHAPTER 5 : FINAL DESIGN



Infrastructure of Support:

After doing the interviews and mappings, the next step was to figure out ways how the journey has impacted the migrants and ways the journey can be improved. Some of the ways this journey can be improved is by having a series of guidelines called “Infrastructures of Support” (Image at top of next page), which is a system in which it helps out migrants throughout the journey.

This guideline consists of six systems which include, Regulatory Guideline, which is where the Mexican federal or local government implies government regulatory system to better improve the journey. The second guideline is the Financial Support. In this infrastructure system, it used for a migrant to get some sort of income.This is very important because going back into the research,

most of the times migrant decided to migrate through Mexico with no documents and no money. So having a system that provides income generation or a safety net, allows for migrants to afford a much safer and faster transportation method as well as migrants to stay in Mexico and work there. The third system of support is the Physical Infrastructure. This system is extremely important because this allows migrants to have access to shelter, food, health, hygiene kits, and travel kits to make their journey much easier.

The fourth system of support is the human infrastructure, which provides migrants with knowledge about their rights in Mexico. This is also important because this helps migrants better understand their rights if they were to get arrested. The fifth system of support is the Social Infrastructure. This

system provides migrants the opportunity to contact their loved ones back home or an opportunity to interact with other migrants. This can better improve the journey because most of the times migrants always tend to be in a stressed situation that sometimes having someone to talk to is a good idea. The sixth system of support is spiritual. After experiencing all those traumas back home or during the journey, oftentimes migrants would look for a place where they can be spiritual. A place where they can feel much better.

Travel Kits

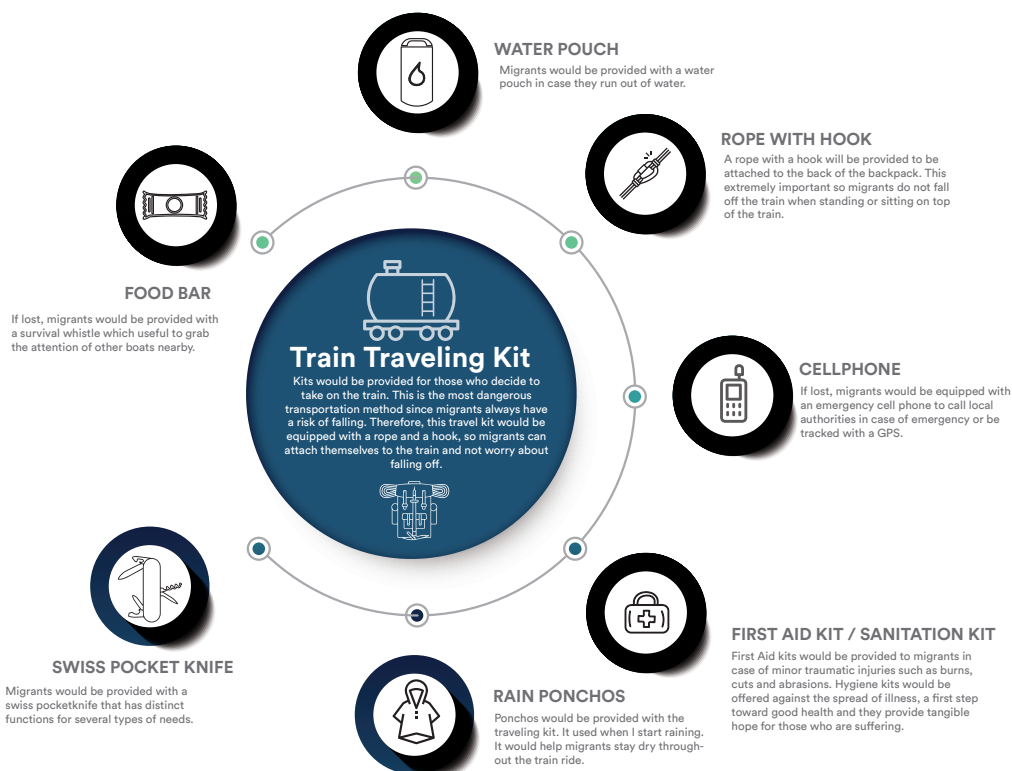
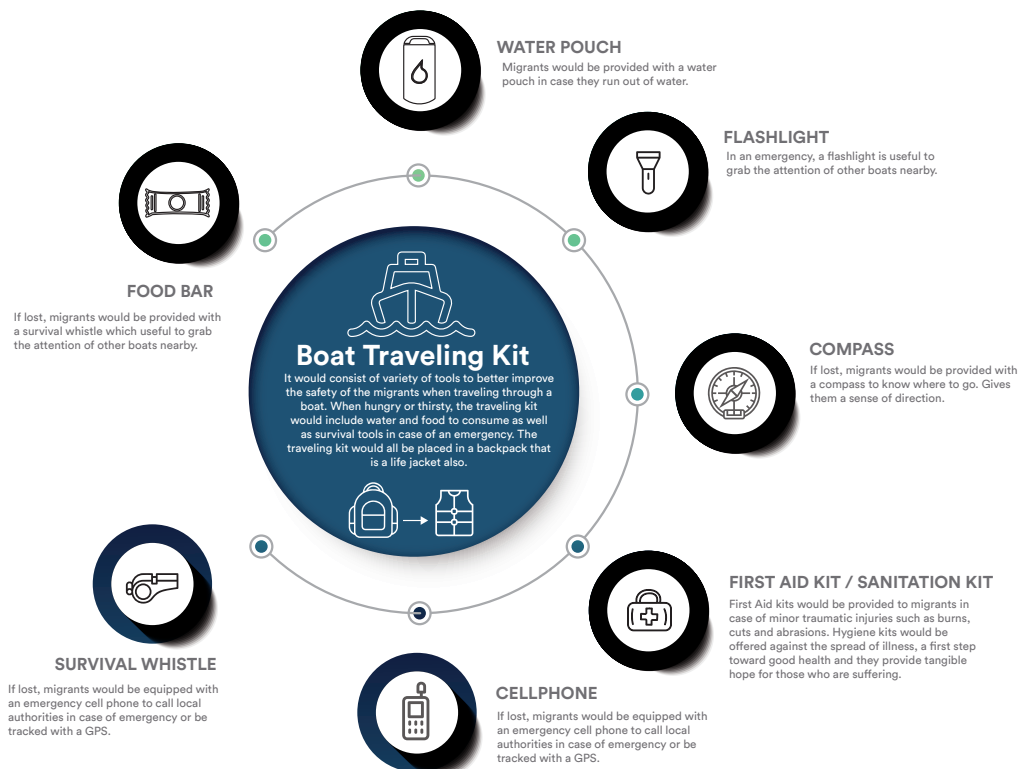
After having this infrastructure of support as a guideline my next step was to figure out how can these guidelines implement to a design that would better improve the journey and how can the transportation experience be much improved. One way the transportation system can be improved is by distributing essential travelling kits, based on the different travelling routes that migrants take. For example, there will be different type of travelling kits such as the boat travelling kit.

In the boat travelling kit it would consist of variety of tools to better improve the safety of the migrants when traveling through a boat. When hungry or thirsty, the traveling kit would include water and food to consume as well as survival tools in case of an emergency. The traveling kit would all be placed in a backpack that is a life jacket also.

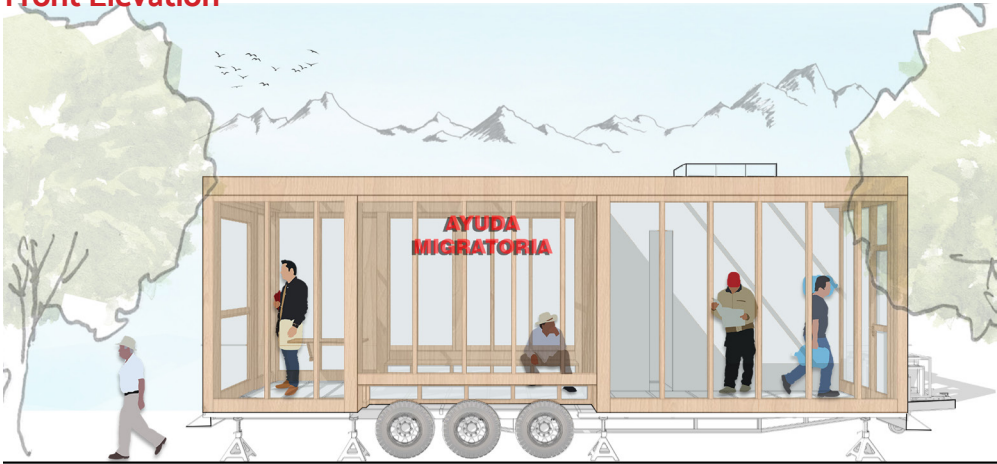
It would also include a First Aid Kit/ Sanitation Kit which would be provided to migrants in case of minor traumatic injuries such as burns, cuts and abrasions. Hygiene kits would be offered against the spread of illness, a first step toward good health and they provide tangible hope for those who are suffering.

One of the other travelling kit is the walking travel kits where it will be provided to better improve the experience for the migrants when traveling by foot. When hungry or thirsty, the traveling kit would include water and food to consume as well as other tools for a better experience. The traveling kit would all be placed in a backpack that carries a tent to sleep in. Another travelling kit is for migrants who decided to use “La Bestia” train. These kits would be provided for those who decide to take on the train. This is the most dangerous transportation method since migrants always have a risk of falling. Therefore, this travel kit would be equipped with a rope and a hook, so migrants can attach themselves to the train and not worry about falling off.

The final travelling kits will be for migrants who decide to use a car or bus as method of transportation. These kits would be provided to migrants that decide to travel by bus and car. They will be provided with a pouch that consists of different kits. A pouch kit would be the best option since migrants are traveling much closer to each other.



Front Elevation



Modular Mobile Hubs

The following step is figuring where and how would the migrants be able to receive these travelling kits and how their experiences can still be improved. My design solution to this is by having these Modular Mobile Hub trailers where the migrants can come and pick up their travelling kits. These modular mobile hubs would be located all around the migrant routes.

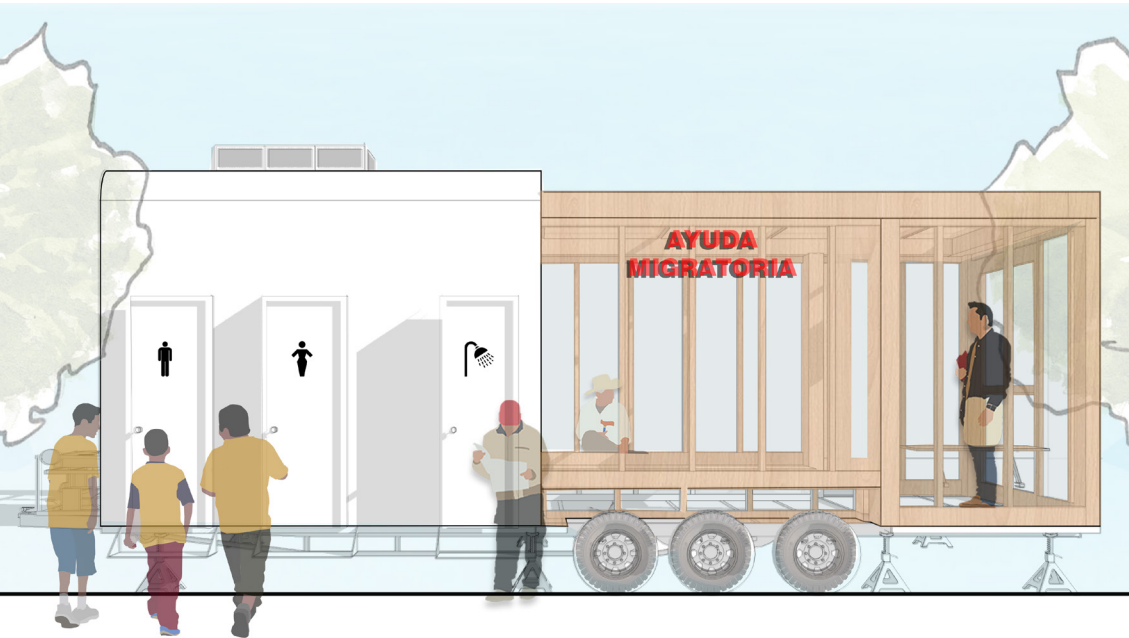
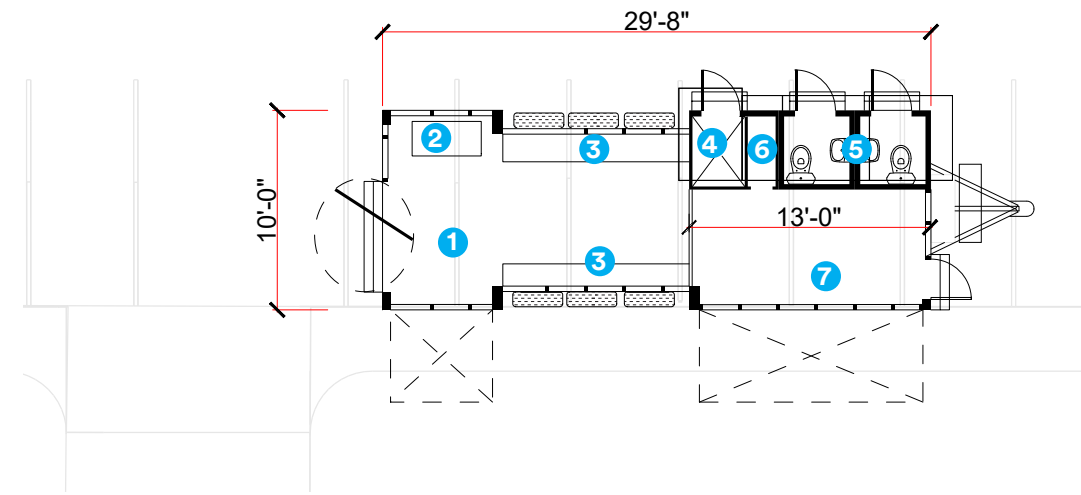
They would be travelling all around the routes to better support the migrants. The modular mobile hubs would also provide different type of supports that the migrants will need. These supports will use the guidelines of the "Infrastructure of Support". Depending on the routes, there will be different type of modules, which would also have different type of supports. This is very important because each location along the migrant journey is distinct from one another. There would be modular hubs where it will

become as a beacon. A beacon to migrants, where it will be easier for them to see. This modular mobile hub would be much more open to the migrants. There would be areas in the trailer where migrants would know where to go because of the materiality used in the trailer. The trailer would be constructed from wood and glass, as it allows natural light and views to the exterior.

In the floor plan on the right, that is a border modular hub, which would be located in the border regions of Mexico. The border modular hub consists of different type of supports that a migrant might need when arriving to the border such as a bathroom, a place to shower, a place where they can pick up the travel kits, a place where they can talk to someone if they need a job or some sort of income. The benefit of the modular hubs being mobile, they won't be at a permanent location. They can travel through the specific routes at any given time, whenever the migrants need the help.

**Border Modular Hub:
(Beacon Location)**

- 1.) Waiting Room
- 2.) Info Desk
- 3.) Benches
- 4.) Shower
- 5.) Bathrooms
- 6.) Mechanical Room
- 7.) Distribution Area



Back Elevation



Section Perspective



Front Elevation



Modular Mobile Hubs Hidden

The other modular hub is more of a camouflage hub. Depending on the location, this hub would most likely be located in areas that are unsafe. Having it hidden, reduces the possibility of something bad happening and would also make the migrants feel much more comfortable. Compared to the other modular hub, this one is less open and much more private.

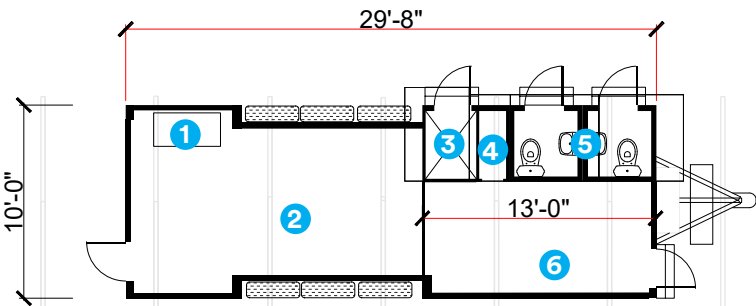
Depending on the route also, there will be different types of support. For example, in the Baja Cali. Route, the modular hubs would have a clinic for migrants that arriving through boats, a distribution area where migrants can come pick up their travelling kits, a shower, and bathrooms. Since it is much more hidden, only the migrants will know where to find them. Some of the ways I began to hide these modular hubs by not making them obvious is by not calling them modular hubs. Instead, it can be a normal trailer or a construction trailer. People wouldn't really know.

Modular Mobile Hubs Map

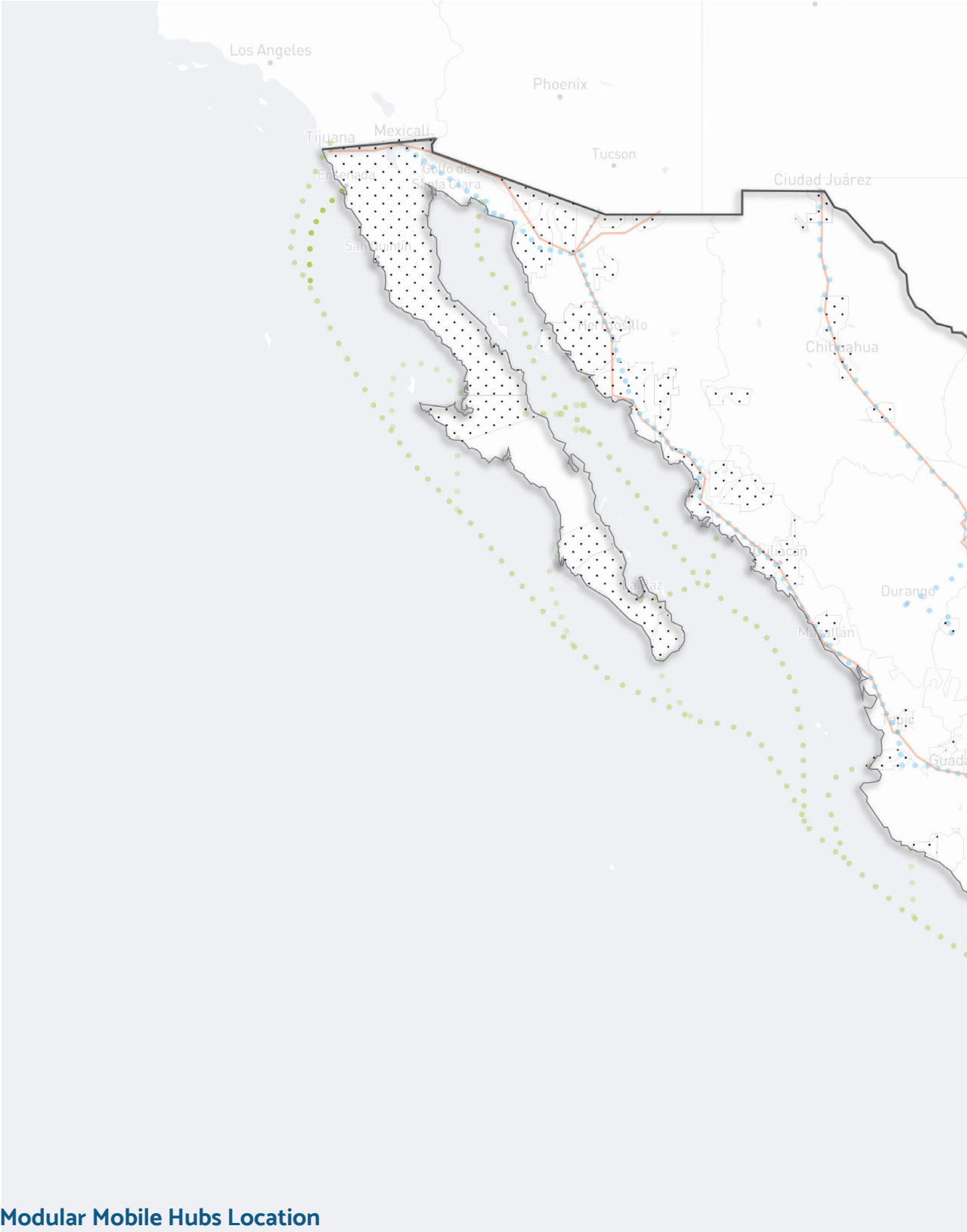
Baja Cali. Modular Hub:

(Hidden Location)

- 1.) Wellness Check
- 6.)Distribution Area
- 2.) Clinic
- 3.) Shower
- 4.) Mechanical Room
- 5.) Bathrooms

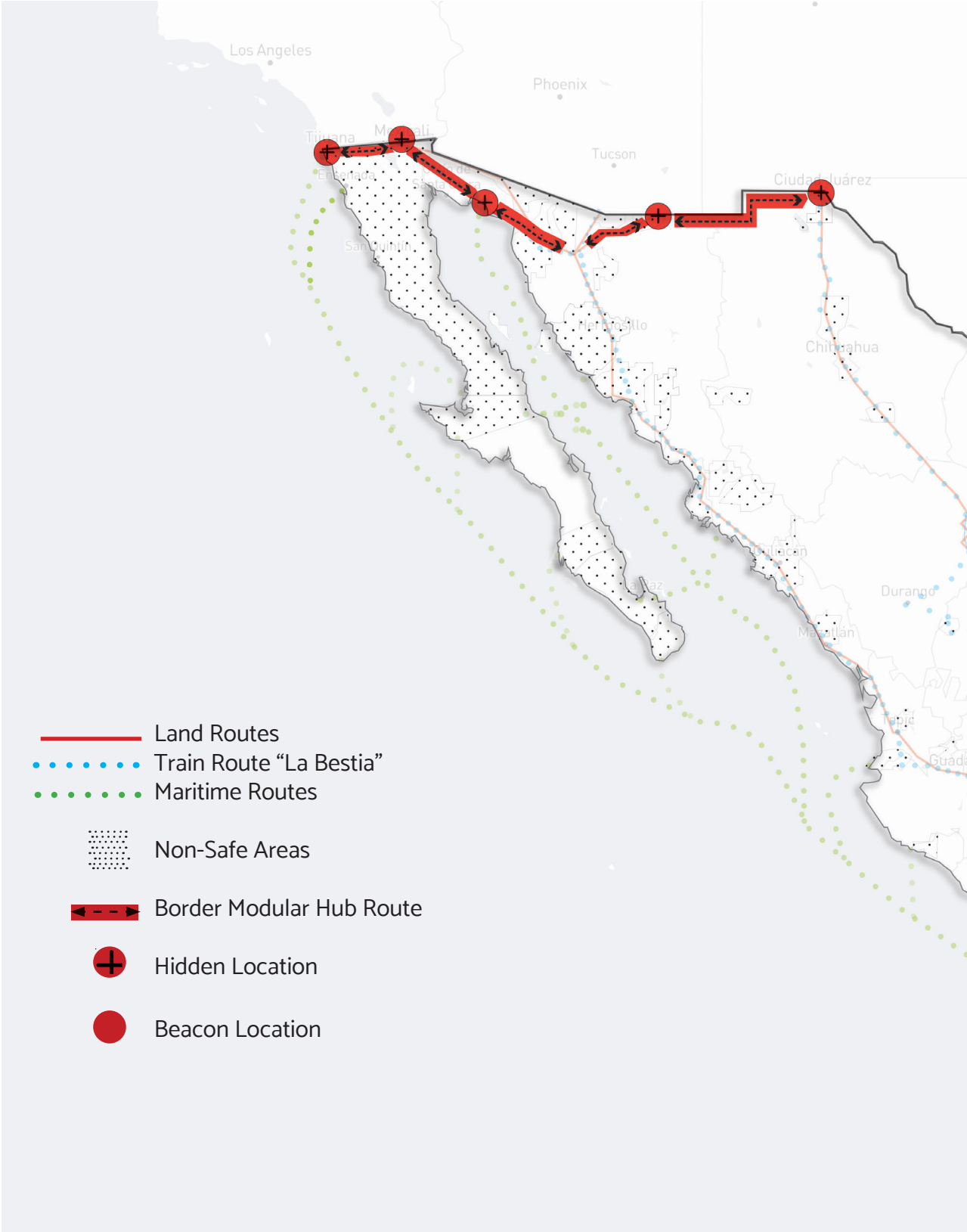


ISO Elevation

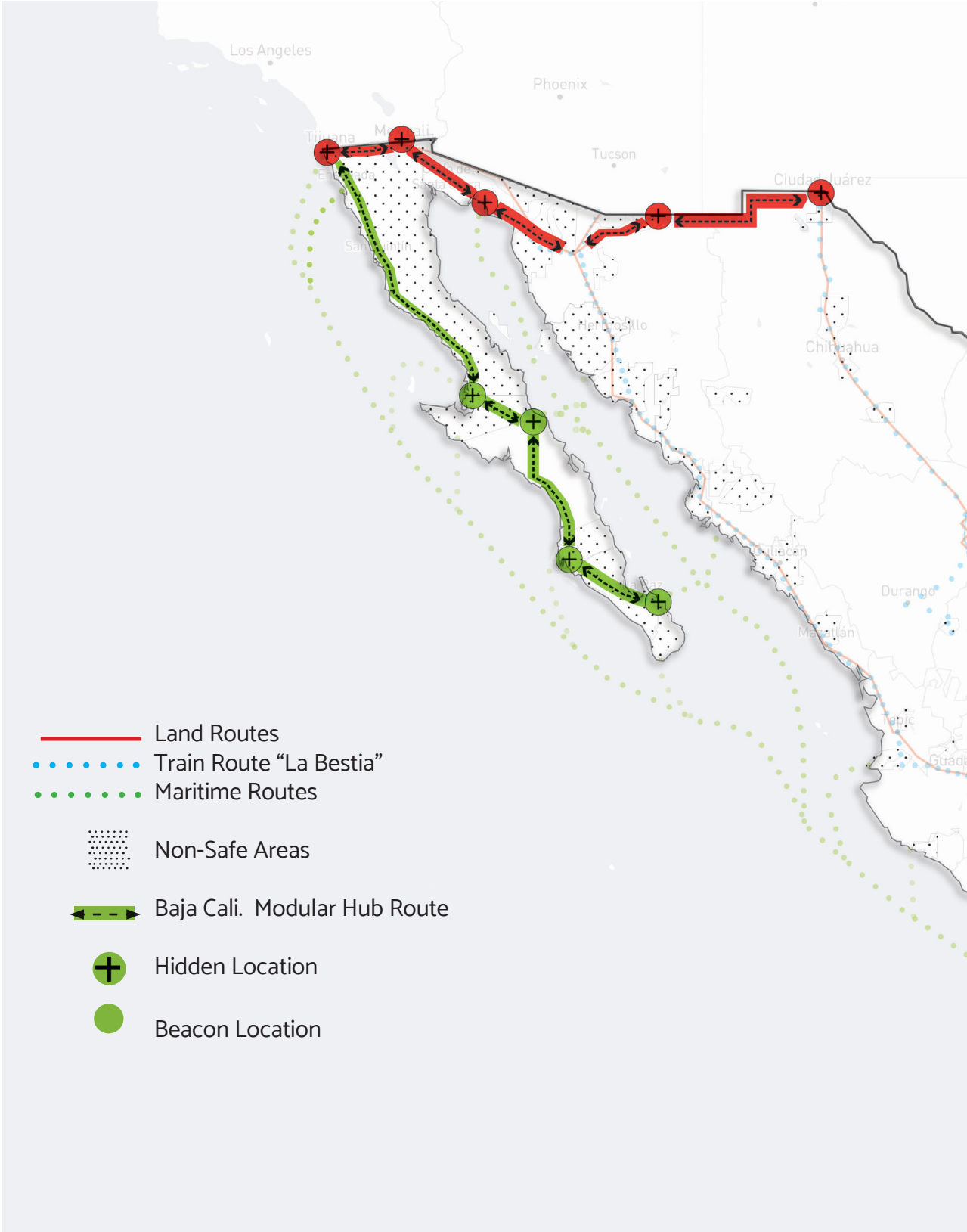


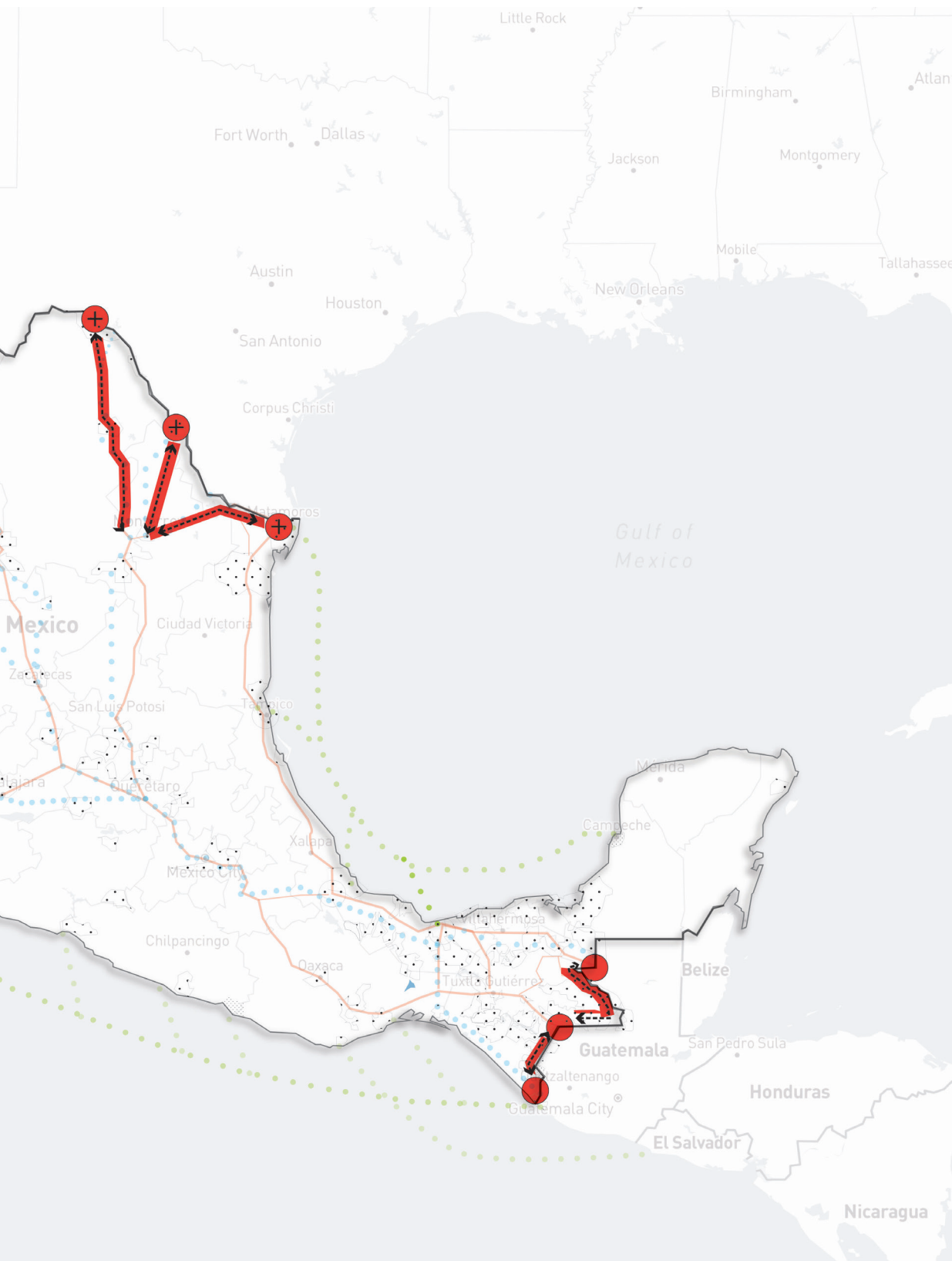
Modular Mobile Hubs Location



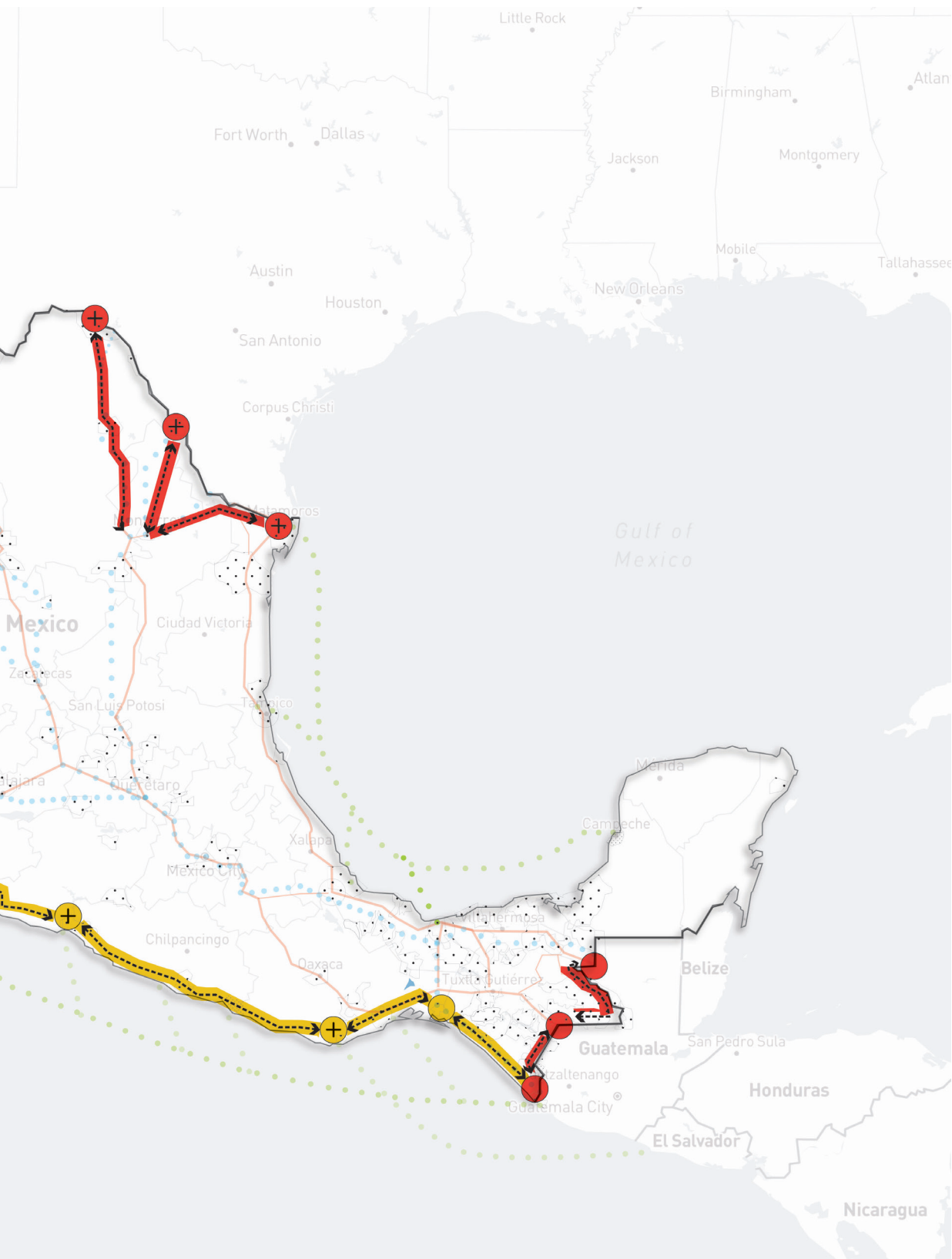




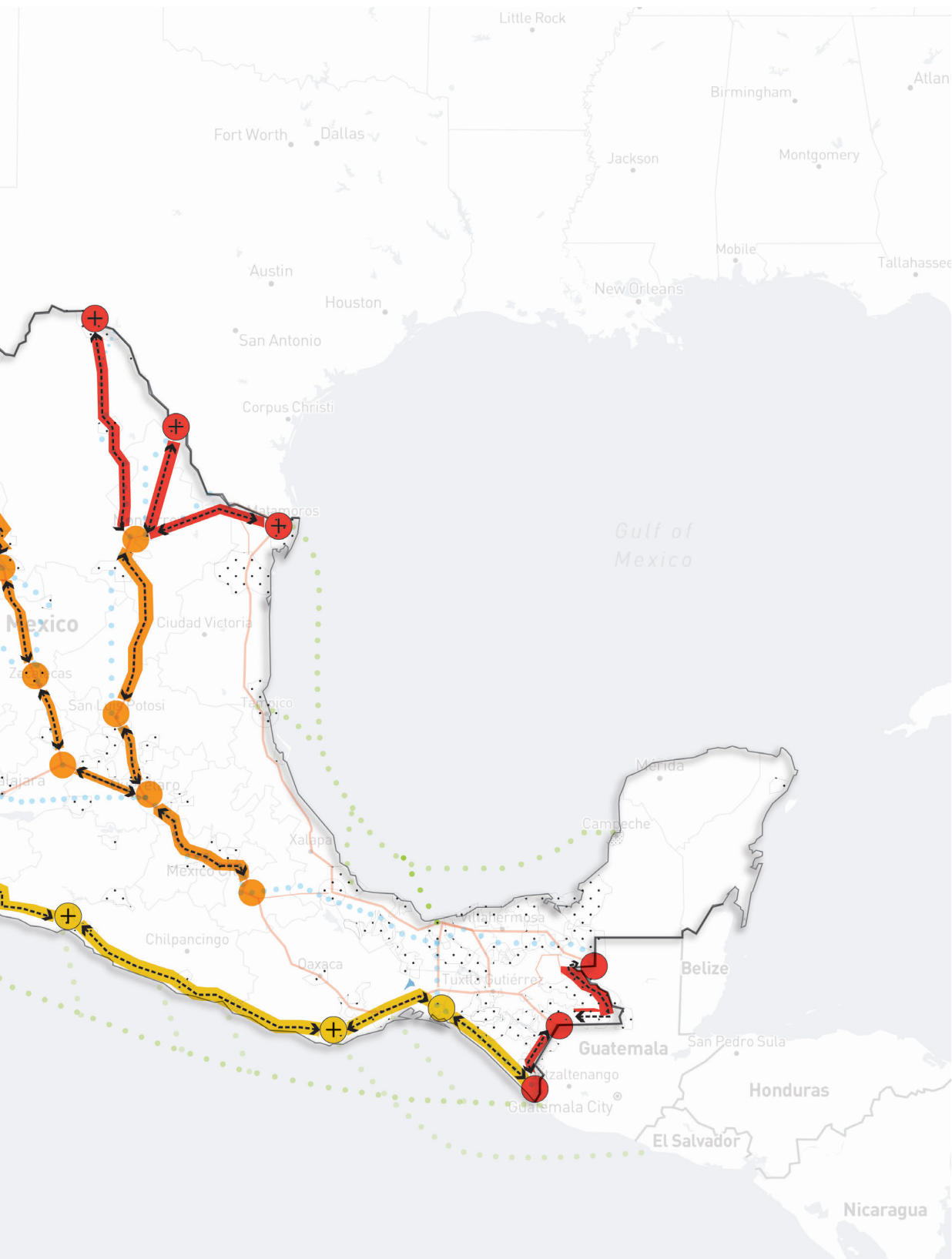
















FUTURE CONVERSATION

C H A P T E R S I X



CHAPTER 6 : FUTURE CONVERSATION

Future Conversations

Throughout my thesis project this academic year, my main goal was to better understand the migrant journey in Mexico. To better understand how the migrant feels when taking on this journey, what they experience throughout the journey, why do they decide to take on this journey and the different methods of transportations they take. Through my investigations through research, eidetic images, sketch problems, and interviews, it has helped me better understand how the migrant journey in Mexico impacts the physical and mental state of an immigrant and ways I, as a designer, can make this journey a much better experience through design.

Initially, when I figured out the problems that the migrants faced in Mexico, my thesis project was so broad that I had a hard time figuring out ways I can help through design. Initially I wanted to start out by designing these big transportation hubs all over major cities where migrants stop by. There were many problems with this idea, first of all the project idea was so big that realistically it cannot be made because of budget and or political issue. I soon started sketching other ideas that has potential to be a reality. Thus, I came up with the idea of designing these Modular mobile hubs. I don't want to end this thesis project

here; I want to make this project a reality since I truly believe it makes the migrants journey experience much better.

To make this thesis project a reality, I must first talk to non-profit organizations, that help migrants in Mexico, to take on this project. The next step would be to actually design these mobile modular hubs. Better improve the functions of the Modular Mobile Hubs. Make the modular mobile hubs much sustainable, in response to the different climatic change that Mexico has. To also figure out ways these trailers can be easily constructed and affordable, so there can be lots more all along the routes. I hope to continue this thesis project in the future.

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