GAMES AS CULTURAL PRACTICE: POSTCOLONIAL IMAGINATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

By creating three board games based on the political frontier between México and the United States, I attempt to promote discourse and interest among 26 participating players about the reality of the border. I also present an alternative perception to that which has been created by sensationalist media, *chismes,* and indifference. Critical theories like *postcolonialism* (e.g., Fanon, 1963), *feminism* (e.g., Saldívar-Hull, 2000), *play theory* (e.g., Pellegrini, 1995), *subaltern studies* (e.g., Sandoval, 2000), and *autobiographical memory* (e.g., Bluck, 2003) play an important role in my exploration of this border, and are relevant to the design of the games employed as the medium for interpersonal interaction. Players answered questionnaires before their game experiences and participated in a group interview after playing the games. Games sessions were also videotaped. A follow up in the form of an e-mail questionnaire was sent to collaborating players. Ultimately, my analysis revealed that board games serve as effective tools to inform, promote discourse, and create interest among people in relation to the social topics presented.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Novels may activate your imagination, and music may conjure up powerful emotions, but games force you to decide, to choose, to prioritize. (Johnson, 2006, p. 41)

Let's assume for a moment that the present trend […] of immigration to the United States (U.S.) will only continue to "Hispanicize" the dominant culture of North America (Wood, 2001). If Wood's conclusions are correct, I believe that it is necessary to view the border as a case scenario for what the entire nation will be facing in the coming decades. The 2000-mile extension of political division between México and the U.S. is an ideal location for social research; it is a laboratory that can help us understand different types of cultural phenomena that cannot be easily studied elsewhere. The cross-national effects of direct contact among different cultures due to consistent migrations is the main factor to consider. This frequently practiced migration, mostly from the southern hemisphere to the northern developed countries, is a key aspect to the México-U.S. border. The unprotected border, the most active frontier for immigration to the U.S., is seen as an open threat to American civilization for two reasons: it has a direct connection to the third world and is used as a port of entry by illegal aliens coming not only from Central and South America, but from all over the world (International Organization for Migration, 2005; 2007). To those who lived there and experienced its versatility, it is simply known as "The Border" or *La Frontera*.

The border between Mexico and the U.S. is the only geographic location where a developed and a third world country directly meet (Kearney & Knopp, 1995); this could

help explain why this particular border has been able to generate much controversy. Because little is known about the struggles of people in sister cities that are divided by a geographic scar, it is easy to believe that these areas, which are isolated from major cities, do not share a common history and a common fate. I think that to the untrained eye, these two cities might look unbalanced in the matters of infrastructure, economic wealth, or political influences, but they share blood bezels that pump life back and forth (Vila, 2003).

Existence in The Border is not due to dollars alone: it requires *pesos* as well. It feeds out of *tacos* and burgers, *limonada* and coke, El Pasoans and *Juarences*. Interrupting the flow of people to one of these systems, the main carriers of life-sustaining oxygen, will result in a dying process that eventually takes both cities down. There are no superior powers when it comes to Juárez and El Paso. There is no male domination or female subjugation. Theirs is, in fact, a delicate symbiotic balance that can be altered very easily by external interests who do not understand *La Frontera*. People in the border are forced to see each other unfavorably, instigated by those who have never experienced the true border life. The people are bound by estranged laws and political orders that come from foreign places like Washington D.C. or México D.F.

What happens in the border should not stay in the border. To talk about the border means to present the cultural diversity, express the bilingual flavor, and spread the *sazón* of the *binational*-bicultural life. At the same time, it is to talk about abuse, racism, intolerance, but with hope for equality, human rights, and opportunity. In my study, I try

to bring attention to the real melting pot and the future of the world: the Border, *mi Frontera.*

Problem Statement

In this project, I exercise my subaltern/postcolonial voice (e.g., Mignolo, 2000; Rodríguez, 2001; Valenzuela-Arce, 2004) to present a vision of the border between México and the United States (U.S.) by using custom-made board games to explore the seldom-understood situations happening within this political division. As a citizen of the Ciudad Juárez-El Paso metropolis, I see the necessity of explaining the cultural phenomena of one large city divided by politics, presenting the procedures of an inconsistent Homeland Security system, and exposing the arbitrarily bureaucratic process that tends to impart legalization in the U.S. In this project, I give context for the history of the México-U.S. border, chronicle the reasons that led me to create such specific games, and consider the reactions of those participants who played them.

I also intend to promote interpersonal relations through play interactivity, which I suggest serves as both a means of understanding life scenarios and a medium to educate. In other words, I visualize the use of board games as a dialectical tool. It is my intention to explore in-depth the mediating capacity of my board games as they help players increase their exposure to border and immigration issues, visualizing the further studies' potential for continuing the use of games in this way.

Background of Research

When I made the first board game *Crossing the Bridge*, in 2001, I never expected to attract much attention. I made the game to purge my own frustrations and tell a joke about the Juárez-El Paso border: in the weeks following September 11, 2001, the average crossing time by foot or by car at any international bridge went up to three hours. To my surprise, others did not see the game so casually. For those who got to play the game, this reaction made sense because it represented their own frustrations and related to topics from their daily experiences. It was then that I understood how there was more in *Crossing the Bridge* than simple amusement. The board game was a representation of cultural theories and discourses about the border and border-related issues that are important to explore in depth (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1999; Del Castillo, 1990; Gómez-Peña, 1993). I knew I had made something interesting, something important, but I never got to work on the deep topics that the game was representing.

In April 2002, only a handful of academics at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) got to see the game before I let it rest for the few months preceding my thesis defense and art show. The game was later presented in different types of classes, and the Inter-American and Border Studies Center requested a copy that is still on display today. It also formed part of a collaborative exhibit in the Mexic-Arte Art Museum in Austin, Texas, also in 2002. After concluding my life as a student, some questions always remained in my mind, which I now apply to this dissertation. Can this game make a difference? Could it be possible for a group of board games to present the situation of the

border and create a discourse between players? Furthermore, can games actually change someone's mind on the subject of border relations?

My questions regarding immigration-related issues continued to grow and expand. I then decided to explore the potential of *Crossing the Bridge* and create two other games that could represent the border issues and introduce them to an uninformed and indifferent audience. Back in 2001, I created something interesting, but I acted naïvely. Today, I explore those same topics with a keen mind, fully aware of the capacity within my art pieces and eager to apply their social potential.

Methodology

For this study, I designed three original board games. The preparation process for these games lasted approximately one year, from April 2007 to March 2008. Each game presents a commonly stereotyped scenario and a different game mechanics that will require various dynamics from the players. All games are bilingual, i.e., composed in both Spanish and English.

These games will be presented in three game sessions: March 18, 2008, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México; April 11, 2008, Lubbock, Texas; April 19, 2008, El Paso, Texas (Figure 1.1). University educators will recruit players from each area. The desired number of players per game session is 10, with the main point being to have enough participants to satisfy the requirements for the games.

The game sessions will be held in university classrooms or environments near the universities with an appropriate setting of tables and chairs for the participants. Three

video cameras, one camera per table, will be used to archive the events that occur during each board game. Before the game sessions, a brief 10 to 15 minutes' lapse will be given to allow the players to complete a questionnaire (see Questionnaire in Appendix C). Subsequently, players will be separated randomly into three different groups, one group per game. The game sessions will last between 45 minutes to one hour. After the game sessions, students will be asked to relax for a few minutes while refreshments are being provided. Finally, the players will be asked to participate in a group interview related to their experiences with the games. An audio recording device will be used to archive the conversations. A set of questions has been prepared to initiate and guide the conversation (refer to Interview in Appendix C).

Figure 1.1. Game sessions: place and date

After the interview session, an invitation to participate in a follow-up interview via e-mail will be presented along with the offer of a $10 gift card as an incentive. If

players agree to a follow-up interview, they must sign a consent letter (see e-mail Letter of Consent, Appendix C) allowing me to contact them by e-mail two weeks after the date of their game session. I will then send the interview participants a questionnaire (see e-mail questionnaire in Appendix C). After a completely answered questionnaire is e-mailed back to me, I will send the gift cards to the participants' professors, who will distribute the cards accordingly.

The information retrieved from the game sessions is based on a mixed methodology that I feel will give me a better understanding of the players' ethnography, process of playing and interacting, and perceptions of the issues of immigration and the border (Creswell & Plano-Clarck, 2007; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The surveys and questionnaire instruments are specifically designed for this research since there have been no similar studies done in the past. The surveys were administered consistently in all three game sessions. In addition to the surveys, data was collected from the video recordings of the game session events, open dialogue during the interview sessions, and written statements that were submitted in essay form via the e-mail questionnaires. The information will be used anonymously, without making any reference to the players' identities, names, or e-mail addresses. Sections of both the interviews and the videotaped game sessions will be transcribed and added to sections of the dissertation to illustrate the perceptions of the players and their behavior (comments, reactions, playing habits, etc.) while playing.

Significance of Research

Immigration, the Mexico-U.S. border, and other related topics have become very serious and delicate issues that threaten diplomacy between México and the U.S. Further more, tension has been increasing among citizens of both countries, which has resulted in manifestations of violence, intolerance, abuse, and corruption; the ongoing conflict is most of all a reflection of unawareness towards the life of "the other" (Bhabha, 2004). That "other" that feels intimidated by a different color of skin, a workforce that is coming from regions unknown to him or her, or the "other" that is risking his or her life to reach the promise of a better future but finding only apathy and rejection. How can we talk about these topics if we ignore the process that is generating the conflicts? How can we initiate a dialogue, face each other without confronting, expose the issues without placing blame, or visualise the "other's point of view? "

By creating three specific board games that reference "The Border", I expect to promote *La Frontera* and bring a new perspective to individuals that have been saturated by sensationalist news and do not think or do not want to think about border issues. I plan to approach audiences on both sides of the border, hoping that my game designs will create interest in the topic and motivate people to read, to hear, to be more educated about the issue, and to appreciate the border beyond the fiction created by arbitrary news and the popular culture of Salma Hayek and Speedy Gonzalez.

To date, this topic has been presented in the form of essays, art, propaganda, or political demonstrations, among others. I expect that my board games will encourage

people to talk about their experiences (or lack of experience) with the topic, receiving information back from other players that might have a different view on the subject. I want the players to question the situation on the border, feel curious about the system that works on both sides of the frontier, and inquire about the people that are directly affected by the politics of two nations that do not want to, or seem to not want to, find a solution to a very serious conflict. And furthermore, I want to create interest in border issues in order to promote social justice and awareness.

I am conscious of other board games that have included the same or similar issues as their central topic. Games like *The Nacho Incident* by Eight Foot Llama or Eric Ceja's *La Migra* present their own views and personal expression about the border and immigration. However, I am not aware of the intentions behind these games; I do not know if they were created with a vision beyond commercialization, or meant to use the border topic solely as a punch line. What I can assure is that, in contrast, my games have been created with an academic purpose: to research peoples' reactions to border topics through interaction with board games. I have not heard about any other research similar to mine, but I hope that my results will serve as a significant stepping-stone for research in the area of interactive media or/and social studies.

Limitations

Because I will be dealing with human subjects, game participants that I call "players," my study tends to present some limitations. One limitation is that I cannot anticipate players' abilities, meaning that I do not know if the players are going to get engaged in a desired

"playing mode" because the players will be exposed to the games for the first time. In the game sessions, there will be assistants explaining the rules and guiding the players through the development of the game, but I cannot anticipate if players are going to enjoy the process of playing while they learn the game. For some people, this process might become frustrating. After the conclusion of each game, players will be asked if they want to play the game once more. I hope that in the second round, the playing mode will become more natural.

I also understand that the topics presented in the games can make some people uncomfortable, limiting their sincerity when expressing ideas or comments as players try to avoid conflict or minimize the chance that people might think less of them (Goffman, 1967). In relation to this, the presentation of my self in the research could be a limitation to the comments that the players might have in mind. The reading that players might make of me could limit their comments if players try to avoid saying things that they believe would potentially upset me.

Another limitation is the amount of players that will agree to participate in the e-mail follow-up interviews. I am hoping that at least one player per game per area will agree to be interviewed. This means that, hopefully, there will be a total of nine follow-up interviews.

Delimitations

It is important to clarify that my intention in this study is to talk about a very specific area of the border between México and the United States: the Juárez-El Paso border. I specify this delimitation because this is the area that I can talk about not just through statistics and literature reviews but also through my own experience. In the future, I might explore other border areas, but I currently feel that there is enough information to present based on my geographical area of interest.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: UNDERSTANDING LA FRONTERA

> We de-Mexicanized ourselves to Mexi-understand ourselves, some without wanting to, others on purpose. And one day, the border became our house, laboratory, and ministry of culture (or counterculture). (Gómez-Peña, 1993, p. 37)

An Area in History

The promise of a new era in diplomacy between México, The United States and Canada seemed to become real with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) treaty in 1994. Sadly, the free trade pact was not what people on the border envisioned. The performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña (1996) has said in an interview that "NAFTA means open doors for commerce but closed doors for immigrant workers" (Bendau & Ritter). The diplomacy fiasco reached its highest point the day following 9/11 when people waiting to cross into the U.S. faced a 4-hour wait at international ports of entry. Since that day, tension has been rising among local residents that need to cross from one city to the other every day. On the other hand, the rearrangement of the border patrol agency created an interruption in drug trafficking, and it was well known that the cargos, intended to supply American consumers, were being consumed at the border, increasing the drug addiction rates and drug wars (El Diario, 2005). In addition, the murder of female workers in the Juárez-El Paso area (though a problem faced elsewhere on the border) has brought a negative impact to the region. These problems have resulted in an economic recession due to lack of investment, the China boom, and by workers' avoidance of the area (Loret, 2005).

Today, the war against homeland terrorism has initiated another type of terrorism: terrorism against illegal workers, the victims of abuse and criticism, by a nation that has become powerful due to slavery and cheap labor (Blanchard, 1996; Cole, 2007; Hays, 1991). By terrorizing and disposing of its subaltern population, the U.S. is directing itself to an economic disaster that seems hard to envision. This might be the reason why reforms to U.S. immigration laws were ignored by Congress in June 2007, and alternative solutions, other than blocking the southwest border, have no visible future. Dunn (1996) has claimed:

> Since the mid-1970's, border control has emerged as a salient topic in U.S. politics, with concern for it often spurred on by sensationalistic portrayals of undocumented immigration, drug trafficking, and occasionally even the threat of terrorism as critical issues for the U.S.-México border region. (p. 1)

It is my belief that many of the solutions proposed to avoid the illegal immigration phenomena, just like Operation Gatekeeper in 1995 (Globalsecurity.org, 2005) or the Secure Border Initiative created along with the Homeland Security Act in 2002 (Homeland Security, 2006), will tend to fail because the minds behind the laws are unfamiliar to border life and how things develop in the region. Immigration laws, for the most part, assume that all people coming from México enter the U.S. with the intention of smuggling in as illegal aliens to find any kind of job. While in reality, most of the people crossing the international ports of entry now live or have lived on the border all their lives and likely have a legal job on one side, whether it be in Juárez or El Paso. They often have families divided by the political line and enjoy their weekends in the neighboring

country. In the Juárez-El Paso region alone, 23,000 to 25,000 pedestrians cross the international line every day in addition to an average of 30,000 vehicles (Senado de la República, 2006). The prejudice of legislatures, that create indifferent immigration laws, affects these individuals in the border community and is not concerned with the side effects that these laws could bring to the area's subsistence.

Since the first settlements of Spaniard conquistadors, the area known today as the U.S.-Mexican border has always been filled with cultural interaction, racial conflicts, governmental isolation, political pressure and social autonomy (Kearney & Knopp, 1995). From the 1851 foundation of Paso del Norte (now Ciudad Juárez) to the last Hispanic foundation in the late 1700s, according to Kearney & Knopp (1995) "the general line of the present border was already traced by a series of continuous towns" (p. 13) that ran from the Pacific to the Gulf of México. This line was the division known as the Indian frontier (Figure 2.1).

It might come as a surprise that the first signs of smuggled merchandise came from the new British colonies in the north due to the decree of Carlos III, the King of Spain in the mid 1700s (Timmons, 1990). With the purchase of the Louisiana territory in 1804, the Anglo-Americans began to have a stronger presence in these isolated territories.

This isolation became the key factor for the loss of the Northern territories, in addition to the innovative commercial agreements with the New Mexican Republic that gained independence from Spain in 1821; this Republic allowed legal —and illegal— trades and initiated a new policy for Anglo immigration. Soon, national resentments bloomed in the form of international conflicts like the Texas War, which concluded with

the rendition of its residents to northern territories in 1836, and the Mexican-U.S. war during which President Santa Anna surrendered more than half of the Mexican territory in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. This treaty established the Rio Grande, or *Río Bravo*, as the main boundary between México and the newly acquired U.S. states (Kearney et al., 1995). From this point on, "twin cities" similar to that of Ciudad Juárez and El Paso began to spread all along the border.

Figure 2.1. The political border between México and the U.S. was already traced back in 1700's, known as the Indian Frontier, according to Kearney & Knopp (1995).

Afraid of new attacks from the Mexican government and to take precautions against Mexican-American revolts, the U.S. government decided to have permanent presence in the Southwest region by establishing a military base in the area. In 1854, Fort Bliss was founded in one of the most prosperous border towns: El Paso (Kearney et al.,

1995). However, the feared Texas Ranger, also known as the "Mexican-American Ku Klux Klan," often appeared in the old days of the Texas Republic to keep Mexicans in line and serve as the border pacifiers and strike breakers (Servin, 1970). With the construction of railroads and train stations in the 1870s, the final touch to the modern frontier was added. Kearney & Knopp (1995) have explained the significance of this history:

> As a result, the border towns have been hurtled ever since down path of overpopulation, underemployment, and increasingly complex problems in American-Mexican relations. Various attempted remedies have been tried; none have yet solved the ills. There is still hope today that the next experiment will offer the solution. (p. 119)

In 1888, the area formally known as Paso del Norte was re-baptized as Ciudad Juárez: this town played a key role when, in May 1911, Francisco I. Madero took it and brought the Mexican revolution to an end. In general, all border towns played a significant part in the revolution, "again demonstrating their traditional role as a leading liberal influence within México" (Kearney et al., 1995, p. 151). Continuing into the 1920s, the years of the prohibition, Mexican border towns developed nightlife in order to cope with the Americans' need for a drink. The smuggling of illegal substances became more obvious during those thirteen years, and the reputation of the border as being decadent cities filled with sin, death, and an "everything-goes" kind of life has been maintained to the present (Schantz, 2004). With the participation of the U.S. in the Second World War, a labor force was requested of their neighbor to the south. To meet

the U.S.'s needs during WWII, the *Bracero* program came to effect from 1942 to 1964, and Mexican workers were issued labor cards, allowing them to work legally for pre-determined periods of time. Martínez (1978) noted that by 1960, four million workers, including men, women, and children, participated as "braceros" (p. 110). Even today, many of the workers from that era are claiming retirement payments that were never issued; according to labor laws, they are also entitled to interest accumulated during those years (El Diario, 2007d).

In 1965, a new industry expansion called the Border Industrialization Program, later known as the *Maquiladora* movement, helped reestablish economic and political bonds between México and the U.S. The program consisted of the concentration of hundreds of assembly plants on the south side of the border from which manufactured parts were sent back to the U.S. This program attracted so much American industry that by 1975, 37 percent of American foreign-assembled goods were being put together in Mexico (Wright, 2003). The devaluation of the *peso* in 1982 became an additional incentive for American industries. This new boom in the border economy attracted a large population from both the northern U.S. and southern México. The census numbers show that just in the Júarez-El Paso region, the population increased to almost one million in 1990 (INEGI, 2007).

However, this industrialization movement also produced a series of side effects that took the borders by surprise. On one hand, there was an increase in environmental pollution, water shortages, and the need for new infrastructure; on the other hand, a change was seen in social and family stratification. The endless demand for labor placed

women in a central position in the economic and social scale, moving them from the household into the *maquila* in waves never before seen. This change produced two apparent reactions: first, there was an absence of both parents due to work circumstances, leaving the next generation without direct supervision; secondly, the economic security of the mother allowed for her independence from the standard family nucleus, increasing the prevalence of single parent households (Dwyer, 1994). Also, the need for a more sophisticated border control, not only for illegal immigration but for the anti-drug efforts, became a challenge for the Immigration and Naturalization Service and their new ally, the U.S. Armed Forces: with the military offering its services to the border patrol, an interesting era of new-militarized border surveillance resulted. New technologies for war have been tested and continue to be used on illegal aliens. Dunn (1996) explained that, "this continuum ranges [from] the relative[ly] innocuous use of military surveillance equipment by police agencies all the way up to the more obvious, large-scale deployment of military forces to maintain security and stability" (p. 148).

In January 2000, the number of unauthorized immigrants into the U.S. was estimated at 7 million, of whom 4.8 million were Mexican (International Organization for Migration, 2005). In addition to these numbers, the U.S. receives around 200,000 legal immigrants from México a year (IOM, 2005). These figures do not account for the increasing numbers of newborns of Mexican descent or the number of other Latin or Hispanic cultures. Every year, there are around 185 million migrants in the world –this translates to 1 of every 35 people in global numbers– and their potential contributions to socioeconomic development and cultural enrichment both at home and abroad are

reshaping political and cultural standards (OIM, 2007). According to Homi Bhabha (2004), because of this global movement, because of the "global migrants, […] a desire to revise the customary components of citizenship — by extending them [the migrants] to include the realm of *symbolic citizenship* [my italics]" (preface). An important factor to take into account relates to the people that remain in the border and combine their cultural baggage with the rest of the population. Just in the area between Ciudad Juárez and El Paso, there are more than 2,187,662 inhabitants, making it the most populated metropolis on the border (Comité Fronterizo de Obreros, 2005). The civilization that settled there has become the real "melting pot" that the rest of the U.S. only claims to be, an area of Español, English, and Spanglish.

Even though many national headlines related to immigration issues seem to occur far from the border region, the national concern still points back to the "theoretical" root of the problem. It is easy to blame the border when 160 chicken-farm illegal labor workers are arrested by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency in Ohio or when Elvira Arellano, an illegal woman that came to the U.S. ten years ago and lived for the last year under sanctuary asylum at a Catholic Church in Chicago, was deported to México without her 8-year-old son who has legal status in the U.S.; now Arellano is seen as an activist for the rights of illegal workers (El Diario, 2007a; 2007b). Every day, similar accounts are noted in the mainstream media, but not for the purpose of finding solutions or promoting agreements. These notes have become a spectacle that feeds into the resentments of the population on both sides of the border and have spread to the rest of the neighboring countries.

The collaboration of México and the U.S. on border issues leaves much to be desired. On one part, the Mexican government is struggling to find an effective program to promote agrarian work and benefits in an effort to help farmers and other types of labor workers by having them desist their migration; at the same time, the government is using different means of propaganda where the message is the abuse of workers and the violation of human rights in the U.S. (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2002). In addition, the U.S. government has engaged in an internal battle between two master plans: a new reform of existing immigration laws or the creation of a great wall between the U.S.-Mexican border (The White House, 2005); concerning this latter plan, TV shows have joked that the wall will be seen from space or will be a project that requires a large labor force likely consisting of cheap Mexican workers.

I conclude that the history of the region is as controversial as the lives that live there right now. One of my questions at this point is: where does the border end today? The political border has been delimited, yes, but what about the cultural border, or the social border? Does it end in the far northern regions of California or New York? Perhaps the driving question of this historical summary really is, "What is the border?"

Theory: The voice of "the other" is the new voice

> When we speak of Others different from us' we are not referring exclusively to other 'exotic' people, but rather in general to all those marked by their differences from a racial, sexual, social, national, or ethnic perspective. (Cristoffanini, 2003, para. 2)

Have you ever played the game GO? In China is known as *weichi.* It is a military game where two players, representing the forces of the *yin* and the *yang*, try to dominate as much area of the game board as possible. It is considered to be the first war game ever made. No one knows when it originated or by whom it was made, but in the consistent evolution of the game throughout the years, a philosophy of proverbs that correlates with plays in the game has been developed. Today, following those proverbs not only in the board game but in real life as well has become the theory of GO, a complementary philosophy in Asia (Cobb, 2002). In reality, many of the games that we play today teach us something about the culture that created them and the reasons behind their creation. In playing, we engage in the absorption of certain theories and, in the development of that game, we learn to practice such theories (Huizinga, 1980).

In 1597, the game of *Goose*, a race game based on luck and not strategy, was used as a cautionary technique to "teach moral lessons to children" (Provenzo & Provenzo, 1981, p. 20). Also, the popular games of *Uncle Sam at War With Spain* or *Roosevelt at San Juan* in the late 1890s, which allowed the player be the protagonists of the then recent war between Spain and the U.S., promoted the ideology of American Imperialism (Hofer, 2003). But we do not need to go back that far since the perfect model of a

capitalist society was established in 1935 with *Monopoly*®, a game that preceded the economic domination of Western culture.

If games can influence players in these ways, if in the past people were able to learn about social morals, supremacy in war, and greed with the use of "simple" games, then I can attempt to use the same mechanics, the same technology, to teach players about hybridism, injustice, equality, and regional lifestyles: in other words, I can use games to teach about borders and *borderism*. If theories can be imbedded within games, then I plan to include pro-border theories that need to be promoted or embraced, and I will address both to those that need them to defend themselves from oppressive forces and those that fail to see ways of life beyond colonial, global, invasive, or American ways.

According to Romero (1993), "very few places have been subjected to as much verbal abuse as the border between the United States and México" (p. 36); Romero is just referring to the area itself, but what about its people, or the people who use the border to cross into the U.S.? They too need representation, a voice that can defend them from verbal or other kinds of abuse. In that border, where a third world country confronts a neocolonialist power, we need to express postcolonial ideas and explore subaltern choices (Sandoval, 2000); the strength of feminism (Saldívar-Hull, 2000) also needs to be present, and the personal experiences of those that have lived on the border need to be considered, as well. These theories, then, will be my foundation as I study and represent the border.

Postcolonialism (In Perspective to the Situation in America… the Continent)

As a child in México, you fast learn to feel proud of the Revolution of 1910. You learn to describe it as the war between the "tyrant" Porfirio Díaz and the "liberating" forces of Francisco I. Madero. But guess what? The revolution in México was the first attempt to change the order of power in the 20th century. It was the first act of justice for thousands of indigenous peasants who lived as slaves in their own country. It was not a war of Mexicans against Mexicans as the elementary school books have promoted it; this was the true war for independence, not like the farce of 1810. Only then, under the Zapatista movement of the South, did the non-Spanish speakers have the opportunity to present themselves as humans, represent themselves and their culture as part of México, and claim "land and liberty" through their military campaign (Bonfil, 2005). Today, an act such as the Mexican Revolution has a name: postcolonialism. That violent mobilization was the first attempt to reach a postcolonial world, one that was silenced by other "so-called" revolutionaries who betrayed the ideals of equality and self-identification. I dare to then say that the ideals of postcolonialism started in México, in 1910; although the application of it did not appear as it did decades later in Cuba, Africa, or the Middle East, it did lay the foundations for a different goal: the postcolonial dream.

I understand *Postcolonialism* to be the intellectual, political, cultural, and social actions that occurred in regions of the world such as India, Asia Minor, and Africa, to name a few, after their colonizers left or were forced to leave. After years of impositions and cultural prosthesis, postcolonial people had to find their identities once more and ask the following questions: what was the importance of native language or customs? What

were our lives like before "they" got here, and how much of what "they" left should we keep? What is the meaning of the color of our skin or our looks? Are we inferior? By answering these questions through the process of re-identifying the self, a new theory was invented that gave autonomy and strength to those not considered Westerners. In the process, these same ideas became the voices for those still in the colonial stage. Postcolonialism became the final spark that lit the way to independence. According to D'Alleva (2005):

> The term postcolonial refers not only to the shaping of new identities, and political and cultural practices in former colonies, but also to a body of theory that supports the study of the distinctive cultural, social, and political dynamics of both colonial and postcolonial societies. (p. 77)

Although these ideas sounds like the perfect application for my studies on the border, I have found a few unconformities that interfere with the usage of this theoretical frame in full. Many of these unconformities have to do with the historical differences that theorists in the discipline have not been able to resolve when it comes to America. The strongest proponents of postcolonialism come from continents like Asia or Africa, where a cultural identity based on historic continuities has been kept despite the colonial occupation. In India, for example, although English has been implemented in the local language, people still practice their own languages. Postcolonial theory has several foundational writers like Edward Said (1979), who in his most popular work describes the cultural stereotyping of the "Orient" and North Africa by the Westernized cultures; also important is Homi K. Bhabha (2004), who describes the representation of binary

oppositions imposed by the Western world and gives examples of postcolonial development in India; of equal merit is the book by Frantz Fanon (1963) considered the bible for postcolonialism since its publication, which describes the cultural imposition of the West and the reconstruction of African identity (Young, 2003). All these works are crucial stepping-stones in the formation of postcolonial theory, but they do not reflect our American realities. As American theorists we need our own representations and our own formulas to contest the colonialism that has merged into our blood, erased our languages, and is still controlling our lives.

As a result, I do not think we can call America a postcolonial region. After understanding the implications of the technologies of power, I am sad to say that I am part of the oppressive culture in my country. I use the language of the oppressor and have learned to use the language of an additionally external neo-colonist oppressor instead of learning a local language like *Raramuri*, which is spoken by the natives in Chihuahua. It is not that I have enforced slavery or abused *las garantías individuales* of another human being, but my presence in the country, along with millions like me, has made an impermeable barrier that reinforces the oppression of the still colonized cultures. I believe that for my purposes, postcolonialism is incomplete. That is why I have decided to complement this theoretical framework with subaltern studies, which will be explained in the following section.

Subaltern Studies (As a required complement for Postcolonialism)

In the 1960s, a new call for independence began in the Southwest and was combined with the new civil rights movements and the support of Mexican-Americans. As Meier and Gutiérrez (2003) observed, "Chicanos in search for identity applied the name *Aztlán*[1] to the U.S. Southwest. The metaphor was in harmony with a stress on cultural nationalism and indigenous roots" (p. 33). Kearney & Knopp (1995) have also explained the following:

> The historical basis for this claim rests on the fact that the Mexican-Americans were principally Mexicans sharing a partial blood inheritance from the Uto-Aztecan Toltec and Aztec tribes. […] Mexican immigrants into the American border region were merely returning to their ancestral homeland. (pp. 239-240)

This cultural claim inspired a renaissance movement among Chicano art and writing: this is the meaning of Subaltern studies. It is through this theoretical frame that intellectual and artistic voices represent what the rest of us are thinking or trying to express. Subaltern studies practitioners use the same words of the oppressor in order to confront him, often through humor, mockery or ridicule, well known weapons of Latin decedents. As D'Alleva (2005) explained, "Subaltern studies seek to recuperate those silenced voices, especially those of peasants, merchants, small land-holders, and others who either do not have power or else have limited kinds of power" (p. 81).

Ever since the Mexican Revolution, when art took the form of murals made by giants of Mexican culture such as David Alfaro Siqueiros, Diego Rivera, and Jose

[1] The legendary ancestral home of the Nahua peoples is believed to exist where the border states of México and the U.S. exist now.

Clemente Orozco, the plastic form of subaltern studies became public. Through these public artworks, "the muralists proposed a more just, less racist society, one with a strong socialist vein and one in which the oppressed played a noble role as a protagonist of a civilizing project" (Valenzuela-Arce, 2004, p. 33). According to Barrera (1990), the Chicano mural and graphic movement of the 1960s and 1970s continued these ideals and reclaimed the unity of *la raza unida* (pp. 38-41). It is from the civil right movements of these decades that several artists and scholars in different types of media have expressed similar concepts. In 1965, the group *Teatro Campesin*o, established by Luis Valdez, used performance art to educate Mexican-American and Chicano farm workers on the goals of and approaches to strikes (Meier & Gutiérrez, 2003). Later on, the group promoted the rich cultural heritage that border residents should be proud of. In the 1980s, writers of literature such as Gloria Anzaldúa (1999) academically recreated memories of love and disappointment for the Southwest border with poetry and personal feelings:

> The U.S.-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country— a border culture. (p. 25)

In the same genre but a decade later, Augusta Dwyer's (1994) journalist recompilations capture the lives of many people affected by the border and describes their inner and external conflicts with immigration. It is also in the 1990s that Guillermo Gómez-Peña, self-called performance-provocateur, "makes use of the multiple languages to explore the politics of culture" (Congdon & Hallmark, 2002, p. 91). In music, Lalo

Guerrero, composer and song writer since the 1920s and creator of *Tacos for Two* and *Pancho Lopez*, a parody on the song Davey Crockett, has expressed his multicultural, multi-linguistic qualities; he has become one of the first artists to shine on both sides of the border by flavoring in his songs with *Spanglish*, a linguistic expression seen as an aberration by both English and *Español* speakers (Meier & Gutiérrez, 2003). In the visual arts, Luis Jiménez made his satiric "pop art" fiberglass sculptures a badge of the Chicano and Mexican-American art renaissance (Congdon & Hallmark, 2002). These and hundreds more artists have given voice to the quiet, to the hybrid, and to the new *mestizage* on the border through the practice of subaltern studies. They serve as an inspiration and provide guidance to those who participate in their attempt to promote the mixed *cultura* and, at the same time, bring justice to the destitute.

Feminism (The Border On-Top)

I am haunted by the legendary myth of the position of powers that has been created and reinforced by tall tales over the decades. These tales are preached and spread by those who only know the border through papers, movies, *chismes*, pop-news, or internal fantasies. Feminism plays an important role in my analysis of the border. We need to understand that the economy and politics of two completely different countries sharing a common border have generated a form of cultural or geographic feminization on the Mexican border, and very few people see the border as the symbiotic environment that it is, where both sides depend strongly on each other to survive.

For example, consider the term *la frontera* by the U.S. counterpart, which is expressed in the lower case and finished with an "a," denoting a feminine characteristic. This characterization of the border presents a discrepancy of powers discomforting to the feminist manifesto in viewing the Mexican side of the border as the self-inflicted victim, as the *desprotegida* in need of the male power that can comfort her or as the angry *bitch* that can never be pleased and needs to be treated from a distance (Klein, 2002). In any case, *la frontera*, the "weaker" Mexican side of the border, has been eroticized for a long time by visitors that use it as a playground where they feel they can basically do anything they please. In this place, *green money* (the American Dollar) fixes any violation. It is *la frontera* that receives the unskilled task for production because it is not capable of doing much (Salzinger, 2003); is *la frontera* that has to adjust to any political caprice from the North. And when something goes wrong, it is always the fault of the children of *la frontera* who are to blame, not the children of The Border.

If the underage children of The Border cross to *la frontera* to drink and kill each other in car accidents, it is the fault of *la frontera* for allowing them to do this. This male versus female relationship in the border is a myth that needs to be overcome. The fable about positions of power that I am mentioning refers to the idea that among both cities, El Paso plays the role of the *Mecca* to be reached, the sustain of the border, the male-on-top, only because it is settled on the side of a first world power; and Juárez, the third world front, as the needy prostitute that takes what is given and abuses the kindness of the master when night falls. If there is a place where feminist theory can be applied, it is in *La Frontera*, now expressed in strong and reaffirming capital letters.

The other reason why feminism needs to be applied to the research on the border relates to the massive female labor force that became a liberation movement occurring in these areas. According to Kearney & Knopp (1995), the participation of women workers in the factories of the *maquiladora* program allowed them to become a part of the economic engine along the border (pp. 239-249). This phenomenon has much to say about the border's readjusted social stratification. In a recent anecdote pointed out by my mother, even the insignificant and maybe trivial act of using jeans in the working area by women was not well seen in other parts of the country. As she illustrates, "Even at that point, girls who are considered decent in Chihuahua[2] should not use jeans in formal activities such as in the work environment" (personal communication, December 2006).

The fight for female equality on the border is twice as hard. Their fight is not only against their own male dominant society, known as *machismo*, but also against an additional misogynist wave: racial difference. As Mexican-American, Chicanas, or Mexican women, they are seen as lesser than the Anglo-American women not only by the Anglo-Americans, but also by the other *macho* ethnic groups (Martínez & McCaughan, 1990). Saldívar-Hull (2000) explains this phenomenon:

> Chicana feminists addressed the sexual inequities inherent in a homophobic and phallocentric nationalist movement whose emphasis on family unity and the concept of *carnalismo* (brotherhood) implicitly omitted women from egalitarian positions of power within the liberation movement. (p. 127)

[2] The capital of the state of which Ciudad Juárez is also a part.

Many of us, the *borderlanders,* have also made the mistake of believing the "border myths" and have praised the superiority of El Paso: the American side, the side of the dollar, the green money. But current events in The Border, like the two-hour car and pedestrian lines at the international ports of entry due to extensive revision by the border patrol officers (now known as the homeland security agents), have initiated a commercial wound that is affecting business in El Paso (El Diario, 2007c). Similar symptoms showed up a few years ago after 9/11 and were also present in 1995 when the economy of México recessed. In addition, similar effects appeared decades ago, around 1982, when the *peso* collapsed. In all of these occasions, the traffic of exchange diminished considerably, resulting in decreased commerce in El Paso. This decay was consequently felt in Juárez, as well.

To those of us who have lived between Ciudad Juárez and El Paso for a long time, it is difficult to avoid mentioning the bloodlines that has spread in both directions. You will hear stories of *la tía* who lives in Juárez in *la Colonia Chaveña* and cooks like an angel; the cousin who found a job *en el otro lado*; the brother that got married with a *gringa* and cannot decide where they are going to live. Of this latter example, many might think, as if it were the most obvious answer in the world: "In El Paso, of course! Better job, better salary, more options." The answer may depend on a person's understanding of quality of life. If you have only experienced one way of life, it is unnecessary to think twice. But for those of us who have lived where cultures and societies collide, it becomes a harder decision. There are many things to consider. The

balance shifts constantly from one side to *el otro:* Where is your language? Where is your soul food? Where are your roots? Where is your heart?

Autobiographical Memory

When reading a book by Irving Goffman (1986), a passage that explains the lack of the individual's biographical life in social studies made me recapitulate the importance of my own multicultural upbringing:

> While the biography has been used by social scientists, especially in the form of a career life history, little attention has been given to the general properties of the concept, […] The first point to note about biographies is that we assume that an individual can really have only one of them, (p. 62)

I found the subject fascinating and decided to explore its possibilities; through this process, I ended up discovering in the cognitive sciences an area of psychology called Autobiographical Memory (AM) that seemed appropriate for my interests. Although it might sound solely as a self-exploration method, I learned that the most important application of this method is social. As Bluck (2003) points out, "Neisse (1988) claims that the social function of AM is the most fundamental function […] Sharing personal memories also makes the conversation seem more truthful, thus more believable and persuasive (Pillemer, 1992) and thereby offers an avenue for teaching and informing others" (p. 114).

According to Fivush & Haden (2003), this reconstruction of memories is attached to emotions experienced in specific moments. What is important in my study is that you

will hear from someone that has lived and experienced the border first hand. I believe that my memories of the border remain so vivid because I enjoyed my life in that area. I have seen it and learned from those who have experienced the border as subalterns. I have never felt threatened by the border patrol, but I have seen their cynicism and aggressiveness in action. The evidence in this research is presented from the point of view of the bordered, not from someone that is going to impose a representation of the border. There will be no "we" who goes "there" to study "them" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992). This is not a story told by "the other" that alienates the explored by critiquing through his or her untrained eyes, using as reference its own cultural baggage. Instead, it will be me talking about where I am from and presenting, through abstracted scenarios, a border that I have experienced in addition to the people that make up the border and live in it. In this sense, my board games are abstractions of places, times, and people taken out of my autobiographical memories.

Play Theory (Not to Confuse with Game Theory)

Play Theory (Pellegrini, 1995) was envisioned by Brian Sutton-Smith, a Doctoral Art Educator from New Zealand who has studied the potential of play in areas such as psychology, education and folklore, and refers to the analysis of games' historical frames, mechanisms, and playability capacities (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971; Sales & Zimmerman, 2004). There is also a *Theory of Play* that relates to the act of play as explored by zoologists (e.g., Beckoff & Allen 1998; Braaf, 2003; Hawes, 1996); similarly, psychologists, behaviorists, and educators have conducted research on play as

it relates to the processes of cognitive and social development in humans and animals (e.g., Bellinson, 2002; Bennett, 1997; Lytle, 2003; Piaget, 1999;). It is also necessary to point out a distinction between *Play Theory* and *Game Theory*, which is used in mathematics and the sciences in order to predict outcomes (Davis, 1970). *Game Theory* has been defined as the study "of the ways in which strategic interactions among rational players produce outcomes with respect to the preferences, or utilities, of those players" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2006, para. 1). There have been many other theories that study other aspects of games, gamming, play and related concepts, but for my research, I find that *Play Theory* has all the elements necessary for an adequate theoretical frame to create and analyze my board games.

The research and study of board games could be seen as a "dead science" for many, especially now that a well-developed, digitally interactive media has found "videogames" to be a very prolific market. There has not been extensive research in the area of board games. Researchers have sporadically appeared and disappeared, leaving a legacy that few have systematically followed (e.g. Sales & Zimmerman, 2004). In the early 1970s, there was a rebirth of interest in games and board games in the U.S. For example, the *New Games Foundation* organized by Stewart Brand in San Francisco, decided to promote and initiate interest in collaborative games. In *The New Games Book* (Fluegelman, 1976), reads:

> Pacifists and war resisters in 1966 were opposed to warfare in any form, including competitive games. To test that opposition, Stewart designed a game that would give lots of opportunity to express aggression. (p. 8)

The *Anthropological Association for the Study of Play (TASP),* created in 1988, became an interdisciplinary place for scholars interested in the study of play. In Europe, the *International Society for Board Game Studies (BGS)*, "an interdisciplinary group dedicated to research on board games and the history and development of board games around the world" (www.boardgamestudies.info, 1990, para. 1) has been organizing yearly colloquiums in three different continents since 1995. In my opinion, BGS is the organization that has made the strongest effort to continue the research and understanding of board games.

Unfortunately, all these attempts have been discouraged by the digital outburst of the early 1980s. The digital medium has become so invasive to the study of play that much of the language once used to express the research of "physical games" has been appropriated into the language of the digital counterpart. For example, the word "gaming," once a slang word that meant the act of someone playing, is now directly associated to people that play digital games. Even in some cases, the term "Game Theory" has been strongly related to the creation and use of digital games. This transition is not universal; it is mostly being done in the U.S. and, with a vengeance, in Japan (Kelly, 2007; Sinclair, 2007). I confess that I also began my research on games through digital avenues, but soon I discovered another area of study that has become marginalized: board games. By studying board games, I fell in love with the potential that this medium offers.

As a researcher in the U.S., I have had a difficult time finding material, especially new material. During the research process, I have found canonic works like *Homo*

Ludens (Huizinga, 1949), *Man, Play, and Games* (Caillois, 1961), *The Oxford History of Board Games* (Parlett, 1999), *Finite and Infinite Games* (Carse, 1986), and the one that I consider the most important of all, *The Study of Games* (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971), to list a few.

Through the process of game exploration, I reached the conclusion that games are not metaphors of culture but are instead an output or result of culture. Wolf-Meyer & Heckman state that "games are much more than games; they are ways of seeing, of socializing, of subjectivizing" (p. 1). Consider chess, for example: in this game, the inclusion of the Queen as a central piece in the game happened to be because, in a certain time period, many of the most important kingdoms and/or empires where being ruled by women (Yalom, 2005). It was necessary to include the Queen in order to maintain cultural accuracy. I also deduce that the cultural outputs in the form of board games can induce interest in the players as long as they assist with the recognition or discovery of identities through which the player can project emotions and fantasies. These identities could be strong enough to initiate interaction. In other words, the form and presentation of the game, the stories behind it, and the appeal of it become starting points that capture the attention of the player but do not guarantee continuous interaction. It is developing the game's activity that determines if the player wishes to remain in the game.

The particular interaction between the game object and the players who engage in the action of play or gaming made me wonder: what is in a game that makes it a "game"? After researching many games, their cultural environments, time periods, and rules, I

reached the following conclusions that I think would be important to add to the scholarship on *Play Theory*:

a. Games represent thorough abstraction. By this I mean that the game itself might be the abstraction of a story, a history, a religion, or an activity. Within the physicality of the game, there are abstracted pieces that stand for something in particular. As I mentioned earlier, in the game of GO the black and white marbles represent the yin and the yang; in Western *Chess*, political and military forces from the middle ages are being represented by six different pieces; in the modern game of *Battleship*®, each player has small plastic naval figurines, an armada abstracted.

b. Games have a mechanics that determines the game's activity. The mechanics takes the form of a question: "what do I need to do in the game in order to play it right?" In serpents and ladders (or chutes and ladders), the mechanic is very simple: all the player needs to do is to throw a die or a pair of dice, letting fate decide where his or her piece will move. The twist in the game is that if the piece lands in a ladder, it should move upwards accordingly, or if the piece lands on a snake, the player will move backwards. Other games can also have a simple mechanics but can become very complicated such as *Othello* or *Chinese Checkers.*

c. Games have a goal. Through the use of the mechanics, the player tries to reach the desired goal in order to win or achieve a conclusion. For example, in *Clue*®, the goal is to find out "who did it" before anyone else in the game; in *Stratego*®, the goal is to reach your opponent's flag before he or she finds yours.

In addition to the three elements that I just described, we need to take into account two factors that, throughout history and across cultures, have been taken as the distinctive factors that divide games: strategy and chance. Roger Caillois (1961) calls these two factors *agôn* and *alea* respectively. *Agôn* is the capacity within the player(s) like speed, strength, memory, skill, ingenuity, etc., and *alea* are the external forces that can influence the performance of the player(s) or the outcome of the game, such as luck, magic, destiny, or fortune, to name a few.

Archeologically, there is evidence that points to race games as the first types of board games that ever existed (Murray, 1951); a crucial mechanism of those games was the inclusion of chance, for example the *Royal Game of Ur* and *Senet* (Falkener, 1961). As games' mechanisms evolved, becoming more strategic in nature, chance in games started to be seen as inappropriate because it could be historically traced back to divination and because such games encouraged gambling (Pennick, 1997; Craig, 2002). For these reasons, games that incorporated some elements of chance were prohibited and banned (Phillips, 2006; Yalom, 2004). As with many other activities, strategy games, like *Chess*, *Go* and some types of *Mancala*, were masculinized and prohibited to women (Craig, 2002; Yalom, 2004) since women were often considered inferior and of an uncontrollable nature similar to fortune or chance (Guerrilla-Girls, 1998; Pennick, 1997).

Caillois (1961) states:

> In contrast to *agôn*, *alea* negates work, patience, experience, and qualifications […] It grants the lucky players infinitely more than he could procure by a lifetime of labor, discipline and fatigue […] It seems an insolent and sovereign insult to merit. (p.17)

Although historically there has been an interest in separating the strategy games, the "real games," from games based on chance, there is little to be said about the success of this process. And even despite the separation that Caillois ascribes, in my experience of game playing, I have seen that chance never ceases to be a part of a game. Never. Not even in those games considered purely strategic like *Chess*, or *Go*. The division, to me, is in reality a gradual addition of chance, recalling that chance is all the external force affecting the gamers or the game's outcome. On one side, we can include the games already mentioned where, in reality, chance has a role in determining the state of the players that day, their mood or their mental freshness, all of which can affect their performance. On the other extreme, we have games that depend entirely on chance like the game of *Goose* or *Snakes and Ladders* where there is no room for strategy at all. It seems to me that although chance has a minor or total participation in the games, strategy is the one that can be incorporated or omitted. As a middle ground, we have games that combine the elements in different gradations; for example, *Backgammon* is a game that requires the ability of the player and depends upon the throw of the dice. Similarly,the games of *Parcheesi*®, *Monopoly*®, *Clue*® or *Risk*® also incorporate both strategy and chance elements. Card games depend entirely on both aspects as well, and players rely on

luck to get an appropriate hand to play with while simultaneously maneuvering their cards for their benefit.

Chance, whatever shape or form it might take, is an essential element of life; it follows us and affects us whether we want it to or not. Returning to the topic of the border and immigration, it is by luck that a person might be able to cross the border illegally without being caught: precaution and luck. It is by luck that someone might get caught when crossing drugs: bad arrangement and luck. For this reason, I have created my games to keep in mind the reasoning that I just presented and have included both factors. You, as the player, have decisions to make, but the action of chance always lingers. All of my games use dice to determine moves, merchandise, and decisions. It is the combination of these two factors that give the games their final likeness to real life, becoming the appropriate outcomes of culture: determination is what pushes the player to generate a strategy, and chance is the flavor that makes the game interesting.

Because games are an outcome of culture and cultures change through time, the abstraction of the game can potentially lose its representative meaning or might be changed by other cultures that embrace it. In relation to the mechanics and goal, similar things could happen: depending on time and culture, these elements might be changed. What is clear to me is that all three combined elements (abstraction, mechanics and goal) create a tangible game experience. A good abstraction creates interest; a good mechanics maintains the interest; a good goal forces the player to end the game and afterwards might make the player want to play again. These three components have been

strategically applied in the games that I designed for this study, which I will explain in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

MY GAMES IN PERSPECTIVE

> Remembering a story is not the same as experimenting with it and imagining alternatives. (Flowers, 2003, p. 31)

The "Why" of My Games

Through the course of postcolonial history, the oppressed has hopefully found a way to envision a new life away from their oppressors. In Sandoval's (2000) book, the ways in which the practitioners of the *Methodology of the Oppressed* make use of any available actions to recognize their places and reclaim their social position are presented in the following ways:

> Whether it is narrative as weapon, riot as speech, looting as revolution. In such activities, no legal boundaries are upheld as sanctified limits of the law, and their aim is chiseling out a new social body— one capable of acting justly on behalf of equality. (p. 78)

Those who practice the *Methodology of the Oppressed* embrace a line of theories that serve as the backbone for their actions. These theories are, metaphorically speaking, the angular corners of *cultural studies,* which D'Alleva (2005) has defined as "an interdisciplinary academic movement that takes culture out of the realm of the elite and examines its interconnections throughout society" (p. 76). Cultural studies appears in the fields of *semiotics, subaltern studies, postcolonialism, feminism, ethnic studies and queer theory.* But according to Young (2003), "some of this theoretical work has gained a

reputation for obscurity and for involving complex ideas that ordinary people are not able to understand" (p. 8). In their research, Avedon & Sutton-Smith (1971) have found that due to their capacity to promote interaction while presenting directed information to the players or participants, games have the capacity to teach complex material that normally might not be retained. Games' potential for educational success is thanks to the inclusion of interpersonal experience in the learning process. For these reasons, I propose promoting interaction through socially-based board games and presenting border topics in a way that keeps people interested and involved. I strongly believe that board games have the potential to effectively present the same academic issues as written forms such as articles, essays, or books. It is not my intention to replace such materials. Using this media, it is my purpose to introduce a new audience to the topics of the border and immigration, with any luck, encourage them to continue nurturing the knowledge they gained through conventional forms, such as books.

After learning the specifics of these theories, I understood that my life experiences had to also be explored, exposed, and re-evaluated for this study. By combining information recovered from the *autobiographical memory* exploration and knowledge gained from the *methodology of the oppressed* and its related theories, I reached the following conclusions. On one hand, my social status, my language, and my skin color (which is light by the standards of my country) are signs of the oppressive culture in México. On the other hand, the same characteristics are signs of the oppressed culture in the U.S. My biography has been divided into two sections that play a different

role depending on which part of the border I stand on, in other words, I am in a position of being a cross-cultural "Jekyll and Hyde."

Seen from the Mexican perspective, I am a person who has gone beyond the norm to have a better life in a foreign country. Seen from another perspective, I am someone who is taking the opportunities from someone else who, by birthright, deserves a better life in his or her own country (e.g., The Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, 2004). The question is this: if I am learning to use the *methodology of the oppressed*, am I going to use it only when I am confronting my oppressor or I should also extend this knowledge to my own country's oppressed? In my heart, I know the answer, although that second part of the question could be an issue for further explorations.

The direct application of *autobiographical memory* in relation to *methodology of the oppressed* is a crucial component for the creation of my board games. Through the construction of these games, I am applying my artistic capacities not solely to please an audience or to satisfy a client. Instead, I am making the games present pieces of realities just as I have experienced them in a life nearly known and mostly misunderstood: the border life, my hybrid life. The games are my way of talking; they are my narrative. Though they offer different narrative from a painting, a song, a book, or a speech, through these board games, I feel I can disseminate what would be hard to express in words or in writing. According to Betty S. Flowers (2003), "remembering a story is not the same as experimenting with it and imagining alternatives" (p. 31). In the process of trying to find a way of telling my stories, I asked myself the same question that she proposed in her writings: how can the scenario be made more memorable? My solution

was the creation of board games that I expect will create an immediate and multilayered discussion. At the same time, I intend to benefit from the interaction between my players. I want to hear them talk about the border and immigration; I want to know how much they think they know about these issues; I want them to discover things behind their political positions. It is my expectation that, through the dynamic play, players will reveal the truths hidden in their hearts exposed by their competitive souls, the gaming soul, and I hope that game play will liberate the truth that I will be taking and transforming it into the core knowledge for this study.

In summary, the created board games contain the following components: (1) exemplification of life in the border and illustration of immigration issues related to the use of the border as a passageway into the U.S., (2) autobiographical material extracted from my experiences, and (3) the application of theories focused on the *Methodology of the Oppressed* as practical means to understand equality. In other words, I locate players in the border environment and create realistic outcomes for the life in the border and border-related issues; I expect that information will be transmitted through the players' active participation. The games are based on three different and commonly-stereotyped scenarios: smuggling merchandise, illegal immigration, and the process for legal status in the U.S. Each game has a different game mechanics that allows the players a very dynamic variation on role-play. All games are bilingual, in Spanish and English (which presented a challenge for the creation of the rule's booklets), but I believe it better reflects the hybrid culture on the border.

Illustrating the Process of Crossing an International Port of Entry

It could be any morning in the early months of 2002. In order to get to work on time, I had to be at the bridge around 4:30 in the morning. It was still dark, but by then there was already a mile of red lights blinking inconsistently, moving slowly in the direction to El Paso, Texas. It was a mile-long line of aligned cars exhaling fumes, making noise, and waiting for their turn to cross. I join in because I have no choice. In this waiting process we are not alone; along the line there is this army of vendors who woke up as early as all of us to satisfy the morning needs of the drivers: orange juice, water, sodas, coffee with or without cream, *churros*, donuts, tacos, *tortas*, burritos in a baste variety.[3] Others sell newspapers, magazines, disposable razor blades, or unofficial copies of the latest music artist or blockbuster movies. If you need to exchange currency, you can call the *dollarboy®,* or if your car's insurance policy has expired, there will be someone to provide you a new one. Then there are the solicitors, the ones who are missing one limb and who make sure you can take a good look at their wounds; the ones that were deported and ask for money to buy a ticket back to their home town (but who will be there month after month telling the same story); older women carrying a child; older men in wheelchairs or on crutches; bad musicians; kids selling bubblegum or waiving a Styrofoam cup at the car's widows; the woman that appears to be pregnant but that I have seen in that stage for more than 15 months; the windshield cleaners that do not seem to approach your car but rather attack it before another one gets there first; and those who, not knowing how to win your sympathy, decide to throw themselves in the asphalt and

[3] Since Ciudad Juárez is the burrito capital of the world, it becomes the most common item for any meal at any time.

extend their arm as you pass along, contrasted with those who step in front of your car to let other vehicles cut in line for a few coins. Those are the worst.

It is almost 6:30 a.m., and the radio stations' disc jockeys are beginning to announce the waiting time for all three international ports of entry (Santa Fé, Puente Libre de Córdoba-Américas, and Zaragoza), a service that started in the 1990s with *FM Globo®,* but now all stations offer it every 15 or 30 minutes. I do not pay attention to it because I am halfway through, right at the peak of the international bridge where I can see that the border patrol K-9 units are making their rounds. They walk around the vehicles. The border patrol officers sometimes ask someone to turn off the car while the dog makes a more thorough search. On a few occasions, I have seen people get out of their cars and run back to México when they see that the dogs are approaching. It could be that they have drugs, or maybe they are hiding someone in secret compartments of their vehicle. Only once have I seen the officers take out a driver and escort him to the main building.

On the sidewalk to the far left, there is a long line of people: pedestrians who also need to cross to the U.S., and just like me, they move forward in very small intervals. You can identify the ones who work in a field or in constructions from those who are going to some office. Then there are the schoolboys and girls, some with blue or green uniforms, and others in regular clothing but with a backpack. Their waiting time might be shorter than mine, but it would not be less than two hours.

When going down the bridge, it is common for people to turn off their vehicles and use gravity to continue their movement down the line. It is also an opportunity to

stretch your legs, especially if you drive a standard car, like me. Now or then there will be a bomb alarm, which can be good if you are already on the U.S. side of the bridge, because the cars will be forced to move forward in an attempt to clear the bridge as fast as possible. Or it can be terrible if you are still on the Mexican side because the bridge will be blocked, avoiding more vehicles. Renewing the flow of traffic can take between 30 minutes to two hours, depending on the severity of the threat. But today there were none, so all continues as usual.

There are other stressful moments that can delay the crossing. A car overheating, for example, is not that common in the mornings but occurs constantly in the afternoons. There are also those drivers that do not move forward on time, opening an opportunity for other drivers to cut in. This might happen to all of us now or then, but sometimes you have the bad luck to be behind the one person who cannot avoid it. There have been fistfights over this. The stress on the bridge is imminent —any reason is good enough to honk your claxon, curse or scream out the window, or get into a fight.

When you finally reach the point of revision, when you get to show your passport to the border patrol officer (who pretends not to recognize you although you have known each other for years) and he or she asks what do you bring from México and what is your business in the U.S. At that precise moment, when that omnipotent authority moves his hand and says “Go ahead,” or “Pásale” if they speak Spanish, then all the wrath, stress, and anger stays behind on that bridge. But it will be waiting for you, faithfully, the next morning. When I finally get to move on, it is 7:23 a.m., just enough time to get to a gas station, hurry up to the bathroom, and go on to work.

NOTE: In the following sections, I will talk about the board games and explain some of the subjects approached and the abstractions represented in them without getting too much into the specifics on how to play them. For the official rules, please go to Appendix A. If you want to build the games and use them as a guide while reading the following sections, please go to Appendix B, where you will find cutout versions of the games and instructions on how to build them.

Game 1: Crossing the Bridge (Version 6.4)

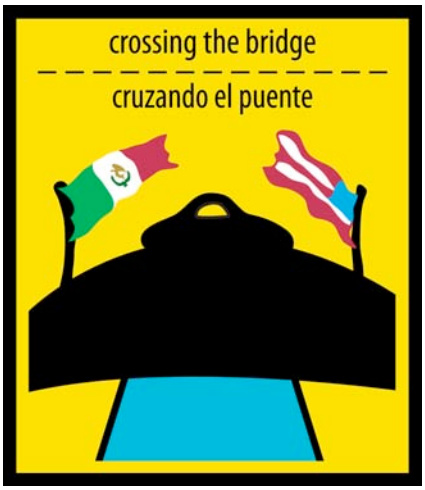

Figure 3.1. Crossing the Bridge banner

The first game entitled *Crossing the Bridge* is a modified, redesigned version of a game that I created back in 2001, after the 9/11 attack to the World Trade Center. In that first version, I wanted to denounce the excessive time that it was taking to cross the international ports of entry from México into the U.S. (Figure 3.2). In the game, just like in life, the player took forever to cross the international line and this resulted in

continuous frustration. The new version of *Crossing the Bridge* illustrates the symbiotic relationship of the El Paso-Juarez border by resembling the cliché of the illegal exchange of goods between both cities (Figure 3.3).

Minor trafficking is a common practice on the border. By this I mean an activity that many people act upon, and no one considers it a crime but rather an act of necessity. For example, people bring medicine from Ciudad Juárez to El Paso without a prescription, or smuggle ham, oranges, or some other type of banned goodies. Buying groceries in Juárez has become an almost religious practice by many El Pasoans. Some grocery providers have found ways to establish a chain of stores near the ports of entry to accommodate all of these buyers coming from the north, captivating customers before they decide to wander deeper into Juárez. Many of these shoppers might be shocked to find out that at least a quarter of their items are not allowed in the U.S., and with resignation, they will have to throw their merchandise into the trash of the customs before entering back to their country.

Figure 3.2. Details of the first version of Crossing the Bridge (2001 – 2002)

Figure 3.3. Details of latest version of Crossing the Bridge (2008)

Similar things happen to people who live in Juárez and buy items in El Paso; however, in this case, there is a limit to the amount of merchandise that can be brought back from the U.S., especially if it is in the form of electronics, clothing, or furniture, just to name a few. Most of the excitement of taking merchandise to the U.S. or bringing it to México is trying to fool the system, or corrupt it. In many cases, once a person lies by declaring that they do not have any merchandise and they get caught with the hidden possessions, the penalty is a fine proportional to the gravity of the misdemeanor.

There are other types of trafficking (Loret de Mola, 2005): these are the ones making headlines in the news and have marked the border as a place of unprecedented violence. First is the human trafficking, which is the importation of illegal immigrants that has taken thousands of lives by accident, negligence, and abuse. The other is drug trafficking. Since the U.S. is a good market for illicit substances, the border becomes the drugs' warehouse before being introduced to the U.S. But the drug industry goes sideways: from the south to the north comes the final product, and from the north to the south go the chemicals to make the drugs. A third trafficking market is guns and other

type of weapons that are made in the U.S. and then distributed to México and many other Southern countries.

Figure 3.4. Details of props

Crossing the Bridge is built for 2 to 4 players. Each player's initial props (cars, house, money, and passport) are represented by a specific color (red, blue, purple and yellow) (Figure 3.4). A player begins the game with three of these cars, which he or she will use to try to smuggle illegal immigrants or illegal merchandise into El Paso in the amount of one or two cargos per car. The merchandise could vary from banned food, alcohol, or drugs (marihuana and cocaine). By succeeding in these acts of illegal trafficking, the player will receive money corresponding to the value of each cargo; for example, a player receives $200 for successfully crossing cocaine or $35 for raw meat. The earnings can then be used to buy furniture and appliances in an El Paso shopping mall. These goods are smuggled back into Juárez to improve the life style of the player's house. However, if players get caught in the Mexican customs, they will lose their merchandise (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5. Sample: The yellow car will lose its merchandise because it landed on the Mexican Customs' space.

This game also illustrates the social environment that has evolved as a consequence of the long waiting lines in the international ports of entry. People like the vendors (e.g., burrito, candy, Popsicle, newspaper, dollar exchange, Mexican curios, etc.), windshield cleaners, and solicitors have made a business out of the border-crosser drivers. This might sound as a burden, but in reality, drivers also expect certain services to be provided while they wait to cross to the U.S. The game also includes some of the idiosyncrasies that any person goes through, like a flat tire, forgetting a passport, car over-heating, bomb-alarms, and fender-benders, among others (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6. By landing on a yellow mark, like the example of the red car (left image), the player must follow the instructions correlating with the "situations table" (right). The yellow figure determines which situation should be followed.

Figure 3.7. Sample: The player with the red house has been supplying it with most of the required items to win the game

The game requires the players to compete against each other while trying to outwit the game's mechanics. At the same time, it emphasizes a consumerist approach such as in games like *The Game of Life*® or *Monopoly*®. It is my opinion that the consumerist culture is the main trigger that makes people participate in such illegal activities. By the preconceived notion that in the U.S. there is a glamorous life that

everyone should have access to, people will do anything to achieve it. If the means are not available in their own country and cannot be reached by legal means, then the next best way is to break the law, which players in the game are doing while enjoying the exciting thrill of smuggling.

Figure 3.8. The red table determines the fate of the smugglers coming from México. From numbers one to six, players can be asked to present their passport or their car could be searched by a K-9 unit that will find any kind of drugs.

In order to win, players need to get six specific objects for their homes: a computer, a stereo, a classy TV, a powerful washing machine, a huge refrigerator, and a comfortable living room set (Figure 3.7). But they need to be careful because in the game, just like in real life, it is very easy to get caught with illegal merchandise. If players get caught crossing an illegal alien into the U.S., they will loose their passports, and if the immigration officers spot players with drugs, they will lose their cars (Figure 3.8). As long as the player has money, he or she can buy more vehicles, up to 8 cars if

fortune allows it. If all vehicles are lost, the player will lose the game automatically and the other player will add up their belongings to see who accumulated the most. The richest player wins the game.

Game 2: Observance

Figure 3.9. Observance banner

I came up with the idea of creating the game of *Observance* in response to the July 28, 2007 rejection of the U.S. Senate to revise the Immigration Reform Bill. I called the game observance because that is what people do when they are faced with the process of illegal migration: The immigrants observe the territory to see if they are being watched or followed; The border patrol observes the area in search of these immigrants and tries to stop them. The game then presents the drama of illegal immigration in some isolated area of the border between México and the U.S. *Observance* takes after the mechanics of the game *Battleship*® in two aspects: First, this is a 2 player game, where each player takes the role of one particular regime: the Border Patrol agents (BP) or the Illegal Aliens (IA)

(Figures 3.10 and 3.11). Secondly, *Observance* uses 2 sets of coordinates, one for each player; the set runs from 1 to 9 horizontally and from *A* to *G* vertically (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.10. Characters U.S. side

Figure 3.11. Characters Mexican side

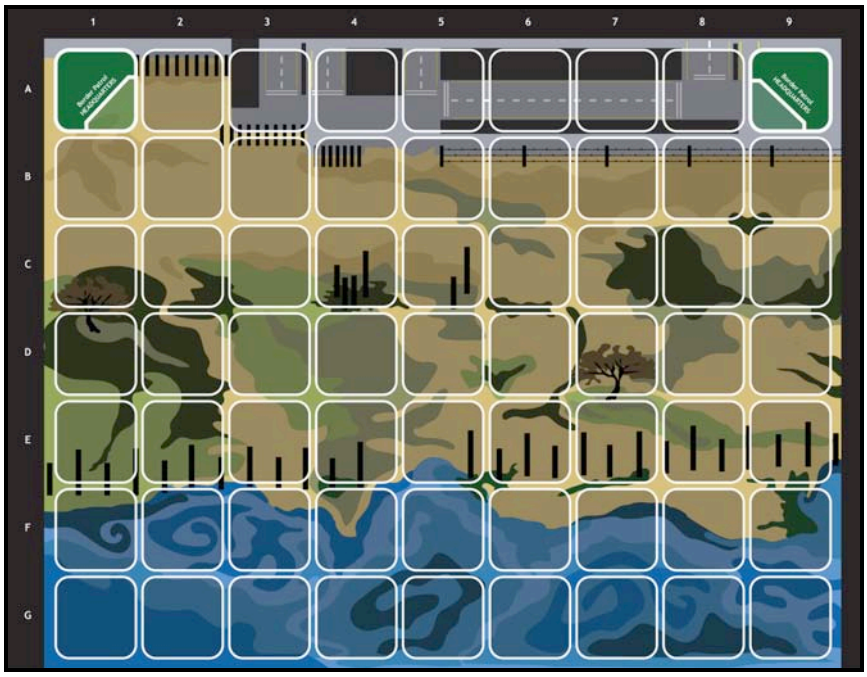

Figure 3.12. Set of coordinates for both players

Each player has six game pieces, or characters (see figures 3.10. and 3.11). All characters have names and background stories that are included in the rules. The reason for this is to give a humanistic perspective to the abstracted product. A game piece is not just an object since it represents a person who has a reason for being there and acting in a particular way. For example, character one for the BP set is Mark (Figure 3.13), a 30-year-old African American man who wanted to enroll in the U.S. Air Force but was not accepted. He suspects the reasons for this failure are racist and, instead of wasting more time, he decides to serve his country in the Border Patrol Agency since they promised him pilot training after serving for a few years. In contrast, in the IA set includes Paco, a 12-year-old kid from Veracruz who expects to find his parents in Nevada (Figure 3.14). I hesitated to keep this character in the game because, very recently, a movie came out

called *La Misma Luna* (2007)[4] that is based on a similar topic. In the end, I figured that the topic is very generic and there is nothing wrong with telling similar stories.

Figure 3.13. Mark
(Border Patrol Agent)

Figure 3.14. Paco
(Immigrant looking for parents)

Right before finishing the design of the game, I decided to add two particular characters on the U.S. side: Mr. and Ms. Minuteman (Figure 3.15). In the times of the American Revolution, the Minuteman were a special militia force always prepared for any type of attack, and "their constant state of readiness at 'a minute's notice' earned them the title, Minuteman" (The Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, 2004, para. 1). Today, the name has been taken by civilians who act like a militia in an effort to find a solution to the "uncontrollable" immigration crisis. In the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps website, their mission statement reads:

[4] Title translated in the U.S. as *Under the Same Moon.*

> It is the mission of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps to see the borders and coastal boundaries of the United States secured against the unlawful and unauthorized entry of all individuals, contraband, and foreign military. We will employ all means of civil protest, demonstration, and political lobbying to accomplish this goal. (aboutus.php)

Figure 3.15. Minuteman couple

Under the words *defense* and *freedom,* many acts of racism and violence against immigrants by the minuteman have taken place throughout the border (El Diario, 2008). There have been direct associations between some chapters of the minuteman with extremist groups like the neo-Nazis and the KKK (El Diario, 2007). In 2005, Chris Simcox, the leader of the minuteman stated, and I paraphrase, that their only concern was to bring back the attention of the nation to a government that has failed in defending the border (El Diario, 2006). But since then, they have served as immigrant capturers and terrorists. Personally, I have seen pictures of minuteman groups preparing for their

routine searches as if they where preparing for a picnic: the whole family joins in. They carry guns and other types of weapons as if they were out for hunting.

The function of Mr. and Ms. Minuteman in *Observance* is not yet well determined. Originally, I added them to make a distinction between capturing immigrants and killing immigrants. But saying that the minuteman kill immigrants, although it has not been proven or disproven, it is a very strong statement based on rumors and second-hand tales. To this point, I have not read anything that I can use to indict members of the minuteman with murder in relation to their *anti-immigration* campaigns. Still, I believe that their presence in the evolution of the border is something worth telling, and it is important to make a distinction between the capture of immigrants by official forces and those made by civilian ones.

For any audience that knows the game of *Battleship*®, the first impression they get is that *Observance* is a rip-off or just a theme variation, but *Observance* does differ in many other ways: to begin, each player has a different goal to reach. The player acting as the Border Patrol (BP) must capture all Illegal Aliens (IA). On the other hand, the IA player has to search and find a green card that the BP player has hidden between coordinates A-2 and A-8 in the stage of preparation for the game (Figure 3.16). The BP player also hides 2 churches in any coordinate of line *D* that if found by the IA player, can be used as sanctuary for political asylum and the BP player cannot harm or capture those aliens while they remain in the church (Figure 3.17). When the IA player finally finds the green card coordinate, he or she needs to move all of the remaining aliens to it as quickly as possible before the BP catches them.

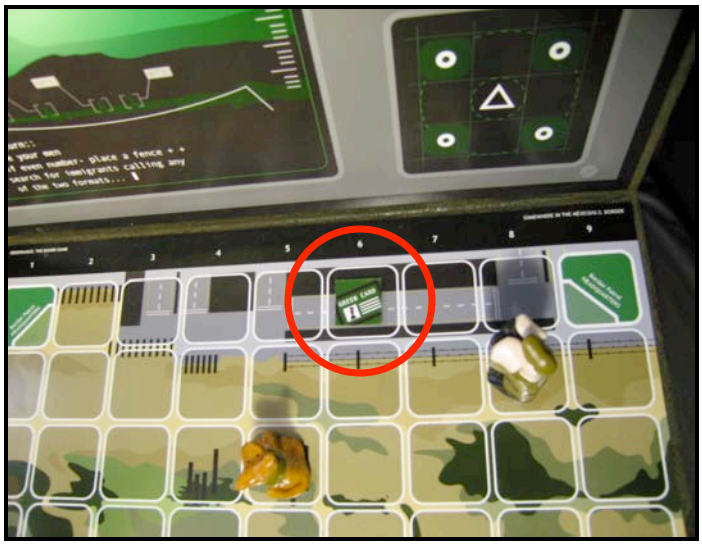

Figure 3.16. Hidden green card in line *A* on the U.S. side

Figure 3.17. Hidden churches in line *D* on the U.S. side

The reason I included churches in the game is because on August 19, 2007, a woman by the name of Elvira Arellano was deported after living under sanctuary for 12 months in a church in Chicago (El Diario, 2007b). This attracted my attention for two reasons: (1) there are still places in the U.S. that protect the cause of any immigrant, and (2) that the U.S. government respected the church's status as political asylum for so long.

I had to add this in some way, and I think the abstraction of the church element in the game perfectly reflects this anecdote.

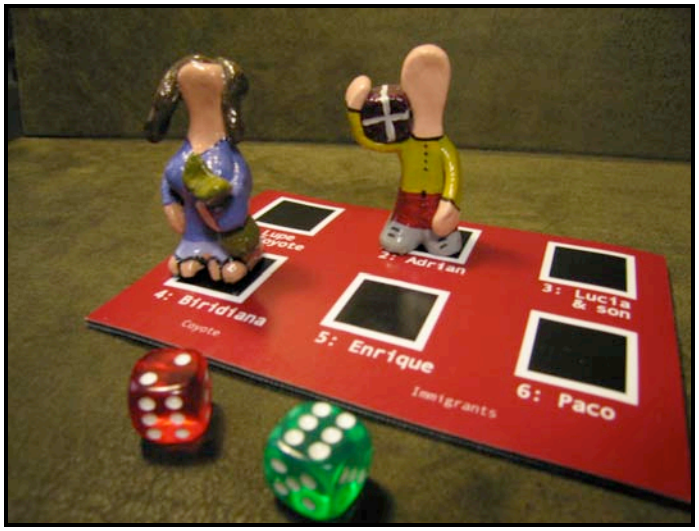

Figure 3.18. Sample: Character No.2 (Adrian) can move six spaces according to the dice

Figure 3.19. Sample: Adrian enters the Mexican coordinates' set through any space from line *G* and can move six spaces in any direction

In contrast to *Battleship*®, where the naval ships need to be set before the game begins, the characters in *Observance* do not begin in the coordinate set; instead, they step into it using a pair of dice. The dice also help specify the amount of steps that each character can take in each turn (Figure 3.18). The IA player enters his or her characters through any coordinate of line *G* (Figure 3.19), which is still a section of the Rio Grand or Río Bravo for Mexicans, and the goal is to move the characters up to line *D* to look for a church or directly to line *A* to look for the green card.

Figure 3.20. Sample: U.S. character No. 1 (Mark) can move one space.
He enters through coordinate A-1 (Border Patrol Headquarters)

The BP player enters characters either through coordinate A-1 or A-9; these are the Border Patrol Headquarters (Figure 3.20). As soon as the BP characters get into the game board, they can start looking for immigrants by using advanced technology that can help them search in four different coordinates at the same time; in the game, these are called *search formats* (Figure 3.21). The emphasis on the difference between the resources that immigrants have and the resources the border patrol agency has had access

to for decades was inspired by the words of Timothy J. Dunn's book (1996) about the practice of military tactics and equipment and other types of military experimentation on the border.

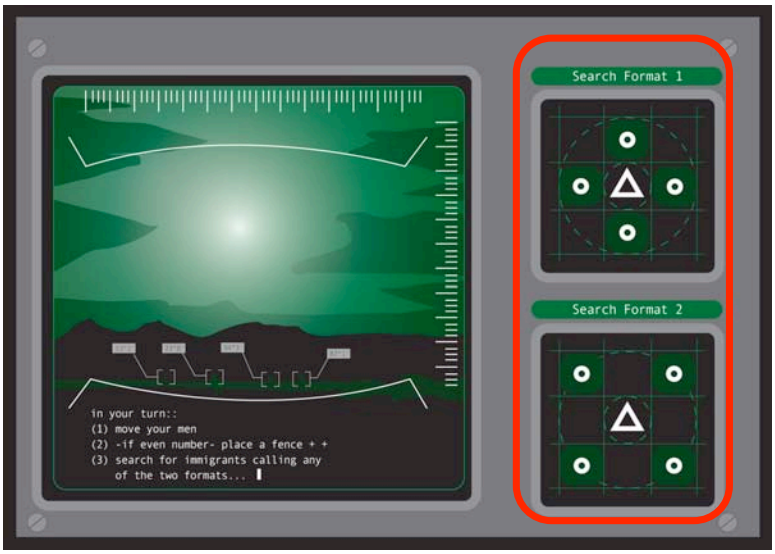

Figure 3.21. Search formats (highlighted with a red line). The white triangle represents the BP agent. The circles represent the coordinates where the agent is searching. The BP agent only has one of these options per turn.

In 2005, the U.S. Congress gave unconditional power to the Department of Homeland Security to begin the construction of a wall along the México-U.S. border (El Diario, 2008b). This wall has become subject of uncountable critiques on many levels: social, cultural, political, and environmental. Still, the U.S. Congress is determined to continue with this project regardless of any opinions. Since this is an important phenomenon on the border, I implemented the wall element into the game. As the game of *Observance* evolves, the BP player will be blocking the border just where the Rio Grand starts (line *E*) by constructing a black wall. This wall will not entirely close the

border, but can redirect the entrance of any alien to a very specific place where the BP could be patently waiting for their capture (Figure 3.22).

Figure 3.22. BP agents and minuteman waiting around the only entrance to the U.S. after blocking most of the borderline

A complete game of *Observance* consists of two sets, where player 1 plays the part of the BP and player 2 plays as the IA, and then they switch positions. This detail in the mechanics of the game is important because it presents the opportunity of being "the other" to the players, and lets them think about the consequences of their actions in relation to their current or future position in the game. If we consider that a player's motivation to play is to win, in *Observance*, it does not matter if you are protecting a country's borders or violating them: the important thing is to reach your goal. In this case, it becomes an issue of necessity and not an issue of ethics, which is a point that I think important to consider when looking at the real-life actions of both the border defense and immigrants. A set is over when all aliens are no longer on the game board because some have been captured by the patrol and others have found their way to the

green card. After the second set, the player who was able to lead more aliens to the green card, wins the game.

Game 3: H1-B Visa (AKA Green•Goes)

Figure 3.23. H1-B Visa banner

I have been requesting visas since 1995, different from the visiting visa that I had since I was six years old, the ones known in Mexico as *micas,* which look like credit cards and allow you to cross the border as many times as you want; however, these micas do not allow you to go beyond the border line without an additional permit, or go to school as a full-time student, and especially are not working permits. From 1995 to 2002, I requested a series of F-1[5] visas that would allow me to be a full-time student at the University of Texas at El Paso. In 2002, I changed my status to a H1-B,[6] a working visa. I changed back to F-1 in 2005 to attend to Texas Tech University and I changed back to an H1-B in

[5] F-1 is the code for one of the foreign (immigrant) student visa

[6] H1-B is the code for a foreign worker visa that allows a non-resident to work legally for three years and can be renewed for another consecutive three years.

2007. Believe me, it never gets old. The stress of the paper work, preparing the appointments and coordinating everything, getting the right size of photographs, filling up the right documents in the right way, making sure that your passport will have an extended expiring date, or better yet, getting a new one. And finally, the day to present all of these requirements to the U.S. Consulate arrives: you need to look your best, show your best side, and have everything in order or else you might lose your turn, which would mean that it would be necessary to arrange another appointment, spending more money.[7] Did I forget to mention the financial aspect of visas? Oh, all of this costs money, a lot of money: time, effort, and money. And every time, it gets more expensive.

Before 9/11, you could go into the U.S. Consulate with things to spend the time, but now everything is very restrained. People who complain about the process of getting on an airplane have never been to a U.S. Consulate. But finally they let you in, they check your documents, they take your picture, your fingerprints (all digital now), and then they send you to the waiting yard to linger. Yes, I said "waiting yard," not room. You will sit outside: if it is cold, you will be cold; if it is hot, you will sweat, and you will never know when your name is going to be called or who is going to take your case. It is all a lottery game. When and who depends on which side of the bed you wake up on that morning, if you threw salt over your shoulder, or if you prayed some *Ave Marias.*

At a certain point, after seeing everyone that arrived after you are being called one-by-one, you hear your name and the number of the cubicle to which you need to

[7] For example, there is a charge of US$26 just to request the information on how to process an interview for any type of visa; some official places might sell you a "guide package" for US$49.95. To request a visa costs US$131, this is also known as the cost for an interview (Alvarado, 2007). This is not the cost of the visa and this payment does not warrantee that the visa will be given. The total cost for some visas can go up to US$1600 per person without using the legal assistance of a lawyer.

approach. It is here where one person, the interviewer, decides if you get the desired document or not. His or her judgment, temperament of the day, and life baggage will be thrown at you, from the way you look on paper to the way you look in person. They always look at your eyes, searching for an excuse, a twitch, and a tottering that can give them a reason to say "*No"*…. Luckily, and I emphasize on the luck part, they have never said "*No"* to me, but I have seen other applicants' very dramatic "*No's*." I always leave that place exhausted, drained, and, on one occasion, shaking. With all of that excitement, who needs roller-coasters?

These experiences were why I decided to make a game out of the visa process. After originally calling the game *"Green•Goes,"* Eric Walden, Assistant Professor at TTU, the person in charge of giving me the approval from the *Office of Research Services*, suggested that I change it to something less offensive. Mr. Walden wrote the following to me:

> You need to change of name of the last game from "green goes" to something more racially neutral. Green goes seems like gringo[,] which most dictionaries define as offensive (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/gringo). You would not want a game about track stars called "Knee gears" would you? (personal communication, March 12, 2008)

Under time pressure and out of necessity, I decided to change the name to *H1-B Visa*, which is the code for a working visa in the U.S. and the game's original sub-title. My intention with the original name, *Green•Goes*, was to present an argument about how anyone, independent from their background, ends up becoming a gringo for their co-

nationals. It is also a play of words in relation to getting a visa: green means that everything is OK. You got the visa, move on. Despite this issue, the game was well received by all my players, which was a big relief to me because I never got the opportunity to test the game before beginning the game sessions on March 17, 2008.

There is a second reason that inspired me to create this game, and that is to give out very specific information about the process of getting a visa. I believe that, in some cases, people tend to become illegal aliens due to their misunderstanding of immigration laws or after receiving misinformation. In some cases, the people coming into the U.S. pay more to a coyote[8] than what it costs to get legal documents. There are many processes that one can go through in order to work legally in this country, sadly many people will take advantage of the uninformed and pressure them into finding alternative solutions. I do not have experience with many of these processes, but I am providing my two cents for the current moment. In the game, the names of the documents do exist, and they are the appropriate ones for the H1-B visa; the additional requirements are also accurate. Some of the processes have been altered to fit the mechanics of a game; for example, players take documents to the consulate one at a time instead of presenting them simultaneously, or players go to a specific office to make appointments to be interviewed for the visa when, in reality, that process is done by phone or through the internet. Still, I feel that the game is a good representation of the course that any immigrant needs to go through in order to obtain a visa.

[8] A coyote is the person to whom you pay money to illegally get you into the U.S.

Figure 3.24. H1-B characters. From left to right:
Nicte, Vardok, Yin and José

The game is the story of four immigrants —Nicte, Vardok, Yin and José— who arrived in the States under different circumstances but are united by the same goal: to get a working visa (Figure 3.24). Unlike the other two games, this one is collaborative and is also time-based. I took the mechanics out of a game called *Break the Safe®,* which I found fascinating and refreshing because I had never encountered a game that required the unification of players who needed to beat the game instead of competing against each other. Each player chooses one character, but all players need to work in harmony in order to meet the requirements before time runs out. Players have a chance to win if they can find four very specific requirements: personal documents, passports, proof of payments, and proof of interview appointments (Figure 3.25). All requirements need to be taken to the U.S. Consulate, and all players need to be there before 30 minutes have passed (Figure 3.26). Players can use the subway to move faster, drink coffee to run like

the wind, or take a cab to get as fast as they can to the U.S. Consulate and try to get their H1-B Visa.

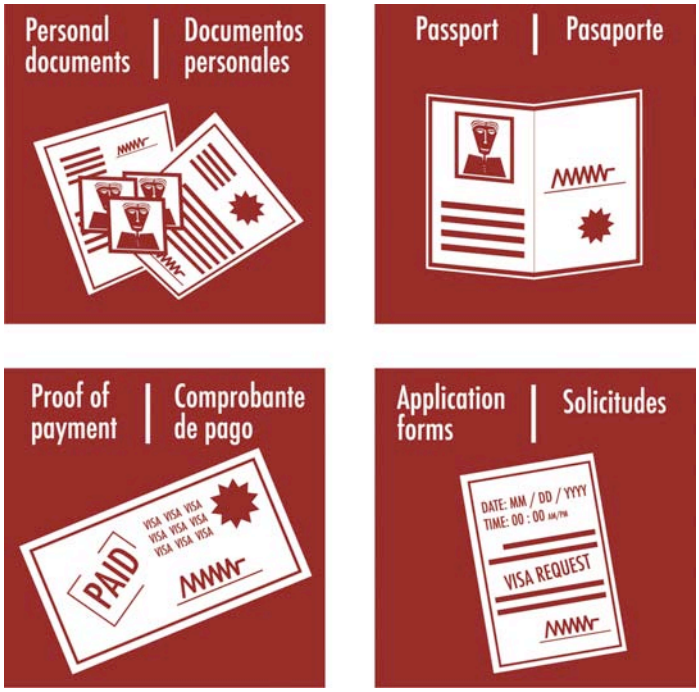

Figure 3.25. Requirements to get the visa

Figure 3.26. All four characters and the requirements are in the consulate on time

While moving around the game board and searching for all the documentation, players need to be careful not to bump into the Border Patrol Officers (Figure 3.27) that will send them to the interrogation room for questioning until some other player gets them out by presenting a valid I-94 as proof of their temporary legal status in the U.S. (Figure 3.28). I added the border patrol in the game to include some dramatic effect to the game's development. In addition, I am projecting some of the stories that I have heard from people that have been detained just for the way they look when they are walking in the streets of El Paso, some of whom were legal aliens, and some of whom were American citizens. These people have told me that the border patrol officers will sometimes take the time to understand the situation and have someone bring the documents to prove their legality. In other cases, they just send them to detention and then to México. Personally, I have been detained two times. The first time my passport was expired —the passport, not the visa—and they told me to go back and escorted me out. The second time, I was going to work and officers stopped me when I was waiting for the bus in downtown El Paso. It took them forever to go over my documents and check whether or not they where real. Eventually, they let me go, but they never even apologized for the mistake or for their erroneous assumptions.

H1-B Visa is the game that took the longest time to design. Mostly, the problem stemmed from the coordinating the entire abstract element that I wanted to include with the game's mechanics. I had in mind the goal of the game, and I knew that I wanted the players to collaborate to achieve it. But I wanted to say so many things in the game at the same time that the rules became a long list of specifications that made the game

unattractive, unappealing to read, and as a consequence, unplayable. It took me around six months to settle on the game's four main requirements. After adapting the mechanics, the visual design took comparatively little time.

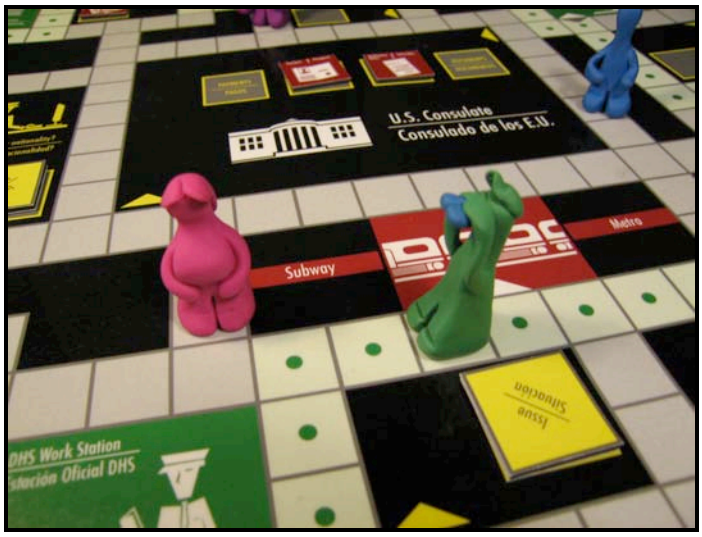

Figure 3.27. Getting detained. Nicte has been spotted by the BP and will be sent to the interrogation room

Figure 3.28. Liberating a friend. Yin has an I-94 and is taking it to the DHS work station to liberate Nicte

Time becomes an important element in the game. The 30 minutes represent the three months on average that an immigrant visitor gets to stay in the U.S. when he or she requests a permit. The permit is known as an I-94 and is usually attached to your passport. The element of time makes reference to the precaution that immigrants need to take when they want to obtain a visa. It is important to be well-informed and complete a series of processes in a timely manner. The opportunity's time frame closes so fast that if timely actions are not taken, it can be lost very easily.

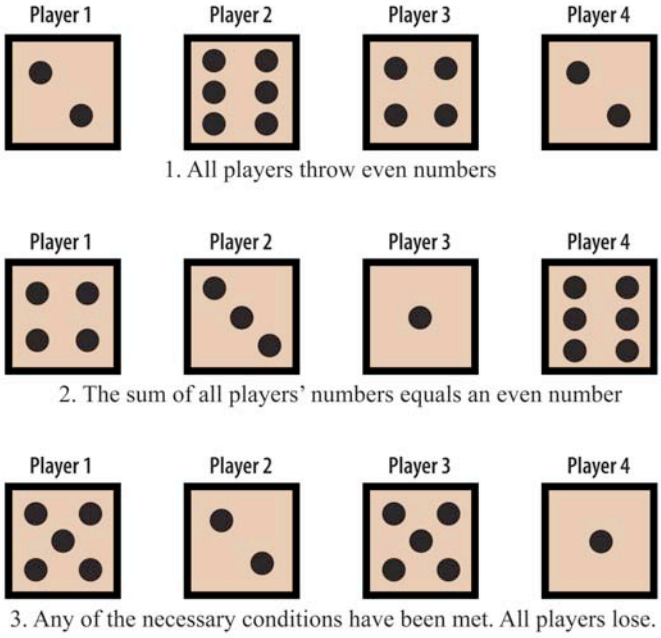

Figure 3.29. Samples of dice throws

Additionally, the game has a twist at the end. As I mentioned before, getting all the requirements in time and being at the Consulate before the 30 minutes have passed does not guarantee that the players will get the passport. As in real life, this last step depends on fate. Remember that having all documents in order are just requirements needed for an interview with an officer. It is this person who decides if the visa will be

issued or not. As a last requirement in the game, and as a way of representing the luck of the interview process, all players need to throw one die (Figure 3.29). Option one is if all players throw even numbers or all players throw odd numbers, the visa will be issued. Option two is if the sum of all players' numbers equals an even number, the visa will be issued, as well. But if these conditions are not met, all players lose.

After almost a year (from April 2007 to March 2008) of intensive work where the abstraction, mechanics, aim of the games, and game design were created, modified, and settled, I felt that the result was a strong trilogy of projects. The games were strong not only conceptually, but artistically, as well. Still, the last word should not come from the creator but from an audience; after all, these are games that need to be played with, used, and experimented upon. The presentation of the games to different types of audiences, the development of the game sessions, and the steps taken to archive the information will be explained in the next section.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

> One of the good reasons for believing what people tell us, as researchers, is a democratic one: who are we to know any better than the participant when it is, after all, their lives? (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 3)

The design

The design of the methodology in this study is based on the notion of *The Metagame* as defined by Richard Garfield (2000). To him, metagame refers to "how games interfaces with life" (para. 5). In other words, "*metagaming* refers to the relationships of a game to elements outside of the game" (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p. 489). Garfield's metagame is divided into four categories (para. 7):

- **What a player brings to a game:** For the purposes of this study, this translates to the cultural background, personal histories, experiences, ethnography, and personal racial affiliations that each player will bring to the game sessions.
- **What a player takes from a game:** This refers to the player's personal analysis of the games, the issues presented (i.e., immigration and the border), the interaction with other players, and thoughts given during the final conversations.
- **What happens between games:** In the case of the socially based board game sessions, this category could consist of conversations during the refreshment break or from the audio-recorded group interview.
- **What happens during a game other than the game itself:** This category refers to the interaction between players and conversations during the games.

All these points need to be addressed accordingly by using different instruments to archive directed information. For this study I plan to use four different types of instruments. One type of instrument will be questionnaires based on the multiple choice format; a second one will be surveys based on the essay format response; the third instrument is direct interviewing where all players in each game session will be approached according to specific questions; the final instrument type is the video-recorded information from each of the games that will be reviewed, evaluated, and partially transcribed into the sections of Chapter Five (e.g. Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

The techniques utilized to search for the information are derived from qualitative research methods (e.g. Patton, 2002; Wolcott, 1994). The design of this mixed methodology is original, as far as I know, and combines ethnography in the form of questionnaires, observations of behavioral development in the form of video recordings, and autobiography in the form of written testimonies and interviews (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The application of the instruments will be consistent throughout all three game sessions, and the study's results will be kept confidential as stated in the letters of consent presented to the players (see Letter of Consent in Appendix C). Only player initials will be used to identify specific comments or highlight information that might be of interest.

The information archived for this study comes from three game sessions, each of which occurred in different geographical regions and on different dates. University professors recruited the players in addition to reserving the playing areas and scheduling the session dates. The places, dates, and geographical areas are described as follows:

- Game session one (March 18, 2008). **Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México.**

  Recruiters: Jair Tapia and León de la Rosa, professors from the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez.

- Game session two (April 11, 2008). **Lubbock, Texas.**

  Recruiter: Francisco Ortega-Grimaldo, assistant professor from Texas Tech University.

- Game session three (April 19, 2008). **El Paso, Texas.**

  Recruiter: John Amastae, professor from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Figure 4.1. Game sessions: place and date

Participants (Players)

As previously mentioned, the participants in this research are referred to as players. There are a total of 26 players: 9 female and 17 male. Player age ranged from 19 to 36 years. The division of players according to the geographical area is as follows:

- **Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México:** There were a total of ten players, of which eight identified themselves as Mexican, one as Latino, and one as Neo-casagrandense.[9] Five were male, and five were female. Ages ranged from 19 to 33.
- **Lubbock, Texas:** There were a total of nine players, of which six identified themselves as White, one as Latino, one as Black, and one as Asia Pacific Islander. Five were male, and four were female. Ages ranged from 19 to 27.
- **El Paso, Texas:** There were a total of seven players, of which five identified themselves as Mexican, one White, and one American. All players were male. Ages ranged from 23 to 36.

Most of the subjects were currently attending a university institution; however, because the game sessions where not conducted behind closed doors or restricted to only university students, some of the other participants were guests or casual visitors.

[9] This is a comic reference to the City of Nuevo Casas Grandes, five hours to the Southwest of Ciudad Juárez.

Arrangements

Players were invited to participate in game sessions of 45 minutes to one hour each where they could choose one of three board games to play with. Refreshments were offered after the game sessions in the form of a light meal (e.g. pizza) and drinks. After the refreshments, there was a small interview session with all players (see Interview in Appendix C); immediately following this session, I presented players with a consent form for an e-mail interview follow-up. As an incentive to answer the e-mail interview, I offered players a gift certificate equivalent to $10. After the game sessions, players were invited to continue playing if they so chose. The outcomes of these post-game sessions remain off record. Recruiting professors were not asked to give additional points or extra credit to the students who participated in the game sessions. There was no exclusion based on race, gender, or physical capacities as long as the players could engage with and play the board games following the specifications (rules) in English or Spanish.

Materials

Three original board games were designed for the purpose of this study. Materials such the cards, the game board, and the instructions were made in both Spanish and English. The process of preparation for these games, from brainstorming to the final and tangible version of the games, lasted approximately one year (from April 2007 to March 2008). Each game presents a commonly stereotyped scenarios and a different game mechanics that will require a different dynamic from the players. For each of the game sessions, there was only one copy of each game arranged on individual tables. Two games were for

four players and one for two players. For specifics about each game, please refer to Appendices A and B.

A two-page questionnaire and a letter of consent were presented to each of the players before they began the game session (see Appendix C). Three video cameras were employed to videotape the development of each game session at each table. One camera was used after the game sessions to record the interviews with the players; however, only the audio was extracted from the videos.

Procedure

In the months of December 2007 and January 2008, I extended a request to three professors who worked in universities in El Paso, Texas and Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua, México: John Amastae, Jair Tapia, and León de la Rosa. I sent them a copy of my proposal (see oral presentation in Appendix C) asking for a classroom or an area where we could have 10 individuals play three board games. I mentioned that the subject of the games referred to border and immigration issues. They agreed to recruit the players and arrange a place. First to give me a specific date were professors Tapia and De la Rosa. They arranged the game session to be on March 17, 2008.

On March 12, 2008, I received the approval from the Texas Tech University Protection of Human Subjects Committee to proceed with my research. This approval allowed me to apply surveys, make interviews, and videotape the game sessions in accordance with my proposal (for specifics, see OHR proposal in Appendix C).

Procedures in the game sessions

Players were presented with an explanation of the research; I read the same *oral invitation* (see Appendix C) previously given to students when their professor(s) were recruiting. I did this to refresh the players' memories and to specify the conditions established in the *letter of consent* (see Appendix C). I stressed that while the game sessions were going to be videotaped, the cameras were directed at the action occurring in the board games and not at them. I let them read the document and asked them if they had any additional questions. Finally, I requested their signatures to assure consent before beginning the game sessions.

Players were randomly separated into three different groups; each group took on a specific game. According to the specifications of each game, *Crossing the Bridge* required four players, *Observance* was a two-player game, and *H1-B Visa* needed four players. In Juárez and in Lubbock, all games were played simultaneously in the same room. In El Paso, because of a coordination problem, only *Observance* and *H1-B Visa* were played at the same time, while *Crossing the Bridge* was played later.

The games were introduced and explained by previously trained volunteer assistants and myself. In Juárez, Dennice De Lucio directed the game *H1-B Visa* and Jair Tapia directed *Observance* while I directed *Crossing the Bridge*. In Lubbock, Richelle Detrixhe directed *H1-B Visa,* and I directed the other two games. In El Paso, Jair Tapia helped me again by directing *Observance* while I was able to direct the other two. By request of the players, a quick test-game took place only in Juárez to ensure that all participants understood the dynamics and mechanisms of the games.

The games vary in the time it takes to complete them, but all could be concluded in less than an hour. During all game play, the three video cameras recorded the activity on the tables during the game sessions. In Juárez and Lubbock, the players of *H1-B Visa* had a chance to play a second round while the other players finished their games.

After the game sessions, students were asked to relax for a few minutes; a 10 to 15 minute break was given to stretch, eat, get a drink, or talk about their experiences. After the 15 minutes, I gathered them around to explain the procedure for the *group interview*, during which the participants had a chance to talk about their experiences with the games, interactions with other players, and thoughts related to the issues presented. Because I lacked an audio recording device, I used one of the video cameras and pointed it to the ground to record only the conversations. In Juárez, the questions and conversations were conducted in Spanish.

I read a set of previously prepared questions to initiate and guide a conversation in relation to the study (see Interview in Appendix C). I envisioned the questions as guides that could engage a series of topics not anticipated. To avoid deviation, I acted as a mediator and decided if certain conversations were relevant to the aims of this research. In the process of the interviews, no one deviated from the topics and issues presented by the questions; however, some of the participants remained silent despite my many attempts to discover their opinion. The time of the interviews varied. In Juarez, it took almost 30 minutes to go through all the questions. In Lubbock, the interview time was about 25 minutes. In El Paso, the answers were very direct and dry; the interview session took only about 20 minutes.

After the interviews, an invitation to participate in a follow-up e-mail was presented along with the offer of a $10 gift card as an incentive. Through an additional consent form (see e-mail consent in Appendix C), I requested the players to allow me to contact them via e-mail. In all cases, I contacted the interested players two weeks after the game sessions; I asked them if they were still interested in participating and added the questionnaire (see e-mail questionnaire in Appendix C). From all 26 participants, I received back nine questionnaires. After they e-mailed me back the completely answered questionnaire, I sent their gift card to their professors, who could distribute the cards accordingly. A note of *received compensation* was added to each gift card that needed to be signed by the players in order to ensure that the payment was received.

Funding

I am not receiving any funding from any grant or institution for the process of this investigation. I covered all expenses for traveling, videocassettes, additional material for the game sessions and gift cards. Friends provided video cameras for the game sessions in addition to the one borrowed from the TTU School of Art. I own an additional video camera that was used for editing purposes. The professors, collaborators and volunteers who helped me organize these sessions agreed to participate and collaborate with me without receiving either monetary or any other type of compensation.

Material for Analysis

The persistent record of the game sessions is an archive consisting of 26 consent forms, 26 questionnaires, 16 e-mail interview consent letters, 11 hours of video recordings (including both game play and group interviews), nine e-mail interviews, and many relevant memories.

Inconveniences

During the initial process of the Lubbock game session, a female player had to withdraw due to personal issues. Her consent form was signed and part of her initial questionnaire was answered, but I decided to discard her participation overall. In El Paso, the players arrived at different times, changing the pre-established order of events. In this game session, most of the participants were casual visitors or guests rather than students recruited by professor John Amastae.

CHAPTER 5

DATA

The intention of the data collected by this study is to generate a conversation with the players about the games presented in the game sessions on March 18, April 11 and April 19, 2008 and the topics of the Mexico-U.S. border and immigration upon which the board games have been based. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the sample is small (26 participants), but the information is rich in content; therefore, analysis of the information is based on largely upon qualitative aspects rather than quantitative ones, although some numbers might be used to illustrate specific points (Creswell, 2003). Data has been analyzed and separated into three categories: player responses to the individual survey questionnaire given before the games were played, the results of group interviews after the games were played, and player responses to a follow-up e-mail questionnaire sent two weeks after the game sessions.

What the Questionnaires Show

The questionnaires were intended to provide information in three specific areas:

- personal information from the players (not numbered in questionnaire),
- game habits and consideration about topics in games (questions 1 to 7),
- points of view or perspectives in relation to border issues and immigration (questions 8 and 9).

Participants (Players)

While I presented the specific description of my participants in Chapter Four concerning each game session, there are other interesting points to think about. In general, game sessions had a considerable majority of male players: 17 males in contrast to 9 female players. Also, there were 13 players (half of the sample's total) that consider themselves Mexican (see table 5.1), and even in El Paso more players considered themselves Mexican than any other ethnic or racial group. This can be an important number when considering the perspectives of the players in relation to border issues and immigration.

Table 5.1
Player's Personal Information From All Three Game Sessions

Age Range	19 – 36	
Gender	Male	Female
	17	9
Ethnicity or cultural identity		
Asian	0	
Black	1	
White	7	
Latino	2	
Hispanic	0	
Mexican	13	
Other	3 (Neocasagrandense; Asia Pacific Islander; American)	

Gaming Habits

In the pre-game questionnaire, questions one to seven dealt with the players' game habits (the player's attitudes towards various aspects of games are summarized in table 5.2). I also asked them their opinions in relation to the use of games as learning tools and the inclusion of social issues in board games. Furthermore, in this digital age, I feel it is important to make a distinction between the specifications of board games versus videogames and not generalize games as one homogenous activity. In this research, I am interested in face-to-face interaction, which has been described by Goffman (1959) as "the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence" (p. 15). In relation to board games, the game itself mediates the face-to-face interaction. It becomes the intermediary and center of the interaction, something that might or might not occur with videogames.

Players have answered that they still play games, 37.5% stated that they mostly do it for fun, 35% when the opportunity arises. Only one player engages in gaming for sport, meaning that he is part of a chess club and competes in game matches. Players tend to play mostly with friends as their first choice and with family as their second choice, but only very few tend to play alone, and two of these players stated that they prefer video games to board games, which could be an interesting correlated reason. Regarding this topic, 33.33% of players prefer video games to board games, which is a contrast of numbers that does not surprise me at all; although the players were invited strictly to play board games, it is interesting to me that players who prefer video games would come to the game sessions. In addition, one player likes games in general, which is a neutral

position in relation to this study. An interesting 69.23% of the players consider games to be tools that reinforce socialization, but a considerable number of them are not sure about the potential of board games on this point. Still, 57.7% of the players think that videogames do not have the same socialization potential (refer to table 5.2, question 7), which leads me to think that a very small amount of players consider that games in general reinforce socialization.

The answers from questions three and four show that barely over half of the players have ever approached board games as learning tools, but almost all of them think that including social issues in board games is interesting and appropriate. This is a stimulating result considering such use is applied by my study. However, this also makes me wonder if players' positive responses to including social topics into board games have something to do with the fact that most of these players are university students.

Table 5.2
Answers from Questions One to Seven

Question 1: You play board games (you may circle more than one)…

Options	Percentage of answers made (n=40)
a. When the opportunity arises	35
b. For fun	37.5
c. For leisure	25
d. For Sport (e.g. you are part of a chess club)	2.5

Table 5.2 (continues)
Answers from Questions One to Seven

Question 2: You play board games (you may circle more than one)…

Options	Percentage of answers made (n=45)
a. With friends	55.55
b. With family	37.78
c. Alone	6.67
d. Other (please specify)	0

Question 3: Have you ever used a board game as a learning tool?

Options	Number of answers made (n=26)
/Yes/	65.38
/No/	34.62

Question 4: What do you think about the inclusion of social issues in board games?

Options	Percentage of answers made (n=26)
a. I find it interesting and appropriate	96.15
b. I find the games appealing but do not care much about the issues	3.85
c. I think that the issues are important and should not be presented as games	0
d. I do not care much for games or social issues	0

Table 5.2 (continues)
Answers from Questions One to Seven

Question 5: You prefer (circle one)…

Options	Percentage of answers made (n=24)
/board games/	66.67
/videogames/	33.33

Note: One person answered both and I did not include her answer in either option. Another did not answer.

Question 6: Do you consider board games to be a tool that reinforces socialization?

Options	Percentage of answers made (n=26)
/Yes/	69.23
/No/	3.85
/More or less/	26.92

Question 7: Do you have the same feeling about videogames?

Options	Percentage of answers made (n=26)
/Yes/	42.3
/No/	57.7

In relation to border and immigration issues

The answers in question eight (see table 5.3) reflect some of the hypotheses presented throughout this dissertation: people far from the border tend to dissociate themselves from those issues even when the media continues to inform about the problems faced. A considerable amount of players in Lubbock (55.56%) answered that they do not know much about these issues. What does surprise me is that there is a very close corroboration between those who consider themselves to be "well-informed" from the ones who stated that they only "know something" about the issues. I was expecting a larger number for "well-informed" from the players in El Paso and Juárez. The majority of players who stated that they are "well–informed" played in El Paso and they consider themselves Mexican (this information is not stated in table 5.3). Furthermore, it is important to notice that none of the players in any game session answered that they did not care about the issues. For answers from question eight, I believe it is important to separate the results by the game session, corresponding to the geographical area.

Table 5.3

Answers from Question Eight Divided by Geographical Area

Question 8: How informed do you think you are about immigration and border-related issues?	
Answers from players in Ciudad Juárez	
Options	Percentage of answers made (n=11)
a. I keep myself well-informed	27.27
b. I know something about it	54.55
c. I do not know much	18.18
d. I do not care much about these issues	0
Answers from players in Lubbock	
Options	Percentage of answers made (n=9)
a. I keep myself well-informed	11.11
b. I know something about it	33.33
c. I do not know much	55.56
d. I do not care much about these issues	0
Answers from players in El Paso	
Options	Percentage of answers made (n=7)
a. I keep myself well-informed	57.14
b. I know something about it	42.86
c. I do not know much	0
d. I do not care much about these issues	0

The answers to question nine (please see tables 5.4a, 5.4b, 5.4c, 5.4d and 5.4e) refers to the players' opinions in relation to the issues on the border and immigration. Players could choose multiple answers (from *A* to *L*) according to the ones that best represented their ideas or opinions. The answers can be framed in one of two concepts: (1) in favor of diversity and immigration or (2) against these ideas. There is a strong inclination towards the following answer: "We can progress as a nation if we appreciate the potential of diversity," which is one of the answers from the group related to the first concept. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, half of players consider themselves Mexican, and this is one of the reasons why this particular answer might have been selected considerably more than the others. I see with great interest that the players on the border were the ones who chose answer *E* the most, an answer related to thoughts about the violence in the Mexican borders. It is also significant to note that all options where chosen at least once, which makes me think that some players have ambivalent and diverse opinions in relation to diversity and immigration; this point will be explored in detail in the next chapter. Nevertheless, I decided to arrange the answers of question nine in different forms to have different perspectives.

Table 5.4a

Percentage Distribution of Answers for Question Nine from All Three Game Sessions

Question 9: Which of these statements better represent your opinion(s) (you might select more than one)

Options		Percentages of answers made (n= 119)
a.	I think immigrants are taking jobs from U.S. workers … … … … … …	1.68
b.	The only way to fix the problem with immigrants is by having a larger and better-prepared Border Patrol Agency … … … … … …	2.52
c.	I think everyone who wants to work should be allowed to work anywhere they want … … … … … … … …	15.97
d.	Much of the drug and illegal substances that affect the U.S. come from the border with México … … … … … … …	5.04
e.	The border cities in México are filled with violence and decadence … … … … …	6.72
f.	The U.S. is a country made by immigrants … … … … … … …	13.45
g.	The U.S. needs a reform in the immigration laws to regulate all illegal workers and allow them working rights … … … … … …	14.29
h.	Illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted … … … … … …	1.68
i.	We can progress as a nation if we appreciate the potential of diversity … … … …	19.32
j.	Immigrants are not to be trusted. 9/11 is a clear example of that … … … … …	.84
k.	Without immigrants we would not be able to enjoy the benefits of superior jobs … … … … … … …	5.88
l.	The products coming from illegal workers feed this country … … … …	12.60
	TOTAL	100

n Refers to the total of answers made in all three game sessions. Answers came from 26 players.

Table 5.4b

Percentage Distribution of Answers for Question Nine Divided by Ethnicity or Cultural Identity

Options		Percentages of answers made			
		Mexican (n=53)	White (n=34)	Latin (n=5)	Other* (n=27)
a.	I think immigrants are taking jobs from U.S. workers … … … …	0	2.94	0	3.70
b.	The only way to fix the problem with immigrants is by having a larger and better-prepared Border Patrol Agency … … …	0	2.94	20	3.70
c.	I think everyone who wants to work should be allowed to work anywhere they want … … … … … …	22.64	8.82	0	14.82
d.	Much of the drug and illegal substances that affect the U.S. come from the border with México … … … … …	3.77	5.88	0	7.4
e.	The border cities in México are filled with violence and decadence … … …	7.55	5.88	0	7.4
f.	The U.S. is a country made by immigrants … … … … …	11.32	17.65	20	11.11
g.	The U.S. needs a reform in the immigration laws to regulate all illegal workers and allow them working rights… … … … …	18.87	11.77	0	11.11
h.	Illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted … … … … …	1.89	2.94	0	0
i.	We can progress as a nation if we appreciate the potential of diversity … …	20.75	17.65	40	14.82
j.	Immigrants are not to be trusted. 9/11 is a clear example of that … … …	1.89	0	0	0
k.	Without immigrants we would not be able to enjoy the benefits of superior jobs … … … … …	1.89	5.88	0	14.82
l.	The products coming from illegal workers feed this country … … …	9.43	17.65	20	11.11
	TOTAL	100	100	100	100

*Other is conformed by one Black, one American, one Neocasagrandense and one Asia Pacific Islander

n Refers to the total of answers made by that particular ethnic or cultural group. In this division we have 13 Mexican players, 7 White, 2 Latin and 4 as other.

Table 5.4c

Percentage Distribution of Answers for Question Nine Divided by Game Sessions

Options		Percentages of answers made		
		Juárez (n=40)	Lubbock (n=41)	El Paso (n=38)
a.	I think immigrants are taking jobs from U.S. workers … … … …	0	2.44	2.63
b.	The only way to fix the problem with immigrants is by having a larger and better-prepared Border Patrol Agency … … …	0	7.32	0
c.	I think everyone who wants to work should be allowed to work anywhere they want … … … … … …	20	9.76	18.42
d.	Much of the drug and illegal substances that affect the U.S. come from the border with México … … … … …	5	4.87	5.26
e.	The border cities in México are filled with violence and decadence … … …	7.5	2.44	10.53
f.	The U.S. is a country made by immigrants … … … … …	12.5	17.07	10.53
g.	The U.S. needs a reform in the immigration laws to regulate all illegal workers and allow them working rights… … … … …	17.5	9.76	15.79
h.	Illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted … … … … …	0	2.44	2.63
i.	We can progress as a nation if we appreciate the potential of diversity … …	22.5	19.51	15.79
j.	Immigrants are not to be trusted. 9/11 is a clear example of that … … …	0	0	2.63
k.	Without immigrants we would not be able to enjoy the benefits of superior jobs … … … … …	2.5	9.76	5.26
l.	The products coming from illegal workers feed this country … … …	12.5	14.63	10.53
	TOTAL	100	100	100

n Refers to the total of answers made at that particular game session. In this division we have 10 players from Juárez, 9 from Lubbock, and 7 from El Paso.

Table 5.4d

Percentage Distribution of Answers for Question Nine from All Players Divided by Game Sessions and Ethnicity or Cultural Identity

Options		**Juárez**			**Lubbock**				**El Paso**		
		Mexican (n=31)	Latino (n=2)	N.Casa* (n=6)	White (n=26)	Latino (n=3)	Black (n=7)	Asia PI** (n=5)	Mexican (n=22)	White (n=8)	American (n=7)
a.	I think immigrants are taking jobs from U.S. workers …	0	0	0	0	0	14.28	0	0	12.5	0
b.	The only way to fix the problem with immigrants is by having a larger and better-prepared Border Patrol Agency …	0	0	0	3.85	33.33	0	20	0	0	0
c.	I think everyone who wants to work should be allowed to work anywhere they want … … …	22.58	0	16.66	7.69	0	14.28	20	22.72	12.5	14.28
d.	Much of the drug and illegal substances that affect the U.S. come from the border with México … … …	6.45	0	0	3.85	0	14.28	0	0	12.5	14.28
e.	The border cities in México are filled with violence and decadence	6.45	0	16.66	3.85	0	0	0	9.1	12.5	14.28
f.	The U.S. is a country made by immigrants … …	12.9	0	16.66	19.23	33.33	14.28	0	9.1	12.5	14.28
g.	The U.S. needs a reform in the immigration laws to regulate all illegal workers and allow them working rights… …	19.36	0	16.66	11.53	0	0	20	18.18	12.5	14.28
h.	Illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted … …	0	0	0	3.85	0	0	0	4.54	0	0
i.	We can progress as a nation if we appreciate the potential of diversity	22.58	50	16.66	19.23	33.33	14.28	20	18.18	12.5	14.28
j.	Immigrants are not to be trusted. 9/11 is a clear example of that …	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.54	0	0
k.	Without immigrants we would not be able to enjoy the benefits of superior jobs … … …	0	0	16.66	7.69	0	14.28	20	4.54	0	0
l.	The products coming from illegal workers feed this country …	9.68	50	16.66	19.23	0	14.28	0	9.1	12.5	14.28
	TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

*Neo-casagrandense

**Asia Pacific Islander

n Refers to the total of answers made by that particular ethnic or cultural group at that particular game session.

Table 5.4e
Percentage Distribution of Answers to Question Nine by Statement

Options		**Juárez**			**Lubbock**				**El Paso**			**TOTAL**
		Mexican	Latino	N.Casa*	White	Latino	Black	Asia PI**	Mexican	White	American	
a.	I think immigrants are taking jobs from U.S. workers (n=2) …	0	0	0	0	0	50	0	0	50	0	100
b.	The only way to fix the problem with immigrants is by having a larger and better-prepared Border Patrol Agency (n=3) …	0	0	0	33.33	33.33	0	33.33	0	0	0	100
c.	I think everyone who wants to work should be allowed to work anywhere they want (n=19) … …	36.85	0	5.26	10.53	0	5.26	5.26	26.32	5.26	5.26	100
d.	Much of the drug and illegal substances that affect the U.S. come from the border with México (n=6) … …	33.34	0	0	16.66	0	16.66	0	0	16.66	16.66	100
e.	The border cities in México are filled with violence and decadence (n=8) … … …	25	0	12.5	12.5	0	0	0	25	12.5	12.5	100
f.	The U.S. is a country made by immigrants (n=16) … …	25	0	6.25	31.25	6.25	6.25	0	12.5	6.25	6.25	100
g.	The U.S. needs a reform in the immigration laws to regulate all illegal workers and allow them working rights (n=17) …	35.29	0	5.88	17.65	0	0	5.88	23.53	5.88	5.88	100
h.	Illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted (n=2) …	0	0	0	50	0	0	0	50	0	0	100
i.	We can progress as a nation if we appreciate the potential of diversity (n=23) … … …	30.43	4.35	4.35	21.73	4.35	4.35	4.35	17.39	4.35	4.35	100
j.	Immigrants are not to be trusted. 9/11 is a clear example of that (n=1) … …	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
k.	Without immigrants we would not be able to enjoy the benefits of superior jobs (n=6) … …	0	0	16.66	33.34	0	16.66	16.66	16.66	0	0	100
l.	The products coming from illegal workers feed this country (n=15) … … …	20	6.66	6.66	33.33	0	6.66	0	13.33	6.66	6.66	100

*Neo-casagrandense
**Asia Pacific Islander
n Refers to the total of answers made for that particular statement.

Other comments

For the final part of question nine, I asked the players to give additional comments that they might want to add to the list of options provided. From all 26 players, we only got six additional comments that give a wide variety of views about the border and immigration:

> "It is not wise to prosecute illegal workers, without dealing with those that employ illegal workers. If immigration is a clear problem (though I feel it isn't) then yes, Border Patrol Agencies should be larger and more prepared" — *A.G. (Lubbock)*
>
> "The issue of private property and giving so much value to it [the idea of private property] makes these issues [immigration and the border] more severe and violent." — *LOIR (Juárez)*
>
> "It is necessary to create a stronger penetration of cultural and social interchange because both nations share families." — *B.S. (El Paso)*
>
> "It is clear to me that many of the jobs fulfilled by immigrants would not be taken as an option by legal aliens and citizens." — *A.G. (El Paso)*
>
> "[…] Most importantly I believe most anti-immigrant sentiments are essentially racist and chauvinistic." — *P/B (El Paso)*
>
> "Illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted after the U.S. has serious immigration reform and a grace period." — *Doc Diggles (El Paso)*

What the Videos and the Post-Game Interviews Show

I found it necessary to use recording devices during the game sessions to maintain an archive of the events and improve recollection of all the game sessions. Most importantly, I had to have a way to observe the interaction in each individual game and not just rely on the comments from the participants and my assistants. In most cases, I was in charge of one particular game or I was coordinating two and could not concentrate entirely on all the games at the same time. I trusted that my assistants would do a good job explaining the games and guiding the players, but I wanted to know specifically what happened while the gaming occurred.

During the game sessions, I was always alert to all three tables; I would move around asking if the game was going well, or if there were any questions. In some cases, my assistants needed to be reminded of certain rules or procedures, which gave me an opportunity to see how the games were progressing. But still, this does not mean that I was always present, constantly vigilant on all the details of the process. The use of video cameras was then a good tool to scrutinize all the details while the groups were playing.

Since I was concerned with forgetting the details of the events, I also decided to record the interview sessions. I did this by using the video cameras but pointing them to the ground to avoid visual recognition of the player when giving his or her comments. As expected, some players where very articulate about their ideas while others remained mute through the whole interview, not even responding when I addressed them directly to get some reaction or comment; instead, they would make facial and hand gestures as

signs of their unwillingness to talk. Still, the material recovered satisfied my vision of what I wanted to achieve.

Game session videotaping

The information from the videos can be separated in six sections: (1) the way the games were explained to the players by my assistants and how this information was perceived by the players, (2) the engagement of the players in the games, (3) comments between players in relation to the social issues presented, (4) interaction between players, (5) enthusiasm for the game sessions over all, and (6) reactions toward the conclusion of the games.

The process of explaining the games and game-rules ranged from 10 to 17 minutes. While reviewing the videotapes, I noticed that my assistants tended to interpret some rules differently or forgot to mention some details before beginning the game but added them later, as the games developed, or when the players met the point where it was necessary for a rule to be applied. I do not think this affected the game mechanics or the aim of the game; rather, it gave the sessions a feeling of truth, meaning that instead of creating an environment that might feel sterilized and calculated, something more appropriate to a lab study, the game sessions felt like a night of friends getting together to play and learn new games. This environment can be perceived upon hearing the laughter, the constant whispers, and the background noise coming from the players and spectators.

I also noticed that at some points, when the assistants were not sure about a rule but the development of the game was intense, new rules were invented. Although this

might not be something that I would feel comfortable with, I also understand that a game takes a life of its own, and furthermore, that the assistants remained consistent in the rule(s) they created or modified. When the same situation appeared again in the game, they would apply the rule in the same way, which I view to be appropriate. What I did not approve of was how one of my assistants, Jair, the host of *Observance* in Juárez, would sometimes give too much information to the players, even to the point of leading them into finding the green card or capturing an immigrant. I talked to him after I reviewed the videotapes, and he admitted that sometimes he got very frustrated because the players would not show progress in the game. There is a saying in México: *"los mirones son de palo."* This means that someone who serves as spectator in a game needs to remain silent, and I had to remind Jair of that. Jair helped me once more in the game sessions at El Paso, hosting the same game. On that occasion, he did remain impartial in regards to the happenings of the game.

In the tapes, I perceived how some players learned the game through the process of playing while others understood the rules from the beginning. To me, it was interesting to see how sometimes players would restate a rule to remember the others, instead of asking me or expecting me to intervene. This suggests to me that the players were making the game theirs and I was another observer. I noticed similar patterns in the videotapes from the other games. In general, every player was able to play the game without problems.

The first time the game of *H1-B* was explained in Juárez, after going over the rules and the aims of the game, one of the players expressed frustration. This player

commented in an exhausted manner, "and we need to do all that in 30 minutes?" The host of the game, Dennice, handled the matter well; instead of reinforcing the gravity of the comment, she told them that it was doable, trying to keep the other players from becoming discouraged by the recent comment. A day before the game session, Dennice and I talked about this issue; we anticipated that if someone seemed to act as if the game was impossible, we should remain calm and let him or her know that the aim of the game was reachable and that all players were going to enjoy themselves. After Dennice's response to the player's negative comment, the game proceeded with no further predicaments.

During the game sessions, there was not much exchange of comments in relation to the topics. There were comments related to the mechanics of the game and the characters, but, for example, no one engaged in a conversation about their experiences while crossing the border, interacting with the border patrol or about what it was said in the news about immigrants. They preferred to ask about the characters in *Observance* and expressed sadness when the character *Lucia and her son* were captured; in *Crossing the Bridge*, they would celebrate when a player was able to cross two cargoes of drugs or feel sorry for the player that lost a car because luck was not on her side; players also commented on how the officers in *H1-B* captured players constantly, interrupting the comfortable flow of the game.

Observance became the quietest game of the three. Players remained serious and attentive —at a certain point they had to show their "poker faces" because the game's mechanics demanded it. They would exchange the necessary words to locate a coordinate

or express a searching format, and eventually show excitement when an illegal alien was captured unexpectedly or when the player on the Mexican side was able to locate the green card. The least applied rule was the placing of the wall sections by the players in the U.S. side. They seemed to forget about it, and the host forgot to remind them, as well.

Crossing the Bridge provided more interaction and conversation, all of which was related to the occurrences in the game. Only in Lubbock, a player made comments about the confiscation of merchandise in México. He said that he was not aware that people were not allowed to cross things like computers without paying importation taxes at the port of entry. In *Crossing the Bridge,* there was more room for expression because most of the processes depended upon luck: how much merchandise is a car taking, how many steps is the car taking, would the U.S. customs officer confiscate the merchandise or only request the passport? There is something about luck that creates excitement, and this was visible during the game.

No game of *"crossing"* was completed in any of the game sessions. The time available for the game sessions was not enough to finish it. I had anticipated the game to last 45 minutes to one hour because the process is simple, but the element of chance can force the game to be longer. In any case, the videotapes showed that the players were able to understand the dynamics of the game, and they enjoyed the process of smuggling illegal merchandise. I modified a few aspects (like rules) during game play because it made the game flow better. For example, there was a very bad traffic jam right before the players could reach the mall to buy items for their houses. The reason for the jam was that there were only 3 parking spots from which the players could buy the merchandise.

What helped fix this issue was to let two cars park in each space; this alleviated the jam and helped the mechanics of the game, but it was a decision that had to be made on the spot.

At the end of the sessions, players had an opportunity of closure by adding up all the monetary value of their possessions, and who ever had the most was considered the winner. In the game, there is no apparent perception of competitiveness, but the players later expressed that the game was very competitive. In the videotapes, you can even see them helping each other by talking about smarter moves for their cars or strategies to try and avoid some penalty. But one can also see that they enjoyed seeing someone getting caught or sent back to the Mexican line of entry.

As expected, *H1-B Visa* generated more interaction and mutual participation because, in this game, all players needed to work together in order to reach a common goal. While looking at the videotapes, it was interesting to see that there was an evolution in the coordination of the players not only in individual movements such as throwing the dice, moving their characters, and so on, but also between all players. The most notable improvement in coordination was found in moving the border patrol officers. The officers do not correspond to a specific player, and their movement is very mechanical. After a player has moved her own character, she needed to throw one die and move both officers according to the number in the die; the dice then go to the next player. Moving the officers takes time and disrupts the movements of the other characters. At the beginning of the game, each player moved his or her character and then moved both officers

accordingly. But later on, players saw that it was more efficient if while one player moves one officer, someone else would move the other, making the process even faster.

There was also an evolution from individual conscience to group conscience. While at first each player seemed to move freely through the game board, trying to contribute to the exploration and search for the required documents, later you can see a communal decision that each player should be moving to serve a better purpose. For example, if a player that has the prerequisites to find a document is in detention, the others would determine who should go and take this player from detention. While one moved a document to the consulate, another signed a document somewhere else, and another one tried to get away from the border patrol. It was interesting to see how the players would stop for a while to decide different directions for a single character or to find the fastest, easiest way into an office. Players unsure about their roles in the process might request communal guidance and ask, "What should I do next?"

In this game, there was stress concerning the timeframe players had to complete the requirements. Still, no tension was seen among players, and dictatorship —one person's desire to coordinate the movement of all players— was not present in any of the sessions. In Juárez, the first group that played the game petitioned to increase game time right after their time ran out. They felt that it was impossible to achieve the goal. The same group decided to play once more and, in their second round, got closer to winning, though failing once more. I considered their petition, but a second group that played the same day (not in the video recordings) was able to win with eight minutes still in the clock. The group that played the *"visa"* game in Lubbock also played twice and was able

to win, with enough time, in their second attempt. After reviewing the tapes, I noticed that the group in Juárez did not pay close attention to the movement of the officers and consistently lost time in detention. They also spent almost a minute deciding certain moves. Interestingly, when time ran out and the players expressed defeat and lamented about not being able to complete the goal of the game, after they were asked if they wanted to play again, they expressed a desire to continue the game the way it was, instead of beginning anew. Both groups in Juárez and Lubbock made similar comments.

Players tended to interpret the situation in the visa game according to their own experiences or visualizations. For example, in Juárez and in El Paso, the border patrol officers were called *chotas*, a colloquial name given to police officers in México. In the videos you can hear the players say, "move from there before the *chota* captures you" or "the *chota* sent me again to detention." In Lubbock, the players changed the name of detention to "deportation," which in real life is a huge difference, but still, being sent to the detention room, for them, was deportation.

When players finally had fulfilled all requirements, we told them that the game was not over yet. They still needed to throw a die and coordinate the outcomes in order to get their visa. I decided to keep the last portion of the game a secret to see their reaction after dealing with so many requirements and so much time-related stress. A certain amount of anxiety was created by this last rule, but the players followed along. In Juárez and in Lubbock, when the players finally got their visas, they applauded: I never expected them to do that, and it was satisfying to see such reaction from a game. In El Paso, however, there was a different outcome. The correlation of the dice was not positive so

the players lost, and their silence showed their dissatisfaction. This might have contributed to their quietness during the interview session.

Interview recordings

The interview session consisted of 12 questions addressed to the entire group of players for each game session. The questions related to the players' perceptions concerning the games, the issues in the games, and the interaction among players. I was pleased to see that players collaborated and participated very willingly, even those who did not want to talk but remained through the whole interview session. In the following section, I will include some of the key comments made by participants concerning individual questions.

How was the interaction among players in the games you played?

Referring to the *H1-B Visa* game, I had interesting comments like the following: *"Competitive, pleasing, enjoyable, solidary* [sic]*... and relaxing… because in games w[h]ere you compete there is a lot of stress, but working together is relaxing."* Others found the game to be a novelty: *"It was something new participating as a group." "I had never played a team-based board game." "Instead of figuring out how to fuck others, this becomes a team and you do not need to hide your cards, you know what everyone has."* Other players found that the mechanics brought something important to the table: *"This game [the visa game] generates union… I think the subject affected [us] and we solidary [gained*

solidarity].” “It was important to work as a team and reach the objective.” “It was important to generate a strategy to beat the bureaucracy.” “The second time we did very well... faster… 30 minutes was more than enough.” “It is fun because you need to strategize together.”

In relation to *Crossing the Bridge*, players had these comments:

“The game demands too much… in relation to all the things that one has to do… but illegal trafficking is comical.” “It reflects the quotidian of the lines at the bridge… it creates stress… but for all the noise that I heard, the visa game is more interesting... because in that one they all [the players] end up being friends, no?... that’s nice.” “I think you interact a lot and what happens to you depends on what others are doing… it makes it fun.” “There is much interaction, you need to maneuver around someone.”

And some remarks about *Observance* were the following:

“Very competitive… lots of exchange.” “I probably would not trust my competitor but there [were] cameras, so.” “The dog is cute.” “It is weird because of the remark on divisions.” “It was easier for me to catch Mexicans than [be] the immigrant.” “I understood the name of the game because in real life that is what la migra[10] does,… remain vigilant all the time.”

[10] Slang or colloquial name given to the border patrol by the Spanish speaking population.

Did you enjoy the games overall?

When I asked this question, in all three sites there was a very resounding "yes." What follows are some of the additional comments:

> "*Was very funny." "In the game you want to traffic drug[s] because there are no real repercussions… you can always buy more cars if you get caught." "I enjoyed the interaction… but there are moments, for example [like] catching the mother [that were] more dramatic… more than catching the coyote."*

Were the mechanics of the games effective?

I explained to the players that mechanics in a game refers to the things necessary to do in the game in order to play them. These are some of the comments:

> *"The bureaucracy reflected in the game for an immigrant is impossible… because of the requirements, the constant presence of la migra… because it shows that the processes are subjective and attached to moods* [referring to the officials who decide if an immigrant gets a visa or not]*." "Yes* [another player continuing the line of the last quote], *bureaucracy is based on a process of requirements that guarantee me a result and that is not true."* "*The game is very similar to real life, a few months ago I had to go through the process of getting a visa."*

The two following comments are very important to me, especially when I was designing the games. They reflect my thought when I was in that beginning process and what wanted to achieve with the games:

"The game [referring to the *Bridge* game] *is a photography of reality… it achieves its objective of manifesting some things like traffic and smuggling… the dynamic is a game of dice, squares, the theme could be different, but these themes get the players to think and remind them that these phenomena exists." "All games serve a recreational purpose, but these games put you to think about the problematic related to the frontier."*

"In real life you always try to cross something to the other side and you think 'lets see if I can…' uncertainty… in the game you live it. The dynamic is very ludic[11]*: you laugh about the aspects presented because they are true… but I think it also helps those who have not experienced it." "I think the game* [referring to the visa game] *was too hard, they should be thing that could help you more." "But that is the point* [another player answering to the previews comment]… *I think the mechanic was good because if it was easier it would be very boring*."

In the process I also received very constructive criticism:

"In the Bridge game it is confusing to read the boxed specifications… well, not hard, awkward… because you need to turn around to read each specification." "It took me a while to understand [referring to *Observance*], *I think it needs more detailed instructions." "It would be interesting to add factual information about the things that happen in the real border." "After getting the basics is easy to understand* [referring to *Observance*], *it helps to have instructions in the board." "The bilingual touch is good because this is a problem in both sides." "Is an*

[11] Variation of the Latin word *ludus* meaning in this case playful

element of seriousness [another player continuing the comment about the bilingual aspect of the games]."

Were you able to clearly identify the social issue of the game?

When I asked this question in Juárez and El Paso, the expressions of the players while answering were obvious. It was different in Lubbock. There it was a "yes" but I perceived a sense of realization in the answer. This question did not generate much conversation although there was one person that made this additional comment: *"Yes, because I have lived in El Paso* [comment from a player in Lubbock]."

Did you learn something new about the social issue played in the game thanks to the material presented? Or, did the game make you think of matters that you had never thought of before in relation to the social issue? (Combining answers from questions 7 and 8).

"*I was never aware that you could lose your stuff going back to México."* *"I liked the last final part of the game* [the visa game] *where you are not guaranteed to get it* [the visa]." *"The other games seem to be more serious than ours [the crossing game]… it is fun but you get to enjoy crossing drugs and getting money for it." "Everything happened in front of us… when you don't need to get a visa you never think about the things people need to go through… here it is 'in your face' but it is a game." "Where do you start? We were running around trying to figure it out… it is a hard process." "Do you think that game* [the visa game] *can help you before trying to get the visa?* [This was a question made by one of the players]."

"It is a frustrating process to reach your goals." "Not really because we know the issues… it is a very latent reality, the geniality was in the way it has been presented in the games." "All Mexicans understand these realities, but wanting to identify them is the hard part." "What would happen if we made this same exercise but in the center of the Republic?… we as fronterizos[12] *are very conscious already* [a player asking and proposing to take the games to southern parts of México]." *"I was thinking that these exercises should be directed to junior high or high school kids… because these kids maybe don't even have an idea of how their father makes a living. They only know that he goes to El Paso and then comes back with stuff. Kids become illuminated with dynamics. The game makes the kid to participate… you can ask them to write an essay and they would not do it, but to participate in a game they will."*

Did you learn something new about the social issue thanks to the interaction between players? Or, in your game-session, was there any conversation in relation to the social issue presented? (Combining answers from questions 9 and 10).

"There was much communication and much of it was in relation to la migra *and how to get away from it… we made a lot of jokes about that." "We mention things about the problem in the border but in relation to the analogies made… jokes in respect to the things that were happening in the game."* "La migra *is a constant in all the games. It's the thing that we need to run from: 'be*

[12] *Fronterizos* is the Spanish equivalent of borderlanders: a way of naming the people that live in the border or the frontier.

careful they are going to get you!'" "That achieving the process [of immigration] is implicit in the games." "It is crazy that people hunt you… to kill them [the immigrants] … and they still want to cross that bad." "I think they guess that if is going to make your life better… willing to cross and risk all that, it is kind of crazy [another player continuing the line of the last comment]." "*I have never experienced crossing the line* [referring to the international border], *but I can get an idea now." "We did not talk, we were trying not to get deported* [in relation to the *visa* game]." *"Yes, but I cannot remember right now."*

When engaged in the game, what did you concentrate mostly in?

"*Probably enjoying [the game experience] and playing… and winning." "It was all about winning." "Winning and getting the money... but I had an internal dialog in my own head, about what is going on, thinking that there are people that do that for money… taking stuff and selling it on the other side." "I already mentioned this: there is guilt* [referring to the capture of immigrants in observance]." *"Winning." "When I play something is to win." "There was a moment that I only thought of winning… but then on helping so we could all win." "In winning, that is why we wanted to play once more."*

Would you like to make any additional comments or suggestions?

At this final stage of the interview, some of the players made comments in relation to some of the things that they thought might help the structure of the games, but only a few made comments in relation to the social issues. In most cases, they were restatements of comments made before. Most of the comments related to the purchase of the games: *"How much [does] it cost?" "Do you sell them?" "Where can I buy one?"*

I conclude this section with two of the comments that I least expected: *"You rarely see people begging for money in Juárez, you see it around El Paso but in Juárez they are doing something, even if it seems so small… selling roses* [comment from a player in Lubbock]." *"They are being productive* [different player continuing the line of the conversation]."

What the E-mail Interviews Show

The e-mail interview was sent to players two weeks after their game session. Players who answered were compensated with a $10 gift certificate. From the 16 players who signed a consent letter for this part of the research and to whom I sent the questionnaire, I received back nine that were suitably answered (to see a copy of the consent letter and the e-mail questionnaire, please refer to Appendix C).

The questionnaire consisted of 14 questions divided into the following five categories:

- Game habits (question 1)
- Consideration about the games and topics in the games (questions 2, 5, 6 and 7)

- Perceptions about the game session (questions 5 and 8)
- Points of view or perspectives in relation to border issues and immigration (questions 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)
- Additional comments

The reason for this follow-up questionnaire was to continue the dialogue with the players and learn about their retrospective reactions to the game sessions. The questions in the e-mail were taken from the pre-game questionnaire and the post-game interview after the game sessions. One of my intentions was to give a response opportunity to those who might have felt intimidated by the group session or the video camera recording and answer in a more intimate space. For the most part, that is what happened; still, some of the other seven players that never answered the e-mail questionnaire but signed the consent form were some of those quiet ones, as well.

Except for number four, all questions were open-ended and required players to develop their own opinions. I found that this development complemented the answers given in the interview session. For example, question two in the e-mail questionnaire (*What is your opinion about the inclusion of social topics in board games? Did you ever consider this possibility?)*, is related to questions three and four from the pre-game questionnaire (*Have you ever approached a game as a learning tool? And, what do you think about the inclusion of social issues in board games?*). The answers from the e-mail questionnaire complemented the limited answers that were given in the first questionnaire, providing me a better understanding of the player's opinions.

In the following sections, I will present comments from the e-mail questionnaires. I cannot correlate the answer with the identity of the commenter because of the anonymity agreement made in the consent letters; however, I will identify comments by the location where the player participated (Juárez, El Paso, or Lubbock). I am not including all the comments but am presenting sections of the answers that I consider significant for this research. The questions are not presented in the order in which they were made. I consider the questions and answers that I have chosen to display in this chapter to be strong examples of players' opinions and reflections related to the games, the game sessions, and the issues explored.

Please describe the experience(s) that you have had with board games in your life. For example: Do you play a lot? Do you own board games? Do you have a favorite board game?

> *"My experience has been very scarce, […] I preferred outside games that [involved] some physical activity […]. Today my attitude is more open and I try to appreciate them, […] but I do not have any intention of buying one."* (Juárez)
>
> *" I have a long and complex amount of experience with games of all kinds. I was introduced to games very young, and continue to play often recreationally with my family and friends. I play games ranging from Twister, Sudoku, Mahjong, Cranium, Battle Ship, word games, strategy games, card games, etc."* (Lubbock)
>
> *"Before I used to play them, especially games like Turista,*[13] *Monopoly, Serpents and Ladders, but today I replaced these games with videogames."* (Juárez)

[13] A game similar to Monopoly® but very popular in Spanish speaking countries.

"Today I do not play so much with board games, probably the cause is that I do not own any. […] It could be that age influences this and as kids we are more fond of these practices." (Juárez)

"My experience with games is very limited. I do not have games in my house and I do not have a favorite one, but I am attracted to Scrabble." (Juárez)

"I do play often. A group of friends get[s] together every other week or so and have a 'game night' where usually we play Settlers of Catan, Monopoly, Clue, or other games that we already have or just bought. I own a couple of traditional games, […] games where strategy is involved are the ones that capture my attention the most." (El Paso)

"I used to play board games much more as a young child. As an adult, I never really find myself with an impulse to play them. I have never really had a favorite, but the ones I remember playing the most are Clue, Monopoly, and Scrabble. Today I generally find board games boring." (El Paso)

"Not so much anymore, I played a lot more when I was much younger with my family. We had monopoly, that was probably one of my favorites." (Lubbock)

"I would play board games as a child with my family as a way to pass the time. Now, not so much." (Lubbock)

What is your opinion about the game you played? Did you find it entertaining? Did you enjoy the event in general?

"I thought the game was very fun, it reminded me of battleship, all in all it was a good experience." (Lubbock)

"I enjoyed the game it was very entertaining and competitive." (Lubbock)

"The only game I really felt would be a game I would play again was Game (b) [Observance]. Games (a) [the crossing game] and (c) [the visa game] I did not find as entertaining as Game (b). This is probably because Game (b) was the only game that had a real sense of urgency that wasn't imposed by an arbitrary timer. I also thought it had the largest strategic element of any of the games presented, making it the best game from a purely gaming standpoint." (El Paso)

"Again, I had much fun playing all of the games. I think they are great as entertainment but also as tools to wake up our knowledge about these social truths and to live at least a little piece of what really goes on in the life of an immigrant." (El Paso)

"I found both games interesting [the ones that this person played], in fact in the Green Goes [the visa game] there is a type of alliance between players that I liked, and in Observance it highlighted the trust that one should have with a rival." (Juárez)

"I enjoyed the game that I played [the visa game]. It appears to me that the dynamic of the game is capable of generating teamwork, even when the participants don't know each other (that was my case). It seems to me that the game represents in a very similar form the subjects that it represents, I even made the same tantrums that I make when the immigrant officers so gently deny you something." (Juárez)

"Very amusing and didactic at the same time. I have been a participant in that process so it was not that unknown to me [in relation to the subject of getting a visa]. On the other hand, my teammates that came from other cities saw it as something distant." (Juárez)

"I absolutely loved the game. It was fun and entertaining, as well as trying, intense, and educational. Overall the event was well thought-out and enjoyable." (Lubbock)

"They were very amusing and it was a very interesting experience […]. As an event, I think that it is a very original way of showing art and to interact with strangers." (Juárez)

What is your opinion about the inclusion of social topics in board games? Did you ever consider this possibility?

"I think it is a very clever way of getting people talking about important issues while having fun. It's a good way to work important matters into casual situations without being forceful about it." (Lubbock)

"I think it's a good idea, and [an] idea I never seriously thought of before." (Lubbock)

"I think the inclusion of social topics in board games is sure to cause some controversy. I see this as a good thing because it stimulates discussion. The possibility of the inclusion of these topics in board games is not really something I ever thought of per se, but I have seen video games (like the Metal Gear Solid

series) touch on social topics before and found it interesting if not thought-provoking." (El Paso)

"It never occurred to me that something like this could be done with such appeal to the 'real thing,' I mean, I went through some of the steps deployed in these games —being an immigrant myself— and I found [it] interesting that people could not only picture themselves within the game, but also people could learn about the 'adventures' one has to live and experience while coming to this country and trying to legalize their status in it. It was not only fun because it was a game, it was fun because it is reality set to a board game. Like when someone tells a joke and people laugh because they have done the same or been in the same place before." (El Paso)

"No, I never contemplated the idea of including topics on social aspects in board games. Now I see it appropriate, now I gained conscience on what is happening around me and what these events produce. These games in particular caught my attention and I would continue playing them if I owned them." (Juárez)

"I find it very interesting in addition to the fact that what makes you win is the communication with others […]. The ludic aspect of art is always important." (Juárez)

"I think it is edgy and different. There are numerous amounts of games that pull in cultural influences, but they do not actually address cultural topics. I think that it just pulls in another interesting aspect into the game —more to think about." (Lubbock)

"I never considered this possibility and it seems to me as an extraordinary idea […] the player (through the game) forms a more complete opinion to have to be a participant of the social situation. Another important factor is the interaction with other people that might have different political opinions; this allows […] the possibility of an open dialogue […]. There is also the acknowledgement of these games as pieces of art, […] this directly approaches the problem of art that remains distant and inactive […]." (Juárez)

How was the interaction among players in your game session? Did you learn something new about the social issues thanks to the interaction between players?

"The interaction was very competitive. It made the issue seem like a more 'kill or be killed' type of scenario." (Lubbock)

"We talked a lot during the game. I learned a lot." (Lubbock)

"Unfortunately, there were very few players at my game session. The interaction was friendly, but I did not really learn anything about the issues that I can recall." (El Paso)

"Some of the games require expeditiousness and working in group or team-work. I think most people are used to play[ing] against each other and could not grasp the concept of working together. I learned that most people, a very high percentage of us, are individualistic." (El Paso)

"I think that the interaction in our game was the best one, we were able to join together as a group to try beating the game." (Juárez)

"Complicity is the word that I can think of when I remember the game session. I was able to understand better the situation between immigrants because in the simulation I was one of them." (Juárez)

"The interaction among players was very fluid, so much that by the second time that we played the game we were able to conclude the game with enough time. But frankly, I did not learn anything from the other players." (Juárez)

"There was a definite interaction among the players in the Visa game, because the players have to work together to actually win the game. For example, only one player can get others out of detention and there need to be two players to sign a document." (Lubbock)

"It was good but I do not think I learned anything from the other players." (El Paso)

What is your opinion in respect to the issues on immigration, and in what way do you think it affects you, personally?

"In a few words, the government of the United States should make the process of legal work more accessible for immigrants. I think this country depends on the work from these immigrants and should be responsible for them. Many families who live in Santa Fe, N.M., say that in reality 'la migra' knows about all the illegal workers and could capture them if they really wanted to, but it is convenient to have them there." (El Paso)

"I have many opinions regarding immigration, mostly they depend on the situation, as most things do. I am from Dallas[;] therefore, [I] am not as close to

the situation as others. I think that everyone should get a [chance] to be an American citizen, however, I do think that it is wrong to come into the country illegally and expect to [not] be challenged on one's right to work. I think that Americans should work in America, that if an immigrant would like to work then they should have to do through the same paper work we would if we wanted to work in another country. The rules should not change because of the number of the population that immigrates. This is just the opinion of a city girl that is not very familiar with the issues." (Lubbock)

"I have been a resident of the border all my life. It is a topic that, although it is not in everyone's mouth every day, I am aware of the preoccupation that exist[s] being a citizen of the border. My house has been a bridge for family that has crossed to the U.S., so that topic it is very present in my family." (Juarez)

"It is logical that an economic power like the United States should be careful about who goes in and out of their country […]. But this is one of those situations where the one with power abuses it and exploits it. This breaks with my fairy-tale-ideas that we should share and live in harmony, to give importance to the human things, to sentimental things." (Juárez)

"Immigration is a problem of two nations and there must be a solution from both sides. It affects me, personally, I have family on the other side of frontier, and whom migrates to a country in search of a better quality of life helps the whole family." (Juárez)

"I believe we (immigrants) go through these situations because we are looking for a better opportunity, a better life, […]. The fact that those chances of 'making it' in this country seem to be narrowing down and becoming more difficult to obtain, forces people to find a way in […]. People are going to try and keep trying […]. So, I think that if the authorities of this country realized that the immigration is not going to stop, they could spend more time trying to implement an orderly and legal way to control it." (El Paso)

"I think most immigrants are just trying to escape a very poor way of life in Mexico, and I cannot blame them for their occasional desperation, which results in them trying to enter the country illegally. I do not personally feel threatened by immigrants in any way, and I think some of the social ills in the USA (e.g. lack of services) that some try to attribute to immigration should actually be blamed on ineffective American policies and bad social attitudes." (El Paso)

"I'm more or less neutral on the subject. I understand that immigration is a big problem, however[,] our country is made up of immigrants. A lot of the things we take advantage of in this country are provided by immigrants." (Lubbock)

"I think immigration will always be a tender subject […] since the colonization of the United States people have been having trouble with groups of different ethnicities moving in, but without immigration we would have cultural stagnation […] having lived in south Texas for most of my life I have had several friends who have had parents who were immigrants, from experience I can say that not everyone from south of the border is a drug dealer or arms smuggler." (Lubbock)

Did the games made you think about things that you had never considered before in relation to the issues presented?

"Yes, the absurdity of some situations, on how irrational it is some times when you are trying to get a legal permit and this depends more on chance […], the multiple ways in which the life of an immigrant is in danger when trying to cross, the how unjust and inefficient they can be on the international bridge." (Juarez)

"Yes, from a far away stance, I would not think about how stressful it is to get your papers and how much one would have to go through. However, once all the objects are in order —and we were lucky with our roll of the dice— there was a definite feeling of accomplishment." (Lubbock)

"I did not think of something new." (Juárez)

"In my case, I do not think the game created in me a consideration, rather a reconsideration on the topics." (Juárez)

"I was aware of these topics through the media, but with the games I was able to deepen into the situation." (Juarez)

"Not really, because I lived them, but the games did bring back memories from the past." (El Paso)

"Since immigration is an issue which I have put quite a deal of though[t] into, nothing in the games really surprised me." (El Paso)

"This game [Observance] seemed to be more about intensifying the idea about what goes on when people are trying to cross the border illegally" (Lubbock)

The reactions of the players in the game sessions fulfilled my expectations and satisfied the self-imposed requirements that I needed for this research. Each stage produced important information that allowed me to evaluate the key points that I visualized early on for the games. In many cases, I felt overwhelmed by the labor that the creation of the games implied, in addition to the time and effort required by each of the game sessions. I felt skeptical at some point about the participation of players and their interest in the games, but it is gratifying to see all the information gathered from these "game experiences." After exploring the possibilities of my socially-based board games and testing the capacities of players (including their patience), finally I will conclude this study in the following chapter by making summative observations about the information presented.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS

The attraction of board games

I believe that the information presented in Chapter Five serves as evidence that board games are critical sites of not only interaction but also social awareness and possible social change. According to Stoll & Inbar (1970), "Games have been predicted to induce virtually every individual and social skill imaginable," and it is my belief that board games still have something to offer an audience that is now used to the immediacy of digital technology (p. 374). Key elements board games offer are face-to-face interaction and increased socialization, skills that seem to be limited by the individualistic approach taken by high technology societies and their educational methods that teach isolation and alienation (Goffman, 1967; Johnson, 2006). For the present moment, video games have taken the initiative to evolve and generate a multiplayer experience superior to the one that any gamer could have had in the last three decades; still the capacity of computer games has not been able to reach or simulate the experience of board games (Gibson, Aldrich & Prensky, 2007). Zagal, Nussbaum, & Rosas (2000) concluded that "although the vast majority of games played all over the world are collective in nature, practically all electronic games are individual" (p. 448).

As I pointed out, 33.33 % of my players preferred video games to board games (see table 5.2), and two players directly expressed in the follow-up interview that board games have become an obsolete activity in their lives since videogames cover their *ludic*

necessities. Still, all of these players came to the event (though perhaps dragged into the game sessions by curiosity) to see what my particular board games had to offer despite being told in advance that these games were related to social issues. Nevertheless, as far as I can tell by the video recordings, all players presented enthusiasm, positive interaction, and had expressive fun in the game sessions.

I have mentioned before in this dissertation that some people might consider the study of board games to be dead science. Personally, I have been confronted by some who would prefer to see a digital version of my games rather than try to understand why I research board games and why I bother to design them. In Chapter Five, some players noted that board games are related to their early youth activities and now, although they talk about some games in a nostalgic way, they lost the enthusiasm about playing with board games. I can not blame them, instead, I blame an industry that has infantilized board games and cannot evolve from games created 30, 40 or even 50 years ago. My players view those games nostalgically because that is what they are: nostalgia items. They are objects encapsulated in time by the toy industry and bought out of nostalgia by parents for their children. Regardless of their outdated capacities, these games still function as objects that promote interaction and socialization, serving as stepping-stones for other, more evolved, games, and constitute —according to Bailyn in *Education in the Form of American Society*— a "process by which a culture transmits itself across generations" (as cited in Wallace-Adams & Edmonds, 1977). Sadly, board game mechanisms, or probably the topics displayed on them, no longer attract many gamers' interest.

How it is possible then that these players, who since childhood have abandoned the interactivity of board games, have experienced so much enjoyment by participating in an experiment based on board games? To answer part of the question, I think it was the feeling of communion, association, and a deep connection that it is necessary for human beings as social creatures that we are (Boyd, 1938). According to Kelly-Byrne (1983) "there is a close relationship between social play and intimacy," something that, as I mentioned before, videogames cannot yet replicate (p. 160).

I admit that from the beginning there was certain skepticism on the part of the players; you could feel a type of aversion, and I almost thought that they were going to leave before even starting. I do believe they were drawn to the game sessions by curiosity about the topic, but they stayed because of the mechanisms of the games. Furthermore, I believe that players enjoyed the experience because of the aims of the games and because of the interaction that the games facilitated. The games that I designed for these events had "challenging mechanisms" and topics that interested my audience. My games worked on a level that can be appealing and interesting to an advanced audience, beyond the over-used mechanics of "who gets there first" common in commercial games like *Trouble®, Sorry®,* and *Candy Land®*, among others.

One might have the impression that we lose the capacity to play games because there is a stigma that says that there is something childish about playing games (Johnson, 2006). Instead, I think that, as we grow up, we lose the taste of playing games made for children after surpassing that developmental stage, and as grownups, we learn that there are little or no board gaming options available. Not all of us enjoy chess or canasta, both

considered "adult games," and not everyone can meet the demanding requirements of some digital games. This begs the question: where and what are the "grownup" games? In some instances, Mr. Yehuda Berlinger, a well known *bloger* in the world of game and gamers has said that *Euro games* like *Settlers of Catan®, Puerto Rico®, Ticket to Ride®* and some other blockbuster hits are the next evolution of challenging board games since they require the skills of an older audience (Haynes, 2006).

In these cases, "the skill" that Berlinger is referring to is the capacity of the players to deal with the game's mechanics like exchange, deceit, alliances, and visualization of future outcomes. However, there are other games that concentrate on the maturity of the topic rather than the mechanics, like trivia games (e.g., *Scene It®*, *Trivia Pursuit®*, *Jeopardy®*, etc.) that assume the players will have to be a certain age in order to recall aspects of culture.[14] Trivia games are one of the oldest types of games in the industrialization era, and they can be very entertaining as long as one person does not dominate the entire game (Hofer, 2003). By experience, I can say that these games also tend to be intimidating to some people because they require specific knowledge of a topic.

Based on the spirit of trivia games, one of the youngest and most popular companies of board games around, *Cranium®*, has developed a series of games that appeal to old and young audiences simultaneously. In these games, well-known game mechanics have been mixed (like charades, pictionary, etc), and the trivia questions are not too demanding for a less experienced audience, allowing players to succeed in the

[14] Although I am well aware that there are trivia games for kids, these also depend on the maturity of the child to have an archive of the culture in question and understand the contents of the games.

game according to their own individual capacities: as their slogan says, "Everyone shines." I think that it is important to highlight this mixture of mechanisms in order to advance the development and creation of games. That is exactly what I did in my games: I incorporated a series of "nostalgic" mechanisms, making them more dynamic than other, "more commercial games," in addition to adding a topic that made the games appealing. As a result, intrigued players saw the final products with interest; they found the mechanics entertaining and enjoyed the experiences of the game sessions. From the quotes presented in Chapter Five, I could perceive the same feeling that I perceived from the environment in the game session: here was a group of young adults enjoying board games, interrelating, interacting, laughing, and playing. It was not about being childish or encountering the inner child. It was about enjoying a natural impulse, socialization, and taking pleasure in the challenging activity of playing games; these sessions created an appropriate environment for my research, and I will begin to analyze the information recollected from them in the following sections.

Conversations

When reviewing the videotapes from the game sessions, I was rather disappointed with the type of interaction during the games. I was expecting players to engage in conversation about immigration and the border and, as I previously expressed, this did not happen. The reason for my expectation refers back to 2002 when I had people look at and play the first version of *Crossing the Bridge*. Those early game sessions, although not intended for the same purposes of this study, generated immediate conversations. While

the players were throwing the dice, they would make comments about things that happened to them a day earlier or a few months before. They would talk about the issues that some family member had experienced or comment about the situation of the border, in general. The whole game session was a combination of playing moves and conversations. I found that this did not happen with the current games.

At first, I was disappointed: I was concerned even when I was conducting games in the sessions, but I never expressed this uneasiness with any comment that might confuse the players or force them into acting "unnaturally." After reviewing the tapes for a few times, I realized two important things. First, that the 2002 version of the crossing game was very slow compared to the new version. The old version gave the players enough time to chat about their troubles while waiting for their next move. Secondly, those game sessions were conducted with close friends or people that already knew one another. These two important variables can explain why the players in these new game sessions acted differently.

On the other hand, I was surprised about the conversations during the interview sessions, particularly when the players would directly express their concerns about the issues presented and the way they saw them in the games. Still, there was a sense of cautiousness when answering. Players were very careful not to say something that might sound biased. Even in Juárez, where I expected more negative comments about immigration or the legal system between countries, players gave very respectful and appropriate answers. They, as did the players in the other session, limited their comments to things that they found out because of the games, things that they realized when making

small talk during the game sessions, or things that they found amusing about the materials presented.

I can understand players' reticent point of view and the reasons for this. First of all, I was present during the interview sessions. As I previously explained, I feel that my persona is perceived with caution on both sides of the border. I confirmed my assumption when I revealed to the players in Juárez that I was one of them: Mexican and raised in Ciudad Juárez. They were surprised. They even said that they thought I was from the U.S. and was doing research in México. At that point, we had already gone over the questions and were in the process of additional conversations; even now I wonder what would have happened if I had told them about my background from the beginning.

In El Paso, it was more obvious that there was a mixed audience; because of where we were, there was an understanding that color, shape, and language do not present the identity of a person. I learned this from my years as a student at UTEP. At least from my experience, people did not talk freely about a controversial topic like immigration if they were not surrounded by a very familiar group of people that are not going to feel offended or make a big deal out of the comments… except if they are looking for a good fight.

In Lubbock, I think that the cautionary nature of the comments was mostly due to my relationship with the players: except for one, all players were my students at the date of the game session. My influence on them as an authority figure and as a person from México, I feel, made a huge difference on their commentaries. However, the written

material from those that answered the e-mail interview did compensate for their verbal caution, a trend that I will be commenting upon very soon.

From the videotapes of the game sessions and the material from the group interview, I can conclude that the game sessions were successful in gathering players, having them interact with board games, and helping them engage others they had never met before in conversation. Although the specific conversations that I was expecting during the games never happened the way I wanted them to occur, there were still corresponding conversations about the topics in the games during the interview sessions. Players did make realizations about immigration and the border and were able to identify the topics in the games. Players also appeared to enjoy the games as playing tools: they gave positive comments —a considerable number of times— in relation to the inclusion of the topics and how they were implemented in the games. Suggestions to make the games better and visualize the game's potential were expressed, as well.

Written Data

About the issues and topics

In an earlier chapter, I explained that half of the players identified themselves as Mexican (see table 5.1). My assumption, upon reflection, was that the majority of answers from question nine in the pre-game questionnaire (see table 5.4) were going to favor immigration more so than any other answer. There was in fact a strong range between answers that favored immigration and those that did not, with larger numbers for the answers in favor of immigration. But these numbers were made possible not only

because of the answers coming from Mexicans: immigration was perceived positively by a considerable number of those who came from other cultural identities. In some cases, the answers did not even correspond proportionally to the amount of Mexicans. For example, consider the results from answer *F* (see table 5.4b), where the number of players self-identified as Mexican is relatively low in relation to the proportions from the other groups. Similarly, the results from answer *L* (also refer to table 5.4b) show a small selection from the Mexican players. In contrast, there are a considerable number of Mexican players who chose answers *C*, *G* and *I* (table 5.4b), which are answers that had the most results from all respondents. The high numbers for this answer do show the influence expected by a majority of Mexican players, but answers from the other groups also helped increase the total number of responses favoring immigration.

Still, what surprises me the most was that the only player who selected answer *J* (see table 5.4a) was a Mexican from El Paso; the answer from this player made me doubt, so I went back to his questionnaire and reviewed the other answers made. Under question nine, his other answers were *C, E* and *H*. *C* is an answer that I considered pro-immigration and pro-diversity, and the other ones (*E* and *H*) reflect a resistance to immigration and diversity. These answers suggest that this player did know what he was answering when he selected answer *J*. In conclusion, despite being Mexican or considering himself Mexican, he inclined the majority of his comments to be against immigrants and immigration. I think that this example breaks with the assumption that all Mexicans would be in favor of immigration. I conclude that our personal histories divide us perhaps even more than our cultural backgrounds or nationalities. I have encountered

this type of reaction in the past with co-workers and friends who ended up living in the U.S. This reaction is commonly known as *malinchismo*[15] in México, referring to a person who talks or acts against his own people or country, in particular against México and Mexicans. I am exited that I was able to capture such a reaction in my study to serve as evidence of the plethora of feelings and ideologies that are found in the border.

When reviewing the groups by geographical region, (table 5.4c) I found it very interesting that players from the border were the ones that thought of the border as a place of decadence, filled with violence (answer *E*), while only one player from Lubbock made this selection. This shows that the perception of the border as a problematic place to live is not only promoted by the media to create a biased opinion in people who are not *borderlanders*, the people in the border also consider their living area to be dangerous. In contrast, I was very enthusiastic that out of all the players, only two thought that illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted (answer H). These numbers correlated with the answers from the e-mail questionnaire, where only one player expressed that illegal workers should be denounced. Other players gave their opinions based on conditions; in other words, they did not see it as a black and white situation. One of the players from Lubbock expressed that if the illegal workers are prosecuted, then the ones offering jobs should be prosecuted, as well. Another player from El Paso said that the only instance where prosecution should happen would be after the U.S. has passed appropriate reforms. Thus I conclude that, in general, there was no direct sentiment against illegal workers

[15] The expression derives from the historical-mythological character La Malinche, who is said betrayed its own country by being the translator for Hernán Cortez and later his wife (Anzaldúa, 1987; Bonfil-Batalla, 2005).

trying to make a living in the U.S.; instead, there is recognition of the work done by illegal aliens and a very strong recognition that the U.S. can progress as a nation if the potential of diversity is appreciated (answer *I*).

About the games and the game sessions

The results from question six in the pre-game questionnaire show that 69.23% of the players consider that board games are tools that reinforce socialization (see table 5.2, question 6). The videos and comments made in the interview sessions reinforce these results. Furthermore, the answers from the e-mail interviews show that players had a successful interaction; I base this conclusion also on my personal observation during the game sessions. Still, information from the e-mail questionnaire shows that the transmission of information related to the border and immigration did not come from players during the playing sessions but rather came from the interview sessions. I touched on this topic earlier in this chapter when talking about the interview; I can reinforce those results with the information from the follow-up written material.

Something that might help explain the lack of conversation about the social issues during the game sessions is the intention of the players while they were playing. As stated in Chapter Five, most players concentrated on winning. Additionally, I think that they also concentrated on learning the games. This is understandable when we consider that none of them had played similar games before. The mechanics, although generally familiar to them through other games, were more complicated and challenging because my games combined several mechanics simultaneously. For example, in *Observance*, the

players were searching for pieces in a coordinate-board while searching for a specific object and trying to visualize where the pieces of their opponent were moving. All players, even the ones that stayed after the interview session and continued to play the games, remained concentrated on the games. This concentration persisted even when players knew that the cameras were off, with no pressure of any kind, and after becoming familiarized with the other players, my assistants, and myself. To conclude this part of the study, I observed the following tendency in the game sessions: players, while playing, concentrated on playing. This is not a conclusion about games in general but rather an analysis of what happened in the settings prepared for this study. The outcomes might have been different if the settings or the levels of familiarity between the players were changed: for example, consider the early comments that I wrote about the interaction of the 2002 version of *Crossing the Bridge*.

Notes on the inclusion of humor in my board games

As I stated earlier in this study, the first version of *Crossing the Bridge* was made as an artistic statement. Part of it was telling a joke about the current situation of the ports of entry, and some elements of it were taken as jokes, sometimes not the ones that I had in mind. When I visualized a new version of the game based on my new purposes, I did not directly incorporate the humorous elements into the new games because I was looking for a more serious approach and acceptance. Thinking about it in retrospective, I remember even using the expression of wanting to make "serious games," which might sound like an oxymoron right now, but that was what I envisioned. This does not mean that I wanted

to make boring games because this would defeat the purpose of making the games in the first place in order to present very serious topics. The games had to be fun because "fun games are what players want. A fun game makes for a pleasurable experience, which is why people play" (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004, p.334). Perhaps play and humor tend to be seen together as one package because both signify enjoyment. According to Koller (1988), "since play like humor is manifested in almost infinite styles and nuances, there does [do] appear to be connections between humor and play" (p. 143). Still, I did not want to design "ha-ha" games, or laughing-matter games, but rather entertaining and interesting games while presenting serious topics through *humoresque* elements.

When it comes to humor, I think it is very hard to say when you are doing or making something humorous. It is like saying "I am funny" when I might or might not be. The perception of humor, I think, is relative, or as Giselinda Kuipers (2006) explains it: "What counts as good humor differs from group to group, from person to person, and from moment to moment." (p.1). Clear examples of this are some of the elements that I created for the first version of *the crossing game*; players never considered them as being humorous or funny, they rather found elements that they could associate with and consider those funny.

Still, to help the players perceive the social topics instantaneously, all of the games that I have created so far include caricatures of cultural elements and cultural practices—these elements are simplified and rearranged in a small package called a board game, which connotates play and signifies humor. But even caricatures can be serious (e.g., Gómez-Peña, 1996; Nericcio, 2007). Nevertheless, there is evidence in the data to

support the idea that humor was expressed by the players in the form of laughter, comical comments during the game sessions, and reaffirming humorous remarks during the interview sessions. Although the games were not design with direct humoristic purposes, I cannot deny that they were received with humor and generated humor in the players. For these reasons, it is important to analyze this reaction.

Koller (1988) says:

> A distinction worth considering is that between *etic* [my italics] and *emic* [my italics] humor. Etic humor refers to judgments by outside observers as to what constitutes humor within a given society and its culture. Emic humor refers to when and why indigenous persons, members of the in-group, think something is funny from their point of view. (p. 142)

Because the games deal with cross-cultural issues, it is important to understand the nature of the laughter coming from the players. "It's one thing to use humor as a coping strategy or as apolitical or artistic strategy—but it usually has to do with the oppressed feeling and using it and not the oppressors." (E. Check, Associate Professor in Art at TTU, personal communication, June 5, 2008). On one hand, we have players that live the issues presented in the games and confront their realities through humor. Some of the players in Juárez, for example, expressed that the games were funny because they were true. From their point of view, the laughing matters presented in the games were representations of their first-person experiences and can be counted as legitimate laughing matters from someone who has experienced them.

On the other hand, several players who had little experience with the border also reacted to the games with humor. The question is: what were they laughing at? One of the players expressed that, to him, the act of smuggling and getting away with it with no real repercussions was very funny. In the game session's videos, you can hear him laugh out loud when he makes his first successful contraband. Going back to the videos from the game sessions in Lubbock, I notice that mainly the laughter comes from the enjoyment of the games and not from the circumstances that the games project. This is reinforced by the interviews where the players express sympathy for the issues presented and for the real people that go through the actions represented by the games' mechanics. I feel that the players in this case acted *etically*, referring back to *etic humor*. They were sensitive about the use of their humor, respecting the circumstances of the issues that they have not experienced.

In relation to theories of *postcolonialism*, the use of humor by the subaltern is a challenge, or as Sandoval might say, is "self-consciously viewed and utilized as one tactic" against the oppressor (p. 75). "The ability to openly joke about an issue without social sanctions is a gauge measuring the freedom in a society (or an institution) and an indicator of issues that are restricted or taboo" (A. Schneider, Associate Professor at TTU, personal communication, June 2, 2008). I cannot deny that humor is a common practice among subaltern artists like Lalo Guerrero, the father of Chicano music. What follows is a sample of the lyrics from his song, Zoot Suit (1979):

Orale carnal, aqui estamos

Shine up your calcos and put on your tramos

Grab your carlango and wear your tando

Let's go downtown, donde estan bailando

You know we might have to fight

Put on your zoot suit, let's go out tonight

In this passage, Guerrero uses English, Spanish, Spanglish and *pachuco* expressions considered an aberration of language during the 1970s, possibly the equivalent of Snoop Dog's lingo today. Still, he intended this song to be a remark upon his culture, a culture denied in two countries and confronted with violence throughout the border. Other examples can be seen in Anzaldúa's poetry (1987) and the performances of Gómez-Peña and the contemporary group *The Latino Comedy Project* (www.lcp.org). Humor is always present, but the type of humor expressed needs to be examined with serious awareness.

Answering questions made by the players

In the last part of the interview sessions, players asked me a few questions that I then tried to answer. Some of the information presented in this paper could answer some of their questions, which I would now like to address because I think they are relevant to this part of the study.

Do you think this game [the visa game] could help people before getting a visa?

My answer is yes. In Chapter Three, which talks about the games and why I created them, I specify that I decided to use the actual name of the documents, the

requirements, and some of the mechanics that reflect the process that people go through when trying to get a visa because I wanted to guide abstractly through the process. I excluded prices and costs because these change constantly, and other procedures were adapted to follow a play mechanics, but I feel —also according to some of the players' comments— that the game's process is very real and is appropriate to what the game is trying to show.

What is the age range for which you made the games?

I had no age in mind, but I certainly did not make the games for small children. I think that those who have reached reading age and have some development of abstract thinking can learn the mechanics of the games. As I mentioned earlier, there are many mechanics intertwined within the games that can be confusing to some novice players but obvious to others. Overall, my main intention with the games was to present the topics of immigration and the border to a variety of audiences in order to disseminate knowledge.

What would happen if we played them in the south of México?

In the process of figuring out where I was going to have the game sessions, I envisioned one in the central states of México. Because of time constraints and a lack of connections, I was not able to have a game session there; however, I thought about it and believe it would be interesting to make a few more copies of the games and take them for a tour of other universities in México to see the variation of opinions.

Further considerations

As I write this last chapter, my Frontera is being militarized as a result of the drug wars that keep feeding the sensationalist views of the media. My friends in Ciudad Juárez tell me about the impotence they feel as they go to the streets wondering if they will be involved in the middle of a shooting, or if they will see a dead body lying in the street. "You need to put this in your games" they enthusiastically say to me since they see the games as an important reflection of truth. I wish that just by doing so, things in the border could magically get better. I know they will not, but at least I feel as if I am saying something about the issues and situations that direct the circumstances that the border, my friends, and my family are facing today, and by it the healing will occur gradually.

In Chapter One, I presented three main goals that I wanted this study to realize through the use of custom-made board games presented in specific game sessions: (1) to encourage people to talk about their experiences (or lack of experience) about the topics of immigration and the border and receive information back from other players who might have a different view on the subject; (2) to have the players question the situation on the border and feel curious about the system that works on both sides of the frontier; (3) and finally, to create interest in border issues with the intent of promoting social justice and awareness. In addition, I approached a series of questions that I dragged with me since I started to present the first version of *Crossing the Bridge* back in 2002: can these games make a difference? Could it be possible for a group of board games to present the situation of the border and create a discourse between players? Furthermore, can games actually change someone's mind on the subject of border relations?

I feel that my set of board games succeeded on their purpose. I got people to talk about the border even when games were not being played. The players who did not have much experience with border issues expressed realization and interest about what was going on. For a brief moment, there was a transmission of knowledge from those that have lived on the border to those who have only heard about the border. There were some that expressed that they learned nothing about the topics presented in the games, but without realizing it they learned that others do not know about the issues or have different opinions about them.

I presented a small sample of a bigger reality through my games, and now that reality is marked, pointed out, called on to be reviewed, re-read, and explored by those affected by the games. According to Salen & Zimmerman (2004):

> We do believe that all games reflect culture to some degree, as they are objects produced and played within culture at large. But not all games manifest transformative cultural play to actually transform culture. (p. 507)

I believe that my games do have the capacity to transform culture through one of the oldest activities in nature: gaming (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971). This craftsmanship and the exploration of game objects have a potential that, as I expressed in Chapter Three, has been left unexplored. There has always been an understanding that board games are powerful tools for education and change (e.g., Katter, 1988; Sanoff, 1979), with capacities as powerful as art (e.g., Kasfir, 2007; Legal, 2003), but because of all the elements that need to be processed to create a board game, the effort is directed toward other activities or products. Marsh (1981) states, "the teachers' reasons for not

using simulation games were related to skepticism about their educational benefit, concern over costs, and an unwillingness to spend the preparation time needed" (para. 2).

I think that board games should be included and taught in classrooms, and board games should not just be used but created. These games should not just be for the benefit of playing, but should also be socially based. Games should say something about the way we live and can express subjects that are hard to understand because they do not relate to our lives. Games can give us an idea of what it feels like to live in poverty in Africa, or in constant persecution in Eastern Europe, or explain what it feels to be bullied in the park in front of your house. We can write about these things, we can make art and songs, but it is through the process of interaction with others that we exchange our perceptions, compare our ideas, and feelings (Sutton-Smith, 1979). According to Goffman (1986) "a plaything while in play provides some sort of ideal evidence of the manner in which a playful definition of the situation can utterly suppress the ordinary meanings of the world" (p. 43); this transforms the routine into something that goes beyond contemplation and instead enhances awareness.

In 2006, when I began to think about the benefits of games and how to proceed with this research, I envisioned a movement, a call for artists to "stop making non interactive art and break the wall between the art object and the passive viewer" (ludoztli.com/about.html), I called this movement "ludoztli" which I translate as "making games." In the ludoztli.com (2006) manifesto, I wrote:

> In this movement, games cease to be purely recreational objects and become active art. Anyone who wants to express an opinion, make a social statement, or

> to declare an injustice can approach it this way. I expect that the game-art, the ludoztli product, will place the viewer in the eye of the hurricane, transforming him/her from a simple viewer into an active participant, into a socially-aware gamer. With ludoztli I intend to promote interaction: action and reaction. Board games will lead the way! (para. 4)

Back then I only had a vision, an expectation. Through the process of the game sessions, I understood that this change was possible. Gaming interaction is the key to social awareness. It is hard to make a game, but the benefits multiply, and it opens a new window of options on how to teach and how to learn. Our tools of learning are becoming more and more individualistic. Consider reading, for example, think about how far in the practice of reading the person leaves behind the interaction of group reading and becomes isolated (Johnson, 2006). While by making board games in the spirit of the ludoztli manifesto, the following benefits are realized:

- The student (or person designing the game) exercises his or her mental capacities of imagination, projection, abstraction and cognitive association.
- The designer researches and explores the social topics that he or she wants to display in the games, exposing the designer to social awareness, cultural understanding, or self-exploration and evaluation.
- The designer practices his or her writing and reading skills in the creation of game rules. And because the feedback will be tangible when players of his or her games try to understand them, the designer will appreciate the importance of clear expression via writing.

- The designer manufactures the product, exercising his or her artistic capacities of craftsmanship in many disciplines: modeling, drawing, painting, sculpting, cutting and pasting, or even photographing.
- The designer tests the product, engaging in social interaction by presenting the game to others. In this way, the designer will be challenged by critique and understand the importance of modification.

It is my opinion that the result will be a product where the designer invites others to explore her or his life. In this case, for example, the creator of the game is not just giving us a picture of her life, or a description of her house, but it is inviting us inside, or placing us in her shoes. I see the creation and design of social board games as the ultimate design project, where all skills and capacities are implemented and the projection of visions and ideas become palpable. I think my games are just the first drop in a river that can make a change in the perception of culture. I see with enthusiasm the reaction of students, educators, and friends when they see the possibility of creating their own games within their reach.

Further studies

In the process of reviewing the archived documents, I began to realize that there were additional questions that I would have liked to ask the players. This thinking retrospectively about the "would haves" and "should haves" might be normal to anyone doing research. For example, I do not have any reference to show that the players changed their mind in relation to the issues of the border or immigration by playing the

games, or that they found something in the game sessions that made them think twice about their original perceptions. But instead of longing for acts not done in the past, I am beginning to visualize further research that will extend the life of this study. One option could be to contact at least three players, one from each game session, and interview them about things that might have changed since the game sessions. Players might have had further discussions about the games with their families or friends, or might have researched more about the issues presented; apart from the interview session (and later the e-mail questionnaire), I do not know these things. It would be interesting to know what the game sessions' effect on players was in the long run. Another extension of this research, which I mentioned earlier in this chapter, is to make more copies of the games, take them to southern parts of México, and archive the findings. I am still curious to see what the reaction of Mexicans who have been affected by the border from a distance would be. Some of them might have family members who left looking for the "American dream" and never came back. What would their reaction be to the game of *Observance*? Or how would they feel about learning the legal process of getting a visa with the *H1-B* game? I think the outcomes would be very interesting.

I have had some offers related to the games. For example, a gentleman that collaborates with the Organization for Human Rights in México wants to discuss the possibility of making games that present the issues of immigration from Central America into México, which could be a logical sequel to this research. In this case, the study would concentrate on México's southern border with Guatemala and Belize and the

processes of illegal immigration in México. This study could give an interesting point of contrast to the topics presented in the current games.

In addition I want to continue to be a spokesperson who advocates board games as tools for social awareness and education. I feel that playing board games is an activity that needs to persist in every culture, and it need to be promoted to those cultures that do not have any games of their own or whose games have been lost. The first country I anticipate working with is México. With a cultural heritage damaged by colonialism (Bonfil-Batalla, 2005) and neocolonialism (Regalado, 2007), México has a poor recollection of historical games, and the only well-archived board game is *patolli* or the game of the bean (Bell, 1979; Phillips, 2006). In 30 years, the only games that originated in México and were attributed to Mexicans have been *Maratón*®, which was popular in the mid 1980s, and most recently, *Adigma*®. Apart from those examples, México only translates and reproduces games coming from the U.S. I do not know the reasons for this, but I have the feeling that if there is a program that stimulates Mexican youth to create board games, an enlightened generation that will carry out their capacity to invent, develop, and create will be nurtured. What started with the creation of board games can evolve into engineering and science. I feel it is time to make the Mexican ingenuity shine, and I think that games are the answer. In this way the creativity, energy and potential of México could go into development and maybe then we could leave behind the paths to migration, drugs and its wars.

Epilogue

In the fall of 2001, a border patrol agent detained me because I was taking pictures of the international bridge in El Paso. He took me into an office, and he asked me what my intentions were with those photos. I told him that I was doing some research for a board game. He did not believe me. I put my hand into my jacket and pulled out a few cards that I had been working on for the first version of *Crossing the Bridge*. He took the cards and left. After few minutes, he came back to the office with a superior and two other officers. They looked at me very seriously and asked me to tell them what this "game" was about. After I explained the idea, they laughed and the superior officer said to the others, "Now we are going to become Monopoly." I laughed with them because I was nervous, but at the same time I felt offended because they compared my game to what is in my opinion a cliché. I do not know, maybe the game sounded like Monopoly, or maybe that was the only reference that the officer could think of. However, at that point, I decided that *Crossing the Bridge* was going to be more than just a board game.

Francisco Ortega-Grimaldo, August 2008
For updates on this research and upgrades on the games,
And additional materials, please visit **ludoztli.com/games**

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Game Rules

Crossing the Bridge …… 165

Observance …… 171

H1-B Visa (aka Green • Goes) …… 176

Crossing the Bridge v6.4 (the board game)

Players smuggle illegal cargo, like food, alcohol, illegal aliens, and drugs, into the United States by hiding them in their vehicles... But it is not that easy: the Border Patrol Officers will be searching for illegal cargo before you enter the country. They could take your cargo, your passport, or even your car as a penalty for being a smuggler.

If you are successful, you will receive money for smuggled cargoes that you can use to buy appliances and furniture for your house (which in turn need to be smuggled back to México to avoid paying taxes) or to buy more cars. The player that gets all the appliances necessary to have a first-class-home wins the game.

For 2 to 4 players.

Contents:

1 game board
1 pair of regular dice
1 colored die (4 sides red and 2 sides green)
1 set of four colored passports (red, purple, blue, and yellow)
1 set of four colored house cards (red, purple, blue, and yellow)
4 sets of eight colored cars (8 red, 8 purple, 8 blue, and 8 yellow)
Money in 5 different denominations (5, 20, 50, 100 and 500)
1 large yellow pawn
1 orange pawn (seller)
A set of multiple merchandise cards: 10 refrigerator cards, 10 TV cards, 10 stereo cards, 10 washing machine cards, 10 furniture cars, 10 computer cards, 10 weapons cards.
A set of 60 cargo cards: raw meat, fruits, illegal aliens, marihuana, and cocaine.
2 bridges (if downloading the internet version, the bridges have been included in the game board)

Setting up:
Each player chooses a specific color: red, purple, blue, or yellow. According to the color, a player receives a passport, 1 house card, 3 vehicles, and $300.

INTERNET VERSION NOTE: If you downloaded the version of the game through ludoztli.com/games, you can also download the document "money.pdf" and print many copies to have enough money to play with.

Another option is to give each player **pencil and paper** to keep a record of the "gains and loses." This option can save you paper and ink. Make sure that the correct adding and subtracting process is taking place. After a few turns all players should give an account of their financial situation… kind of like "taxes season." If a player is found

cheating, the others can determine his or her penalty. For example, taking one vehicle, taking an appliance from their home, financial compensation, etc.

To determine how to place the cars, each player throws one die. The player rolling the lowest number places a car in any place on the "alto, aduana Mexicana" line (white box, red letters). The player rolling the second lowest number also places a car in this line; the player with the third lowest number completes the line. The player who rolled the highest number begins in the next line in front of the other cars (gray boxes). The sequence repeats until all players have placed their cars. At this point, all vehicles are on the Mexican side of the border. **For example,** if players rolled a 1, a 6, a 4 and a 2, then the player who rolled 1 places the car first, then follows the player who rolled the 2, then the player who rolled the 4, and finally, in the next line (gray boxes), the player who rolled the 6.

It is recommended that the player with the highest amount on the die throw be in charge of the money and the merchandise. However, any player can take this responsibility.

Place the orange pawn in the box labeled "TV" in the shopping mall.
Place the big yellow pawn in the yellow-boxed section on the square that says: "advance two extra spaces."

Loading your cars: Each player (starting with the one that had the highest number on the die throw) throws ONE die three times. These throws will determine how much cargo each car will be taking into the US.

- If you throw an odd number, you may place one cargo in any of your cars. (Use the slim cut on every car to place the cargo cards.)
- If you throw an even number, you may place two cargoes in any of your cars.

NOTE: Every time your car comes back to México, make sure that you load cargo into it following the same system.

Put the cargo cards in a box or bag and grab them without looking. Choosing the cargo should be random.

After all vehicles have been loaded, you are ready to begin.

The first player (the one that had the highest number on the die throw) throws both dice. Use the amount rolled by a single die to move one car. **Example:** If you throw a 3 and a 6, decide which car will move 3 spaces and which car will move 6 spaces.

Additional specification: You always need to move your vehicles, if possible. You cannot choose not to move unless you really cannot move.

NOTE: you cannot jump the cars in front of you. If some other car (yours or another player's) is in front of the car you are moving, you need to stop at the box right before it.

Throwing doubles: If you throw doubles (for example, both dice show the number 3) you may do one of two things:

1. Move two cars the total amount on both dice, or
2. Move one car the total amount on both dice and throw again. Only two doubles in a row are accepted.

Lanes:
Notice that there are three lanes from the Mexican to the US side of the board: left, center, and right. Your vehicles are placed in one of them and need to continue on it accordingly. **You cannot change lanes unless passing over the boxes that have a two-way arrow or three-way arrow.** If you pass over on the arrow-box, you must decide which lane you are going to jump to according to the options in the arrows. You can also decide to continue on the same lane. But pay attention to which lane your cars are in and which lanes your opponent's cars are in, as well. It is very easy to change lanes without noticing, which is a violation of the rules.

Yellow marks:
From México to the US, there are many yellow oil marks. When someone lands on one of these marks, they need to do what is specified on the yellow box where the big yellow pawn is standing. The first player who lands on a yellow oil mark will move two extra spaces because that is where the yellow pawn always starts.

After following the directions, the player can decide where the yellow pawn will be placed next. You cannot leave it in the same place that affected you; its placement needs to be changed.

Arriving to the US Customs:
All cars need to stop in the green box labeled "Stop, US Customs." Even if you are a square away and you throw a six, you will need to take just one step and stop there. After dealing with Customs, you cannot move out of that box until your next turn.

At Customs, the officers will check your passport and your vehicle for any cargo. Relax and look cool. Throw the colored die (the one with 4 sides red and 2 sides green).

- **If you get a green side,** collect the money corresponding to the cargo that you just crossed and return the cargo cards to the cargo bag or box (depending what you are using).

- **If you get a red side,** remain calm: it is not the end of the world, yet. Take one numbered die and throw it. According to the number on it, follow the directions on the red-boxed set.
  NOTE 1: If they catch you with food, return the merchandise and no additional penalties will be imposed.
  NOTE 2: If they catch you with illegal aliens, you need to surrender them and you will lose your passport.
  NOTE 3: If they catch you with drugs, you lose the merchandise and the car.

Multiple merchandises: If you are carrying different types of merchandise in one car, you will be penalized for the merchandise found but not for the one that they did not find. **Example:** The dice landed on 5, so your illegal aliens will be deported and you will lose your passport; you also had drugs in the car, but these were not found, so you can still collect money for the drugs.

NOTE: If you lose your passport, you can always buy it back in the mall. If at any point an officer asks for your passport in the US customs and you do not have it, you will be sent back to México (in any white box labeled "Alto, aduana Mexicana").

The Mall:
You can decide to go to the mall and start buying the stuff you need to improve your house.

Follow the orange arrows and stop on one of four orange boxes labeled, "Parking/Estacionamiento." You do not need a perfect number to stop at the mall, as long as you can roll high enough to get there.

While at the mall, you need to buy whatever the seller (the orange pawn) is selling. The first person to get to the mall will need to buy a TV because this is the space where the seller starts. Pay the corresponding fee and load it into your car.

After buying, throw one die and move the seller the required amount of steps in either of two directions, clockwise or counter-clockwise. The next person will need to buy whatever the vendor is now selling.

There are four squares that act differently:

- When you get the red box labeled, "trafficking with guns," you will place one gun cargo in the car and try to smuggle it back to México. If you succeed, you can collect the amount specified on the card.
- When you get the blue box labeled, "gasoline," you will pay $10 back to the bank.
- There are two yellow boxes labeled, "optional." If you get these, you can choose whatever you want or need to buy (only one cargo).

At any point while still in the mall, you can buy your passport for $100.

Buying in the mall counts for your turn. If you want to move along, you need to wait until your next turn.

Getting out of the mall: If you are in the far parking box, you can jump over the nearest parking box to the freeway and continue your die count. Although the freeway boxes are longer, only one car per box is allowed.

Going to México:
Try to avoid landing on the "Alto, aduana Mexicana." If you land here, any merchandise from the US will be confiscated and you will need to pay a $50 fee for attempted contraband.

If you get caught with weapons, you will lose your car.

Successful crossings: When you finally get your appliances or furniture to México, take the merchandise out of your car and place it in your house. If you crossed weapons, collect your money and return the card to the weapons pile.

If for any reason you have a double of anything (example: two TVs or two stereos), there are two additional squares in the attic of the houses where you can place your extras (labeled extra stuff and cachibache). Filling up these two squares is not required since you must only fill the other six squares made for specific merchandise.

Right after crossing the Mexican "aduana," you need to throw a die and load your car with more cargoes following the specifications found in the section, "**Loading your cars."**

Buying more cars: When any of your cars has returned to México, you can decide to buy an additional car. **Pay $200** to the bank and you can add a new vehicle to your lifestyle. You can have up to eight cars. As soon as you get your new car, place it on the "Alto, aduana Mexicana" white box and load it with cargoes following the specifications found in the section, "**Loading your cars."**

Remember!!!
According to the amount of vehicles that an individual player might have, his or her turn can take longer than others. In each turn a players could be moving vehicles, crossing the border with merchandise, buying something at the mall, loading more merchandize in a vehicle, or buying more cars, among other activities.

After a player has passed the dice to the next player, his or her turn will end. After this point there is no turning back. If some actions where left unattended (in favor or against the players) its the fault of the players, so pay attention to what the others are doing.

Losing the game:
A player who loses all of his or her cars will automatically lose the game. If this happens, the game stops and whoever has the most appliances and furniture in his or her house wins the game. If one or more players have the same amount of items in their houses, then add the amount of cars. If this is not enough to decide a winner, then add the money. The player with more stuff wins the game under these circumstances.

Winning the game:
The player who gets the six items for their house first wins the game despite the amount of cars or money available.

That's it. Any rule can be changed and other rules can be added as long as the players agree on it.

Enjoy the Game!
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If you have any comments or suggestions please e-mail me: pako@ludoztli.com

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Observance: The Board Game

> "In any type of game, the most important element is trust. When you cannot trust your opponent, there is no reason to play."
> -Recommendation by the author inspired by *The Grasshopper* (Suits, 1978)

For 2 players.

Objectives:
For Mexican (MEX) side: To find where the green card has been hidden and get as many immigrants to it as possible.
For United States (US) side: To arrest as many illegal immigrants as possible.

NOTE: 1 game consists of 2 sets with players alternating roles. In the first set, one player gets to be the border patrol; the other player plays the immigrants. In the second, set players alternate positions. The player who gets more immigrants to the green cards wins the game.

Equipment:
MEX side: 6 immigrants*, 8 walls labeled, "blocked," 16 "nothing here" tokens, 2 churches, and 1 green card.

*Immigrant Characters:

#1 – Lupe: Age 46. Her husband used to be one of the most popular coyotes in the western borders (Tijuana, Mexicali, and Nogales), crossing people from all nationalities to places as far as Vancouver, Canada. He was killed by gunshots in a confrontation with US governmental forces. She took over his rounds and she now leads the group you are in charge of.

#2 – Adrian: Age 33. Married to a US citizen, he returned to México after being tempted by the exquisite cuisine and was detained when trying to get back. He was charged of leaving the country before getting his official documents. He can receive a pardon in 5 years and request his residency once more, but he does not want to wait any more.

#3 – Lucia and son: Ages 25 and 1, respectively. She tried to cross legally when she was three months pregnant to stay with her sister in Missouri, but the officer that took her case declined the permit. She decided to stay near the border and work instead of going back to her hometown. Now that she has enough money to pay a coyote, she will try to go to her sister's.

#4 – Biridiana: Age 38. She comes to the US in seasons; this is her 7th year. She already has a very stable clientele in San Francisco where she works as a babysitter. Usually, she spends her summers taking care of upper-middle class kids while their parents go on vacations. Her clients pay her coyote fee and airfare from the nearest airport to the border, depending on where she is crossing. Before winter, she returns

home because she hates cold weather. She is the mother of 4, and the oldest of her children works in the roofing industry in Lubbock, Texas.

#5 – Enrique: Age 52. He used to work on a milk farm near Milwaukee for 7 years. During a recession period, his patrons decided to call the border patrol to avoid paying half of their workforce. He has been going back and forth, but this is his first trip in 10 years, and he says he already has a good connection in Connecticut for landscaping.

#6 – Paco: Age 12. His father left for the US when he was 8; after struggling for many months, Paco's father finally found a steady job as an electrician in Las Vegas. He went back to Veracruz on Paco's tenth Christmas. After that, both of his parents left, leaving him in the care of his uncles. They send him money to go to school and to be well dressed, but Paco has decided to go to Nevada to find them.

US side: 3 border patrol agents, 1 border patrol "K-9" unit, 1 minutemen couple (dressed in red and blue with firearms), 10 walls, 2 churches, and 1 green card.

*US Characters:

#1 – Mark: Age 30. He is an African American man who wanted to enroll in the US Air Force, but was not accepted. He suspects the reasons why he did not get in were purely based on racism. But instead of wasting more time with the Air Force, he decided to serve his country in the Border Patrol Agency since they promised him pilot training after serving for a few years.

#2 – Roger: Age 24. He is convinced that all immigrants are a threat to the nation and should be stopped at all cost. He is using this job as a springboard to get a position in the Texas Rangers where his father used to work. Most of all, he enjoys fieldwork instead of standing on an international bridge, checking passports. He likes a girl in the office, but he does not know that she is Dominican.

#3 – Albert: Age 27. After graduating from high school, he had to find a job to help with the family expenses. Although his family is from Mexican and Shout American origins, he feels it is his duty to stop any more immigrants from taking American jobs. His dream is to buy a Texas Edition Truck and live in his own trailer.

#4 – K-9 unit: Age 4 (28 dog years). She was found in the pound; her rescue was part of an animal shelter program where the Border Patrol Agency trained dogs to spot drugs and/or explosive substances. She graduated with honors from her class and now she has a profitable career in the force. She enjoys beef tacos.

#5 – Mr. Minuteman: Age 48. He loves to spend his weekends rounding the arid areas of the border, trying to capture illegal immigrants. He spent a fortune on high tech goggles similar to the ones used by Navy Seals. He ends his trips drunk and moody and always shoots at his empty beer cans. He is genuinely convinced that he contributes a great service to his country, although, in the 1960s, he refused to go to Vietnam.

#6 – Ms. Minuteman: Age 43. She takes her role very seriously and, every weekend, prepares all the necessities so she and her husband can go mount guard. Her religious devotion makes her go back to their town to attend church every Sunday morning, but she returns to their post by midday. She has known how to use a rifle since

she was seven, when she would protect the chickens on her daddy's farm. Because she always had to work, she never had a formal education, but she is able to read the good book while they wait to catch those nasty immigrants.

Additional Information: the game also includes a set of colored dice: one red, one green. Both players make use of these dice during their turn.

Set up:

Open the game board. The two middle sections should be in a vertical position, allowing a visual separation between players. The US side has the view of a night-light camera, which represents the interior of a very sophisticated, high-tech guard post. The MEX side looks like the interior of a truck, facing the restrained border. The horizontal sections (the ones flat over the table) are the same on both sides. All pieces must be outside of the board when beginning the game and should be placed on the name cards. Keep these cards and the characters in a place where both players can see them. Notice that each character piece has a number on its back. These numbers should be facing the board so both players can view them.

The US player hides the **green card** in lane "A" between boxes 2 and 8 on the US side (do not tell the MEX Side player where the green card is).

In addition, place the **churches** anywhere in lane "D." The churches are for political asylum. When an immigrant finds one, he or she cannot be captured while in that coordinate. When one of the churches has been found for the first time, the immigrant who found it can ask for any coordinate in line A to see if the green card is hidden there (one coordinate per one immigrant per church).

The Mexican side always begins (why would you want a border defense if you did not have immigrants, right?).

Throwing dice and actions:

For the US side: Throw both dice at the same time. The **green die** will determine which character will enter the board and the **red die** will determine how many steps the character must take. As the game advances, if a character is already in the board, then the green die will determine which character moves and the red die will determine how many steps are taken.

For the MEX side: Throw both dice at the same time. The player can decide which die will be assigned for the character, and which for the steps to be taken. **Example**: red die is 3 and green die is 5. You can choose to move character 3 five steps or to move Character 5 three steps.

US characters always enter through coordinates A-1 or A-9, which are labeled "Border Patrol Headquarters." Getting into the board counts as step one.

MEX characters always enter through any coordinate in line G, which is still part of the Río Bravo (Grand River). Getting into the board counts as step one.

In the US turn:

1. If in the throw of the dice, the red die was an even number, **place a wall/block** on any coordinate in line "E." Make sure you tell your opponent in which coordinate you are placing this wall so he or she can mark it, as well.
2. **Move your character.** Characters can move up-down, left-right, but NOT diagonally. You must always use the whole amount of the dice. This means that, in some cases, you will need to move your piece in circles until you reach the coordinate that you want.
3. **Search for immigrants**. Call out your coordinate first (where your character is standing) and any of the two formats shown in the game board (or see specifics below). **Example:** Character 3 is in coordinate C-4. You tell your opponent where are you standing (C-4) and you specify *search format 2*. This means that you are scanning four coordinates at the same time: B-3, B-5, D-3 and D-5. If your opponent has an immigrant in any of those coordinates, that immigrant will be captured and taken out of the game.
   NOTE 1: Only the character that moved can search for immigrants.
   NOTE 2: If you capture an immigrant, you can add a wall to line E

Search Format 1 will capture any immigrants in the immediate coordinate to the up-down-left-right of your piece, but not the coordinate that your piece is standing on.
Search Format 2 will capture any immigrant in the immediate coordinate to the diagonals of your piece, but not the coordinate that your piece is standing on.

Throwing doubles, US side: If you throw doubles (for example, green 3 and red 3), you can do all activities from 1 to 3, and throw again. Only two doubles in a row are accepted.

In MEX turn: (Remember, the Mexican side always starts first.)

1. Choose your options of movement or character. Try to move as fast as you can upwards. Remember that you cannot cross over any coordinate blocked by a wall. Characters can move up-down, left-right, but NOT diagonally. You must always use the whole amount of the dice. This means that, in some cases, you will need to move your piece in circles until you reach the coordinate that you want.
2. **If you want to search for a church,** you need to be standing on a coordinate in line D. Tell your opponent your position and ask if a church is hiding there.
   Example: Character 2 is standing in coordinate D-8. You ask your opponent if D-8 has a church.
   If the answer is yes, you are safe as long as you remain in that church. Make sure

to mark the coordinate with one of the "church tokens," so you can remember where you found it. With the character that found that particular church (and only with that character), you can ask from a distance for any coordinate in line A (only once) to see if the green card is hidden there.
If the answer is no, make sure to mark the coordinate with a red "nothing here" token.
NOTE: Searching for a church is a dangerous activity because you give up your position in the game. Make sure that you work strategically.

3. **If you want to search for the green card,** you need to be standing on a coordinate between A-2 and A-8. Tell your opponent your position and ask if the green card is hiding there. **Example**: Character 4 is standing in coordinate A-6. Ask your opponent if A-6 has the green card.
If the answer is yes, take out the character that found the card and place it on your side: this is a point in your favor. Do not forget to mark the coordinate with a "green card" token.
If the answer is no, mark the coordinate with a "nothing here" token.
NOTE: Searching for the green card is also a dangerous activity because you give up your position in the game, so make sure to work strategically.

Losing pieces: As the game evolves, your pieces will be captured or will find their way to the green card, so either way you will be limiting your capacity for movement. If the dice gives you numbers for pieces that are not in the board, you cannot move. You lose that turn and hope that you can throw something usable for the next one. This is why the MEX player can use the values of the dice interchangeably. **BUT** when you are down to your last piece, then throw only one dice, which will determine only the movement of that last piece.

Throwing doubles, MEX side: If you throw doubles, you can choose any piece and move it according to the sum of the dice, or choose two pieces and move them according to the number on each individual die. **Example:** both the red and the green die have a four. You can move Character 6 eight times or move Characters 2 and 3 four times each. After finishing this move, throw again. Only two doubles in a row are accepted.

Winning the game:
The winnings of the game depend on how many immigrants made it to the US, not on how many were captured. Remember that players need to switch positions at least once. Whoever introduced more immigrants into the US wins the game.

Enjoy the Game!
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If you have any comments or suggestions, please e-mail me: pako@ludoztli.com.

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H1-B Visa: The Board Game
(Also known as: Green • Goes)

This game plays better with 4 people. But it can be adapted for 3 or even 2 players.

As an immigrant in the United States, the best way you can work legally without being a resident is to have a H1-B visa. This is the story of four immigrants —Nicte, Vardok, Yin, and José— who arrived in the States under different circumstances but were united by the same goal: to get that visa.

Purpose of the game: To search for and present to the consulate of the United States (U.S.) four (4) essential requirements, securing an H1-B visa before 30 minutes run out.

Contents:
1 game board
4 immigrant characters: Nicte (pink), Yin (yellow), Vardok (purple), and José (blue)
2 Immigration Officers
14 playing cards
8 small yellow cards (issues to resolve)
8 small red cards (2 subway cards, 2 "go to interrogation" cards, and 4 requirement cards)
1 Timer (if you are using the internet version of the game, make sure you have a stop watch or look for a kitchen timer)
1 pair of dice

Knowing the game board:

The central location of the game is the U.S. Consulate. All characters need to start here and should end here as well. The consulate has four gray boxes specifying where you need to place each of the requirements that you and your colleagues will be looking for.

There are two subways stations, illustrated in red. These serve as tunnels to move faster around the board.

There are four green rooms. Two of these are the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) workstations. You go to these areas when you have an I-94 and want to free your colleagues from detention. The other two green rooms illustrated with American flags are the detention rooms. When the immigration officers catch anyone or a small red card tells you that you need to be interrogated, you can choose which room to be detained in.

There are eight black rooms with gray boxes; these are known as *administrative offices*. Here is where the small red and yellow cards will be placed with their specifications facing down. Three of these offices have illustrations that do not influence the game whatsoever. Their only purpose is to illustrate some of the things that immigrants go through when visiting the U.S. and trying to get an I-94.

NOTE: You can only enter and leave rooms through the yellow or white triangles. Only the consulate has two enter/exit yellow triangles.

Preparing the game:

Each player selects one of four available characters. Place your character in the central "Consulate box;" this is the beginning AND ending point of the game.

There are **two additional characters** dressed in green that use spectacles. These are the **Immigration Officers** who will be making rounds as the game progresses to look for suspicious characters that might be illegal immigrants. Place these characters outside of the "Detention Rooms" (the green areas with the U.S. flags), right on the box with the gray arrow.

Separate all cards by categories: playing cards, small yellow cards, and small red cards.

For the playing cards: Separate the ones that indicate "signature" and give one to each player. Shuffle the remaining cards and give one at a time to each player until all have been dealt. There are 14 cards, so some players will have four cards and others will have three.

Place your playing cards with the specifications face up so everyone can see who has what. This is important for the development of the game.

Playing cards will help you eliminate the small yellow cards. To see a correlation of cards read CORRELATION.

Small red cards: Shuffle the eight (8) small red cards and place them face down over the gray empty squares in each administrative office (the black ones with the yellow triangles).

Four of these cards contain the requirements that you need to request an H1-B visa: proof of payments, your current passport, applications, and personal documents.

Two of these cards serve as tunnels to the subway that can be used to move faster around the board.

The remaining two are immigration officers who need to interrogate you. When you flip these cards, you need to move to any of the "Detention Rooms" (green area with U.S. flag).

Small yellow cards: Shuffle the eight (8) small yellow cards and place them on top of each of the red cards. Make sure that the legend "Issue" is facing up.

Each of these cards has a hidden situation that you will need to overcome by using your playing cards. Each issue on the yellow cards corresponds to a solution indicated on the playing cards. In order to overcome the issue, **the player with the appropriate card** needs to move to the room and fulfill the requirements.

Example: Yin gets into one of the black rooms and flips a yellow card that requests for appropriate signatures. To meet this requirement**, two players with signature cards** need to be in the same room at the same time. Let's say that José is the player closest to the room, so he must move in there to present his signature card. Now that the requirements have been met, Yin takes the yellow card off the small red card. NOTE: When you use your playing cards (except the I-94s) you need to put them away and cannot use them again.

After eliminating the yellow card, the player who met the yellow card's requirement with his or her playing card flips the red card. Three different things may then occur, according to the contents of the small red card:

1. If the card has one of the 4 requirements, the player takes the card with him or her to the consulate.
2. If the card has one of the two subway signs, you can use it at any time as a passage to any of the subway stations or to the other subway card. .
3. If the card has one of two immigration officers, you must go to one of the detention rooms (green areas with the U.S. flag). In the case where two players are needed to satisfy the requirement (signature cards), both players go to detention.

NOTE: You do not need to flip over all yellow cards to win the game, only the ones necessary to find the consulate's requirements.

Moving around:
Use the pair of dice to move your character around the board. You can move in any direction as long as you do not go back and forth in one turn.
You only get to throw the dice once to move on each turn, even if you get doubles.
You do not need exact numbers to get into the rooms, just enough to get you into them. The moment you enter into an administrative room or the consulate, your movement ends. But when you use the subway, you can continue the steps remaining in the roll on the other side. Moving from one subway station to the next counts as 2 steps: one when you get into the station and one when you land in the other station.

In your turn:
Any player can begin the game; just make sure to follow the same pattern throughout the game. The first player needs to prepare the timer. Set it to 30 minutes, which is the time that all of the players have to complete the game. In a turn, a player may do the following:

1. **Throw both dice and move his or her character** (use the arrows to get in an out of the consulate and/or any other room in the game).
2. If you get into one of the black rooms, **flip the yellow card** and see if you can meet the requirements with your playing cards. If not, leave it with the requirement facing up so it can be taken care of by the appropriate player (the one that has the playing card to take the yellow card out).
3. **Throw one die and move both Immigration Officers** according to the number (both move the same amount of spaces). The board game has one visual direction: move the officer near the detention room on the top to the RIGHT (according to the gray arrow) and the other officer, near the bottom detention room, to the LEFT. They can only move following the green dotted path. **TIP:** immigration officers should never meet.
   After moving the immigration officers, the turn goes to the next player.

   NOTE 1: If you have one of the requirements, go to the consulate on your next turn and place it on the required place. This counts as one turn. After leaving the document, throw a die and move the Immigration Officers.

   NOTE 2: If you did not get a document, on your next turn, move to another box and follow steps 1 through 3.

   NOTE 3: While inside of the black rooms or the consulate you can decide not to move if this could prevent you from getting caught. This does not apply for the subway or the detention rooms. If you decide to stay in your room, you still need to throw the dice and the die to move the immigration officers.

Getting detained: There are two ways that you can end up in detention:

1. If you flip the red card that says: “We need to interrogate you.”
2. If one of the immigration officers, after moving, ends up four (4) steps or closer to one of the immigrant characters. The direction of the four steps does not matter as long as they remain in range.

NOTE: Immigration officers cannot reach you if you are inside of any of the administration offices, the consulate, or the subway.

NOTE 2: Even in detention you need to throw a die to move the immigration officers.

How to get out of detention:

1. By throwing a double with the dice in your turn.
2. If one of the players who has an I-94 card takes it to one of the DHS Work Stations. Using this card frees any player in detention. I-94 cards can be used multiple times and are not discarded.

NOTE: There are only two I-94 cards in the game and can only be used by players who are not in detention. If the character in detention has the I-94 card, he or she cannot use it to get out and cannot transfer it to another player while in detention.

Additional information about playing cards:

Players can exchange cards throughout the game. In order to do this, two or more players need to be in the same room at the same time and can only exchange among themselves.

There are two additional cards that can speed up the movement of a character:

- **The coffee card** can be used to duplicate the amount of one throw, and
- **The taxi card** that allows a player to throw the dice a second time.

NOTE: These cards can only be used once and only as described.

Correlation of playing cards with small yellow cards (issues):

Issue	Card
Signatures	Please sign your document (2 players are required)
Appointments	I made the appointments online
I-797 form	I have the approved I-797 form
Items not allowed	I am leaving all related items outside of the consulate
Job offer	I have the job offer here
Payments	I have the money right here
Photographs	I have the pictures right here

Finishing the game:

STEP 1: All documents need to be at their appropriate places inside of the consulate, and all characters need to be in the consulate, as well, before the 30 minutes are up.

Having all requirements and being there on time does not guarantee that you will get a visa. In order to get the visa, you need to be interviewed by an official who will evaluate your intentions for wanting to be in the U.S.

STEP 2: After satisfying step one, the timer does not count any more.

All players need to throw one die. There are two combinations that will let you know if your interview was successful:

a. If all players get even numbers in their throw or if all players get odd numbers in their throw. **Example:** Nicte threw a 4, Vardok threw a 2, Yin threw a 6, and José threw another 4. This is considered a good outcome, and the interview is successful.

b. If the sum of all throws total an even number. **Example:** Nicte threw a 1, Vardok threw a 4, Yin threw a 6, and José threw a 3. When adding these numbers we get a 14: this is also a successful outcome.

If the outcome is good, then all players will receive their H1-B Visas, which are valid for 3 years. After these 3 years, if they get to renew their contracts, they need to go through the application process all over again. Congratulations!

Enjoy the Game!

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Appendix B: Material to Build the Games

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Building Instructions

These instructions serve as guides to build the printout versions of the games *Crossing the Bridge, Observance,* and *H1-B Visa*.

Note: All of the game's files are formatted as PDF. To download and read these files, you might need to install Acrobat Reader onto your computer. You can find a free version of Acrobat at this website:
http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

Materials:
Use any type of glue (or binder) material that you feel comfortable with. Glue stick, multi-purpose glue, or even tape can work to get the game pieces together. In similar way, use whatever you feel you can handle better to cut the pieces: scissors or a cutting knife. You will also need a ruler and a kitchen butter knife to score the folding lines. If you are using a cutting knife, make sure to cut over the appropriate surface.

MATERIALS

PAPERS AND ILLUSTRATION BOARD

About paper: I strongly suggest looking for something thick that can be a little more durable. I have tested a #65 white card stock and that works very well. If you do not have access to this paper, regular printing paper will do, but I suggest finding something like illustration board to glue the game boards on to provide additional support and avoid bending and warping.

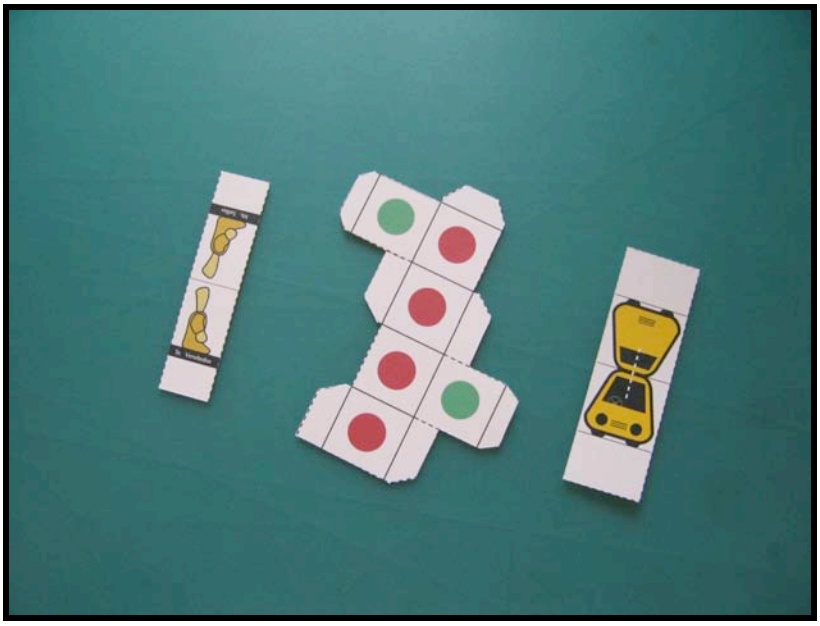
Printing:
The board game's files are very colorful; in fact, color is an important part for the game's mechanics. I understand that not everyone has access to color printers, but I have not yet created black and white versions of the games that can be colored by hand. I promise to work on this version and place it online very soon.

For the version available, I strongly recommend printing on a laser color printer, if available. An inkjet printer will do fine, but because you will be working with pieces that people will handle, the ink from an inkjet tends to run or smudge with sweat or liquids. If you are planning to print with an inkjet, I recommend buying some **transparent contact paper** to cover the game boards or even the game pieces. For those who are not familiar with this product, contact paper is a thin, transparent, plastic material that has adherent glue on one side and is commonly used to cover books or notebooks. This material can be found at almost any store, and it can be found in inexpensive rolls, similar to wallpaper.

Building:
Make sure to pay attention to the two types of lines that each game piece has. The dotted lines indicate cutting; straight lines indicate folding. Be sure to use a butter knife or something similar to score over the folding lines before folding. This way, the fold will be clean and crisp.

LOOK FOR THESE SYMBOLS

Most of the game board's pieces need only to be cut. There are a few pieces that require assembly, like the game characters, dice, or the cars. Also, the game board for *Observance* requires some folding and gluing. We will get to that part very quickly.

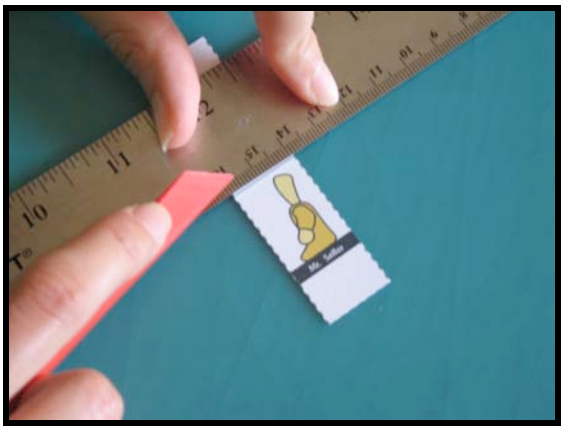


SAMPLES OF PIECES THAT REQUIRE ASSEMBLY

For the game boards from *Crossing the Bridge* and *H1-B Visa,* you need to print and cut four pieces for each. These pieces will have additional white areas for gluing all the pieces together. Make sure to follow the letters that coordinate the pieces together appropriately. **NOTE** that this version of the game does not require bridges; these have been included in the board.

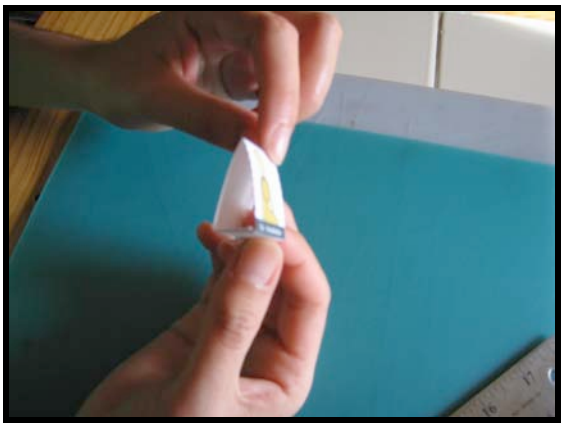
Observance also requires four pieces to build the game board. From the PDF files, print the **coordinate document** twice, but print the **Mexican side and U.S. side** only once. On the coordinate and U.S. side documents, you will see additional white areas. Score these areas and glue them following the symbols on the corner of the documents. Each of the U.S. and the Mexican sides need to be attached to a coordinate section. Finally, the top part of the U.S. side needs to connect to the top part of the Mexican side.

For the characters and cars, you need to score the paper pieces in three different places and fold.



SCORING PIECE WITH PLASTIC KNIFE

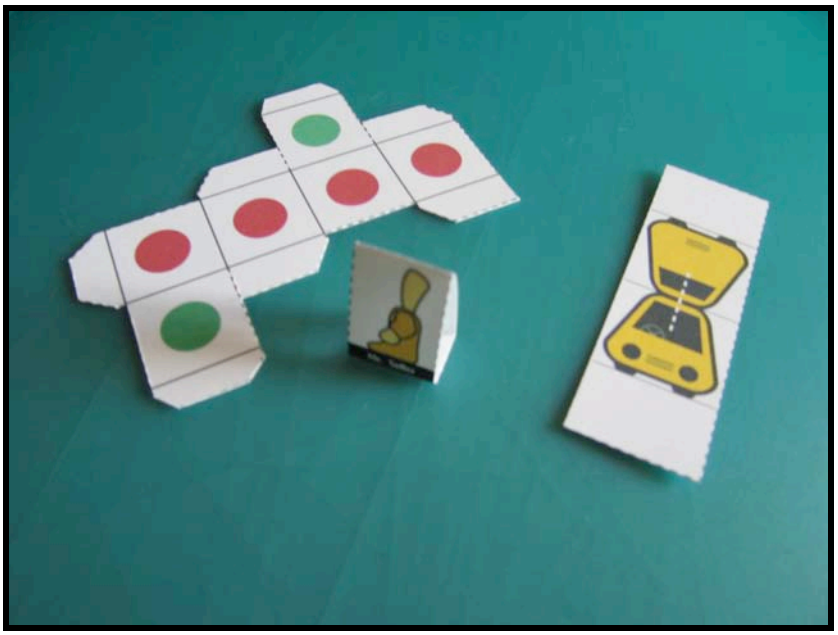
FOLDING SCORED LINES



FOLDING OTHER SCORED LINES

GLUING BLANK CORNERS

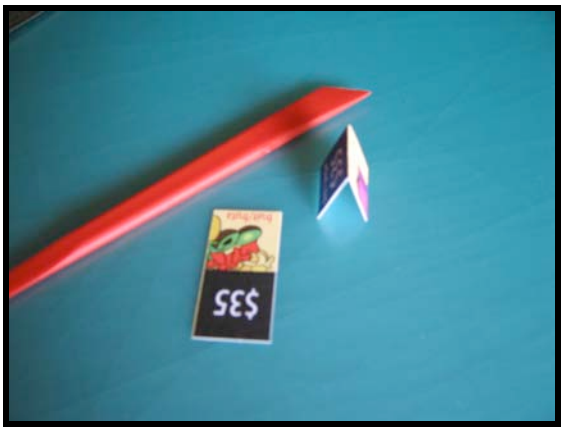
Glue together the additional white area at the external corners (blank areas). What you will get are some triangular shapes. For the cars, you can use that hollow area in the middle to place the merchandises and illegal cargoes.



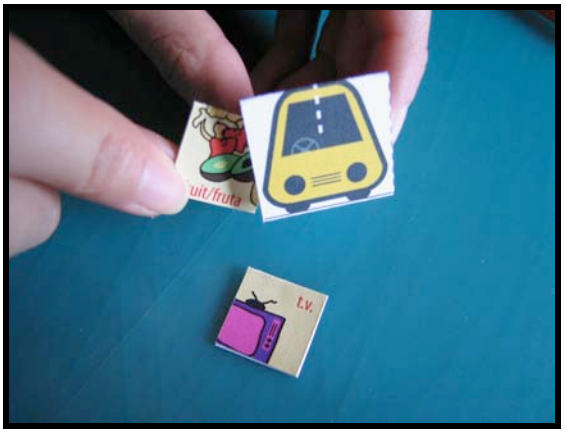
CHARACTER PIECE NEXT TO CAR AND DIE

When building the dice, make sure to score all the solid lines and fold them to have a more flexible material to work with. If you find that some of the gluing areas do not seem to fit, reduce them by cutting small pieces out until you get the appropriate size.

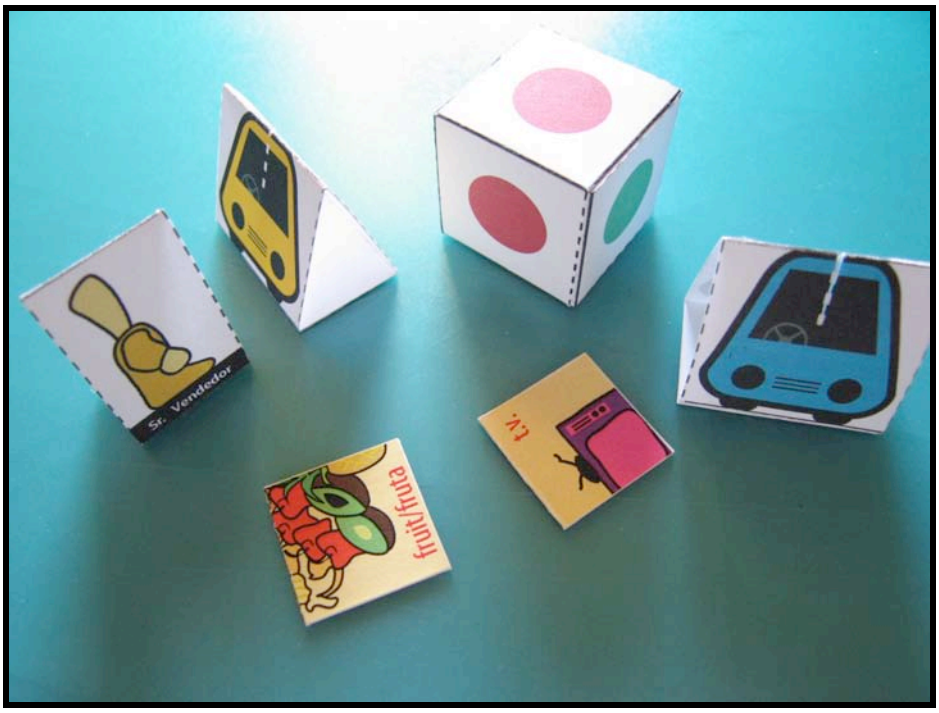
There are other pieces, like the merchandise cards, cargo cards, and passports, that are double-sided; make sure to score these cards in half and glue them.



MERCHANDISE PIECE SCORED AND FOLDED



MERCHANDISE PIECE BEING PLACED INSIDE OF A CAR



SAMPLES OF PIECES ALREADY ASSEMBLED

Suggestion: If you are using any type of wet glues, I suggest not putting too much on the gluing areas. This will dampen the paper, and you will end up with warped pieces. Also, do not forget to spread the glue evenly.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please e-mail them to: pako@ludoztli.com

Enjoy the games,
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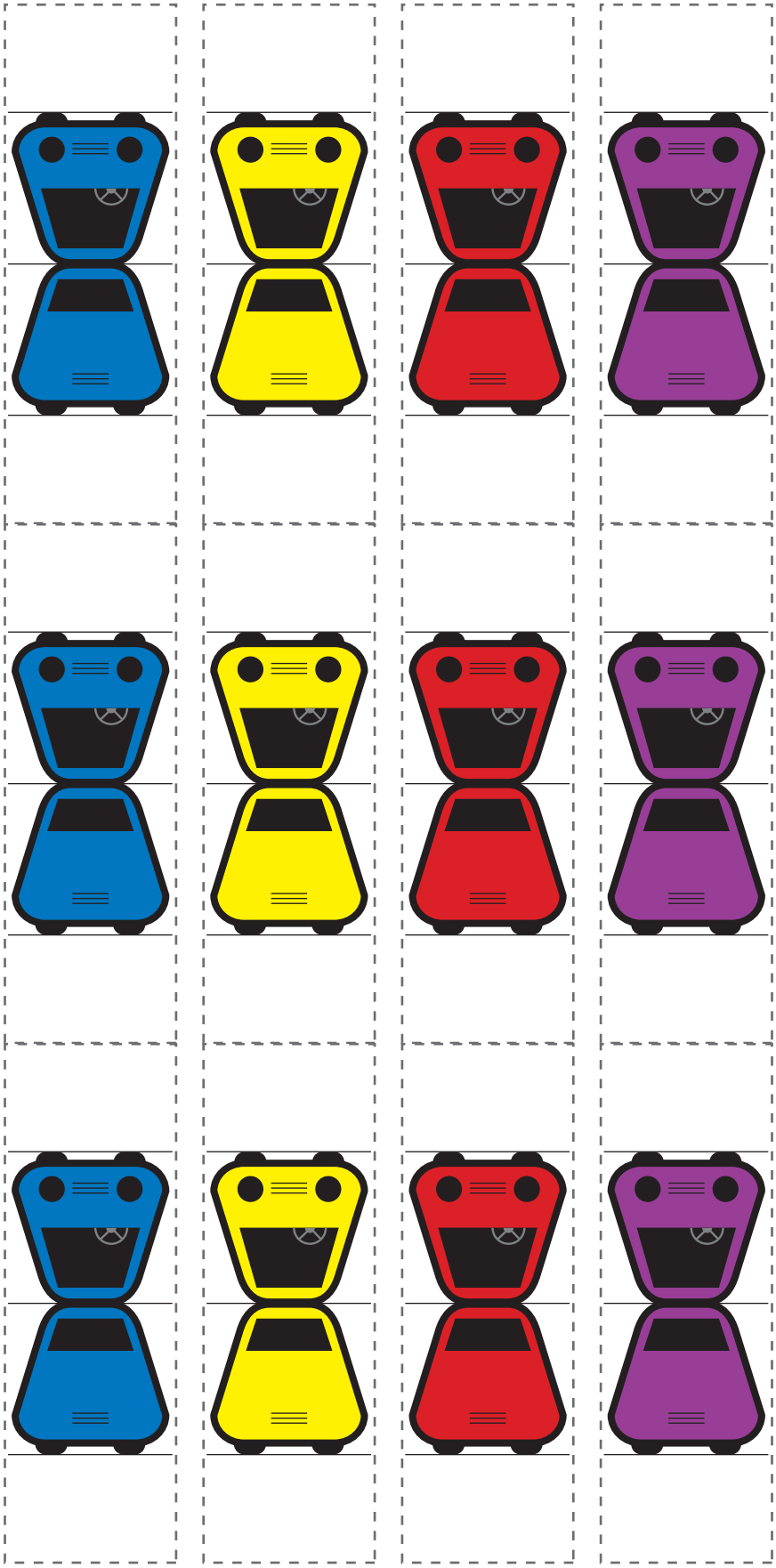
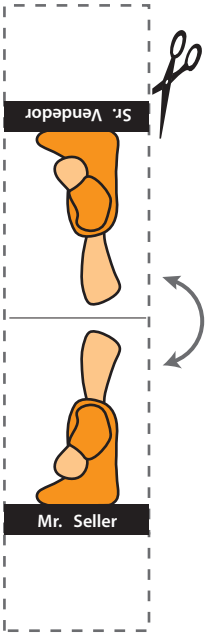
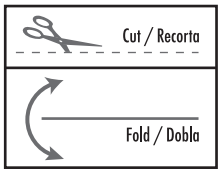
Building pieces for Crossing the Bridge

Vehicles 190
Dice 191
Guns 192
Illegal cargo 193
Appliances 194
Passports 195
House 1 196
House 2 197
Bills 198
Red chart 199
Yellow chart 200
Game board A 201
Game board B 202
Game board C 203
Game board D 204







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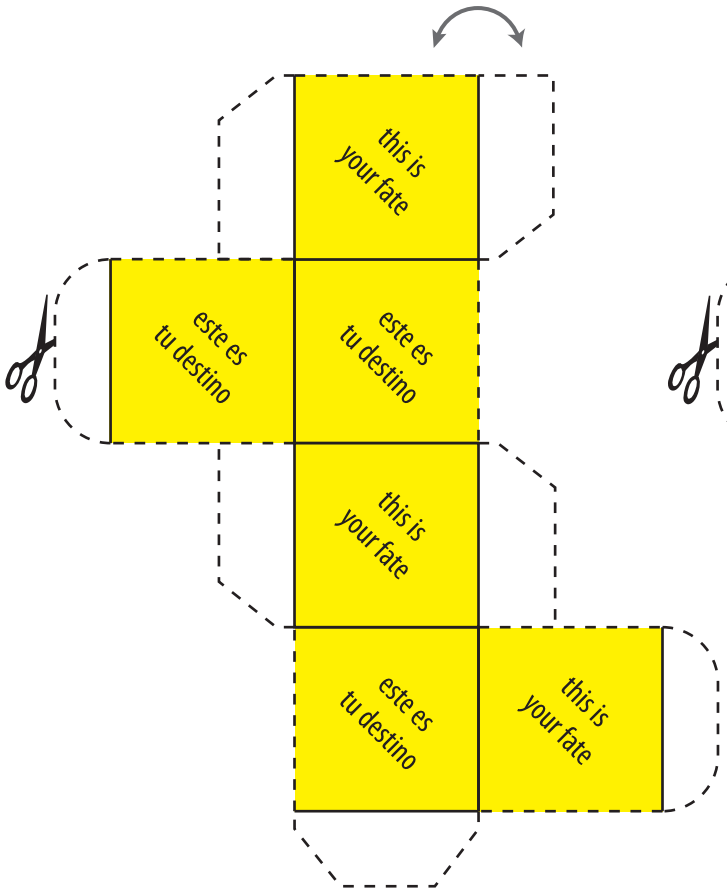

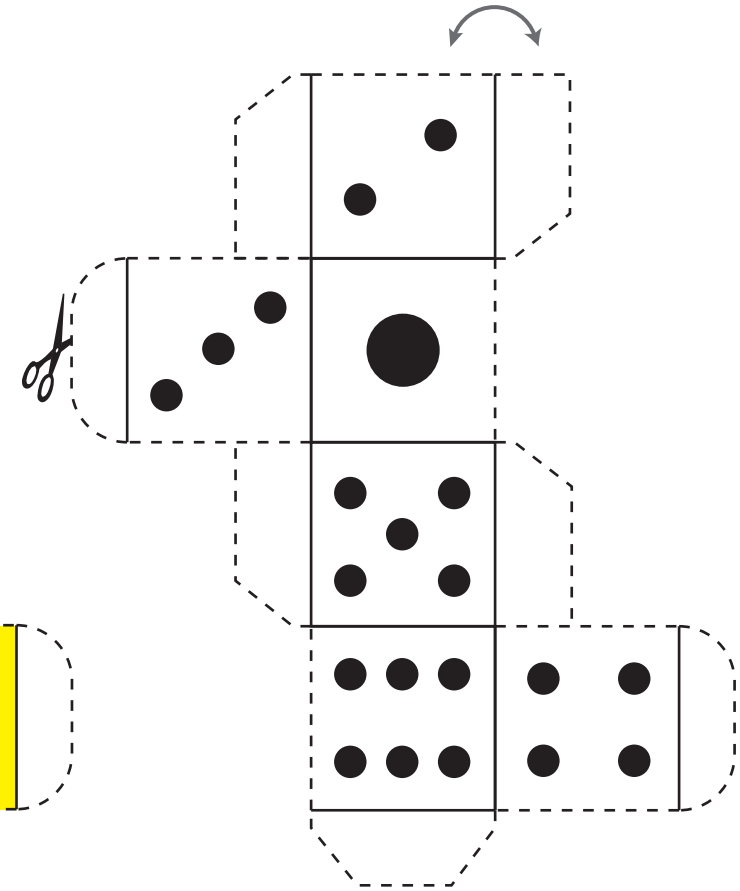

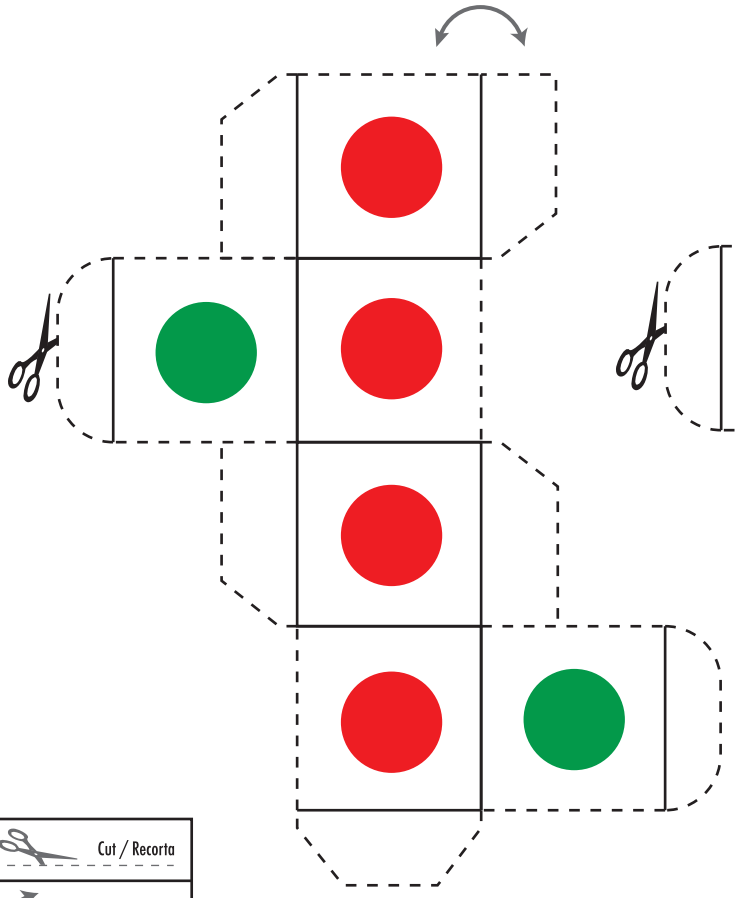

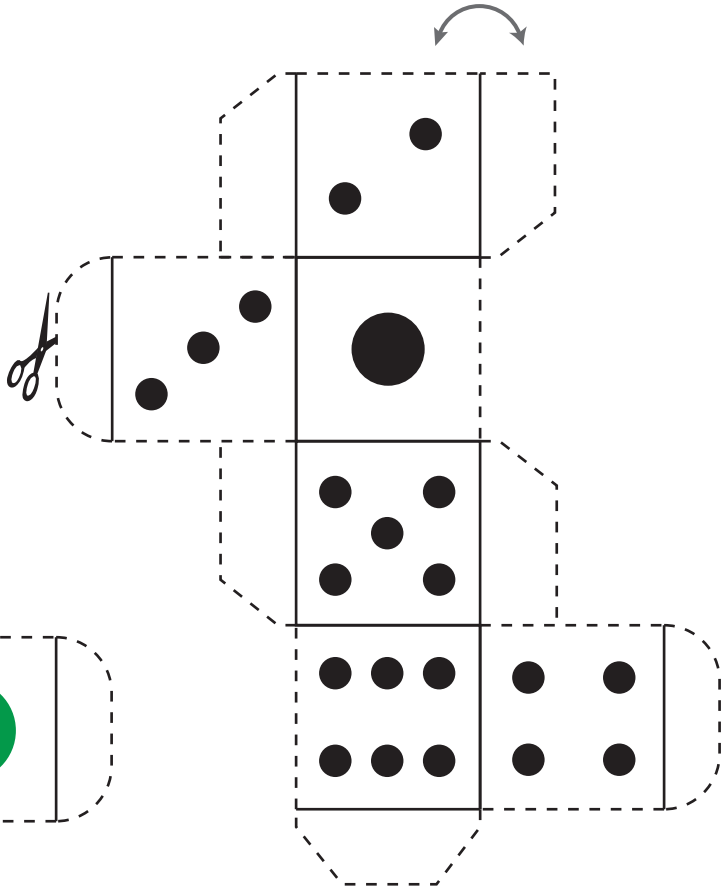

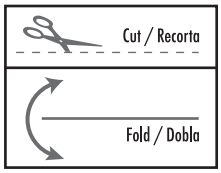

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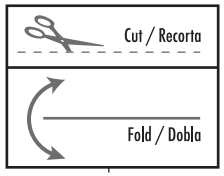

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Fold / Dobla

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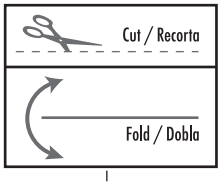

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pay / pagar $80 — washing m. / lavadora

pay / pagar $35 — t.v.

pay / pagar $80 — refrigerator

pay / pagar $55 — computer

pay / pagar $55 — stereo

pay / pagar $115 — furniture / muebles

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CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

RED, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

RED, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

PURPLE, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

PURPLE, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

BLUE, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

BLUE, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

YELLOW, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

NOT PERMITTED TO WORK IN U.S.

YELLOW, PLAYER

NAME

050309
DOB

97867453
CARD NUMBER

ELP
POI

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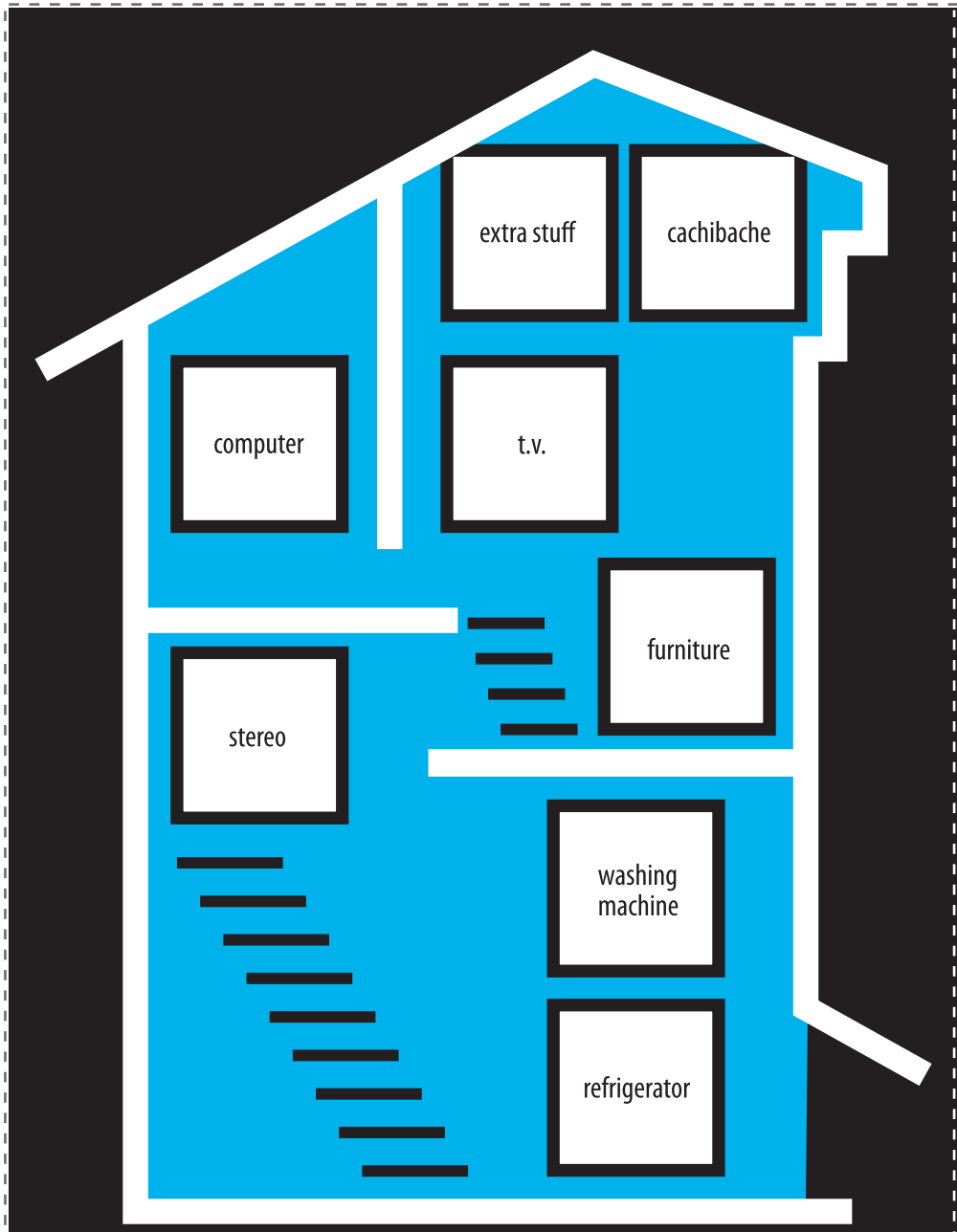

crossing the bridge

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crossing the bridge

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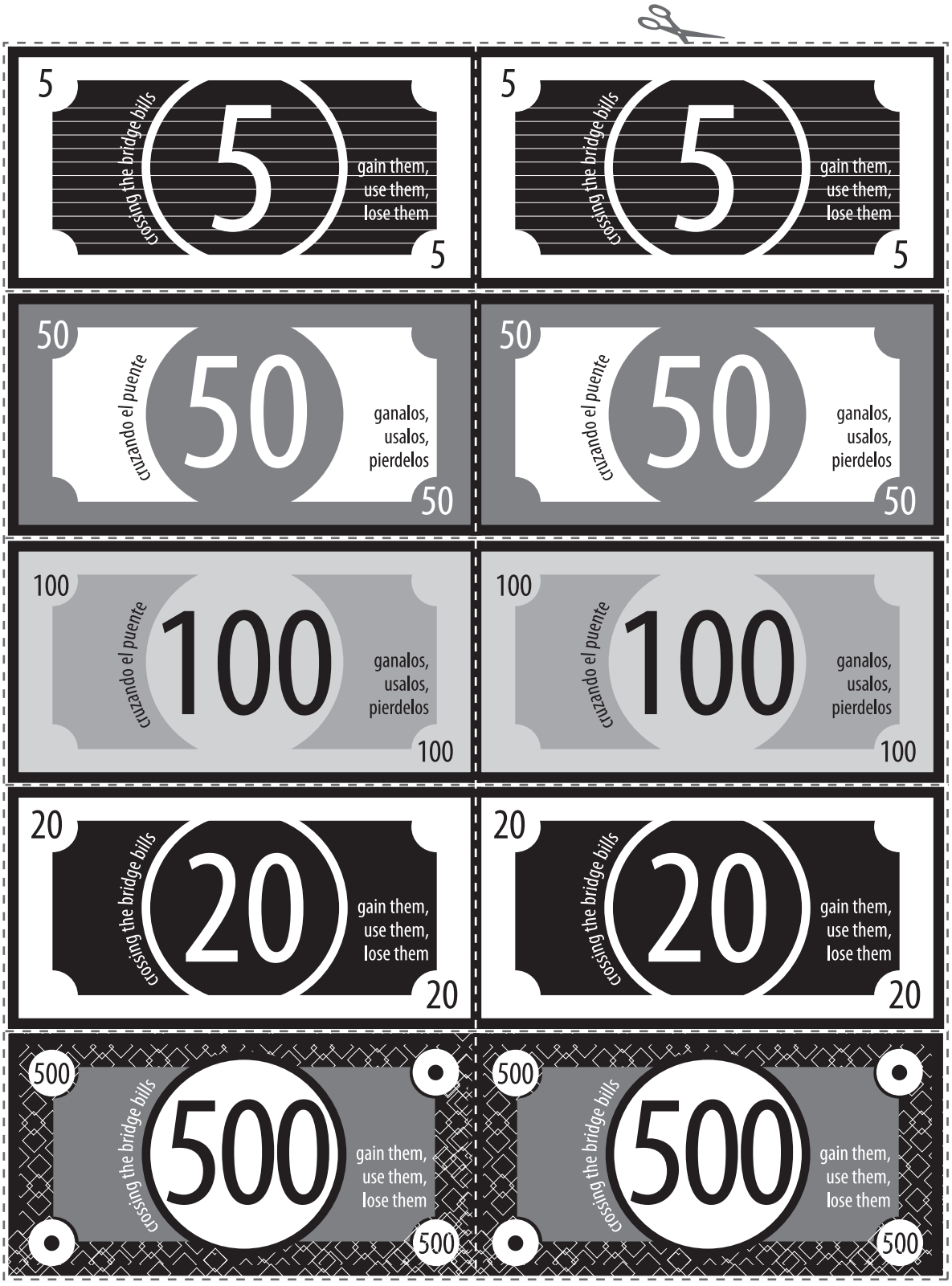

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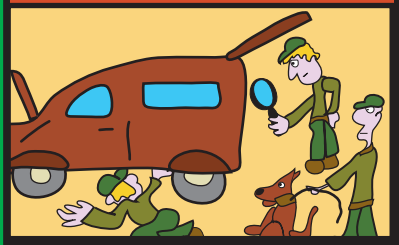
1

your passport please !! —
que trai de Mejico ?

2

general revision
(any type of cargo will be found)

revisión general
(todo cargamento será confiscado)



3

the officer looks in side the car
(food and/or alcohol will be confiscated)

el oficial revisa el interior del auto
(alimentos y/o alcohol serán confiscados)

4

the officer checks under the hood
(any drugs will be found)

el oficial revisa el cofre
(cualquier droga será encontrada)

5

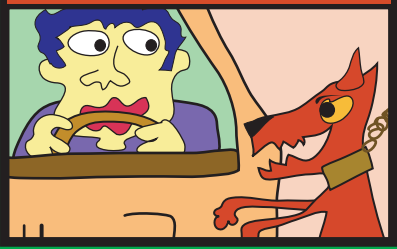
the officer searches the back
(any illegal aliens will be found)

el oficial revisa la parte trasera
(los pasajeros ilegales serán detenidos)

6

dog search
(any drugs will be confiscated)

rastreo con perro
(cualquier droga será confiscada)



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you forgot your passport
(return to mexican port of entry)

olvidas el pasaporte
(regresa a las garitas mexicanas)

you give charity to an indigent
(give $5 to the player with less money)

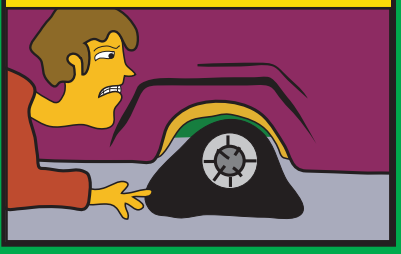
das limosna a un indigente
(dar $5 al jugador con menos dinero)

BOMB alarm!!!
(you lose two turns)

¡ Alerta de BOMBA !
(pierdes dos turnos)

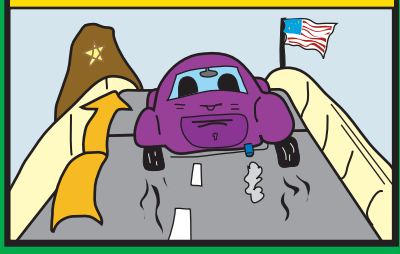
a flat tire
(you lose one turn)

llanta ponchada
(pierdes un turno)



advance two extra spaces

avanza dos espacios

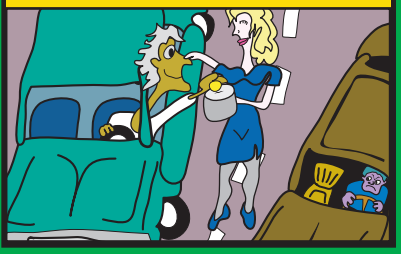


the car to your right
slides in front of you

el auto a tu derecha
se mete enfrente de ti

you give charity to alleviate the poor
(give $10 to the player with less money)

ayudas a los pobres
(dar $10 al jugador con menos dinero)

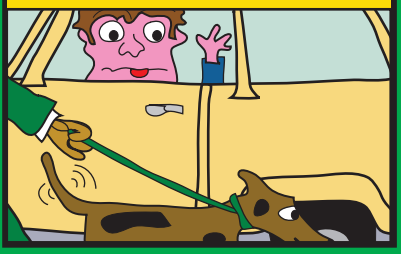


car over-heats
(return to mexican port of entry)

el auto se recalienta
(regresar a garita mexicana)

dog search
(any drugs will be confiscated)

rastreo con perro
(cualquier droga será confiscada)



the car to your left
slides in front of you

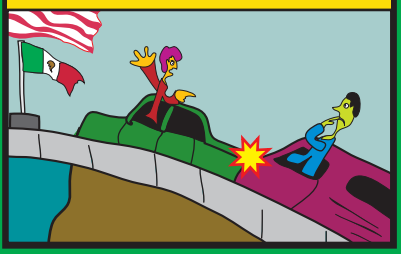
el auto a tu izquierda
se mete enfrente de ti

you stop to buy refreshments
(you lose one turn)

compras refrigerios
(pierdes un turno)

fender-bender
(pay $20 to the driver in front of you)

choque
(paga $20 al conductor frente a ti)



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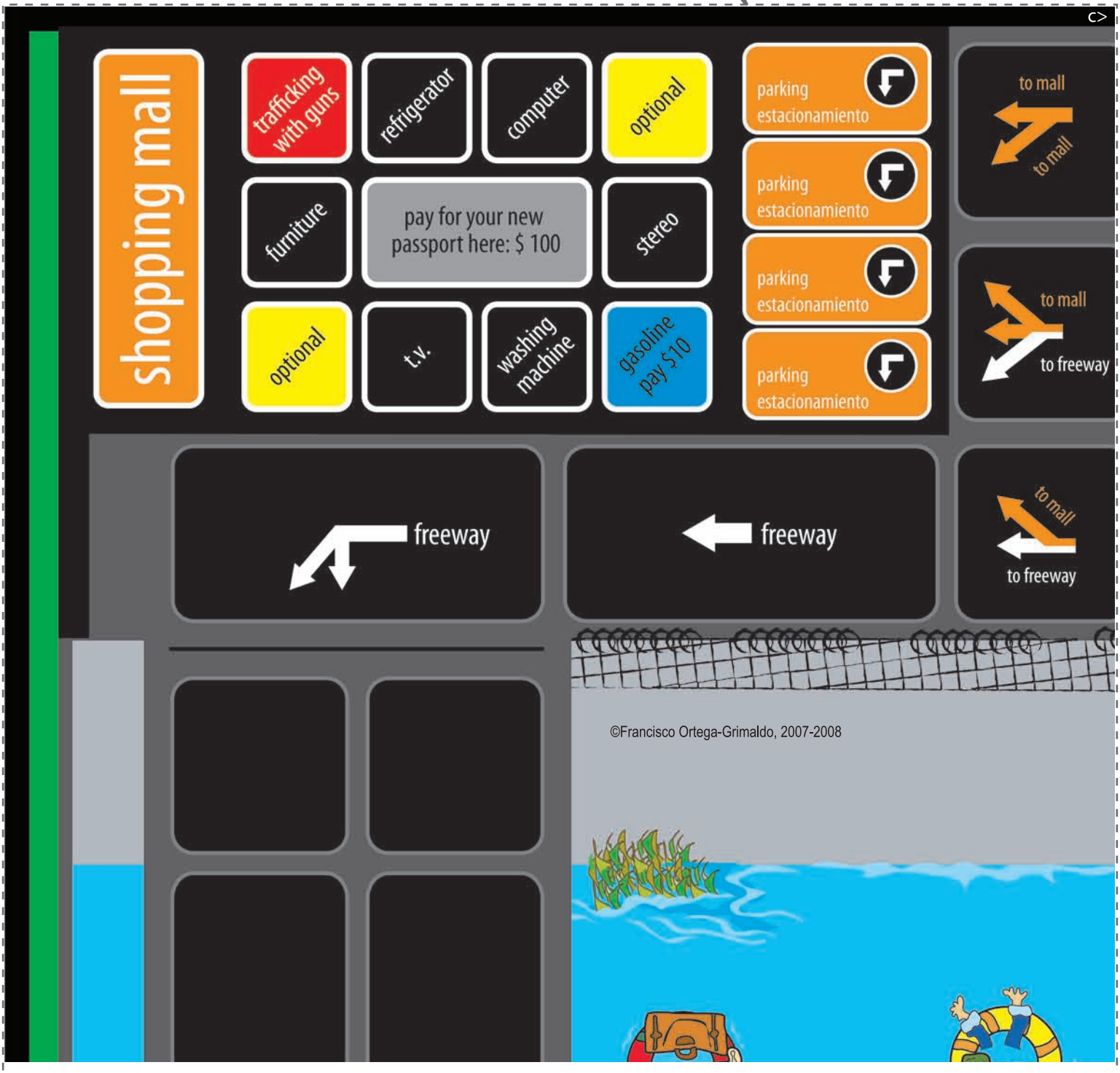

<a

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<b

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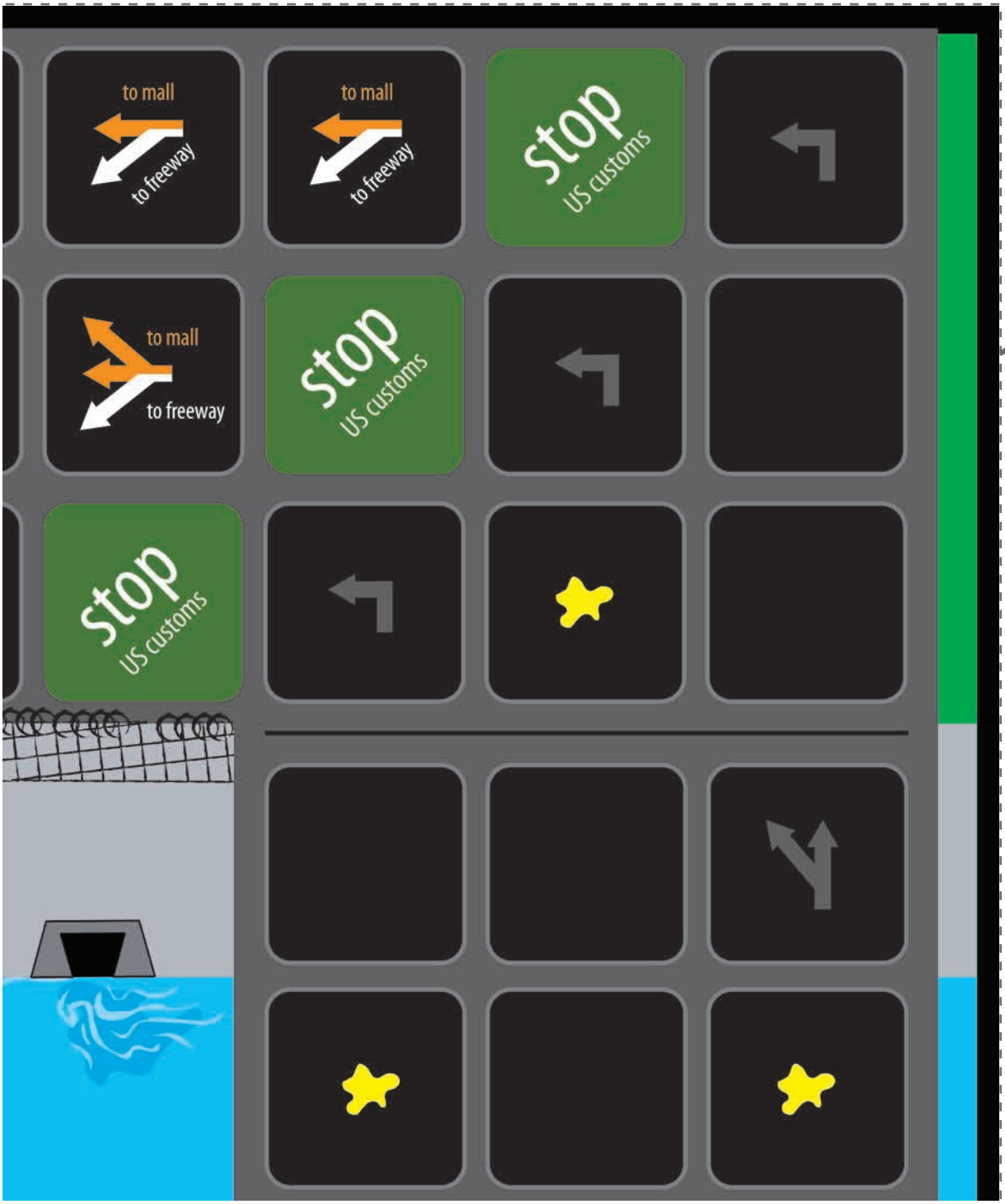
<c



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Building pieces for Observance

Coordinates …… 206
Mexican side …… 207
U.S. side …… 208
Characters …… 209
Cards + …… 210
Dice …… 211

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Fold / Doblа

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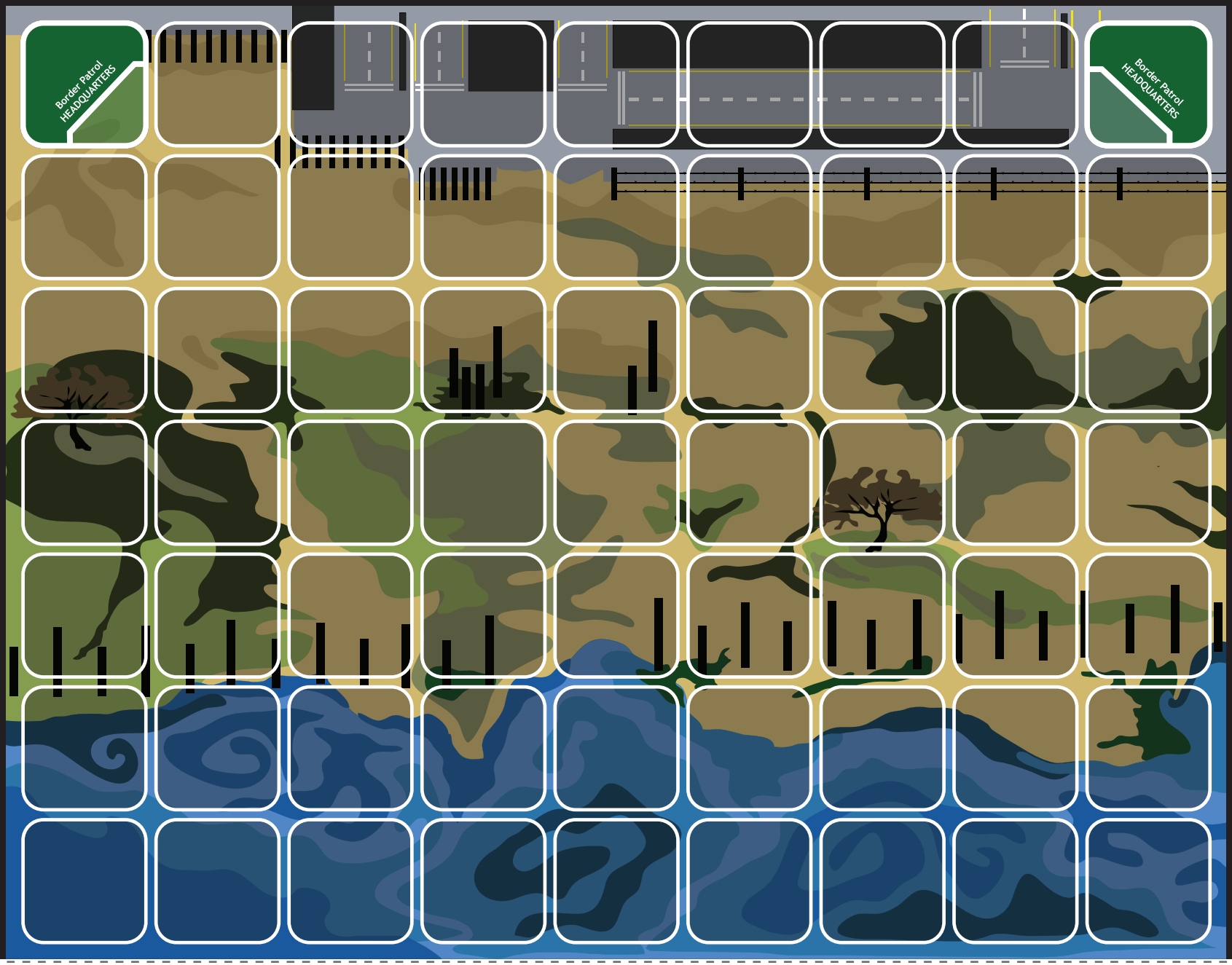

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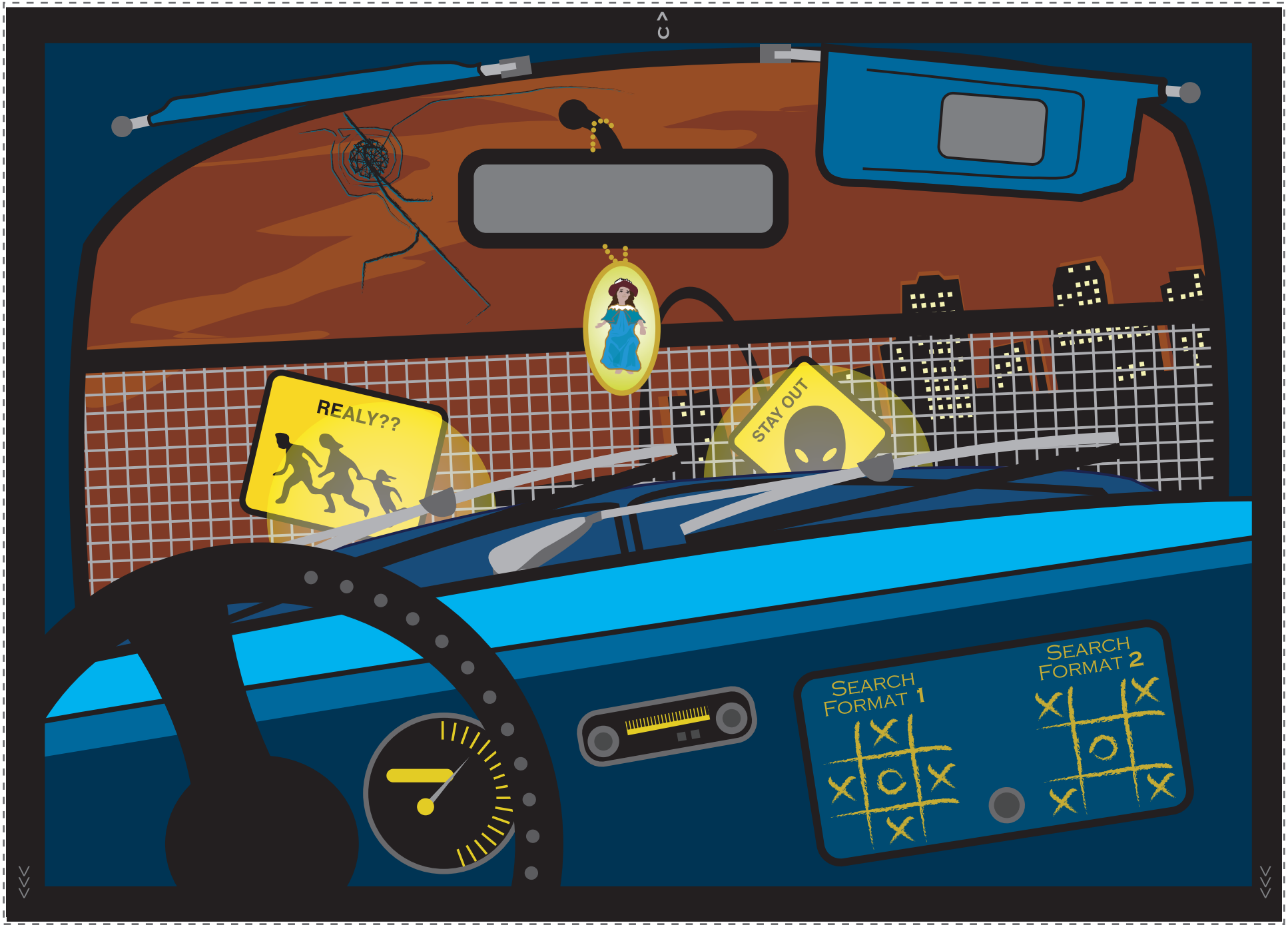

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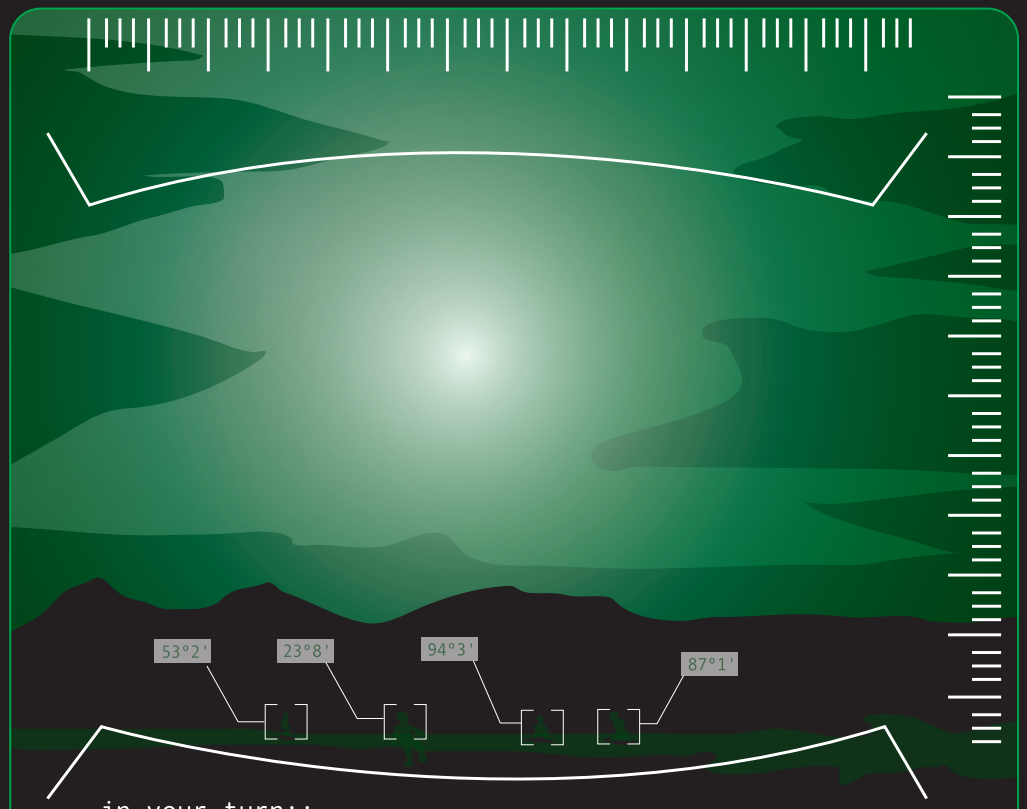
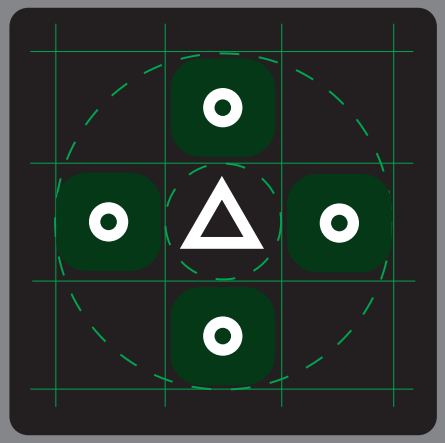
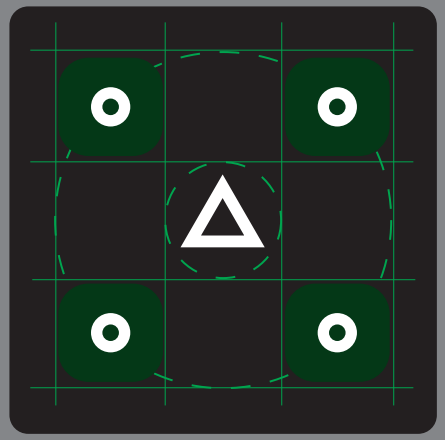


in your turn::
(1) move your men
(2) -if even number- place a fence + +
(3) search for immigrants calling any
of the two formats...

Search Format 1



Search Format 2



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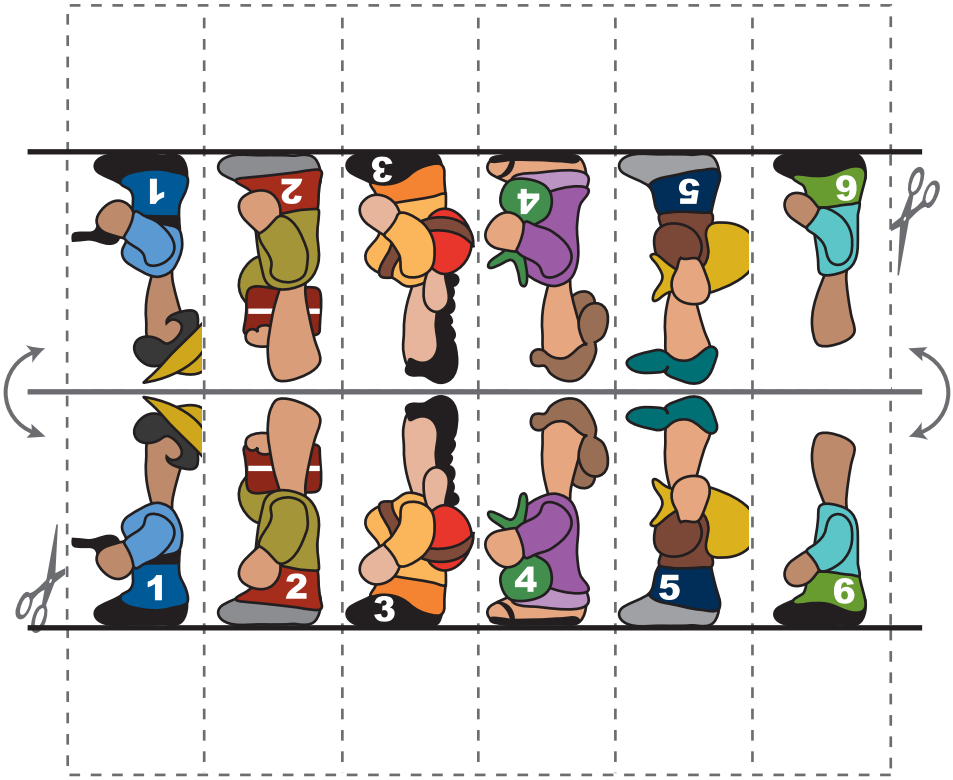

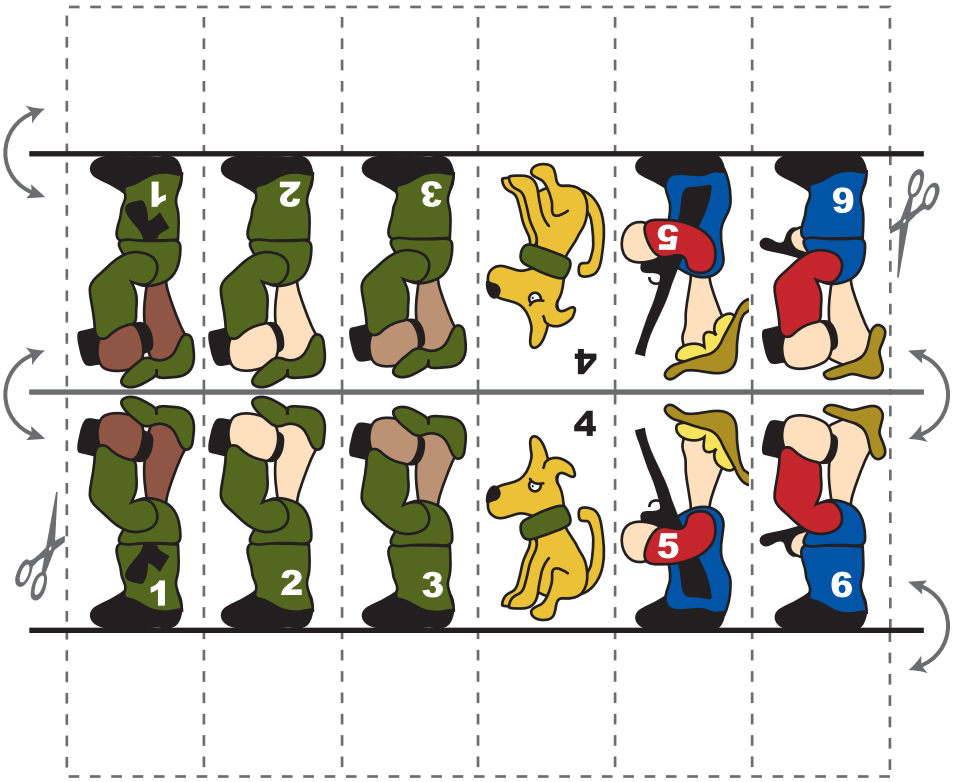

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CHURCH CHURCH

CHURCH CHURCH

GREEN CARD GREEN CARD

NOTHING HERE NOTHING HERE

NOTHING HERE NOTHING HERE

NOTHING HERE NOTHING HERE

NOTHING HERE NOTHING HERE

NOTHING HERE NOTHING HERE

NOTHING HERE NOTHING HERE

NOTHING HERE NOTHING HERE

BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED BLOCKED

Coyote

1: Lupe Coyote

2: Adrian

3: Lucia & son

4: Biridiana

5: Enrique

6: Paco

Immigrants

Minutemen

Border Patrol Officers

1: Mark

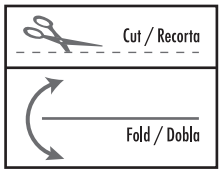
2: Roger

3: Albert

4: K-9

5: Ms Minutemen

6: Mr Minutemen



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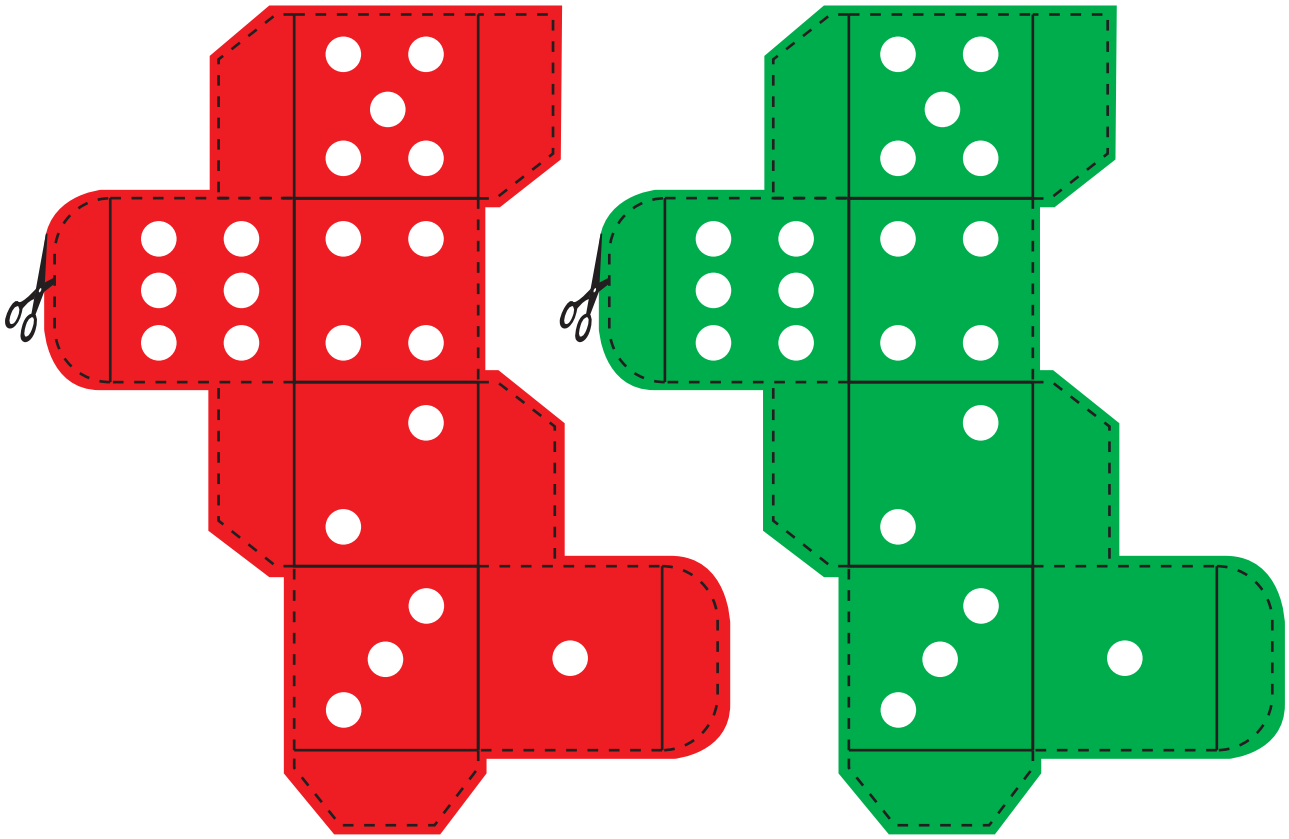
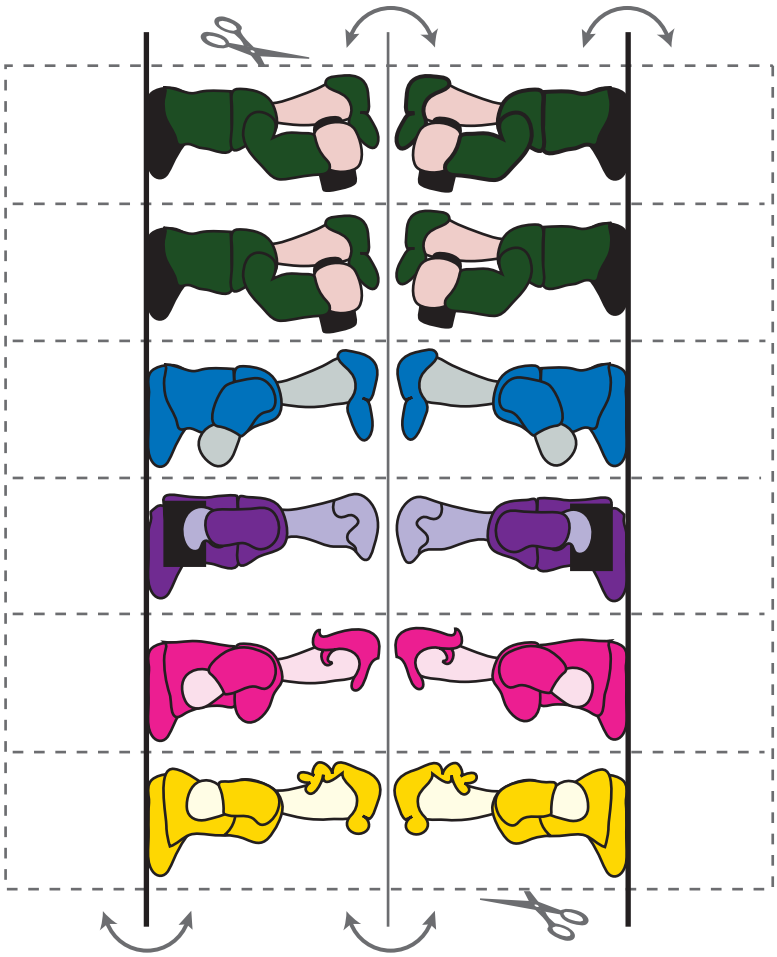


Building pieces for H1-B Visa

Yellow cards and characters …… 213
Red cards 1 …… 214
Red cards 2 …… 215
Game board A …… 216
Game board B …… 217
Game board C …… 218
Game board D …… 219

Issue / Situación	Signatures? ¿Firmas? 2 players at same time / 2 jugadores al mismo tiempo
Issue / Situación	Signatures? ¿Firmas? 2 players at same time / 2 jugadores al mismo tiempo
Issue / Situación	Photographs? ¿Fotos?
Issue / Situación	Appointments? ¿Citas?
Issue / Situación	Payment / Pagos
Issue / Situación	Job offer? ¿Oferta de trabajo?
Issue / Situación	Items NOT allowed / Objetos NO permitidos
Issue / Situación	I-797 form? Documento I-797?



Cut / Recorta

Fold / Dobla

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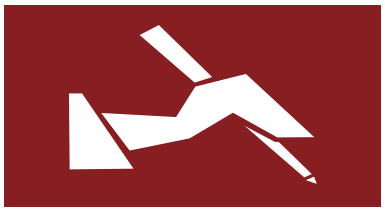
Please sign your documents
(and bring a witness)



Por favor firme sus documentos
(y traiga un testigo)

Please sign your documents
(and bring a witness)

Por favor firme sus documentos
(y traiga un testigo)

Please sign your documents
(and bring a witness)

Por favor firme sus documentos
(y traiga un testigo)

Please sign your documents
(and bring a witness)

Por favor firme sus documentos
(y traiga un testigo)

I have the pictures
right here !

¡ Aquí tengo
las fotografías !

I made the appointments
on-line !

¡ Yo hice las citas
por internet !

I have here the
job offer !

¡ Aquí tengo la
oferta de trabajo !

I have the
money right here !

¡ Aquí tengo
el dinero !

Cut / Recorta

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I have the aproved
I-797 form !

¡ Yo tengo la solicitud
I-797 aprovada !

I am leaving all related
items outside of the consulate

Voy a dejar cualquier objeto
similar afuera del consulado

I'm taking a coffee !
(Dice roll x 2)

¡ Voy a tomarme un café !
(Lo que indiquen los dados x 2)

This I-94 is still valid !
(Use to get out of detention)

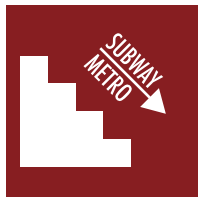
¡ Esta I-94 aún es valida !
(Usarse para salir de la
sala de interrogatorio)

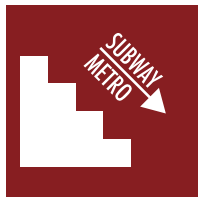
This I-94 is still valid !
(Use to get out of detention)

¡ Esta I-94 aún es valida !
(Usarse para salir de la
sala de interrogatorio)

I'm taking a taxi !
(Roll twice in your turn)

¡ Voy a tomar un taxi !
(Tirar los dados 2 veces)





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A >

B >

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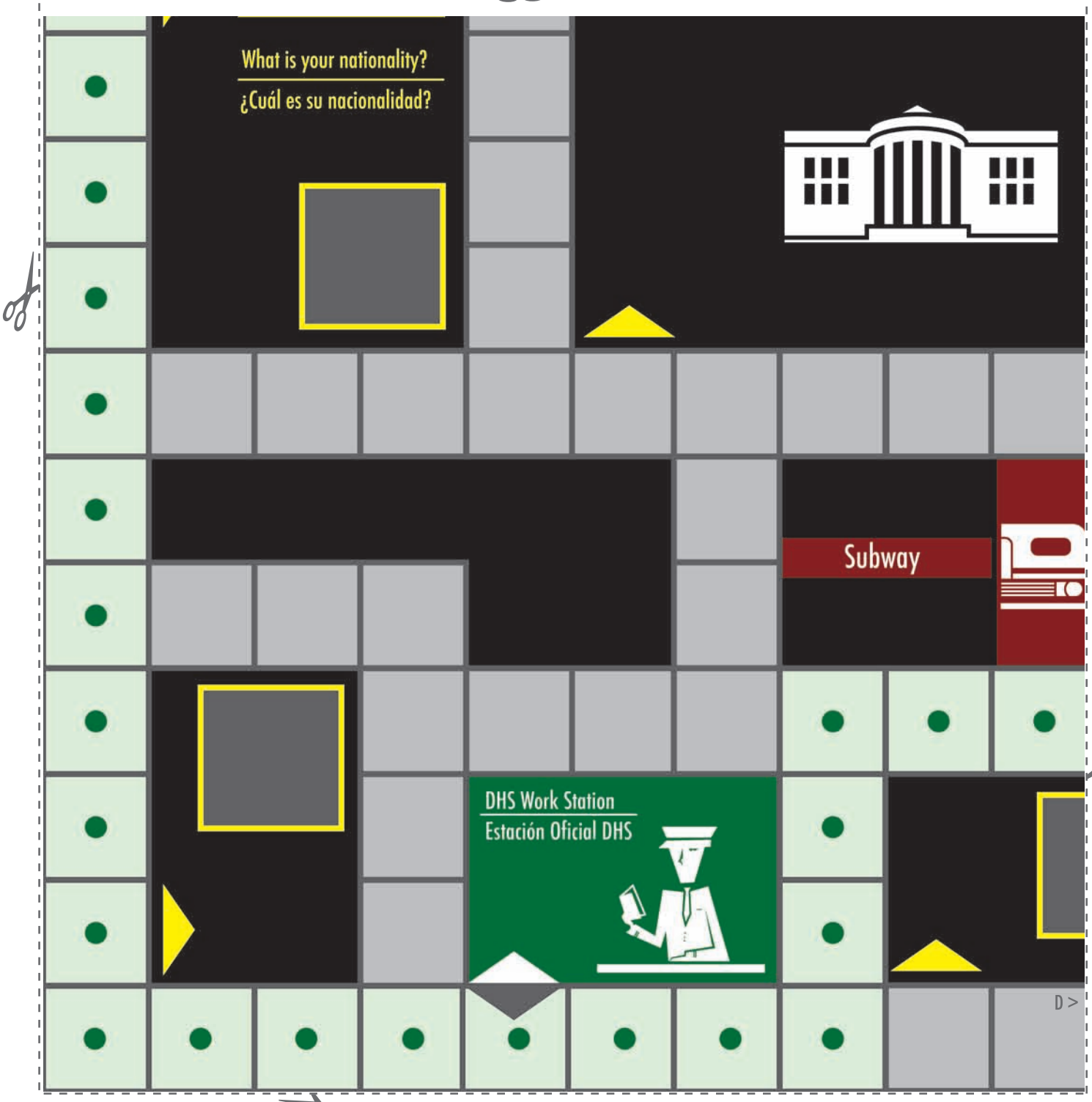
< B



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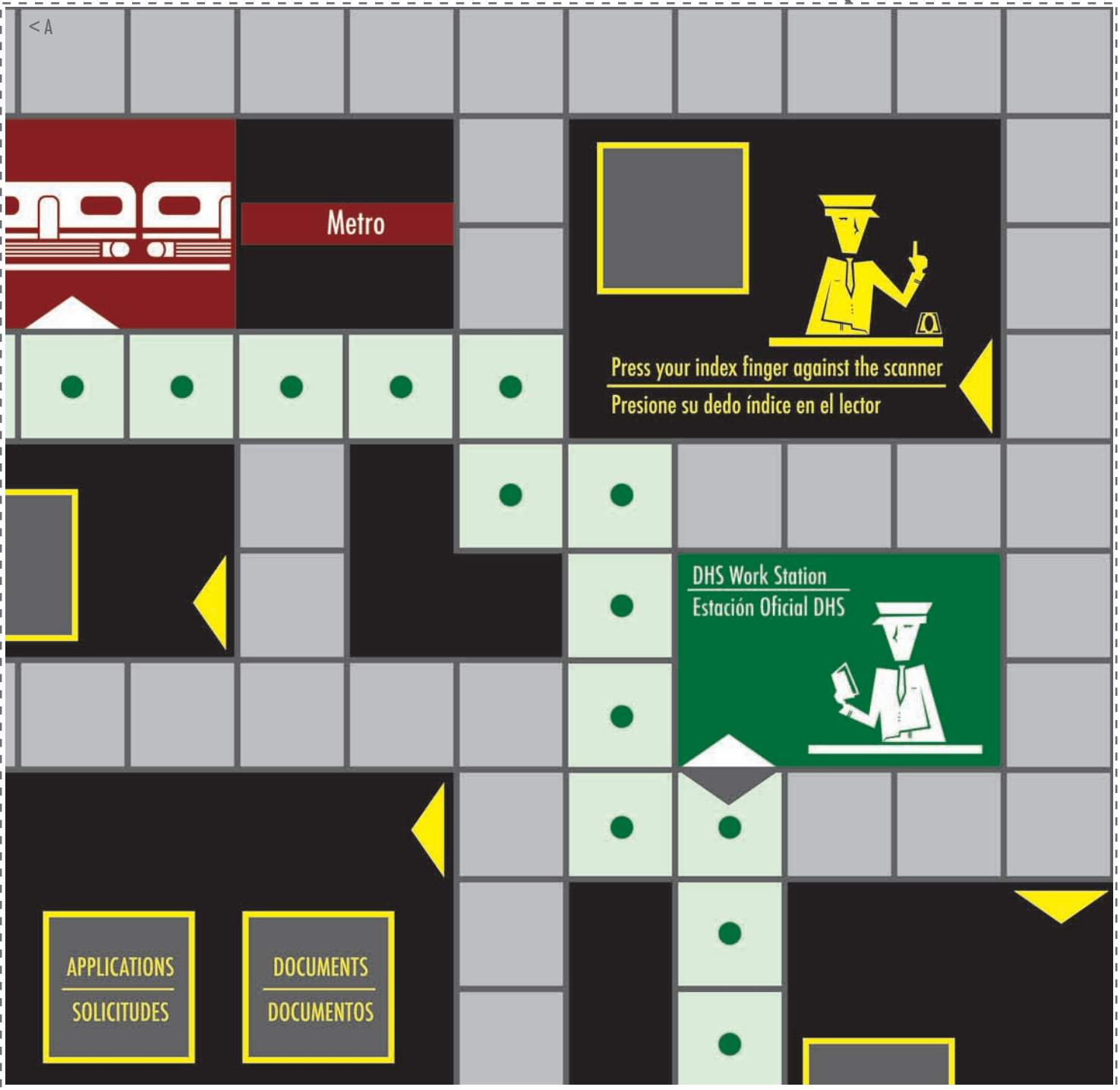

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V D

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Appendix C: Consent Forms and Questionnaires

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Proposal for the Office of Research Services

Francisco Ortega, M.A. (PhD Candidate, School of Art)
Games as Cultural Practice: Post Colonial Imaginations

I. Rationale: There is a 2000-mile extension of political division between México and the United States (US) known to us who have lived in it simply as *La Frontera,* The Border. It is an area that the media has presented as a place of decadence filled with drug wars, prostitution, economical need, and immigrants trying to invade the US. Through the creation of three board games based on border-related scenarios, I attempt to promote discourse and interest on participant players about the reality of the border issues and if possible, change the sensationalist perception created by unscrupulous media, gossip, and indifference. The use of critical theories in the design of the games such as Post colonialism, Subaltern Studies, Feminism, Autobiographical Memory and Play Theory, in conjunction with the analysis of recollected data coming from the players of my games are a crucial part of this research.

It is my hypothesis that the convention of board games could be used to promote personal conversation on social issues among players while having a pleasant time participating in a game activity that allows them to interact with people "in site."

II. Subjects: On this first attempt to gather reactions from human subjects while playing the board games, I plan to use college students, ranging age from 18 to 27. Three [3] different groups of students are going to be recruited by their professors from particular classes and from three [3] different academic institutions. I am recruiting one group here at Texas Tech University; the students will be part of design communication classes. A second group will be recruited by Dr. John Amastae form the University of Texas at El Paso; students in this case will be part of his "Introduction to Linguistics" classes. The third group will be recruited in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México, by professors Jair Tapia and León de la Rosa; students in this group will be part of graphic design and

visual arts classes. A copy of the oral invitation that will be sent to professors is attached with the rest of the documentation and titled "Oral Invitation."

Each of the three groups of students will consist of 10 members minimum, giving me a total and preferred research group of 30 students for the whole research. The group might increase by a few additional participants but it is not likely to decrease.

There will be no exclusion based on race, gender or physical capacities as long as the subjects can engage and play the board games following the specifications (rules) in English or Spanish. A simple meal will be presented to the participants as part of the game communion that is expected to occur in the game sessions. An additional compensation in the form of a $10 gift certificate will be offered to those participants that agree to complete a follow-up questionnaire to be sent by e-mail two weeks after the game session has occurred.

III. Procedures: The procedure for the game sessions runs in the same way in all 3 groups. Dates and times might change depending on the availability of the professors and that of the students, although I am letting the professors know that I will prefer if the game sessions fall under any date between March 17 and April 13, 2008. I will be present in all sessions to direct the procedure, explain the games and observe the behavior of the players.

Pre-arrangements for game sessions.

The games. I will construct three games based on three different commonly stereotyped scenarios. Each game will present a different game mechanics and will require a different dynamic from the players. All games will be bilingual, Spanish and English.

The first game, entitled "Crossing the Bridge," which illustrates the symbiotic relationship of the El Paso-Juarez border resembles the cliché of the illegal exchange of goods between both cities. The second game, "Observance," was created as a response to the rejection of the US Senate to revise Immigration Reform on July 28, 2007. The game presents the conflict of immigration in motion between the Border Patrol Agents and

Illegal Immigrants who try to find a way to get their hands on a green card. "Observance" takes after the mechanics of the game Battleship® in the use of separate sets of coordinates for two players who compete by eliminating the pieces of their opponent. The third game, still in design, unites the players to beat the game's mechanics in a race against time. This game called "H1-B Visa?" illustrates many procedures that an immigrant has to go through in order to gain a legal status in the US. All players need to collaborate in order to beat the 30-minute clock. When the time runs out, whoever was not able to turn in all their documentation, failed to pay the correct fees, and failed to get their passport stamped, will be deported. If one person is out, all players lose.

Visual examples of these games can be found at the following web address: **ludoztli.com/games.**

The setting. I propose to present the board games in sit-in game sessions in three [3] different geographical places. The first location is an area isolated from the border in the US side: Lubbock, Texas. The second location will be in El Paso, Texas, a border city in the US side. The third location will be in Juárez, Chihuahua, México, the counterpart of the US border city. The game sessions will be held in university classrooms with an appropriate setting of tables and chairs for the participants. Three [3] video cameras, one [1] camera per table, will be used to archive the action in the board games.

Procedures in the game session.

a. Students will be presented with an explanation of the research; I will read the "Oral Invitation" previously read to students when their professor(s) were recruiting. I will do this to refresh the information to them and to specify the conditions established in the letter of consent that I would give to them at the beginning of this process. A copy is attached to this document labeled "Letter of Consent." The document will be read to them, and I will request their signatures to assure consent before beginning the game sessions.

The following list provides a few of the highlights I am stressing:

1. Questionnaires should be signed with initials or a pre-selected surname or alias for filing purposes and further data analysis.
2. Game sessions will be videotaped but cameras will be directed to the action occurring in the board games and not to the students.
3. Post-game group interviews will be audio recorded for accuracy and archival purposes. Sections of these interviews might be transcribed and added to the final version of the dissertation. The audio itself will never be released and names will never be used in the transcriptions.
4. Follow-up interviews are voluntary and conducted via e-mail. The information will be used without any association to the student's names or e-mail address. For those who agree to do the follow-up, a compensation of $10 dollars in the form of a gift certificate will be presented after they completed this process.

b. The students will be presented with a questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to this document labeled "Questionnaire." A brief 10 to 15 minutes' lapse will be given to complete this section of the session.

c. Students will be separated randomly into 3 different groups, one group per game. According to the specifications of each game, "Crossing the Bridge" requires 4 participants, "Observance" is a 2 players game, and "Green-goes" requires 4 players. All games will be in the same room and played simultaneously. The games will be introduced and explained. A test-set will take place to ensure that all participants understand the dynamics and mechanisms of the games.

The games vary in their time to be completed, but all of them can be concluded in less than 45 minutes. After the first round, the students will be requested to shuffle around and try another game. After the second round the game session will conclude.

d. Between game sessions, students will be asked to relax for a few minutes; a lapse of 10 to 15 minutes should be more than enough. Refreshments will be provided.

e. Finally, I am introducing the students to the concluding part of the session: a group interview where the participants will have a chance to talk about their experiences with the games, with other players and their thoughts related to the issues on immigration. An audio recording device will be used to archive the conversations. A set of questions has been prepared to initiate and guide the conversation. The document is attached to this proposal under the title "Interview." These questions are only guides that could engage a series of topics not anticipated. To avoid deviation I will act as a mediator and decide if certain conversations are relevant to the aims of this research.

f. An invitation to participate in a follow-up interview via e-mail will be presented along with the offer of the gift card as an incentive. As we get close to conclude the session, I will expose the invitation to the students, explaining the details of this step. I will ask for the e-mails of those who might want to participate. I will contact the volunteers around two weeks after the game sessions and ask them if they are still interested in participating. If they agree, I will send an e-mail repeating the questions asked in the survey and interview sessions but in a different order.

After they e-mail me back with a completely answered questionnaire I will send the gift card to their professors so they can distribute them accordingly according to their e-mail address.

Funding.

I am not receiving any funding for this investigation from any grant or institution. I will cover all traveling expenses, videocassettes, audiocassettes, additional material for the interviews and gift cards. Friends will provide video cameras for the game sessions. I own an additional camera that will be also used for editing purposes. The professors and collaborators helping me organize these sessions have agreed to participate and collaborate with me without receiving neither monetary nor any other type of compensation.

IV. Adverse events and liability: No risks are associated with this research. Although, the issues presented might cause tension among participants because of their personal ideologies and beliefs. I will remind the students the importance of being courteous to others while expressing their ideas and opinions. My assistants and I will serve as mediators if some kind of tension might occur. **I may discontinue participation** if they believe that there is a risk to you based on their observations. In addition, the recruiting professors have agreed to be present on the day of the event. Their participation will assure a safer environment while performing the research.

V. Consent form: Consent forms are attached to this proposal under the title "Letter of Consent."

Oral Invitation

Doctoral Candidate Francisco Ortega, from the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Texas Tech University, is requesting the participation of ten [10] volunteers for the research project "**Games as Cultural Practice: Post Colonial Imaginations"** (Francisco Ortega of the School of Arts at Texas Tech, phone number **742-3825 x255**, e-mail: **francisco.ortega@ttu.edu**). The following summary explains the nature of this research project.

Overview: Participants will play board games created by Francisco Ortega. The themes of the board games are immigration, the border, and other border-related issues. There will be a short survey session at the beginning, followed by two game sessions and, finally, a short group interview.

Purposes

1. Promote discourse and interest about the reality of the international border between México and the United States.

2. Explore the potential of board games as tools to promote personal conversation about social issues among players.

3. Understand the perception of subjects created by unscrupulous media, gossip, and indifference in relation to the border and border-related issues.

Procedures

1. Survey/Questionnaire: In the first step of this research, you will fill out a questionnaire about playing habits and perceptions of immigration issues. This process will take between 10 to 15 minutes. Consequently, it is important that you provide complete and accurate answers. Any failure to answer completely and honestly could lead to erroneous conclusions from the investigator's part, and valuable time and effort might be wasted. Also, if you think there is any reason you should not participate in a study that involves immigration and/or border related issues, please inform the instructor.

2. Game sessions: The second step, which will take place today, is a set of game sessions. First, you will be randomly assigned to one of three [3] games. Some games require more participants than others. Your instructor will let you know how many players each game requires. Second, a review of the rules for each

game will be explained, and a test session will be initiated to get a clear understanding of the games' mechanics. This step might take about 20 minutes. Third, there will be two [2] game sessions; each one will last approximately 45 minutes. There will be a short break between sessions with refreshments and a light meal. During the second game session, you must pick another game to interact with.

3. Monitoring A: During the sessions, Francisco Ortega and his assistants will continuously monitor your responses. In addition, there will be three [3] video cameras pointing to the board game and monitoring the activity in the board game exclusively.

4. Interview: The third step of the research is an interview session. As a group, you will be asked questions in relation to the games played, your interaction with the game piece, and your interaction with the other players. This step is expected to last 45 minutes.

5. Monitoring B: During the interview, recording devices will capture the audio of the session.

6. Follow-up: The last step of the research is an interview via e-mail. Questions similar to the ones presented in the questionnaire and interview sessions will be reinstated. This follow-up step will take place two [2] weeks after the game sessions. Compensation in the form of a $10 gift certificate is offered to those who complete this step.

7. Time summary of the activities:
   – Questionnaire: 10 – 15 min.
   – Instructions and test session: ~20 min.
   – First game session: ~45 min.
   – Intermission: 15 – 20 min.
   – Second game session: ~45 min.
   – Group interview: ~ 45 min.

Risks

No risks are associated with this research

Precautions: The issues presented in this research might cause tension among participants because of their personal ideologies and beliefs. It is important to remember to be courteous to others while expressing your ideas and opinions. Your professor, Francisco Ortega, and his assistants will serve as mediators if some kind of tension might occur during the game sessions and interviews.

Benefits

Learning something about immigration, border issues, and border-related topics.

Confidentiality

1. Access: The data recovered from the questionnaires, video, and audio recordings will be seen only by Francisco Ortega and his editing assistants. All the records will be kept in Francisco Ortega's office in a locked filing cabinet. No one will have additional access to this cabinet.

2. Recording and storage: Once all the data is recorded and entered into a computer, only your initials will identify you; your selected nickname or alias, anything with your name on it, your e-mail, or any other form of contact information, except a copy of this consent form, will be destroyed.

3. Publication: If any of the findings from this study are published, your name will not be used and your identity will remain confidential.

Rights and Information about Consent

1. Voluntary participation: You will not lose anything to which you are entitled by refusing to participate.

2. You may withdraw from the research any time you want, even in the middle of a game session. If you do withdraw, you will not lose anything to which you are entitled by refusing to complete the sessions.

3. Staff may discontinue participation if they believe that there is a risk to you based on their observations.

4. If you decide to withdraw, all the information that you have provided so far will remain with the researcher and will be used in the same way as that provided by those who completed the sessions.

Contact and Insurance Information

1. Francisco Ortega will answer any questions you have about the study. For questions about your rights as a subject or about injuries caused by this research, contact the **Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects**, Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. **Or you can call (806) 742-3884.**

2. If this research project causes physical injury, Texas Tech University or the Student Health Center may not be able to treat your injury. You will have to pay for treatment from your own insurance. The University does not have insurance to cover such injuries.

_____ _____

Signature of Witness to Oral Presentation Date

This consent form is not valid after March 31st, 2009.

Consent Form

We are asking you to be a subject in a research project called "Games as Cultural Practice: Post Colonial Imaginations." Doctoral Candidate Francisco Ortega, from the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Texas Tech University, is in charge of the study. His phone number is 742-3825 ext.255, e-mail: **francisco.ortega@ttu.edu.**

The purpose of this project is to promote discourse and interest about the reality of the international border between México and the United States, explore the potential of board games as tools to promote personal conversation on social issues among players, and understand the perception of subjects created by unscrupulous media, gossip, and indifference in relation to immigration, the border and border related issues. If you agree to be a subject, what follows is a list summarizing the activities in which you participate:

1. You will take a survey that asks some questions about your playing habits and perceptions of immigration issues. Some of the questions might be considered a little bit personal to some people. However, it is helpful for us if everyone answers all the questions in an accurate and honest way. No other participants will ever know your answers. It will take you about 10 - 15 minutes to finish the survey.

2. You will be given an opportunity to play two [2] original games based on immigration and border-related issues. Each game session might last around 45 minutes. Video cameras will record the activity in the board games, but they will be pointing at the board and not at the players.

3. You will participate in a group interview that will take an additional 45 minutes and will be required at the end of both game sessions. The interview will be audio-recorded for transcript accuracy.

We will offer refreshments and a light meal during the session. This is our way of thanking you for participating in our research.

In addition, we are offering a $10 gift certificate to those who want to participate and complete a follow-up interview. The questions will be related to the ones already presented in the questionnaire and interview sessions and will be sent to you via e-mail two [2] weeks after the game session.

No risks are associated with this research. However, the issues presented

might cause tension among participants because of personal ideologies and beliefs. It is important to remember to be courteous to others while expressing your ideas and opinions. The Instructor and assistants monitoring the game sessions and running the interviews will serve as mediators if some kind of tension might occur. **Staff may discontinue participation** if they believe that there is a risk to you based on their observations.

The data recovered from the questionnaires, video, and audio recordings will be seen only by Francisco Ortega and his editing assistants. All the records will be kept in Francisco Ortega's office in a locked filing cabinet. No one will have additional access to this cabinet.

Being a participant in this research is completely up to you. No one can force you to do so, and you won't lose anything if you don't participate. Also, you can quit anytime you want, and you won't lose anything. **If you decide to withdraw,** all the information that you provided so far will remain with the researcher and will be used in the same way as that provided by those who completed the sessions.

Francisco Ortega will answer any questions you have about the study. **For questions about your rights as a subject** or about injuries caused by this research, contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or you can call (806) 742-3884.

If this research project causes physical injury, Texas Tech University or the Student Health Center may not be able to treat your injury. You will have to pay for treatment from your own insurance. The University does not have insurance to cover such injuries.

If you sign this sheet, it means that you have read this form, agreed with the conditions established, and had all of your questions answered.

_____ _____

Signature of Subject Date

This consent form is not valid after February 28th, 2009.

Questionnaire

Personal Information.

Name Initials or Alias: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

In relation to ethnicity or cultural identity, you consider yourself:
(Circle one or handwrite your answer)

Asian Black White Latino Hispanic Mexican other: _____

1. You play board games (you may circle more than one)…

    a. When the opportunity arises
    b. For fun
    c. For leisure
    d. For sport (e.g. You are part of a chess club, etc.)

2. You play board games (you may circle more than one)…

    a. With friends
    b. With family
    c. Alone
    d. Other (please specify)

3. Have you ever used a board game as a learning tool?

    /Yes/ /No/

4. What do you think about the inclusion of social issues in board games?
    a. I find it interesting and appropriate.
    b. I find the games appealing, but do not care much about the issues.
    c. I think that the issues are important but should not be presented as games.
    d. I do not care much for games or social issues.

5. You prefer (circle one)…

    /board games/ /videogames/

6. Do you consider board games to be a tool that reinforces socialization?

    /Yes/ /No/ /More or less/

7. Do you have the same feeling about videogames?

/Yes/ /No/

8. How informed do you think you are about immigration and border-related issues?

a. I keep myself well informed.
b. I know something about it.
c. I do not know much.
d. I do not care much about these issues.

9. Which of these statements best represents your opinion(s):

NOTE: You may select more than one. Please be honest while answering. All this information will remain confidential, and you will not be judged on your personal opinions.

a. I think immigrants are taking jobs from US workers.
b. The only way to fix the problem with immigrants is by having a larger and better-prepared Border Patrol Agency.
c. I think everyone who wants to work should be allowed to work anywhere they want.
d. Many of the drug and illegal substances that affect the US come from the border with México.
e. The border cities in México are filled with violence and decadence.
f. The US is a country made by immigrants.
g. The US needs to reform immigration laws in order to regulate all illegal workers and allow them working rights.
h. Illegal workers should be denounced and prosecuted.
i. We can progress as a nation if we appreciate the potential of diversity.
j. Immigrants are not to be trusted. 9/11 is a clear example of that.
k. Without immigrants, we would not be able to enjoy the benefits of superior jobs.
l. The products coming from illegal workers feed this country.

Other comments that you might want to add to the previous list?

Thank you! You just completed the first part of this research. Please wait for everyone else to finish. If you prefer, you can fold this sheet to keep your answers safe.

Interview

NOTE: Francisco Ortega will ask these questions and all of them, if necessary, will be explained in detail during the interview. These questions serve as guidelines to begin a dialogue. Unexpected questions may occur in the process of the interview that will be considered; if they are relevant, these questions will be discussed in the process of the interview.

1. Which games did you play?

2. How was the interaction among players in the games you played?

3. Did you enjoy the games overall?

4. Were the mechanics of the games effective?

5. Were the game's mechanics relevant to the social issue presented?

6. Were you able to clearly identify the social issue of the game?

7. Did you learn something new about the social issue played in the game thanks to the material presented?

8. Did the game make you think of matters that you had never thought before in relation to the social issue?

9. Did you learn something new about the social issue thanks to the interaction between players?

10. In your game-session, was there any conversation in relation to the social issue presented?

11. When engaged in the game, you concentrated mostly in:
    a. Winning
    b. Playing
    c. Thinking about a social issue
    d. Paying attention to what others were saying
    e. Enjoying yourself

12. Would you like to make any additional comments or suggestions?

Consent Form for E-mail Interview

We are asking you to be a subject in a research project called "Games as Cultural Practice: Post Colonial Imaginations." Doctoral Candidate Francisco Ortega, from the School of Visual and Performing Arts at Texas Tech University, is in charge of the study. His phone number is 742-3825 ext.255, e-mail: **francisco.ortega@ttu.edu.**

The purpose of this follow-up interview is to give you a private opportunity to answer some of the questions related to the research in which you already participated. If you agree to be a subject in this follow-up process, what follows is a list summarizing the development of activities:

1. You will receive an e-mail sent by me [Francisco Ortega] approximately 2 [two] weeks after the game sessions. The e-mail will contain a series of questions similar to the ones you answered in the group interview.

2. You should answer the entire questionnaire as honestly as you can. Your collaboration on this step is crucial for the research. After finishing, please send the completed questionnaire back to me as soon as possible.

3. After receiving the e-mail and evaluating the contents, I will send you an e-mail to confirm your participation and to let you know that a gift certificate worth $10 will be sent to your professor through USPS.

4. Your professor will identify you only by your e-mail address and the alias you used in the game sessions. A letter of confirmation will be presented to you that you must sign to assure that you have received your gift.

The $10 gift certificate is our way of thanking you for participating in the follow-up research and completing our short interview.

Identify yourself only by your e-mail and alias used in the game sessions. Your real name and other type of contact information will not be required or requested.

No risks are associated with this research. However, the issues presented might cause tension among participants because of personal ideologies and beliefs. Please know that you will not be judged in any way by your answers. Your complete and honest answer will be greatly appreciated.

The data recovered from the interviews will be seen only by Francisco Ortega and

his editing assistants. All the records will be downloaded from Francisco Ortega's e-mail account and printed. The hard copies will be kept in Francisco's office in a locked filing cabinet. No one will have additional access to this cabinet. Your e-mail address will not be revealed at any time.

Being a participant in this research is completely up to you. No one can force you to do so, and you won't lose anything if you don't participate. When you receive the e-mail with the questions, you will be asked if you are still interested in participating. You can decline the invitation, and you won't lose anything by this.

If you decide to respond, please consider the following points: Incomplete questionnaires will not be counted to receive the gift certificate. The researcher can contact you concerning answers that might appear unclear, or answers that appear to have not been taken seriously. The gift certificate will be awarded after the researcher receives complete satisfaction about the answers provided.

Francisco Ortega will answer any questions you have about the study. **For questions about your rights as a subject** or about injuries caused by this research, contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research Services, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409. Or you can call (806) 742-3884.

If this research project causes physical injury, Texas Tech University or the Student Health Center may not be able to treat your injury. You will have to pay for treatment from your own insurance. The University does not have insurance to cover such injuries.

By signing this sheet and placing your contact e-mail at the bottom, it means that you have read this form, agreed with the conditions established, and had all of your questions answered.

_____ _____

Signature of Subject Date

_____

e-mail address (please write as legibly as you can to assure a certain response)

This consent form is not valid after February 28th, 2009.

E-mail Questionnaire

The purpose of this follow-up interview is to give you the opportunity to privately answer some of the questions related to the research in which you already participated (April 11, 2008). If you agree to be a subject in this follow-up process, what follows is a list summarizing the development of this activity:

1. You will answer the entire questionnaire as honestly as you can. Your collaboration on this step is crucial for the research. After finishing, please send it back to me as soon as possible.

2. After receiving the e-mail and evaluating the contents, I will send you an e-mail to confirm your participation and to let you know that a gift certificate worth $10 will be sent to your professor through USPS.

3. Your professor will identify you only by your e-mail address and the alias you used in the game sessions. A letter of confirmation will be presented to you, which you must sign to assure that you received your gift.

The data recovered from the interviews will be seen only by Francisco Ortega and his editing assistants. All the records will be downloaded from Francisco Ortega's e-mail account and printed. The hard copies will be kept in Francisco's office in a locked filing cabinet. No one will have additional access to this cabinet. Your e-mail address will not be revealed at any time.

If you decide to respond, please consider the following points. First, incomplete questionnaires will not be counted to receive the gift certificate. Also, the researcher can contact you in relation to answers that might appear unclear or answers that appear to have not been taken seriously. Finally, the gift certificate will be awarded after the researcher is completely satisfied with the answers provided.

If you decide not to participate, please send an e-mail declining your participation.

E-mail Questionnaire.

The following questionnaire consists of 14 questions. Some of the questions have more than one section. Please take your time to read and analyze each one. Please be as explicit as you can when answering.

Instruction: Please answer immediately after the question, beginning each answer with a capital "R" followed by a colon.

Example:
What is you name?
R: My name is Alejandra.

1. Please describe the experience(s) that you have had with board games in your life. For example: Do you play a lot? Do you own board games? Do you have a favorite board game?

2. What is your opinion about the inclusion of social topics in board games? Did you ever consider this possibility?

3. What is your opinion about the issue of immigration, and in what way do you think it affects you, personally?

4. Which game did you play?
    a. Crossing the Bridge (about crossing cargo and merchandize in an illegal fashion into México from the U.S.)
    b. Observance (about immigrants trying to find a green card while the border patrol tries to stop them)
    c. H1-B Visa (about a group of people trying to get a working visa)

5. What is your opinion about the game you played? Did you find it entertaining? Did you enjoy the event in general?

6. Where you able to clearly identify the issues presented in the games? And if so, do you think the games accurately reflect the social issues presented?

7. Did the games made you think about things that you had never considered before in relation to the issues presented?

8. How was the interaction among players in your game session? Did you learn something new about the social issues thanks to the interaction between players?

9. What is your opinion about the U.S. acquiring a larger and better-prepared Border Patrol Agency?

10. What is your opinion about the international border with México?

11. Do you think that immigrants take jobs from U.S. citizens?

12. What would be your solution to change some of the issues that the U.S. is facing in relation to the topic of immigration, the border, and border-related issues?

13. What is your opinion about the saying, "The U.S. is a country made by immigrants?"

14. Would you like to add any comments or make any suggestions?