

**Family resilience and Filipino immigrant families:  
Navigating the adolescence life-stage**

by

**Jacqueline de Guzman**

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## ABSTRACT

### **FAMILY RESILIENCE AND FILIPINO IMMIGRANT FAMILIES: NAVIGATING THE ADOLESCENCE LIFE-STAGE**

**Jacqueline de Guzman**  
**University of Guelph, 2011**

**Advisor:**  
**Dr. Donna Lero**

This study investigated the cultural and family contexts of Filipino immigrant families and their experiences of challenges related to adolescent development. The systems theory of family resiliency (Walsh, 2006) served as a framework to interpret how Filipino mothers experienced and navigated these challenges. Using a qualitative approach, 20 Filipino mothers of adolescents between the ages of 13-19 years were interviewed, investigating their experiences of challenges related to adolescent development and the strategies used to overcome these challenges. Thematic analysis indicated that cultural values and family contexts shaped mothers' experiences of adolescent developmental challenges and the development of strategies to overcome these challenges. Discussions of these topics corresponded with the systems theory of family resilience (Walsh, 2006). Overall, the implications of the study reinforce the usefulness of a resilience-oriented paradigm to understand how immigrant families mobilize cultural and family resources during difficult challenges to foster family empowerment and strengthen family relations.

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## **Resilience and Filipino Immigrant Families**

Although immigration is a world-wide phenomenon, Canadian immigration and multicultural policies continue to attract potential migrants to Canada. Current Canadian immigration policies have facilitated ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity in the Canadian population. The growing Filipino-Canadian community in Canadian society requires attention as their history, cultural framework, and adjustment needs may create unique pathways of integration. Despite the growing presence of Filipino immigrant families in Canada, research on their experiences and challenges of adjusting to a new society is lacking. Additionally, much of the literature on recent immigrants tends to focus on individuals' adjustment to a new society (e.g., Ying & Han, 2008), with more limited investigation of immigrant families' experiences (e.g., Navarra & Lollis, 2009). This exploration emphasized resilience in Filipino immigrant families, focusing on their interpretations of cultural frameworks, strengths, and challenges (Walsh, 2006). The role of family cohesion, relations, and functioning was investigated as Filipino immigrant families navigated the challenges of adolescence.

### **Immigration Policies and Patterns in Canada**

Early Canadian immigration policy was heavily Eurocentric. Canada favoured immigrants of Western-European origin because of their perceived ability to better integrate in the new world (Simmons, 1999). In 1967, Canada's immigration policy was revised to reflect a more equitable approach. This policy implemented a points system which considered aspects of social and human capital, such as education, work experience, family members already in Canada, and language skills, and discontinued the exclusion of potential immigrants based on race and/or ethnicity. Due to this change,

Canada experienced an influx of ethnically diverse individuals and families (Satzewich, 1989).

Current Canadian immigration policy has three goals. It aims to reunite families (family class immigrants), to bolster Canadian economic human resources (economic-class immigrants), and to provide humanitarian and international refuge (protected persons) (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2009a). Family class immigrants made up 26.5% (65,567 out of 247,243) of new residents welcomed to Canada in 2008 (Citizenship & Immigration Canada). The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) reported that most immigrants moving to Canada were classified as economic-class immigrants (67%). Within this category of immigrants, the majority of applicants (44%) were the spouses and dependents of the principal applicant (Statistics Canada, 2003).

For several decades, China and India have been the two top source countries for immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2003). It has only been in recent years that the Philippines has become a top source country for immigrants, despite having Filipino immigrants arriving in Canada as early as the 1960s (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2009b). The Filipino community has increased exponentially in recent decades (Gilmore, 2008). Prior to 1991, the number of Filipino immigrants totalled 107,765, but by 2006 the Filipino immigrant population exceeded 300,000. Within the period of 2001 to 2006 alone, 77,880 Filipinos immigrated to Canada (Statistics Canada, 2007).

In addition to a more liberal immigration policy, the social values embodied by the Multiculturalism Act of Canada may appeal to many potential migrants. It celebrates a culturally diverse population by promoting the maintenance and practice of one's ethnic

and cultural values, traditions, and beliefs freely and without discrimination. The Multiculturalism Act of 1970 is renowned for unifying the diversity of Canadian people. It acknowledges the different ethnic backgrounds of Canadian citizens and promotes integration to Canadian society (Simmons, 1999). As previous studies have shown, immigrant parents usually wish to uphold their cultural values, although they understand the importance for their children to learn the new culture for successful academic and social integration (Kwak, 2003; Kwak & Berry, 2001).

Although Canada is increasingly multicultural, Canadian culture, policies, and attitudes are deeply entrenched in Western European values. Resnick (2005) has argued, more specifically, that Canada's mentality is deeply rooted in European colonization values:

Canada is not a blank slate to be reinvented with each new group of immigrants that arrives at our airports. Its underlying political and social values are intimately European-derived ones: peace, order, good government, constituted authority, political community, individual liberty and citizen equality. ...But the source from which this democratic tradition derives is Europe, and more broadly speaking, the western political tradition. (p. 61-62)

This statement underscores the individualistic worldview framing Canadian societal values. One's freedom, democratic rights and responsibilities, liberty and equality are implemented through and reinforced by Canadian public policies.

The two federal policies on immigration and multiculturalism have helped diversify the Canadian population. Citizenship and Immigration Canada reported that 247,243 immigrants arrived in 2008 (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2009b). Additionally, the 2006 census reflected the diversity of Canadian demographics - Canadians reported belonging to at least one of 200 other ethnic origins (Statistics Canada, 2008). Approximately 16% of Canadians belong to a visible minority, an

increase from 13% in 2001 and 11% in 1996. Newcomers to Canada are a significant contributor to this increase in the visible minority population, as nearly 75% of recent immigrants were visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2008).

### **Contemporary Societal Context and Culture in the Philippines**

The Republic of the Philippines is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country located in Southeast Asia. As an archipelago, the country consists of 7,107 islands, with a population of approximately 98 million people. The majority of its population identify as Filipinos (28%), followed by Cebuano (13%), Ilocano (9%) and Bisaya (or Binisaya, 8%). This division of ethnic groups is based on geography and regions (Government of the Philippines, 2007). Linguistically, the country is just as diverse - Filipino and English are the official languages, but there are several major dialects: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Ilongo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). Catholicism and Christianity are the predominant religions in the Philippines.

Factors such as the economy, government policies, and social and cultural dynamics contribute to maintaining the vast division between socio-economic classes in the Philippines (Cuenca, 1998). A lack of opportunities for the upward mobility of lower-class Filipinos is but one of the underlying reasons for the massive inequality between the rich and poor. Cuenca reported that nearly 40% of the Filipino population lives in poverty. Current economic policies in the Philippines also favour urban development, resulting in under-developed agricultural sectors and substantial levels of unemployment in rural areas. As a result, farmers and other individuals from rural areas have migrated to large urban centres, such as Manila. However, urban centres are often overpopulated and

do not provide many economic opportunities for rural migrants, forcing them to live in the poorest and overcrowded of environments.

For most Filipinos, extreme poverty and high rates of unemployment are the driving forces for seeking a livelihood outside of their home country. Most choose to migrate overseas if the prospect of obtaining a better life outside of the Philippines is feasible (Cuenca, 1998). Currently, migration outside of the Philippines is encouraged through government policies (e.g., the Migrant Workers Act; from Philippines Overseas Employment Act <http://www.poea.gov.ph/rules/ra8042.html>), as well as through organizations designed to provide financial, legal, and/or social aid to current and potential Filipino migrants (e.g., overseas employment programs). The government has capitalized on this “migration mentality” (Cuenca, 1998, p. 24) to inject income into an unstable economy, as overseas workers must remit a portion of their income to the government. In 2010, overseas Filipino worker remittances to the government totalled \$18,762,989 USD (Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas, n.d.). In addition to government remittances, many Filipinos abroad also send financial support to their families back home.

Unlike most Asian countries, the Philippines has had extensive colonization periods. The Philippines was colonized by Spaniards during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Under Spanish rule, Filipino indigenous cultures and beliefs were supplanted with Spanish culture and the Catholic religion. By 1898, the Philippines was ceded to the United States by Spain. A positive outcome of this colonization was the establishment of a free education system. Espiritu (1995) argued that this education system introduced American values to Filipino students. As a probable result, American political, social, and cultural

values were imposed on the students (Espiritu; Rimonte, 1997). Additionally, Filipino students were taught primarily in English. Whereas most immigrants from Asia may experience their first encounters with Western culture during their immigration and acculturation processes, Filipino immigrants have already been exposed to American values and beliefs (David & Okazaki, 2006). Thus, Filipino immigrants may be distinct from typical Asian immigrants in two ways: (1) The majority of Filipinos are Catholic; and (2) Filipinos are highly proficient in English prior to their migration.

### **Filipino Immigrants in Canada**

By 2001, the Filipino population in Canada was the third largest non-European ethnic group in Canada (Lindsay, 2001), with nearly 70% born outside of Canada. The majority of the Filipino community reported either being married (50.6%) or identified themselves as a child living at home (21.9%), indicating that most Filipinos were part of a family unit. Many Filipino immigrants migrated with their families, or were later reunited with their family from the Philippines as part of the family reunification or economic-class immigration status (Statistics Canada, 2008).

In addition to independent, economic and/or family reunification immigration statuses, most Filipino women enter Canada under the auspices of a temporary work program, the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), which is an alternative private caregiving option for Canadian families. Successful LCP applicants are given temporary work permits, allowing qualified non-Canadians to work in Canada as a caregiver for children, elderly persons or people with disabilities (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2010). However, LCP workers may apply for permanent residence after completing two years of caregiving service.

The LCP contributes a significant and consistent number of Filipino women into Canada. The majority of LCP workers who arrived between 1993 and 2006 were women (97.5%) and held Filipino citizenship (78%; Spitzer & Torres, 2008). More recently, it was reported that approximately 90% of LCP workers in Canada are Filipino women (Friesen, 2011).

Filipino immigrants come to Canada with various social assets. For example, most Filipinos reported having a good level of English proficiency, and 42% of Filipino immigrants reported speaking English at home (Statistics Canada, 2008). The majority of Filipino immigrants were also likely to be educated and have strong work experiences, similar to their Chinese and Indian counterparts. As well, Filipino immigrants were more likely to obtain a job within the first year of settling in Canada whereas Chinese and Indian immigrants were more likely to work in a field related to their pre-immigration experience. In comparison to Chinese and Indian immigrants, Filipinos arrive in Canada with few financial assets (e.g., savings account), often coming from lower socio-economic statuses (Kelly, Astorga-Garcia, Esguerra, & The Community Alliance for Social Justice Toronto, 2009). Unlike Filipino immigrants, Chinese and Indian immigrants are more likely to make an income similar to Canadian-born populations (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Although Filipino immigrants hold university degrees and have strong work experiences, some researchers have pointed to the “deprofessionalization” of Filipino immigrants (e.g., Kelly et al., 2009). Kelly and colleagues reported that Filipino immigrants, in general, often seek “survival jobs,” in lieu of one related to their pre-immigration career. It could be argued that Filipinos’ high levels of employment, coupled

with the downwards mobility in their career paths, may be partly driven by the large number of Filipino women participating in the LCP. For example, once LCP contracts are fulfilled, Filipino LCP workers often will apply for a temporary work permit while awaiting approval for their immigration papers. In such cases, Filipino LCP workers will have already participated in the Canadian labour market for several years. In most cases, these Filipino women will participate in labour sectors that do not match their areas of expertise.

### **Filipino Cultural Context of the Family**

In most Asian societies, like China, Japan, or Korea, individuals are socialized to view the family as the focal reference group (Chao & Tseng, 2002), thus placing family goals above personal goals. More broadly speaking, collectivistic cultures emphasize interdependence at a societal level, placing community goals over individual goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Oyserman, 1993; Triandis, 1990). Researchers often investigate several Asian cultures together (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Indian and Japanese cultures) because they are considered collectivistic societies. Interdependence between family members is the most cited characteristic regarding Asian family life (see Chao & Tseng, 2002; Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003). Different Asian societies may view family functioning and processes similarly, especially regarding family interdependence, obligations, and honour; however, each Asian society may emphasize aspects of family life differently, especially regarding family roles and responsibilities (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

In the Filipino culture, smooth interpersonal relations also highlight *pakikisama*, or group harmony, (i.e., maintaining group, or family harmony, at the expense of one's

own desires). Filipinos hold self-esteem in high regard, developing systems to be sensitive to their own and others' esteems. These two social values promote harmonious relationships within society, as well as within families (Dolan, 1993). Thus, family relations are guided by personal sacrifices and obligation to the family. Similar to Chinese and Indian family values, individual members must uphold the family's name and honour, and not bring *hiya* or shame to both (Chao & Tseng, 2002; McCubbin, McCubbin, Thompson, & Thompson, 1998). Youths' adherence and obligations to parents are still important in Filipino culture (Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). Although these aspects of family life are salient to Filipino family functioning, it is important to understand that such aspects are not integral to the person's moral or spiritual development in the way that other Asian cultures emphasize (e.g., Vietnamese and Indian).

Children and parents' respective roles are less defined in Filipino culture, in comparison to other Asian cultures (e.g., Chinese and Indian). Filipino culture tends to be less rigid in authority related to patriarchy and age, but still emphasizes family interdependence. Chao and Tseng (2002) reported that Filipino youths view themselves, and respond in ways that highlight their family and family life. Chao and Tseng also reported that Filipino families are not guided by the strict principles of filial piety in the same way Eastern Asians are. Instead of the rigid morality of Confucian filial piety, social harmony guides Filipino interactions, whereby a person's goals should be sacrificed for the greater good (i.e., family) to preserve personal and family face, and to ensure harmonious relations with family members and outside members.

Family obligations are strongly emphasized in Filipino culture, as they are in India and China. Instrumental and emotional support for elderly parents are obligations that Filipino children learn at an early age. Although the strength of this obligation varies as a function of socioeconomic status, gender, and other variables, Filipinos believe that this reciprocity to parents at later stages in life is a repayment for all the help and care that parents give their children at earlier stages in life (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

Unlike other Asian families, Filipino families have a strong matrifocal orientation (Jacobsen, 1974). Mothers are the most important figure as they have the most prestigious role, being the “architect” for the next generation (Hollnsteiner, 1979). Additionally, domestic roles and relations are deemed egalitarian. Domestic labour and managing household budgets are usually done democratically and in consultation with both parents (Dolan, 1993; Jacobsen, 1974). Increasingly, mothers are not only contributing to the household income, but are contributing a significantly larger portion to it (Dolan, 1993). For mothers participating in overseas labour (e.g., caregiving programs), informal remittances are regularly sent to their families in the Philippines, in addition to the required government remittances from their salaries.

### **Parent-Adolescent Relationships in Filipino Immigrant Families**

Adolescence is a stressful period for many families across different cultures (Arnett, 2008). For Filipino immigrant families, the adolescence life-stage may present a unique paradox. A developing sense of autonomy in adolescents is often in direct conflict with harmonious family relationships during adolescence (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Although Asian parents have reported a desire for autonomy in their adolescents, Asian adolescents have expressed that they delay their autonomous development in response to

their feelings of strong family obligations (Kwak, 2001). Most Asian families reported emphasizing interdependence between nuclear and extended family members, and harmony and duty to one's family values (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Yee, deBaryshe, Yuen, Kim, & McCubbin, 2006). For example, Asian adolescents reported conceding to their parents' wishes and desires regarding school and career choices, understanding that these concessions would honour their families' name at the expense of personal desire. Asian adolescents, however, also expressed personal desires to be more autonomous (Chao & Tseng). Difficulties arise when researchers attempt to disentangle challenges around adolescents' autonomy-seeking behaviours (a normative transitional development) from cultural and acculturative clashes regarding family relationships, roles and individual development (a non-normative adjustment).

Studies have also demonstrated the importance of family context in relation to Asian individual acculturation processes in Western nations (Bhattacharya & Schoppelry, 2004; Crane, Ngai, Larson, & Hafen Jr., 2005; Phinney et al., 2000; Yee et al., 2006). Most Asian parents have expressed the desire for all family members, including adolescents, to maintain their ethnic heritage, but also expressed a desire for successful integration in their new country. However, discrepancies may exist between the adolescents' desires and their parents' expectations regarding desired levels of ethnic maintenance, Canadian identification, and overall acculturation strategies (Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Kwak, 2001; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Phinney et al., 2000).

Although this type of research has yet to include Filipino immigrant families, it could be argued that Filipino immigrant families may experience similar issues: Asian youths often speak about themselves in relation to family, as well as their strong family

bonds. How Filipino immigrant families manage everyday conflicts and stresses may be reflective of the unique protective mechanisms and risk factors (e.g., cultural values and family obligations) these families possess and/or experience.

### **Family Roles and Relationships**

Families are viewed as the principle source of care and nurturance for individuals, providing the foundation for normative physical, emotional, and social development (e.g., Bush & Peterson, 2008; Slonim-Nevo, Mirsky, Rubinstein, & Nauck, 2009; White & Klein, 2008). However, understanding what factors contribute to the well-being of families is also of importance (Hawley & DeHaan, 1996; McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988; Simon, Murphy, & Smith, 2005; Walsh, 2006). Families, like individuals, are not static social entities. Changes experienced by families may create instability and vulnerability, but also present opportunities for growth and development.

In family theories, (e.g., family life course developmental theory), transitions associated with developmental processes are considered normative events (White & Klein, 2008); however, families must re-define roles, relationships and functioning during transitions (White & Klein). Social norms define role expectations during specific life stages and for relationships between family members. Within the family structure, each member has a role to play: Family roles have been defined as the social norms prescribing behaviours as dictated by each person's social position within the family structure (e.g., mother, wife, son, brother; White & Klein). Family members' roles are age and duration specific, thus members' behaviours are distinguished by the life-stage the family is currently experiencing (e.g., infancy, adolescence, adulthood). Similarly, relationships between family members are based on social norms too. How well families

function is dependent on having clear roles for each family member and expectations for relationships.

During developmental transitions into adolescence, parents and adolescents must negotiate new rules, roles, and relational dynamics to accommodate adolescents' increasing demands for personal autonomy and freedom (Steinberg & Silk, 2002). This particular developmental transition, however, may be even more challenging for immigrant families, as they must also balance competing pressures of learning and navigating a new cultural environment while maintaining features and values from their culture of origin. As well, changing roles and expectations may add more pressure to families seeking to re-establish harmonious family functioning following migration to a new and culturally dissimilar country (McCubbin et al., 1998; Walsh, 2006; White & Klein, 2008). Challenges may arise when new roles and patterns of interactions emerge in response to adolescents seeking more autonomy, but clash with cultural values from immigrant families' country of origin (e.g., Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Navara & Lollis, 2009).

One common example of how family roles are affected during settlement into a new country is observed when immigrant families experience role reversals, where children act as the authority and parents may defer to children for support, information and decision-making (Weisskerch, 2010). Most commonly, these role reversals are evident when children of immigrant parents act as cultural and language brokers for their parents. Immigrant parents often rely on their children for assistance navigating the new culture (e.g., filling out documents, scheduling appointments, helping younger siblings with homework), as children often acculturate faster than their parents.

Some immigrant parents have attributed language and cultural brokering as part of children's role in supporting the family (Orellana, 2009). Additionally, research on immigrant adolescents acting as cultural and/or language brokers has reported some positive outcomes for families (e.g., better communication and interactions between parents and children; Orellana) and for children (e.g., higher levels of self-efficacy; Weikkersen, 2007; Wu & Kim, 2009). Conversely, other studies have reported that adolescents may feel burdened by the responsibility, feel shame or anger towards their parents' inability to properly navigate the new culture, and may experience higher levels of depression (Love & Buriel, 2007; Wu & Kim, 2009). Family functioning may also be compromised, as high levels of language and cultural brokering have been correlated with increased family stress and a perceived decrease in parenting effectiveness (Martinez, McClure, & Eddy, 2009).

Navigating between two cultural frameworks within private and public domains presents many challenges to the structure and functioning of immigrant families, and more specifically to parent-adolescent relationships (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Navarra & Lollis, 2009; Phinney et al., 2000). Most research on immigrants and their families adopts a deficit model (e.g., Weisskirch, 2010); however, a strengths-based perspective would provide a foundation for immigrant families to build upon current assets and to optimize their adjustment processes.

Adopting a family-resilience framework focuses on the entire family unit: This allows for a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between acculturation and developmental transitions within immigrant families, and between individual and family functioning. A family resilience framework also allows researchers to focus on immigrant

families' strengths, capacities, and competencies inherent within the family during stressful times. A family resilience framework also allows the uniqueness of immigrant family perspectives and situations to be highlighted, emphasizing situational and cultural contexts when assessing challenges, resources, and functioning. Lastly, family resilience theories emphasize families' growth and transformation during stressful times, rather than focusing on the detrimental effects of such situations.

### **Family-Level Resilience**

McCubbin and McCubbin defined family resilience as the “characteristics, dimensions and properties of families which help families to be resistant to disruption in the face of change and adaptive in the face of crisis situations” (1988, p. 247). Similarly, Walsh described family resilience as “the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges” (2003, p. 1). The basic tenets inherent in the preceding definitions include (1) the presence of a significant or major challenge, crisis, or adversity with the potential to disrupt the family unit's functioning, (2) the family's ability to mobilize available internal and external resources, and (3) the dynamic process involved in order for the family to optimize their adaptation to crises and/or challenges.

**Prevention-oriented family resilience framework.** Seminal research by Hill (1949; 1958) distinguished four factors related to family responses to stress. Based on these four factors, Hill developed The ABCX-model of family responses to stress. The four factors are (A) the stressor, (B) resources, (C) the perception of the stressor or crisis and (X) the stressor or crisis itself. A brief explanation follows:

A (the event) – interacting with B (the family's crisis) – interacting with C (the definition the family makes of the event) – produces X (the crisis). The second [the family's crisis] and their determinants – the family resources and definition of

the event – lie within the family itself and must be seen in terms of the family's structures and values (Hill, 1958; p. 5).

Based on the ABCX model, McCubbin and colleagues (1998) developed a prevention-oriented model for practitioners, the resiliency model of family stress, adjustment and adaptation, to understand how families react to stress and how families are resilient during these times. This model identified coping mechanisms families used to overcome normative challenges and adapt to non-normative ones, as well as identifiable outcomes (e.g., the well-being and development of the family and its members). In addition to the ABCX factors, this model accounts for the family's appraisal processes (which reflect family values, beliefs and expectations), the salience of established family functioning, and how the family perceives and copes with the crisis or crises (McCubbin et al.). This family resilience model provided a way to understand family reactions to life challenges and how resources available to families support their reactions.

Families' definition of, and ensuing reaction to the stressor depends on the family schema and the sense of coherence between its members. Family paradigms allow family members to share common beliefs about the functioning of their family system (Yee et al., 2006). For example, a family schema utilizing a collectivistic or relational orientation focuses on the group (we), rather than the person (I), and emphasizes family investment. A relational orientation may strongly emphasize maintaining family harmony as an optimal adaptation outcome, placing more importance on the family's functioning rather than individual outcomes. For a family with a collectivistic orientation, family obligations, and honouring one's family are examples of common beliefs and goals. Thus, assessments and interpretations of the stressor are subject to the family's appraisal, which in turn is framed by their relational orientation.

**Systems theory of family resiliency.** A second major theory of family resilience is Walsh's systems theory of family resiliency which "serves as a conceptual map to identify and target key family processes that can reduce stress and vulnerability in high-risk situations, foster healing and growth out of crisis, and empower families to overcome adversity (2003, p. 5). Crucial to this theory of resilience is the importance of social (e.g., cultural values) and family contexts (e.g., family life-stage) in understanding the individual, as well as the family's potential for growth and relational transformation by identifying and fostering the capacities and resources inherent in a family.

The systems theory of family resilience emphasizes three key processes: the family belief system, organizational patterns, and communication. Family beliefs, or shared constructions of reality, organize family processes and approaches to crisis situations and subsequently potential solutions. Achieving a positive belief system unites the family and normalizes the challenges or adverse situations. Walsh (2003) asserted that by normalizing adversities, the family can evaluate and maximize available resources to create a hopeful outlook for their future. Family organizational patterns include flexibility, connectedness and social and economic resources. The ability to "bounce forward" in the face of challenges and to maintain levels of cohesion and mutual support among family members were also identified as crucial to promoting family resilience. The development of open communication, freely expressing emotions and sharing crucial information, also fosters resilience by establishing mutual levels of trust and respect.

**Family resilience theories and immigrant families.** Family resilience theories, specifically the prevention-orientated and systems theories of family resiliency, highlight the impact of serious challenges on the entire family's functioning, relationships, and

well-being. Although these two theories of family resilience differ in their orientation, both empower the family as a unit through the utilization of their strengths and use of existing internal and external supports and resources. Much of the related literature has been developed for practical application, such as preventative therapy, assessments and treatments. Some research (e.g., McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988) suggests the relevance of family resilience theories to specific populations, such as post-divorced, military and ethnically-diverse families; however, these theories have not been empirically tested (e.g., Walsh, 2003), especially for immigrant families living in contemporary and multi-cultural societies. Furthermore, family resilience theories have not been used to explore the experiences of immigrant families when balancing the competing demands of adapting to a new culture, maintaining values from the culture of origin, and transitioning family processes from childhood to adolescence. The focus on strengths makes resilience theories and practice highly desirable; however, a solid foundation of research and empirical findings is needed to support and extend the applicability of family resilience theories, whether for treatment, therapy, or developing family-related policies.

### **Family Resilience and Cultural and Social Contexts**

Culture is a robust influence on family roles (White & Klein, 2008) and functioning (Harkness & Super, 2002; Tseng & Hsu, 1991), but is often excluded in family research. Research on family resilience should include cultural and societal factors, especially in families of diverse backgrounds. Societal and cultural contexts are especially important in understanding the challenges facing immigrants and their families, especially as culture shapes the context of immigrants' personal, family, and social lives. Yet cultural frameworks are often treated as a uni-dimensional concept,

where researchers measure culture using a single variable (e.g., ethnic identification) (e.g., Tseng & Fuglini, 2000; Ying & Han, 2008).

Additionally, cross-cultural applications of family theories, including applications of family resilience, are needed (White, 2005). What is appropriate for families' growth and development, how families strategize against adversities, and the outcomes resulting from the challenges facing families are all rooted in their cultural context. For Asian immigrant families, research must identify and examine changing or different social contexts and the implications for family life (e.g., Chao and Tseng, 2002).

Research on Asian immigrants assumes a predominantly Eastern Asian cultural framework. Although several Asian countries, including the Philippines, may share similar cultural features, the nuances of the country and its cultural systems must be addressed in a distinctive manner. Progress in understanding Filipino immigrant family well-being and the preservation of family relationships should be guided by theories that explain how and why they are predisposed to vulnerability and what factors mitigate or exacerbate hardships, as well as why some families succeed and not others.

### **Why Study Filipino Immigrant Families**

David & Okazaki (2006) argued that Filipinos, in comparison to their Asian counterparts, are underrepresented in academic research despite being one of the largest ethnic groups in North America. As "invisible minorities" (David & Okazaki, 2006; p. 6), few studies have focused on issues related to Filipino immigrants and families. More specifically, very few researchers have examined experiences of intergenerational and cultural conflicts in Filipino immigrant families in North America (e.g., Ying & Han, 2008), or how they have utilized unique protective mechanisms based on the Filipino

culture (e.g., McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988). The dearth of research on Filipino immigrants and families in Canada, coupled with their “quiet” integration into Canadian society, continues to render their acculturation and adjustment challenges invisible.

Assuming universal integration strategies for Filipino immigrant families does not account for the unique aspects of their immigration pathways, cultural values, and family life. Understanding the specific circumstances of Filipino families is crucial to understanding their societal adaptation and family-related adjustment experiences.

Filipino immigrant families are often caught between two worlds, two cultural frameworks, and thus, two contexts. Understanding these contexts, culturally and societally, from new and old countries, will provide a richer understanding of Filipino immigrants’ experiences and their pathways to resilience.

### **Current Study**

Guided by principles of family-resilience frameworks, the goal of this thesis was to investigate Filipino immigrant parents’ perceptions of family challenges, utilization of their family and other resources, and the interaction between the two factors as they manage family life during the adolescence life-stage. Because of the limited academic research on Filipino immigrants and their families, this study focused specifically on Filipino immigrant families in Canada, examining Filipino immigrant mothers’ interpretations of their dual cultural frameworks (Canadian and Filipino cultures), family relationships, and the challenges associated with raising adolescents in Canada. Family cohesion and positive functioning within the dual cultural frameworks were also examined.

First-generation Filipino immigrant mothers were interviewed in order to understand their experiences as they navigate the adolescence life stage and acculturation processes. Filipino immigrant families may already possess several assets and resources which can be utilized as tools to support their adjustment processes, both within their family environment and within the broader Canadian society. Several of these assets may be inherent within the family, some may be products of Filipino culture, and some may be learned from Canadian culture. Thus, a secondary focus of this research was on the family-related and cultural values supporting Filipino immigrant family functioning and relations. The research questions were:

- 1) How is Filipino culture defined by Filipino immigrant mothers?
- 2) How is Canadian culture defined by Filipino immigrant mothers?
- 3) How do these two cultural frameworks affect family adjustment to the adolescence life-stage?
- 4) What are the challenges Filipino immigrant families experience related to the adolescence life-stage?, and
- 5) What and how are family resources and strengths utilized by families to overcome these challenges? To maintain family closeness?

Using a qualitative approach, this study provides an understanding of resilience in Filipino immigrant families by unpacking how Filipino immigrant parents and adolescents negotiated each others' adjustment to Canadian culture and society, their maintenance of Filipino cultural values, beliefs and traditions, and family functioning, relationships, and harmony as the family navigated adolescence.

## Methods

### Participants

Although both mothers and fathers contribute to the development of their children, mothers are traditionally the primary caregivers and “architects” for future generations in Filipino culture (Jacobsen, 1974). For this study, mothers from 20 different families were interviewed. To qualify for the study, mothers and their families had to meet the following criteria:

- 1) Mothers must be of Filipino descent.
- 2) Mothers must have immigrated to Canada.
- 3) At least one adolescent, between the ages of 13-19 years, must have been residing in the household at the time of the interview.

Of the 20 participants, 10 mothers were recruited from the South-Western Ontario, from the Waterloo-Wellington region (Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo;  $n = 3$ ), Greater Toronto Area (Mississauga, Scarborough, Hamilton;  $n = 6$ ), and Windsor ( $n = 1$ ). Ten mothers were recruited from central Saskatchewan (Saskatoon,  $n = 10$ ). Out of the 20 participants, a few mothers did not return the demographic questionnaire (90% response rate,  $n = 18$ ). A comparison of participants recruited from Ontario and Saskatchewan revealed no significant differences on any of the demographic variables, including age, time in Canada, number of adolescents, and number of family members (Table 1; See Table 2 for more demographic information).

Mothers were an average of 45.76 years old (Range = 31-56 years). The majority of the mothers self-identified as Filipino citizens (78%,  $n = 14$ ) and reported Filipino/Tagalog as their first language (83 %,  $n = 15$ ). One mother reported English as

Table 1

*Demographic Comparison between Ontario and Saskatchewan Participants*

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Ontario</u>		<u>Saskatchewan</u>		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
	Mean (SD)	Range	Mean (SD)	Range	Mean (SD)	Range		
Mother's age (years)	45.76 (7.85)	31-56 yrs	44.89 (6.90)	32-54 yrs	46.75 (9.78)	31-56 yrs	-.48	15
Time in Canada (months)	133.88 (108.14)	14-325 mo.	108.78 (106.62)	14-268 mo.	162.13 (109.62)	16-325 mo.	-1.02	15
# of adolescents	1.44 (.51)	1-2	1.56 (.53)	1-2	1.33 (.50)	1-2	.92	16
# of family members	3.56 (1.04)	2-6	3.11 (.93)	2-5	4.00 (1.00)	3-6	-1.96	16

Notes:  $N = 18$

$p > .05$

her first language, and two mothers reported “other” as their first language (i.e., Bilingual in Filipino and English; Bicol). Mothers immigrated to Canada between 1982 and 2009, (Mean years in Canada = 11.53,  $n = 17$ ), with 39% ( $n = 7$ ) of respondents arriving within the last five years, 6% ( $n = 1$ ) arrived between 6-10 years ago, 17% ( $n = 3$ ) arrived between 11-15 years ago, and 33% ( $n = 6$ ) arrived 16 or more years ago.

Half of respondents reported landing in Canada as immigrants or permanent residents of Canada ( $n = 9$ ), whereas eight mothers initially arrived as a temporary worker through the Live-in Caregiver program (LCP;  $n = 8$ ). One mother did not report any information about her immigration to Canada. Nine families migrated with the mother (50%). Of these families, one mother migrated with their spouse/partner and eight mothers arrived in Canada with their spouse/partner and children.

Overall, 50% ( $n = 9$ ) of respondents were Canadian citizens at the time of the interview, averaging approximately 15.78 years as a Canadian citizen ( $Range = 8-24$

Table 2

*Participants' Demographic Information*

	Total		Ontario		Saskatchewan	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
<b>Marital status</b>						
Married/partnered	88.9	16	88.9	8	88.9	8
Single/divorced	11.1	2	11.1	1	11.1	1
<b>Family migrated with mother</b>						
Yes	50.0	9	55.6	5	44.4	4
No	38.9	7	44.4	4	33.3	3
NA	11.1	2	-	-	22.2	2
<b>Current citizenship status</b>						
Canadian	61.1	11	55.6	5	66.7	6
Awaiting citizenship	33.3	6	44.4	4	22.2	2
No response	.06	1	-	-	11.1	1
<b>First language</b>						
Filipino	83.3	15	77.8	7	88.9	8
English	.06	1	11.1	1	-	-
Other	11.1	2	11.1	1	11.1%	1
<b>Religion</b>						
Catholic	100	18	100.0%	9	100.0%	9
<b>Mothers' socio-economic status (Philippines)</b>						
<b>Education</b>						
High school	.06	1	-	-	11.1	1
Some secondary	27.8	5	22.2	2	33.3	3
Degree/Diploma	61.1	11	66.7	6	55.6	5
Other	.06	1	11.1	1	-	-
<b>Annual income (Cdn)</b>						
< 25,000	27.8	5	33.3	3	22.2	2
25,001 < 45,000	11.1	2	22.2	2	-	-
45,001 < 65,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
65,001 < 85,000	11.1	2	11.1	1	11.1	1
> 85,000	11.1	2	22.2	2	-	-
No response	33.3	7	11.1	1	66.7	6
<b>Occupation</b>						
Clerical	27.8	5	22.2	2	33.3	3
Semi-skilled	22.2	4	44.4	4	-	-
Semi-professional	.06	1	-	-	11.1	1
Professional	16.7	3	33.3	3	-	-
Other	11.1	2	-	-	22.2	2
NA	16.7	3	-	-	33.3	3
<b>Mothers' socio-economic status (Canada)</b>						
<b>Education</b>						
Some secondary	11.1	2	22.2	2	-	-
Degree/Diploma	.06	1	11.1	1	-	-
Other	27.8	5	33.3	3	22.2	2
NA	55.6	10	33.3	3	77.8	7

Annual income (Cdn)						
< 25,000	11.1	2	11.1	1	11.1	1
25,001 < 45,000	22.2	4	33.3	3	11.1	1
45,001 < 65,000	16.7	3	11.1	1	22.2	2
65,001 < 85,000	16.7	3	11.1	1	22.2	2
> 85,000	22.2	4	22.2	2	22.2	2
No response	11.1	2	11.1	1	11.1	1
Occupation						
Labourer	22.2	4	11.1	1	33.3	3
Clerical	22.2	4	22.2	2	22.2	2
Semi-skilled	.06	1	11.1	1	-	-
Semi-professional	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	38.9	7	33.3	3	44.4	4
NA	11.1	2	22.2	2	-	-

Notes:  $N = 18$

years,  $n = 9$ ) and 44% of respondents ( $n = 8$ ) were awaiting citizenship to be finalized. One mother did not report this information. Sixteen respondents were married (88.9%), with only a few single and/or divorced households ( $n = 2$ ). The number of adolescents living in the household ranged from 1 (56%,  $n = 10$ ) to 2 (44%,  $n = 8$ ). Overall, there were 26 adolescents from all of the families (male adolescents,  $n = 12$ ; female adolescents,  $n = 14$ ). The number of family members in the household ranged from three to seven ( $n = 18$ ). Four households (22%) included extended family members, such as parents or parent-in-laws, and nieces or nephews.

### Procedure

Ethical approval for this study was granted through the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board (Appendix A). Participants were recruited from April to September 2010. Recruitment flyers (Appendix B) were posted in Filipino grocery stores, restaurants and organizations, as well as at a variety of organizations, such as community organizations (e.g., Filipino-Canadian Clubs, Migrant Workers and Family Resources Centre, Philippines Independence Day Council), settlement organizations (e.g.,

Immigrant Services Guelph-Wellington, Newcomers Centre of Peel, New Canadians' Center of Excellence, Gateway Centre for New Canadians), and local churches. The researcher sent emails to community organizations (Appendix C) and also recruited through social networking sites, such as Facebook<sup>®</sup> and a Filipino forum (Filipino.ca). Information about the study was posted on Filipino adolescent, parenting, and community groups on Facebook<sup>®</sup> and general chat forums about parenting on Filipino.ca. Several personal meetings with leaders in the Filipino community were also scheduled to spread information about the study. A session about university information was conducted at a newcomer centre, where the researcher recruited at the end of the session. The researcher also utilized "snowball sampling", by asking all contacts and participants to suggest 2-3 potential participants. Snowball sampling was employed when several participants had expressed interest in the study. Some participants were recruited through friends of the researcher. Although convenience sampling is often less desired as a recruitment strategy, it can be a successful recruitment sampling method for difficult to reach populations, such as immigrant families. The two most successful recruitment strategies in Ontario were through community or settlement organizations ( $n = 6$ ) and through personal networks ( $n = 4$ ). Saskatchewan participants were primarily recruited through participants' personal networks.

Semi-structured interviews were most often conducted in person at the participants' home ( $n = 12$ ) or at a preferred location as suggested by the participant (e.g., at coffee shops;  $n = 7$ ). One phone interview was conducted ( $n = 1$ ). More information regarding the purpose of the study was given to the participant at the time of scheduling the interview. Consent forms and background questionnaires were mailed or emailed to

the participant prior to each interview (see Appendices D & E, respectively). Participants were asked to read the consent form and complete the background questionnaire prior to beginning the interview. Mothers were then interviewed, (average interview length = 60 minutes, Range: 35 to 120 minutes). Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. As a token of appreciation for participating in the interview, each mother received a \$10 gift card to a restaurant or grocery store of their choice. The researcher created a safe, secure and relaxed environment for mothers to speak freely and comfortably.

Mothers were encouraged to participate in the interview in whichever language (Filipino/Tagalog or English) they felt more comfortable speaking, as the researcher understood both languages. Filipino immigrants often have strong English language skills (reading, writing, and speaking) prior to their arrival to Canada (David & Okayanzi, 2006). Mothers reported being fluent, mostly fluent or completely fluent in their English skills ( $n = 18$ ).

Although some mothers participated in Filipino/Tagalog for the interview ( $n = 3$ ), the researcher conducted all of the interviews in English. These three interviews were originally transcribed in Filipino/Tagalog and then translated to English by the researcher. These were then back-translated by an independent translator fluent in Filipino/Tagalog to ensure that the meaning and context for translated transcripts were maintained.

### **Data Collection**

**Background questionnaire** (Appendix E). The background questionnaire included items such as the mother's age, birth country, ethnic identification, identified

citizenship, first and second languages, religious affiliation, occupation (prior to and after arriving in Canada), level of education (prior to and after arriving in Canada), income level (prior to and after arriving in Canada), immigration status, citizenship(s) prior to arriving in Canada, year of Canadian citizenship (obtained or expected), the number of years resided in Canada, and several background questions about both immediate and extended family members.

**Interview guide** (Appendix F). The interview focused on the following topics: (1) Filipino culture, (2) Canadian culture, (3) the concept of a “strong and close” family, (4) family challenges, (5) strategies to overcome such challenges, and (6) strategies to maintain family closeness. The interview targeted mothers’ perspectives about cultural values, family closeness, the types of developmental challenges experienced by families, and their coping strategies. These questions also allowed the researcher to investigate mothers’ perspectives about their family relations during the adolescence life-stage within Filipino and Canadian cultural frameworks. Several follow-up questions and prompts were used to further elucidate the cultural values and beliefs Filipino immigrant families adhere to, their overall family functioning and relations, and the challenges affecting their family life.

The researcher was able to contextualize participants’ responses and to provide thick descriptions of their social experiences by conducting interviews (Ungar, 2006, 2007, 2008; Warren, 2002). Qualitative interviews also allow the researcher to develop emerging themes and patterns from participants’ responses by integrating participants’ varying perspectives, describing the process, and learning the various interpretations of their social experiences (Warren). Interviews were designed to extract detailed responses

from mothers and to promote meaningful discussions for a deeper understanding of Filipino immigrant families in Canada.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was conducted through the theoretical position of a non-relativist social constructionist, or critical realism (Willig, 1999). Critical realism is the combination of constructionist and realist positions, which postulates that interactions between individuals and their broader social structures (e.g., socio-history, politics and culture), and the subsequent interpretations individuals make about these interactions, shape and inform their social environment. Thus, social meanings of events and processes are constructed within the presented limits and opportunities of these broader social structures (Willig). Critical realist researchers must provide (1) a comprehensive and detailed description of the participants' experiences, and (2) an analysis of the historical, social and economic conditions surrounding these experiences.

Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the data as it allows for patterns or themes within a dataset to be identified and interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The procedure for this qualitative method generally followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke. For the first phase of analyses, the researcher immersed herself in the data. By collecting, transcribing, and engaging in repeated reading of all interviews, the researcher familiarized herself with the breadth and depth of the data. The second phase of thematic analysis was to generate a comprehensive and inclusive set of initial codes. Each transcript was read thoroughly and initial notes were made on significant concepts and ideas from the interviews. In phase three, searching for themes, these initial notes were constantly reviewed as the researcher attempted to interpret mothers' responses into

conceptual themes. As codes were organized, initial candidates for overarching themes and sub-themes were developed. As a re-iterative process, quotes were constantly compared to one other to ensure they closely matched the concept for their respective themes. Phase four was the reviewing of themes. Braun and Clarke asserted that “data within themes should cohere meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes” (p. 91). The researcher refined themes by examining the sets of quotes for meaning to ensure that themes were consistent and distinctive from each other. New themes or sub-themes were extracted when a subset of quotes reflected a concept different from the original theme. The last phase required the researcher to define and name the themes, “identifying the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall)” (p. 92).

Several coding systems were developed to address each of the research questions for this study. Each interview question and their respective probing questions were analyzed to produce the following coding systems of (1) Filipino cultural values; (2) Canadian cultural values; (3) Conceptualizations of close and strong families; (4) Challenges experienced related to adolescent development; (5) Strategies to maintain family cohesion despite adolescent developmental-related challenges (see Tables 3-8). Within each coding system, codes that were too infrequent to create its own category, or that did not fit any of the existing categories were labelled as uncodeable.

Several assessment criteria have been suggested to ensure the trustworthiness of qualitative data analyses (e.g., Mays & Pope, 2000; Parker, 2004). To ensure trustworthiness in this study, the researcher and an independent cultural researcher

examined the fit of every response during each stage of analyses (e.g., from concepts to codes to coding systems). Discrepancies were discussed until an agreement was reached.

## **Results**

### **Cultural and Family Contexts for Filipino Families**

Mothers responded to open-ended questions about both Filipino and Canadian cultures, as well as open-ended questions about close family relations. Their responses described the roles these contextual factors played in the family environment. From their responses, overarching themes were developed to reflect mothers' perceptions and interpretations about (1) Filipino culture, (2) Canadian culture, and (3) strong and close family relationships. Especially within the cultural contexts, family roles and relations were emphasized.

**Filipino culture.** Mothers were asked about their perception of the Filipino culture. From their responses, five main themes emerged pertaining to: (1) family; (2) respect for elders; (3) parenting practices; (4) personal traits; and (5) the importance of education (Table 3).

**Family.** Most mothers conceptualized a cohesive family unit as important to Filipino culture (13 instances). The importance of family was reflected in statements about strong relations, deep emotional bonds between family members, and the benefits of having close family members. Several family sub-themes emerged, which included: (1) close family relations; (2) supporting family members; (3) family time and (4) family definition.

Close family relationships were reported as integral to Filipino culture (13 instances). Closeness between family members was defined as strong emotional bonds

Table 3

*Perceptions of Filipino Culture*

Theme	Definition	Example phrases
Family		
Close family relations	Strong emotional bond between all family members, regardless of age	“tighter family relationships”, “close knit”
Family support	Financial, moral, instrumental and emotional support to immediate and extended family	“We’re open to really helping families, not just immediate family”
Family time	Daily, infrequent, and/or special events where family members are expected to be together	“shopping”, “dinner-time”, “holidays”, “birthdays or anniversaries”, “get together”
Family definition	Close relationships with immediate and extended family members considered to be part of the family and household	“Closely-knit families-extended families included.”
Respect for elders		
Recognizing authority and elders	Proper acknowledgement of authority figures in the family and workplace	“You have to say <i>po</i> , which is a sign of respect”
Caring for elderly parents	Expectation for adult children to provide care, support, and living space for parents in old age	“We take care of our elders.”, “I also expect in the older years, you’re with family right?”
Parenting practices	Enforcement of rules and/or guidelines for children and age-appropriate disciplinary actions for children	
Personal traits		
Hospitable	Accommodates others’ (non-family members’) needs	“generous”, “warm”, “we give them the best”, “we let them feel welcome”
Easily adaptable	Integrate easily and well into other cultures	“get along well with neighbours”, “ability to adapt”, “In another country, we don’t easily give up”
Patriotic	Exhibit pride in home country (Philippines) and its culture	“We like our culture very much”
Hard-working	Persevere and take work seriously	“work, work, work”, “want to surpass expectations”
Importance of education	Emphasize the importance of pursuing and completing higher educational goals	“study”, “grades”, “good education”
Uncodeable		

between all family members, regardless of age and generational differences, geographical distance, and personal situations. Most mothers described their family relations in terms of “close ties” or being “closely-knit”, implying an intertwining of family members’ lives and emotional states with one another. One mother of a 13 year- son described close family relations as, “(W)e’re so closely knit. ...The Filipino family is the most important part. For me. For me”. Similar to other respondents, this mother reiterated the personal importance placed on having close family relations (“For me. For me.”). Mothers also described close emotional bonds through families’ willingness to share their home with adult children and with elderly parents. One mother of two sons, ages 15 and 18 years, stated:

For us Filipinos, a house has a great impact on our culture. To have a house of our own is a very big deal for us. ... Because we’re closely knit and we like to have our families always with us. (05M)

Mothers viewed their homes not only as a physical building to house family members, but also as a physical representation of family unity and an embodiment of emotional closeness. Family members must be willing to share living space with multiple generations, which in turn is interpreted by mothers as representing their familial closeness.

More than half the mothers (11 instances) also described the role of family support in Filipino culture, which was defined as the ability and desire to provide financial, moral, instrumental and emotional support to immediate and extended family members. What was important in mothers’ responses was the intrinsically-driven willingness to express and provide support to family members. One mother of two adolescents, a 16 year old son and a 13 year old daughter, described family support as:

We're open to really helping families. Not just immediate family, but even relatives. Just for example, I am also sending money to my parents. Supporting them in the Philippines and also to my relatives, like my cousin. ... It makes me feel better because if I didn't do those things, I would feel..I don't know how to say. It's just not comfortable, if for myself, if I knew I have a bit to help and I didn't. It would make me feel uncomfortable, like my conscience bugging me. (03M)

As this example illustrates, supporting family members was more than a perfunctory obligation to any family member. It was central to how this mother felt and ultimately, how she perceived herself. One mother of a 17 year old daughter explained:

...even with their own (children), it's still our responsibility - it's still the parents' responsibility. ...Even if they have their own kids, if they're really older or something, the parents are still open to help them. ...It's not just responsibility, but it's a thing a parent (does) to help their children. (20M)

Despite the children's ages or life-stage, parents were willing and ready to provide support or help to their children through any means. Supporting an immediate or extended family member was not seen as an obligation, but rather as a personal responsibility to ensure that each person's well-being and needs were met.

Spending time together as a family was also considered a valuable aspect of the family in Filipino culture (7 instances). Most of these mothers described family time in several ways, such as celebrating large events (e.g., holidays and birthdays), having family activities, (e.g., going to church, vacations, or shopping trips), and routine or daily events, (e.g., eating dinner together). One mother of a 13 year old daughter (15M) described family time as, "Filipino families eat together and then go to church together. Instead of going out with other people, you go out with your family. Spend time with them." Thus, joining together in family-related activities, even ones that do not require elaborate planning, was also important in allowing family members to connect and maintain relations with one another. It also implied the expectation that family relations

must be prioritized before other types of relationships (“instead of going out with other people, you go out with your family”). Another mother of a 19 year old son compared her Canadian son-in-law’s experiences of holiday celebration to those of her own family’s. This example demonstrated the importance mothers placed on their families being together, especially in terms of communicating and connecting to each other:

Christmas or big holidays: I mean, Filipino families will stay together. It has meaning to them that on this occasion the family should be together. My (Canadian) son-in-law has experienced being all alone on Christmas. (When) he started hanging out with us, he couldn’t believe - ‘You stay very long in the dining table.’ Well, that’s the only time we get to talk to each other. (His family doesn’t) do that. (09M)

Some mothers (4 instances) also focused on the family structure, specifically including immediate and extended family members. As articulated by one mother of a 15 year old son:

Family is more extended in the Philippines. You have your aunts and uncles, or everybody else is an ‘aunt’ or ‘uncle.’ And it’s more extended, like sometimes in one household, you have your grandparents living in the same house. (01M)

***Respect for elders.*** Another theme that emerged focused on respect for elders and authority (10 instances). This theme was oriented towards the hierarchical relationship between parents and children and in other relationships, such as adults to adults and employees to employers. This concept of respect was defined to encompass two sub-themes: (1) recognizing authority and elders and (2) caring for elderly parents.

Ten mothers described intentional ways of properly recognizing authority figures and/or the social positions of elders within and outside the family setting. In particular, using proper terms instead of first names to address someone respectfully was often mentioned. For example:

The culture in the Philippines is about respect for the elders, so that's why we have certain words that we use: *ate* (for older sisters or women related by blood), *kuya* (for older brothers or older men), *lola* (grandmother), and *tatay* (father) and *lolo* (grandfather). You don't just call me by name. You call me, if I'm older than you, you call me *ate* or *tita* (for older women not related by blood). (Mother of two daughters, ages 13 and 16 years, 02M)

Additionally, when speaking to a parent or an elder, certain actions were required (e.g., blessing of the hand) or specific words were used to acknowledge the social position of elders. As explained by one mother of a 13 year old son and a 16 year old daughter:

In that culture, back in the Philippines, your respect with elders can be defined in a lot of things. You don't talk back to your parents or to anyone who is older than you. You have to say *po*, which is a sign of respect. (07M)

Personal caregiving for older parents or grandparents was seen as a duty and responsibility of the child(ren). It was also considered the ultimate way to show respect to one's parents, as it reflected the strong cultural attitude that one's parents must be valued throughout both the child's and parent's life (5 instances). For example, one mother (gender and age of adolescent not reported) described:

You take care of your elderly parents in the Philippines once they are older. No matter what. ...Because there (in the Philippines), it's different when it comes to older parents. It's like a big sin, a really big sin, if you should take your parents to a home for the elderly. People you know may condemn you--think of you as a bad child. (16M)

***Parenting practices.*** Parents' roles in disciplining and setting forth rules for their children were also discussed as a part of the Filipino culture (7 instances). According to these mothers, parents placed and enforced rules or guidelines regarding personal time and other social commitments (e.g., friends, curfews and study time). Mothers discussed how they disciplined their children to ensure that their rules were followed. One mother of two daughters, ages 15 and 18, compared the differences between disciplining children and adolescents:

... (My one daughter) is already 15. Before they were 10, we used to spank them, and they knew this too, when they'd do something wrong. After 10, there's no more (spanking) because they can understand now. There's no more physical hurting, or discipline, but we're more in the verbal. We talk to them, what they did wrong. Usually, when I'd get angry, they did something wrong, so their dad will talk to them. So, we will ask them what they did and why we're angry. (06M)

A mother of a 16 year old daughter described how family members (especially the children) were assigned household duties and what was expected from them:

They have curfew hours. They have to come home before supper because everybody should be at the table for supertime. After school, they should be home. And, they have their chores, you know? You have to assign them something to do – washing the dishes, somebody will clean the house, somebody will do the laundry. (19M)

***Personal traits.*** Several mothers (7) also discussed several common personal traits believed to be characteristic to Filipinos. From their cultural socialization experiences, Filipinos were viewed as hospitable, adaptable, hardworking and patriotic.

Hospitality was discussed by several mothers (6 instances), defined as accommodating another person's needs, especially a non-family member. Mothers described instances of hospitality, such as opening up one's home to other people, entertaining guests with the best they have to offer, and treating guests like family members in their home. For example, one mother of two adolescents, a 13 year old daughter and a 16 year old son, said:

I guess it would be like when we meet people, when people come to us for our help, as if they need something, regardless of who he is, we are open to help and to accommodate for whatever that person needs. And, when we receive visitors, we tend to give everything to the visitor in order to please him, like make the visitor feel like he is in his own home, or something like that. (03M)

***Importance of education.*** Mothers also discussed the importance of their children's education (4 instances). Mothers prioritized their children's academic performance, but also discussed the parent's responsibility in ensuring that their children

pursued higher education. As one mother of a 14 year old son stated, “Our tradition is to give our children a good education... It’s our responsibility to give them a good education and support: To keep their motivation until they finish their education” (06M). This quote illustrates mothers’ emphasis on upholding “tradition” and personal “responsibility” in ensuring children pursue higher education.

In summary, mothers described Filipino culture in terms of relationships, most importantly with family members, but also with friends, peers, and the larger society. Overall, strong relationships between nuclear and extended family members were of central importance. Spending time together and supporting all family members were ways to reinforce strong bonds between family members, but were also expected from family members. Respect for elders was another theme that focused on family relationships, as well as hierarchical relationships in the broader society. Both parents and children were expected to adhere to a system that recognized elders and authority figures from within and outside the family unit. Mothers also expressed how children were also obliged to care for parents in their old age. This obligation was not just a responsibility, but also an important aspect of the relation between parents and children. Also, parents were expected to develop and enforce rules and boundaries for their children, ensuring their proper development and growth into adulthood. Mothers also focused on the importance of academic performance for their children, but also the role parents played in ensuring their children`s success. Lastly, mothers spoke of a personal trait inherent in Filipinos and Filipino culture: hospitality. This personal trait highlighted the importance of maintaining good relationships with others, as it seeks to accommodate and treat others as if they were family.

**Canadian culture.** Mothers were asked “How would you describe Canadian culture?” From their responses, several main themes emerged (Table 4): (1) uncertainty; (2) parenting practices; (3) family relations (4) lack of respect for elders; (5) personal traits; (6) social freedom; and (7) language.

**Uncertainty.** Six mothers were unsure of how to describe Canadian culture. Several mothers explained their uncertainty was due to a lack of experience or exposure to Canadian culture. For some mothers, their inexperience with Canadian culture was due to their recent immigration. As one mother of two sons, ages 15 and 18, (05M) said, “There’s nothing more I can say because I have not mingled with anyone of them (Canadians).” However, some mothers could not describe Canadian culture altogether, despite their length of time in Canada. For example, one mother of a 14 year old son (20M) simply could not comment: “Canadian culture is... (paused for 18 seconds). Help me out.”

**Parenting practices.** Many mothers (13) conceptualized Canadian culture in terms of parenting practices they observed or heard about through Canadian peers. Two parenting sub-themes emerged, including freedom and promoting independence for children. Across both sub-themes, mothers were likely to describe such individualistic concepts synonymously with complete separation from the family. Often, mothers juxtaposed Filipino parenting practices and expectations with those they had observed or heard of from Canadian colleagues.

Mothers discussed how Canadian children were encouraged to make decisions for themselves upon reaching legal age (7 instances). As one mother of a 13 year old son and 16 year old daughter described:

Table 4

*Perceptions of Canadian Culture*

Theme	Definition	Example phrases
Uncertainty	Hesitant or unsure of how to describe Canadian culture	"I don't know what really is Canadian, right?", "I don't know how to explain it. It's just different. I don't know"
Parenting practices		
Freedom for children	Upon reaching adult age (18 years), children have the capacity to make their own decisions	"The kids are free.", "They just do whatever they want to do."
Promoting independence	Opportunities and encouragement for children's decision-making begin at an early age	"Leave the house", "decide for themselves", "They can make it their own.", "separate"
Family relations	Strong emotional bond and support provided between immediate family members, but is not extended into older life-stages	"Family is still a strong bond, but not so much the extended family", "they go to a nursing home"
Lack of respect for elders	Lack of proper acknowledgement of authority figures in the family and workplace	"Here, even the President, you can call them by their first name."
Personal traits		
Assertive	Direct and forthcoming about thoughts, feelings, and personal opinions, regardless of relationship	"being shy..is a negative thing", "very vocal"
Polite and friendly	Well-mannered and amicable towards others	"they say thank you", "they are friendly...they say 'Hey, how are you?'"
Helpful	Willing to provide assistance to others without encumbering one's convenience	"very heart-giving", "helpful, like they're hospitable too"
Social freedom	Exempted from strict social constraints	"not bound so much by what your neighbours will say", "mind their own business"
Language	Primary language is English	"I speak in English here"
Uncodeable		

There's a tendency to control their children (in the Philippines), so (Filipino parents) wanted to chart their children's future as to what they think is best for their children. ...I see here in Canada, that there's more freedom to the person,

when they get to the age of majority, so (Canadian) children can chart their own future. So, parents can't really - they can try to influence the children, but the adult-child is in charge, they can decide on their own. They can listen to their parents or not. (07M)

This quote illustrated mothers' perceptions of Canadian adolescents' choices in decision-making. In the Philippines, parents (mothers) have influence and control over their children's lives, but in Canada "there's more freedom to the person" and the adolescent "can chart their own future". However, mothers were also less likely to see this as a positive development. As one mother of a 16 year old daughter explained: "Like, their (Canadian) kids, when 18 years old, they (Canadian parents) just let them go. ...If possible, you don't want them to go away. But, Canadians...just let them go" (19M). As exemplified in this quote, mothers believed that upon reaching the age of majority children can decide to separate from their families and parents "just let them go."

Some mothers also described the promotion of independence in Canadian children (6 instances). One mother of a 13 year old daughter, described, "(Adolescents) are independent. They go to work. They can live on their own, have their own lives. They're also making their own money" (14M). Another mother of two daughters, ages 15 and 18, stated:

Independence is like, you can give them (adolescents) something and they can make it their own. ...And, you won't be nervous or something, or wonder if there's something that's going to happen. They know what they do and then they can talk to other people confidently. ...You get to decide what you want and what you're going to do. (06M)

Similar to other mothers, these quotes focused on opportunities available to Canadian adolescents for developing their sense of independence (e.g., working and making their own money), and the positive aspects of independence (e.g., "they know what they do").

***Family relations.*** Participants expressed their belief that Canadians cared for their family members and had strong relations between family members; however, they also believed that children were less likely to provide personal care or space in their homes for elderly parents (4 instances). As one mother of a 19 year old son stated, “A lot of (Canadians) are still strong on family ties. But, there are a lot of them who put old people in nursing homes.” She continued:

They (Canadians) are very logical, whereas Filipinos, I know myself, tend to be a little more emotional (when it comes to my parents). I can’t bear to do that. ... For us (Filipinos), it doesn’t matter what, you will not go out in a nursing home. ...It doesn’t matter-my conscience will not let me just push out my mother just because it will be convenient, I mean it might be good for her and it’s convenient for me. But, we are not raised that way. (09M)

This quote exemplified mothers’ discomfort at the thought of placing elderly parents in nursing homes, despite being the most “logical” option for Canadian families. Mothers were likely to juxtapose Filipino children’s obligation and duties of caring for elderly parents (“we are not raised that way”) with the view that supportive relations between Canadian children and parents (“[Canadians] are still strong on family ties”) may not always extend into older life stages (“But, there are a lot of them who put old people in nursing homes”).

***Lack of respect for elders.*** Mothers also described the ways Canadians informally acknowledged authority and/or elders (3 instances). Using first names to address parents, supervisors, and older adults, the lack of specific terms to refer to older siblings and having no actions (e.g., blessing of hands) to signify the social position of elders were examples mothers used to illustrate their experiences in Canada.

***Personal traits.*** Seven mothers described several individual traits they believed were inherent in Canadians’ socialization experiences. Some mothers saw assertiveness

(3 instances) as being encouraged to speak one's mind, whether adult or child. For example, one mother of a son, age 16, and a daughter, age 13, stated:

Filipino people tend to be more shy. In the Philippines, being shy is a good thing, but here in here (Canada), it is a negative thing. ....For example, like what happened yesterday (at the recruitment session), I'm sure some people yesterday had something on their minds. But, they were too shy to express. But, I think for Canadians, they will. They will participate, or something like that. (03M)

Politeness and friendliness were also described as being well-mannered and making small talk with strangers (3 instances). One mother (age and gender of children not reported, 16M) described her early encounters with Canadians: "For me, when I first came here, I was surprised at how friendly they were. They're really friendly. Also, they like to say 'Good morning, hi, how are you?' Like that. Unlike in the Philippines, there's nothing like that."

***Social freedom.*** Four mothers conceptualized social freedom as an integral aspect of Canadian culture. Social freedom was defined as the ability and/or capacity to be whoever one wishes to be and the lack of social constraints placed upon the individual. For example, a mother of a 19 year old daughter stated:

I find that they (Canadians) are a little more liberated compared to Filipinos. ... Most Canadians mind their own business and don't really care about other (people's) businesses, which is good. It's better that way. Less gossip, less fights, less complications. That's how I find Canadians. You go on with your life, whatever you're doing in life. They don't care. It's up to you. (22M)

***Language.*** A few mothers also mentioned language as an aspect of Canadian culture that they have encountered since their arrival: "Language. It's so different!" was exclaimed by a mother of a 13 year old daughter (15M). Similarly, most mothers simply stated that they spoke more English, as this mother said: "I didn't really feel like I live in

a different place – except that I speak in English here” (Mother of a 16 year old son and 13 year old daughter, 03M).

In summary, mothers mostly conceptualized both Filipino and Canadian cultures in terms of relationships between family members, interactions with people, and relationships outside of the family. Mothers also often compared aspects of Canadian culture to Filipino culture: Their observations of Canadian family relations and parenting practices, as well as the lack of respect towards elders, were mostly explained in comparison to the values and beliefs upheld in Filipino culture. Mothers acknowledged values of independence and social freedom in Canadian culture, however this was often conceptualized as a negative aspect of personal development. Mothers described independence and social freedom for their children as a complete separation from the family unit. Another noteworthy theme to emerge was uncertainty about Canadian culture. Mothers expressed their inability to comment on Canadian culture, due to their lack of experience or knowledge about it.

**Perceptions of a strong and close family.** In response to the question “What does it mean to be strong and close as a family?”, themes regarding (1) interpersonal climate and atmosphere; (2) respectful relationships; and (3) parental involvement emerged from mothers’ responses (Table 5).

***Interpersonal climate and atmosphere.*** Most mothers (17 instances) discussed concepts related to maintaining relationships between family members and a positive family environment. Several sub-themes emerged, encompassing areas of: (1) communication, (2) conflict management, (3) family unity, (4) family time, and (5) family support.

Table 5

*Perceptions of Close and Strong Families*

Theme	Definition	Example phrases
Interpersonal climate and atmosphere		
Communication	Open discussion of information, issues, and disagreements between family members, especially between parents and children	“Sharing what happened during the whole day with each other”, “We can talk about a problem and happy things”, “Being open”
Conflict management	Respectful resolution of conflicts and issues between family members	“Just forgive each other”, “handle problems”, “through good times and bad times”
Family unity	Love, care, protect and understand family members, immediate and extended	“We have to love each other”, “Family comes first”, “close ties”
Family time	Desire for all family members to spend quality time together	“family gatherings”, “doing nothing together”, “you hang out.”
Family support	Expectations for financial, moral, instrumental and emotional support to immediate and extended family	“Everybody is there for you when you need them.”
Respectful relationships	Respect and trust between all family members	“respect is a form of loving that person”, “they are open to their dad but..there’s a little fear.”
Parental involvement	Parents take a genuine interest and an active role in their children’s extracurricular activities and education	“I show up...whatever affair they have in school”, “We make sure we go with them”
Uncodeable		

One of the sub-themes that emerged was communication, as mentioned by nine mothers. Mothers spontaneously discussed the variety of ways family members communicated with each other. One mother of a 19 year old daughter discussed the importance of sharing and listening to details about each others’ lives with one another:

A close family is good communication, each and every one. ... You talk about what’s going on in your life, not all in your life, but especially if you’re going to school. You tell this to your parents, to your other sisters, brothers or sisters, that you could talk to. Tell stories or have fun and sit down together and enjoy the day, you know? (22M)

In addition to sharing stories, some mothers believed that it was important for parents and children to be open to one another about embarrassing topics, as well as willing to discuss contentious issues. One mother shared her family's strategy for ensuring open communication between parents and children during disagreements:

I have my time, he (my husband) has his time. If he's mad, I'm not mad. If I am mad, then he is quiet. But, we make sure that one of us is not mad at the same time. So, at least the children have someone to approach in-camera. (Mother of two daughters, ages 13 and 15, 02M)

How the family managed conflicts and problems was mentioned by eight mothers. Conflict management was defined as resolving issues and discussing controversial topics respectfully and together as a family. For example, one mother of a 15 year old son (04M) described, "As long as you can handle all problems, you're a strong family. That for me is a strong family – whatever comes your way you can solve it. ... A close family stays together through good times and bad times." Being able to "solve" issues together and "work through good times and bad times" emphasized the importance of family unity as families worked through conflicts. Another mother further explained how she and her family members viewed disagreements:

Different people, various people, and different personalities will clash and everything. All through that, there's some out today in that situation, still being able to deal with each other with respect and tolerance for each other, for whatever we've gone through in that time. ... Conflict is a part of growing up. There will always be disagreements. But, let's look at it that way, as a part of development, not as someone putting down somebody else. (Mother of a 13 year old son and 16 year old daughter, 07M)

Similar to other mothers, this quote emphasized maintaining family relations and an overall sense of unity during and after conflicts, by "still being able to deal with each other with respect and tolerance". Additionally, this mother also emphasized the normality of disagreements within family relationships, as a "part of growing up."

Family unity, or a strong emotional bond between all family members, also emerged as an important aspect of family relationships (7 mothers). Overall, having good relationships with nuclear and extended family members and placing the values and needs of the family over one's personal desires and/or other peers were included in this discussion. A mother of two adolescent daughters, ages 13 and 15, described the importance of the love between the married couple, as it set an example for how family relationships thrive:

There should be-between husband and wife-that would be the foundation of the family: The husband and wife first. We have to love each other. That would bind you together. You have to instil in their minds (the children) how important family has to be close and protect each other, especially the sisters. They have to protect each other outside the home, because no one else can protect them but themselves. (02M)

Another mother with two adolescent sons, ages 17 and 18, simply stated: "Strong family ties, I think that's *yung dadamay* (in how you feel about each other). They know what they want, I know what they want." Thus, protecting one another and prioritizing family relationships were interpreted by mothers as expressions of love and closeness between family members.

Spending time together with family members, whether for casual or more formal events, was important in maintaining close and strong family relations (6 instances). Although celebrations and holidays were considered main family gatherings, most mothers also described daily or weekly activities, such as dinner time, going to church and spending the day together, as important for family bonding. For example, one mother described the range of family activities they did together:

Even when they were young (the children), we go with the family gatherings with them. We talk to each other and we bring them, even when we meet friends, we go with their children and meet their family. They see that our friends are close too.

Our relatives are close too. They see us close too- they are close with us. If we go to a place, we make sure that we bring the kids, even if it's birthdays, or some outing, going to the mall, or shopping, or to the groceries, we bring them. Always. Weekends, every Sunday, because we're Catholic, we attend mass every Sunday. So, that's basically it. That's the one that makes us close. We (the parents) are with them (the children), most of the time (Mother of two daughters, 15 and 18 years old; 06M)

Another mother of two adolescent sons, 17 and 18 years old, compared the family activities they did in the Philippines and in Canada and its effect on personal feelings and family relations:

In the Philippines, every Sunday, we are really obligated to go to church. We go to church together, then after that we eat together. It's like our bonding time. And now, here, we seldom do that. One time we went to see a movie, we have the five of us: You can feel that *natutuwa sila* (the children were really happy) we were together. ... *Nakakalunkot* (it sometimes makes me feel lonely and sad) because we don't do that more often. But it's still there, our desire to do things as a family. (13M)

Despite this family's inability to engage in regular family activities in Canada, this mother valued family activities, which was also expressed by other mothers. Mothers believed that it was crucial for family members to spend time together and to enjoy each other's company in order to build emotional bonds. Also, mothers valued and were aware when other family members, especially adolescents, "desire(d) to do things as a family", even if it was not always possible.

Three mothers discussed supporting both nuclear and extended family physically, emotionally, morally and spiritually, if necessary. In particular, one mother of a 13 year old son and a 16 year old daughter described how a difficult time rallied the support of her children, husband and extended family members for her and for each other:

We're a young family, I would say, but we've gone through a lot of challenges in life. And, my children have been every good at dealing with really big situations. A few years back, I had a stroke and I was paralyzed on the right side of my body. I was back in the Philippines, so they (the children) were left here with their *lolo*

(grandfather) and *lola* (grandmother) and some of my extended family. That was just a lot of pressure on my family and my husband's family, because they had to come and help out. So, there was lot of pressure on even her (my daughter) and the other children, and they were good at managing. ... And, that's where the family support comes in, where people are open minded about things. They will accept that there will be conflict, there will be emotional pressure, but we can definitely do more. (07M)

***Respectful relationships.*** Mothers also discussed how children displayed respect to parents and to all family members (4 instances). Respect towards parents was shown by being open and obedient to parents. However, mothers were also likely to acknowledge that having completely obedient children was more of an ideal than reality, as one mother of a 13 year old (15M) daughter jokingly quipped: "They follow mommy all the time. For now. Oh! *Hindi pala! Makulit!* (Not really! They are cute but pesky!)." Although respect towards parents was emphasized, mothers also placed importance on showing and having respect for each family member: "A close family is all about respect, because respect is a form of loving that person, of loving whatever they will become or what they are." (Mother of a 13 year old son and 16 year old daughter, 07M).

***Parental involvement.*** A few mothers also discussed the importance of parental involvement, defined as showing interest and being actively involved in their children's extracurricular and educational activities. A mother of two daughters, ages 15 and 18 years, described how the parents supported their children's interests and activities:

Before, (one of my daughters) had dancing lessons or piano lessons, if they had a celebration, we'd go there! We make sure that we go with them. Up until now, if they have some celebration at the school. (06M)

Overall, several contextual factors surrounding Filipino immigrant families, including Filipino and Canadian cultures and close family relationships, were discussed. Conceptualizations for the two different cultures emphasized values pertaining to positive

family relationships, roles, and functioning. Although Canadian cultural values were often juxtaposed to Filipino cultural values, mothers viewed Canadian families as valuing strong family relationships too. As immigrant mothers, these discussions highlighted the old cultural values they adhered to, and reconstructed new cultural values, as they balanced new and old cultural values within their role as a parent. In their discussions of close and strong families, mothers conceptualized harmonious relationships, as exemplified by themes of open communication, conflict management, family unity and respectful relationships between all family members.

### **Experiences of Adolescent Developmental Challenges**

Open-ended questions about adolescent-development related challenges were discussed. Nineteen mothers spoke of the daily challenges their family experienced with regards to raising adolescents in Canadian society (Table 6). A gender analyses revealed no differences between the challenges mothers described for male and female adolescents. Several challenges emerged pertaining to (1) peers and friends; (2) assertiveness; (3) household responsibilities and rules, and (4) personal freedom.

*Peers and friends.* A theme that emerged focused on adolescents' friends and peers (7 instances). More specifically, mothers expressed high levels of dissatisfaction with the amount of time adolescents spent with their friends and the desire to be with their friends. One mother related this example:

Before, we have this, not really a big problem, because they were so close to their friends, ... Everyday they're in school, they are always all together. Then after school, they come to our house – and they're bonding. There was a time, I felt that their friends were more important. There was a time that I think they neglected us – there was a time. Because, you know, they were bonding with their friends *grabbe* (to the extreme). (Mother of two sons, ages 17 and 18, 13M).

Table 6

*Challenges Related to Adolescents' Developmental Needs*

Theme	Definition	Example phrases
Peers/friends	Amount of time spent with peers and/or friends	"They were bonding with their friends to the extreme", "Even when they're no longer with their classmates- chat, chat, chat, all day long!"
Assertiveness	More direct about personal thoughts, feelings, and opinions	"He talks back, but back [in the Philippines] it's the <i>opo</i> ."
Household responsibilities and roles	Established household rules, responsibilities and roles are not always followed	"Like, I cannot see the floor (of his room)!", "My daughter comes home late all the time."
Personal freedom	Expectations for social interactions outside the home are too liberal	"Sleepovers. I don't think there's nothing wrong with that, but I want my kids to be home."
No challenges	Did not specify any challenges	
Uncodeable		

Many mothers expressed similar sentiments: Mothers expressed how adolescents "are always all together" with their friends and then "bond" even more with them after school. In choosing to spend time with peers and friends, mothers believed that adolescents were "neglecting" their families and preferred that adolescents stay home with the family, or at least not spend as much time with their friends.

***Assertiveness.*** Another theme to emerge was related to the challenges of dealing with an assertive adolescent (5 mothers). Speaking their minds, sharing personal thoughts and opinions, and expecting parents to acknowledge and respect these opinions, were some of the examples mothers provided. One mother of a 15 year old son articulated:

Raising teenagers...because they're very outspoken, they speak their mind. And, if you listen, they do have a point sometimes, but they're very strong-willed. It's always immediately, everything is urgent! It's really my biggest challenge to always remind myself that these are young adults. I cannot boss them around anymore. ...Because in the Philippines, that's what you do. You get bossed around.

You do this, you do that. You're not supposed to do this and that. But here, you have to explain why and I think it works better. (01M)

Another mother of a 15 year old son also said:

Sometimes he answers back. He talks back. I don't know – but back home, it's the *opo, opo* (formal way of acquiescing to elders). Yeah, he used to be alot. But now, ...he's on his stage where he has to have his own mind, right? That's why I tell him, you don't have to talk that way to me. He talks back, but that's it. (04M)

These examples were similar to other mothers' experiences. Mothers described these as struggles between striking a balance between Filipino cultural expectations of parent and adolescent interactions, what was considered respectful and acceptable, and understanding the developmental growth of their child, from childhood to adulthood. Mothers can no longer “boss them around”. However, some mothers also expressed discomfort at the way adolescents spoke to them (“you don't have to talk that way to me”), referring to expectations of respectful interactions between children and their elders in the Philippines. One mother of two adolescents, a 13 year old son and 16 year old daughter further illustrated this point by saying, “For me, when I grew up, okay, (you have to) be quiet when the elders speak. Every now and then, I fall into that, but my daughter learned to be more assertive” (07M).

***Household responsibilities and rules.*** Another major challenge mothers described was related to adolescents' share of household responsibilities and adherence to house rules (5 instances). Frustrations around enforcing household rules for adolescents, such as keeping up with household chores, were discussed by mothers, as illustrated by a mother of a 19 year old son (09M): “Like, the youngest son-I cannot see the floor of his room. ...And, look! The grass is high, aren't you going to mow the lawn? That!” Other mothers described their frustrations with implementing household rules, such as curfews.

One mother's challenge was her daughter's curfew: "My daughter comes home late all the time, when I want it before my/her curfew hour. That is the biggest challenge!" (Mother of a 19 year old son and 17 year old daughter, 18M).

***More personal freedom.*** A few mothers (2 instances) also discussed how a greater range of personal freedom for adolescents posed an issue. For example, a mother of two daughters, ages 15 and 18 years (06M) expressed, "Here (in Canada), kids are free-er and their friends-They would compare that their friends has a lot of freedom."

**Difficult and non-difficult challenges.** In addition to asking about the types of adolescence-related challenges, mothers were asked to describe whether they found these challenges difficult or not (Table 7). Half of the mothers (10 instances) found their challenges difficult, whereas the other half did not. Several themes emerged when mothers discussed how difficult the challenges were. The challenges and issues were perceived as difficult due to (1) competing cultural values and (2) a breakdown in communication between family members. For others, the challenges were not perceived as difficult due to parents (1) adjusting to their child's development into an adolescent; (2) family members respecting one another; and (3) successfully managing household budgets.

***Difficult challenges*** (see Table 7). One of the themes to emerge was related to mothers' perceptions of competing Filipino and Canadian cultural expectations regarding adolescents' behaviours. Two culturally-based sub-themes emerged from this, as mothers described tensions between (1) parents' expectations of behaviours to convey respect to elders and adolescents' assertive behaviours towards elders, and (2) parents' expectations to prioritize family over peers and friends.

Table 7

*Perceptions of Difficult and Non-difficult Challenges*

Theme	Definition	Example phrases
Difficult Challenges		
Competing cultural expectations		
Respect for elders - Assertiveness	Tensions between expectations of displaying respect to elders and adolescents' developing assertiveness	"If he thinks he's right, he talks back" "They used to be quiet when they'd get into trouble"
Family time- Peers/friends	Tensions between expectations for spending time together as a family and adolescents' desire to be with friends/peers	"It's either your friends or us", "We can't bring them to different parties."
Breakdown in communication	Unwillingness to disclose information about daily events and/or issues with parents	"Sometimes you can't talk to them", "They don't listen. For them, it's a stay away"
Uncodeable		
Non-Difficult Challenges		
Adjust parenting practices	Parents recognize normal developmental processes as children and family transition into adolescence	"You have to adapt...the dynamics are different than dealing with a 5 year old"
Respect for family members	Maintains values and displays behaviours that convey respect to all family members	"They still listen to me"
Manage household budget	Recognizes the importance of contributing to the maintenance of household finances	"We try to work out the budget for everybody"
Uncodeable		

Tensions were often due to clashes between parents' expected and culturally-based behaviours to convey respect for elders and when adolescents were assertive towards parents and/or other elders (4 instances). Mothers described examples of adolescents expressing themselves in a manner that did not properly acknowledge or convey respect towards their parents. For example:

For now, the way my daughter talks to me, it's probably okay in a Canadian living. Filipino culture, I think they talk in a nicer way. But,...It's hard to take. The way they talk. It's not easy, like it's, I would say, sarcastic or something like that. If you

talk to an elderly, or someone that is older than you, you have to be in a low tone and I think it's respectful. (Mother of a 17 year old daughter, 21M)

Mothers also discussed occurrences of adolescents arguing back during disagreements.

Cultural values of social harmony and respect towards elders, especially within the family, were believed to be at risk during these times, as the adolescent refused to “go along” with parents or to agree with their views, in order to maintain the harmony and unity of the family.

Another culturally-based tension to emerge was between parents' and children's disparate perceptions of adolescents' prioritizing personal/social time over family time (6 instances). Mothers described examples of adolescents refusing to accompany the family to events and activities, often choosing to stay home or to prefer going out with friends. As well, parents and children argued about the amount of time spent with friends and peers. However, what was common amongst these examples was a shared dissatisfaction with adolescents' desire to spend time outside of the home, especially with friends and peers. As one mother of two sons, ages 17 and 18, explained:

I was telling them, at that time we had just bought a new home, I told them, “It's useless having this house without you. The reason why we have this home is so that we can be together, to enjoy our house. Not so that most of the time, it's just us – me and the youngest one – left in the home.” So, you know, *nalulunkot* (it gets lonely and sad in here). ...That's the time they started to think “Oh no, that can't happen. No mama!” Well, you have a choice: It's either your friends or us. (13M)

This quote illustrated how some mothers felt disconnected from their children, as perceptions of adolescents spending less time with their family led to the belief that family cohesion was unravelling. Adolescents were no longer prioritizing their family, instead choosing to value their other social relationships. For these mothers, spending

time away from home and family represented choosing to be separated from the family (“it’s either your friends or us”).

Another theme to emerge was the perception of lacking communication between parents and children (2 instances). Mothers described feeling disconnected to their adolescents, as demonstrated by this example:

Sometimes you can’t talk to them about what they are talking about (with friends) and what they’ve been doing. Even when you’re inside your own home. You have no idea what’s happening with your own children. (Mother of a 13 year old daughter, 14M)

*Non-difficult challenges* (see Table 7). For some mothers, raising an adolescent in Canada was not challenging. Several mothers acknowledged that their children were transitioning into adolescence, and that this transition required adjustment in parenting practices (6 instances). It was best described by this mother of a 15 year old son:

You have to adapt. I have to adapt myself too. ... It’s very difficult dealing with an adult child, or an almost adult child. The dynamics are different than dealing with a 5 year old. You get to be the boss of a 5 year old. Saying “you do what I say” to a 19 year old, or even to a 15 year old, it doesn’t work. Plus...you have to step back a bit. (01M)

As exemplified in this quote, some mothers understood that adolescents, or “adult-child(ren)”, were developing their sense of independence. As parents, mothers were aware that they would have to relinquish some control over their children’s choices by “step(ping) back a bit”. Mothers understood that transitions into adolescence required parents to acknowledge and encourage (sound) adolescent choices, especially in the domain of personal freedom (e.g., curfew for weekday bed-times). For example, one mother of a 17 year old daughter stated “I’m just thinking that they’re in elementary. I’m so used to putting them to sleep at 10 o’clock. But, I’m getting used to it (letting them stay up later)” (21M).

Other mothers were less likely to experience difficult challenges due to adolescents and all family members continually maintaining and upholding respect for each other (2 instances). For parents, it was important that children abide by household rules, which demonstrated respect to the parents. However, parents were also willing to provide some flexibility within their household rules, demonstrating respect for their children's development. For example:

They still listen to me. When I said, "Ten o'clock is the parting time, we all have to be sleeping by ten o'clock," they just listen to me. Although, I think they still do Facebook on their bed. ...It may not be 100% followed, but at least there's respect on the part that we are not bothering other people who are sleeping. (Mother of a 13 year old son and 15 year old daughter, 03M)

Another theme that emerged was the family's ability to ensure a balanced family budget (2 instances). Mothers described how both parents and adolescents contributed to managing household finances. One mother of a 13 year old daughter related, "We're trying to be equal to the five kids. If this one gets this, "Oh here, this is for you, and then *ate* (your oldest sister) gets this. We try to work out the budget for everyone" (14M). For these families, ensuring fairness in material distribution and opportunities for all children, including adolescents, was a priority in terms of financial management. Mothers also described being open and transparent with their children about the family's financial situation. By doing so, adolescents were likely to adjust their financial demands if it would not fit in their home finances.

In summary, the challenges mothers described mostly pertained to issues central to adolescent development, the shift in adolescents' social networks (from family to friends) and developing assertiveness. Additionally, parents' abilities to enforce household responsibilities and rules were sometimes seen as contentious issues. Several

mothers acknowledged that these challenges were due to normative developmental processes as both children and the family transitioned into the adolescence stage. Also, harmonious family relations were related to mothers' perceptions of non-difficult challenges, as exhibited through family members' continuing maintenance of respectful relationships with one another and actively contributing to their household budget management. However, some mothers perceived these challenges as difficult. Filipino cultural values and expectations regarding proper adolescent behaviour clashed with adolescents' growing social networks and developing assertiveness. Also, some mothers also expressed feeling emotionally disconnected from their adolescents as one of the reasons for experiencing difficult challenges.

### **Strategies for Overcoming Conflicts and Challenges**

Mothers were asked to describe the strategies they and their families utilized to overcome adolescence-related challenges, as well as strategies for maintaining family cohesion. Mothers' discussions for both questions revealed different strategies that could be executed at the family, parent, and adolescent level (Table 8). Throughout the different levels of strategies, respondents stressed the importance of maintaining a strong emotional bond between mothers and adolescents as they worked through difficult developmental issues.

**Family related strategies.** Discussions of family-related strategies (15 mothers) yielded two sub-themes: (1) open communication and (2) maintaining family relations. Such strategies reflected every family member's responsibility to maintain cohesiveness within the family unit, before, during, and after times of conflict.

Table 8

*Strategies for Overcoming Conflicts and Challenges*

Theme	Definition	Example Phrases
Family level strategies		
Open communication	Cultivated family environment to allow for sharing of daily events, feelings, thoughts, opinions, and to openly discuss issues with family members	“talk to one another”, “communicate”, “share thoughts”
Maintain family relations	Actions and attitudes convey respect, support, and desire to be emotionally close with family members	“spend time together”, “maintain closeness”,
Parent level strategies		
Provide unconditional love and support	Encouragement and support for adolescents, as they are and to reach their full potential	“being interested in what they’re interested in”, “we’re there to help them”, “being there for one another”, “give them love and support”
Adjust parenting practices	Opportunities for negotiation and decision-making are provided to adolescents	“let them make their own decisions”, “more of a negotiation”, “you made an agreement”
Adjust to Canadian culture	Acknowledgement that parents must culturally adjust to support adolescents’ development within Filipino and Canadian cultural frameworks	“we adapted”, “for parents who come from a different culture and understanding what their children needs in their (new) culture”
Adolescent level strategies		
Set rules and boundaries	Guidelines and consequences for adolescents and expected behaviours and roles, as a household member	“we try to say no every once in awhile”, “limits”

***Open communication.*** Mothers discussed how open communication between parents and adolescents was crucial in maintaining close family relations, despite challenging experiences (14 instances). Creating an environment where family members felt safe to share their feelings, thoughts and opinions was crucial. It also allowed family members to address issues together and to come to a solution together. Mothers

specifically discussed the value in having family meetings to discuss matters that would have an impact on all family members, or in having frank conversations between parents and adolescents. These types of more formal dialogues allowed parents and adolescents to work out larger issues, such as adolescents' defiant behaviours, or to discuss upcoming family events. As one mother of two adolescents, 13 year old son and 17 year old daughter described:

It's trying to communicate to the children still. Every now and then we try to get together and sit down, or try to talk to them individually. Trying to reach them. Sometimes it can be like "Oh, come here and let's talk about these things." Sometimes it's casual. Very big ones, for example, selling of the house and buying a new one, we all had to sit down and say, "This is how it will impact our family, right? So, somebody might be moving to another school. Which room are you getting?" All of us are there going, "Okay, you're taking this room, you're getting that room, what do you need in that room?" Those kinds of big decisions we try to have a meeting (07M).

In addition, mothers also desired to keep abreast of their adolescents' interests and on-going events. However, mothers were also likely to express difficulties in maintaining this type of casual communication with adolescents, as one mother of a son, age 15, described:

It's like keeping in touch, "How's school? What's happening?" Being attuned to them, because sometimes they won't say anything, but you'll notice that they're quieter. So, you just know, whatever. He doesn't want to talk to me. You have to pursue it now. Sometimes you have your gut feelings as parents, or like you have to try and be sensitive to them. Pick up on change in mood, change in speech, change in friends. ...Keeping in touch with them, with what's happening in their lives. (01M)

For mothers, casual conversations, or "keeping in touch" with adolescents opened avenues for discussing larger issues. As another mother of a 15 year old son (04M) said, "The communication is there because if you don't have open communication, it will be difficult."

***Maintaining family relations.*** Several mothers also explained the relevance of all family members' role in upholding strong family relations (5 instances). Through supportive actions and respectful attitudes towards one another, family members are able to convey their emotional closeness regardless of aversive situations. One mother discussed moving forward after a challenge:

Just that, after it's been talked about, that's done and dealt with. We don't talk about it the next day. It's over with...because there's no reason to continue holding on to it. ...As long as it has been talked and settled then it's done (Mother of two daughters, ages 13 and 15, 02M)

As with the previous theme of open communication, this mother and her family "talked about" their issues in order to come to a solution. Similar to other mothers' perspectives, after discussing such issues, it was important for the family to come back together and move past the issue. Several mothers also discussed the efforts they exerted to maintain harmonious relations between themselves and adolescents, as well as for the benefit of the entire family unit. As one mother of two daughters, ages 13 and 14, explained:

Because, if I stress myself out, then everybody will just go crazy. I'll be irritable and then everybody else will be too. Then, nobody will be happy. Sometimes, when you let little things go, even big things, it's more healthy for you because you don't have that weight on your chest. (17M)

**Parent related strategies.** Another type of strategy mothers discussed focused on relations between parents and adolescents. Seven mothers explained different strategies parents specifically used to maintain cohesiveness between themselves and adolescents. Three sub-themes emerged (1) providing unconditional love and support; (2) adjusting parenting practices; (3) adjusting to Canadian culture.

***Providing love and support.*** Several mothers discussed the importance of demonstrating support for adolescents during difficult times (7 instances). In

demonstrating unconditional love and support despite, and during, conflicts, mothers believed that this showed how much they loved their adolescents. A mother of a 19 year old daughter stated:

You give them love. You give them more love and more support because they need you the most. ...More support, more talking, more understanding of what's going through in her life. Because, if not, she will think that she is nothing. She will think that you don't love her, that you just abandoned her. (22M)

Mothers believed that consistent displays of strong emotional bonds between mothers (parents) and adolescents supported adolescents' growth as a person because "they need you the most." "More support" and "understanding of what's going through in (their lives)" would establish feelings of worth, as mothers wanted to make sure that adolescents do not "think that (they) are nothing".

***Adjusting parenting practices.*** Mothers explained their own adjustment processes in accommodating children's transition into adolescence (7 instances). Mothers acknowledged that adolescents' increasing desire for independence and autonomy required accommodation in their parenting practices, mainly by providing guidance in decision-making processes and opportunities for negotiation. Guidance included asking adolescents several questions about their decisions, as a method of raising awareness for any potential consequences, as well as reminding them of the potential consequences of a bad decision. As one mother of a son, age 15, described:

For example, if we don't allow him to go out, I'm telling him once you go out, you spend. It's very difficult here in Canada, you don't earn money all that easy. Unlike back home, you earn, you save a lot. Here, it's very different, especially because we have our own mortgage. You have to budget everything. I'm telling him, if you don't –we're giving him allowance – you have to pay for school. Once you go out of the house, you spend, then you to the mall. You can find anything there, then you spend again. That's it. You have to explain, and I think he understands. (04M)

This quote illustrated how mothers understood that previous communication processes between mothers and children required some modifications. Specifically, when adolescents sought justification for household rules, mothers would “have to explain” their reasons in order to provide a deeper understanding and to inform adolescents’ future decision-making opportunities (e.g., about spending money, going out with friends). Similar to other mothers, the following respondent described the way she provided guidance for her son’s decision-making processes, but acknowledged that the choice was for him to choose:

I think the simplest one is you have to step back and to let them make their decisions. There’s still rules that apply, but it’s like you sort of step back. Instead of telling them, “I think you should do this or that,” you have to ask, “Okay, what do you think? What would you do? OK. OK. Do it, if you think it’s okay with me, do it.” (Mother of a 15 year old son, 01M)

***Adjusting to Canadian culture.*** Two mothers also discussed how parents have adapted values from the new culture, or re-vamped new and old cultural values to work for their family. One mother reflected on the different cultural frameworks from the country of origin and the country of settlement and its implications for the dynamics of parent and adolescent relationships:

Every now and then, you try. Trying to be a parent from (the Filipino) culture, you tend to fall into that cycle: This is how you’ve grown up, and that’s how sometimes the conflict begins. Yeah, I know there will be arguments and everything on things, but in the end, we come to an agreement about something. We try to apologize if we think we’re in the wrong which, I think, for some Filipino parents, it’s very difficult to say that they’re wrong and the children are right. (Mother of a 13 year old son and 16 year old daughter, 07M)

**Adolescent-related strategies.** Three mothers also addressed the need to establish order and expectations regarding adolescents’ behaviours. In doing so, mothers ensured that adolescents were clear on what was expected of and from them, as well as

the repercussions of not adhering to household rules. In most cases, mothers described setting rules for personal domains, such as usage of cell phones or curfews. One mother of a 17 year old daughter described, “I just told them that I’m going to take out everything, if they don’t maintain what I want them to (e.g., academic performance). They listen. I don’t think they can live without cell phones.” (21M). Another mother stated:

It’s like being the boss. Just like, I have to set the rules, right? I have to be firm in what I was saying at that time and it has to be followed. After that, after saying what I need to say, then I go back to “How can I help you,” or “Is there anything that I can help you with?” Being soft again. But, at first, I have to be firm with what I want her to do. (Mother of two daughters, ages 13 and 15, 02M)

Similar to other respondents, this quote exemplified the importance of maintaining good relations between mothers and adolescents. After working through issues, disciplinary actions, and re-establishing household rules, mothers would make certain that their love and support was clearly demonstrated to adolescents.

In summary, mothers discussed three distinct types of strategies to overcome adolescent developmental-related challenges: family-related strategies, parent-related strategies and adolescent-related strategies. These strategies emphasized mothers’ roles in accommodating adolescents’ developing sense of autonomy and independence, and mothers’ sense of responsibility in ensuring the proper development for these two factors. Mothers also emphasized the importance of their role in providing opportunities for adolescents to build their personal autonomy. Mothers also discussed establishing proper guidelines for adolescents’ behaviours to ensure better-informed decisions and to provide awareness of the possible consequences for wrong or bad decisions. . Throughout these strategies, respondents stressed the importance of maintaining family cohesion.

## **Discussion**

The goals of this investigation were to explore the cultural and family contexts of Filipino immigrant families and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences during developmental transitions into adolescence. Both Filipino and Canadian cultures served as a dual framework for mothers to make sense of their adolescents' development, as well as their family environment in Canada. Overall, mothers discussed the importance of close family relationships as an integral aspect of Filipino culture compared to the value placed on individual autonomy in Canadian culture. Another main goal for this study was to explore Filipino immigrant families' challenges related to adolescents' development. A family resilience framework was used to interpret how Filipino mothers interpret the normative challenges associated with developmental transitions in the context of their personal and cultural values. Using a qualitative approach, mothers of Filipino immigrant families were interviewed for a deeper understanding of (1) the cultural and family contexts surrounding these families, (2) their experiences of developmental challenges, and (3) the strategies families used to overcome these challenges. Overall, discussions of these topics corresponded with family resilience theories, including the systems theory of family resilience (Walsh, 2006). The results of the current study suggest that an understanding of the cultural and family contexts is required to understand how Filipino immigrant families navigate life-stage transitions into adolescence.

### **Contextualizing Filipino Immigrant Families**

#### **The role of cultural frameworks in family relationships and functioning.**

Similar to previous research on immigrant families from Asian countries, participants' perceptions of Filipino culture strongly focused on cultural values regarding family

members' roles and relationships (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Yee et al., 2006), emphasizing interdependence and a strong sense of family unity. Family members were expected to maintain a sense of unity between nuclear and extended family members. The importance of cohesive family units was emphasized for several reasons: It nurtures close emotional bonds between family members, and builds strong family support systems. In addition, mothers emphasized the importance of spending time together as a function of close family relations and as a way to reinforce emotional bonds between family members. Most mothers described maintaining family relationships as integral to their identity and core beliefs, as well as a cultural value. The majority of mothers also expressed a sense of obligation to maintain the family unit's cohesion and to foster similar personal desires in each family member to develop strong emotional bonds with one another.

In keeping with Filipino cultural values, mothers also discussed the role of intergenerational respect within families and in the broader society. Parents and older adults held expectations for children and younger adults to convey appropriate levels of respect to their elders and authorities. Caring for elderly parents was also discussed as a sign of respect for parent-child relationships, as well as an obligation children should fulfill. This system of respect for elders and authority was perceived as a means to ensure and maintain harmonious relationships, not only within the family unit, but also between individuals and the broader society. In addition to cultural beliefs regarding the family atmosphere, most mothers discussed parenting practices as integral Filipino cultural value. Parents were expected to fulfill roles that would guide their children's development and growth. Setting appropriate guidelines and expectations for their children's behaviours were included in mothers' discussions, as well as implementing

any disciplinary actions, if necessary, to ensure adherence to household rules and responsibilities.

Mothers often juxtaposed Canadian values to specific Filipino cultural values. Although most mothers observed close family relationships in Canada, their discussions mostly centred on the emphasis placed on individual development, especially in terms of prioritizing it over the family within Canadian culture. Filipino immigrant mothers described Canadian parenting to only be valid until the age of majority, believing that children would no longer have to listen to nor heed advice from parents. Upon reaching age 18, Canadian children are perceived to become fully responsible for their own behaviours, actions and thoughts, ultimately reducing Canadian parents' roles to nothing. Filipino mothers acknowledged the role Canadian parents played in shaping their adolescents' developmental processes, especially with regards to autonomous development. Mothers perceived this as the beginning of a disconnection between adolescents and parents and ultimately a severance of bonds between adolescents and their families. These two observations contributed to respondents' beliefs that family values in Canadian culture were not as strong as those that typify Filipino culture.

Mothers also discussed the lack of respect shown towards elders in Canadian culture, as there were no observable linguistic or behavioural systems to signify respect and recognition of parents, elders, and higher authorities. Mothers also expressed beliefs that Canadian children do not share the same obligation and desire to care for their elderly parents as children raised with Filipino cultural values do. Furthermore, this was perceived to be a manifestation of valuing one's own independence over one's family in Canadian culture.

In some cases, several mothers were unable to discuss the Canadian culture. The majority of these mothers were usually newly immigrated to Canada and attributed their uncertainty to inexperience with the Canadian culture (e.g., limited interactions with Canadians). A few mothers could not comment on Canadian culture, despite their length of residence in Canada. For these mothers, their reluctance to speak about Canadian culture was due to not wanting to speak broadly about it (e.g., for fear of stereotyping), as well as its plurality. This context of uncertainty may play a role in Filipino immigrant mothers' psychological and socio-cultural integration of new cultural values into expectations of family members' roles and overall family functioning. Having close relations and regular interactions with members of the new society also seem to be crucial experiences for new immigrants, especially when learning about a new culture (e.g., Kopic, Kruglanski, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004).

Cultural values related to the family and beliefs about cohesive families were intertwined with mothers' core personal values. Discussions of close and strong families focused on themes of fostering unity among and between family members. Mothers' discussions of close and strong families emphasized harmonious relationships with all family members, for example, communication, conflict management, and respect for one another were critically important in maintaining close family relations.

Open communication emerged as the most important and recurring theme in maintaining a close and strong family environment, especially for parent-adolescent relationships. Mothers related several examples of communication, from sharing mundane or daily events with one another to discussing contentious or embarrassing topics. The importance of communication was also prevalent in family conflict

management. Reflections on conflict management between parents and adolescents emphasized communication strategies. These strategies, for example, involved coordination between parents to ensure that adolescents could speak with one parent about disagreements with the other. Mothers mostly emphasized conflict management strategies in ways that sustained loving parent-child relations and preserved family cohesion. Another close family theme that strongly resonated with Filipino cultural values was one of respect towards parents, as well as for all family members.

In this study, perceptions of Canadian and Filipino cultural values and cohesive family relations provided a guiding framework, which was crucial in understanding the family and cultural contexts of Filipino immigrant families as they navigated developmental transitions from childhood to adolescence. Discussions of cohesive family environments reiterated Filipino cultural values related to family cohesion and interdependence (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Yee et al., 2006). Additionally, family-oriented values seemed to be integral to mothers' sense of being. Mothers expressed a strong personal desire to share, preserve, and uphold these values within themselves and their own family. Mothers also observed close family relations in Canadian cultural values, albeit not as strongly exhibited as within Filipino culture. Mothers' reflections of Canadian culture and family relations emphasized individualistic pathways for adolescent development. This focus on the person over the family was often equated with separation and contributed to perceptions of less cohesive relations between adolescents and their family, especially as adolescents matured.

**Navigating developmental transitions in adolescence.** As Filipino immigrant families navigate the turbulent waters of adolescence, Filipino cultural values of family

harmony and interdependent relationships may be challenged by adolescents' growing demands for autonomy, independence, and the priority given to relationships with peers and friends (Yee et al., 2006). Mothers discussed similar concerns for both male and female adolescents, which included adolescents spending too much time with peers and friends, becoming too assertive, and not following household rules and responsibilities. Although these challenges are considered normative in developmental transitions to adolescence (Steinberg & Silk, 2002), understanding how these conflicts are perceived within Filipino immigrant family contexts is important, especially within a resilience framework.

As discussed earlier, mothers placed importance on cultural and family values regarding family roles and relationships, as it was deemed integral to their definition of self and to their family's well-being. Experiences of difficult challenges related to adolescents' developmental needs arose when mothers perceived increasing conflict between adolescents' personally-driven desires and family-related cultural values and expectations for cohesive family relations. Some mothers found it disrespectful to the parent-child relationship when adolescents began asserting their own thoughts and opinions. Additionally, adolescents spending (more) time with friends was often explained as a perceived trade-off to spending time with the family. Some mothers saw this as a threat to the family unity, as adolescents were no longer interested in and/or partaking in family events. Similarly, deteriorating communication between parents and adolescents was also discussed, as some mothers experienced difficulties in engaging adolescents in any type of conversation. Overall, these challenges were difficult mostly due to perceived disruptions to cohesive family relations and functioning.

In comparison, mothers' perceptions of non-difficult challenges related to adolescents' developmental needs saw these challenges as manageable. Adjusting parenting practices, for example, was a way to manage these challenges. Mothers recognized that shifts in adolescents' priorities were a part of their developmental growth, and that parents' role was to recognize this, make some accommodations for it, and provide guidance for adolescents' growth and development. Also critical in perceptions of non-difficult issues were aspects of the family that positively contributed to cohesive family relations. Respect for one another and managing household budgets ensured smooth family relationships and deflected any potential conflicts between parents and adolescents.

Consistent with other studies, most Asian parents have reported a desire for all family members, including adolescents, to maintain their ethnic heritage, while also successfully integrating in the new country (Kwak & Berry, 2001). Similarly, previous research has also suggested that the family context is crucial in understanding Asian immigrants' adjustment in Western nations (Bhattacharya & Schoppelry, 2004; Yee et al., 2006; Yip, Kiang, & Fuglini, 2008; Walsh, 2006). Most mothers recognized that issues around increased assertiveness, desire for personal freedom, and prioritizing time with peers and friends emerged during adolescence. These challenges seemed difficult when adolescents took part in activities that were incongruent with mothers' expectations and family-related cultural values (e.g., assertiveness was seen as a lack of respect to elders). Perceived changes in adolescents' priorities, from family to peers and oneself, left mothers feeling vulnerable about the state of their family relationships and functioning. Not all mothers found these challenges difficult. Some mothers perceived

these issues as normative and due to the current developmental stage their children and families were experiencing (e.g., desire for autonomy was because they were “growing up”).

### **Understanding Filipino Immigrant Families’ Challenges in a Family Resilience Framework**

Normally, developmental transitions in adolescence are not described as a crisis or an atypical challenge for most families. However, competing cultural frameworks and upheavals in family functioning due to immigration experiences may present unique challenges for immigrant families during developmental transitions. Identifying successful and essential components for optimal family functioning and cohesive family relations contributes to a greater understanding of how immigrant families remain resilient despite developmental adversities during adolescence. In this study, mothers differed in their perceptions of typical issues related to adolescence. Fifty percent of mothers found these issues difficult, perceiving these challenges as destructive to established family values. The other 50% did not find it difficult, believing these challenges to be manageable and normal to adolescents’ development. Despite the varied perceptions of difficult challenges, almost all mothers believed their families to be strong and close. This contrast in perceived difficult challenges, despite perceived strong family relations, underscores the importance of contextualizing Filipino immigrant families within their cultural and family environments.

Walsh (2006) asserted that immigrant families may be more resilient in navigating challenges when families find balance between competing demands of new and old cultures. The maintenance of old cultural values, while learning new cultural

values, can be a source of strength for immigrant families. Walsh also asserted that well-functioning families accept the occurrence of continual growth and change within a family's life course. Transitions into adolescence can be disruptive to established family values, beliefs and patterns of functioning. But, for immigrant families, transitioning into and during adolescence also requires a re-evaluation of their current cultural values, beliefs and systems of functioning. Such pressures may transform families' cultural and family paradigms and build or reinforce family resilience. When families are unable to re-interpret established cultural values and family beliefs and patterns, developmental transitions during adolescence may pose significant challenges to the family.

Within a resilience framework, cultural and family contexts provide critical information for understanding families' potential for resilience and the key processes involved in overcoming challenges and moving forward as a cohesive family unit. Walsh's (2003, 2006) development of a family systems resilience framework identified three key processes involved in family resilience: (1) family belief systems; (2) organizational patterns; and (3) communication processes. The following discussion will examine these three processes, as related to the strategies Filipino immigrant mothers discussed using to navigate challenges experienced due to developmental transitions in adolescence.

**Family belief systems.** Belief systems provide the meaning for families to define, cope, and make sense of adversities facing families (Walsh, 2006). For Filipino immigrant families in this study, cultural and family values shaped their experiences of challenges and the strategies utilized to overcome them. Similar to Walsh's assertions,

mothers in the study emphasized interdependent and cohesive family units, which affected how they interpreted and perceived challenging events.

Based on these family and cultural beliefs, mothers also developed appropriate strategies for these challenging events. Relational-oriented paradigms were also reiterated: These strategies not only navigated families through developmental challenges, but were also designed to maintain cohesive family functioning and relationships. Specifically, mothers discussed several multi-level strategies, ranging from individual member's role to the entire family's role in overcoming conflicts. Within each level, strategies also emphasized all family members' roles in maintaining cohesion within the family, despite disagreements and conflict.

Mothers also emphasized their roles, as parents, in maintaining or re-establishing cohesive parent-adolescent relations: Some mothers described adjusting to adolescents' development, understanding that their approach to adolescence should be different (in comparison to parenting younger children) and provide appropriate opportunities to facilitate adolescents' developmental needs. Some mothers also expressed the need to set rules and boundaries for adolescents as they began to push or negotiate for greater autonomy and freedom. Thus, Filipino immigrant mothers mobilized their greatest resource, cultural values of family cohesion and strong family relations, in overcoming challenges and optimizing their family functioning.

**Organizational patterns.** Influenced by family belief systems, family organizational patterns provide the structure for families and their members to adapt to adverse challenges. Organizational patterns include flexibility, connectedness, and

having available social and economic resources to support the family during adversity (Walsh, 2003; 2006).

For optimal family functioning, flexible family structures strike a balance between stasis and change when faced with either normative or non-normative adversities (Walsh, 2003, 2006). Many mothers discussed strategies that allowed their families to regain a sense of normalcy, while simultaneously strengthening family relations, as parents managed these challenges. Specifically, attempts to re-establish or continue family rituals, such as having dinner together on a daily basis, setting aside time for a family day, and regular conversations between parents and adolescents helped families foster strong relationships.

Connectedness, or the emotional bonds between family members, is another aspect of family organizational patterns (Walsh, 2006). To accommodate developmental needs, parents and adolescents must re-negotiate an optimal balance of adolescents' levels of connectedness to and separateness from family (Walsh, 2006). For Filipino immigrant families, relational views of the family environment strongly emphasized family cohesion and support (Yee et al., 2006). Furthermore, mothers' cultural and personal values were deeply entrenched in the connectedness of the family relations; thus, many of the strategies mothers discussed concentrated on maintaining strong emotional bonds between parents and adolescents.

Effective and strong leadership from parents produce healthy and well-functioning families (Walsh, 2006). Mothers discussed strategies that accommodated adolescents' development by setting rules and boundaries for adolescents. These strategies allowed for explorations and negotiations of personal freedom and

opportunities for adolescents to make their own decisions, but also established boundaries around these developmental needs. For mothers, Filipino parents' roles also required that they provide appropriate guidance to ensure adolescents' proper development. Mothers expressed that parents must establish and reinforce rules and boundaries when and if they are not adhered to by adolescents. However, mothers also discussed the importance of showing or reiterating their love and support to adolescents, despite conflicts. In doing so, mothers believed that they were consistently displaying emotional closeness and support for adolescents and their growth, without compromising the emotional bond in mother-adolescent relationships.

Among the families in this study, mothers felt that parents were mostly willing to adjust their family practices in order to (re)establish cohesive family relations. Most mothers in this sample did not focus on social and economic resources as critical influences in managing parent-adolescent conflicts and family relations; however, flexibility and connectedness (flexible connectedness) were essential for strategies in managing conflict and maintaining family relations. Mothers emphasized various strategies that focused on guiding adolescents and nurturing their development, maintaining close relations between parents and adolescents, and emphasizing the importance of overall cohesion within the family.

**Communication processes.** Family functioning depends on clear communication between family members. Sharing beliefs, information, and problem-solving are transmitted through open communication (Walsh, 2006). As Walsh emphasized, positive interactions between family members are fostered when communication patterns convey love, respect, and appreciation for one another.

Mothers in the study emphasized the importance of open communication in their families. Most mothers believed that communication provided ways for parents and adolescents to stay connected to each others' lives, further reinforcing cohesive family relations. Casual conversations and informally seeking or sharing advice between adolescents and parents were as important as having more formal discussions (e.g., family meetings). For example, mothers often described dinnertime as a regular and enjoyable opportunity for parents and adolescents to share daily tidbits about their lives. Communicating freely with one another facilitated positive interactions between family members, but also fostered a loving and caring family environment. Furthermore, sharing feelings and thoughts about daily events cultivated a family environment wherein all family members, including adolescents, could openly express feelings or thoughts on more difficult or contentious topics.

Some mothers also believed that open communication was crucial in managing disagreements or conflicts between parents and adolescents. Mothers expressed how parents and adolescents should be open about their positions (feelings and opinions) during contentious discussions. Taking such an approach required both parents and adolescents to listen and talk to each other in order to facilitate positive discussions, negotiations, and ultimately collaborative problem-solving of the issue(s). Mothers also utilized these periods for sharing advice and guidance on life with adolescents. Furthermore, mothers emphasized that parents must express love and support for their adolescents, despite being in disagreement or conflict with one another. Similar to Baumrind's (1966) authoritative parenting strategy, mothers recognized adolescents' developing autonomy by encouraging fair verbal exchanges while standing firm in

standards and reasons for current and future behavioural conduct. Authoritative parenting practices often leads to good outcomes for adolescents, such as emotional regulation, mastery of tasks, and developed social skills (Baumrind).

Communication processes in Filipino immigrant families were seen as a vital strategy not only for managing conflicts, but also for promoting close family relations. During transitions in adolescence, mothers expressed feeling disconnected to adolescents as daily conversations decreased and adolescents began forging intimate relations with friends and peers. However, open communication facilitated cohesive family relations and functioning and reinforced an emotionally close family environment.

In summary, the growing interest in family resilience underscores the importance of understanding families in vulnerable situations and in seeing the potential for their growth and transformation. Resilience frameworks, such as Walsh's systems theory of family resilience (2006), seek to understand families' challenges and adversities in ways that facilitate positive family recovery. By understanding the unique resources families have available to them, these resources and strengths can be fostered and mobilized during difficult times, providing families with opportunities to positively adapt to challenging times and emerge as a stronger and unified unit. As a relatively new concept, empirical evidence for family resilience is still needed (Patterson, 2002; Simon et al., 2005), especially in understanding some of the challenges facing immigrant families. The application of this resilience framework to Filipino immigrant families contributes to a better understanding of family roles, relations, and functioning in Canadian society, as they are re-negotiated or re-forged through challenging events.

In this study, Filipino immigrant families' belief systems (cultural and family frameworks) gave context to mothers' interpretations of parent-adolescent conflicts typical to this developmental period. As immigrants to Canada, mothers and their families are adjusting to and navigating through a new culture. The previous cultural framework, emphasizing family cohesion and interdependence, was perceived to be different from the new cultural framework, which emphasized independence and personal autonomy. These differences were emphasized through mothers' juxtapositions of Filipino cultural values to Canadian ones, especially focusing on culturally-based values of family roles and relationships.

Cultural and family values concentrated on developing and maintaining a positive family atmosphere with close emotional bonds, intergenerational support systems, open communication and respect for one another. Mothers engaged in nurturing parenting practices that were adaptive to adolescents' developmental needs, but remained consistent with Filipino cultural beliefs of family cohesion. Mothers were most likely to feel discomfort and strain within family relations and functioning when adolescents' demands for more autonomy and more time with peers were perceived to conflict with deeply held personal and cultural values that prioritized family closeness and time together. An analysis of family resilience in coping with the confluence of normative and non-normative life challenges is particularly relevant among immigrant families in Canada's multicultural society.

The inclusion of family and cultural frameworks for Filipino immigrant families offered a deeper understanding of how and why developmental transitions into adolescence proved difficult for some families. Although several components of the key

processes in Walsh's (2006) family resilience framework were not addressed in this study (e.g., spirituality, kin and community resources), their utility has been established in other studies of both immigrant families and in family resilience research (see Walsh 2003, 2006). These components may be more important when considering other types of adversities (e.g., the importance of spirituality and religion in coping with an unexpected passing of a family member). Nevertheless, this study examined the significance of understanding which strategies were utilized within Filipino immigrant families' in overcoming challenges related to developmental transitions in adolescence and why mothers chose to use them.

### **Limitations**

Some limitations of this study should be addressed. A better understanding of family resilience could also include the perspectives of other family members. In Filipino culture, mothers are considered to have a central role in shaping their children's development and in maintaining family harmony. Mothers may provide critical information about the family environment, but their perspectives on family unity are not the only one. It is also important to give voice to Filipino immigrant fathers' and adolescents' perspectives of optimal family functioning and relations, and their experiences of adversities in relation to adolescent development.

Secondly, life-stage transitions, such as the period of adolescence, are processes, not events. In this study, interviews were conducted only once and focused on one challenge, likely a recent or salient challenge or conflict mothers experienced with adolescents. Although a few mothers described these challenges as on-going, the majority of mothers described them as one-time events. As well, despite the experience of difficult

challenges, all mothers described their family relationships as close and strong. Thus, this investigation may not have fully explored the development, maintenance and/or evolution of adaptive processes in families during the adolescence life-stage.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

The integration of immigrant families in Canadian society requires a focus on ensuring their social and economic success and understanding how cultural values, personal experiences and normative transitions affect family life. A resilience framework applied to immigrant and family support services ensures that families and their members are not just functioning, but “functioning well” during and after challenging times. This study provided some evidence for the usefulness of a family resilience framework in understanding Filipino immigrant family relationships and well-being. Furthermore, it expanded the limited literature on Filipino immigrants and their families. Future studies should include other Filipino family members’ perspectives to gain a full understanding of the processes involved in building resilient families.

Additionally, the roles of personality and acculturation strategies should be included in further investigations of individual contributions to family relationships. Although the Filipino culture shares similar features with other Asian cultures, the nuances of different cultures should be explored as they may provide unique perspectives to immigrants’ experiences of adjustment to life-stage transitions. Future studies should also investigate resilience processes in Filipino families who have experienced unique immigration pathways (e.g., transnational families; forced migration), and continue exploring the role of cultural and family frameworks.

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*Appendix A*

University of Guelph Research Ethics Board Certificate

	<p><b>RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD</b></p> <p>Certification of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Human Participants</p>
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**APPROVAL PERIOD:** March 16, 2010 to March 16, 2011

**REB NUMBER:** 10FE020

**TYPE OF REVIEW:** Delegated Type 1

**RESPONSIBLE FACULTY:** SUE CHUANG

**DEPARTMENT:** Family Relations & Applied Nutrition

**SPONSOR:** N/A

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** Resilience and Filipino Immigrant Families:  
Navigating between two cultural worlds.

The members of the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board have examined the protocol which describes the participation of the human subjects in the above-named research project and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement.

The REB requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB. The REB must approve any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please complete the Change Request Form. If there is a change in your source of funding, or a previously unfunded project receives funding, you must report this as a change to the protocol.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Responsible Faculty, the safety of the participants, and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, a final report and, if the approval period is longer than one year, annual reports. Continued approval is contingent on timely submission of reports.

**Membership of the Research Ethics Board:** M. Bowring, *CME*; F. Caldwell, *Physician (alt)*; J. Clark, *PoliSci (alt)*; J. Dwyer, *FRAN*; M. Dwyer, *Legal*; D. Dyck, *CBS*; D. Emslie, *Physician*; M. Fairburn, *Ext.*; J. Hacker-Wright, *Ethics*; G. Holloway, *CBS (alt)*; V. Kanetkar, *CME (alt)*; L. Kuczynski, *FRAN (alt)*; S. Lachapelle, *COA*; L. Mann, *Ext.*; J. Minogue, *EHS*; P. Saunders, *Alter. Health Care*; S. Singer, *COA (alt)*; L. Son Hing, *Psychology*; V. Shalla, *SOAN (alt)*; L. Spriet, *CBS*; L. Trick, *Chair*; T. Turner, *SOAN*; L. Vallis, *CBS (alt)*.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Per Chair, Research Ethics Board

Appendix B

Recruitment poster



**UNIVERSITY  
of GUELPH**

# FILIPINO IMMIGRANT FAMILY STUDY

(Part of a Masters Thesis conducted at the University of Guelph)

# WHAT KEEPS FILIPINO IMMIGRANT FAMILIES STRONG?

Interested? Contact Jaqui

[deguzman@uoguelph.ca](mailto:deguzman@uoguelph.ca)

Advisor: Dr. Susan Chuang

Receive a \$10 gift certificate for  
participating in an interview! (~1 hour)

Filipino immigrant study

Contact :Jaqui de Guzman  
deguzman@uoguelph.ca

*Appendix C*

## Recruitment and Reply Emails

Subject heading: Recruitment for a research study on Filipino immigrant families

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

My name is Jacqueline de Guzman and I am currently a Masters student at the University of Guelph (Advisor: Dr. Susan Chuang).

For my Masters thesis, I am researching Filipino immigrant families and their experiences and adjustment of family life in Canada. More specifically, I am interviewing Filipino mothers to gain a better understanding of these experiences. We'll be talking about family relationships, culture, and challenges - which usually lasts about an hour long. Anyone who take part in this study receives a \$10 gift certificate as a token of appreciation. Interviews can be done over the phone, or I can travel to the person's home to do the interview (or another location that is comfortable to the mother).

This is where I need your help! As an individual who is well-established within the Filipino community in Toronto, I would greatly appreciate any help in recruiting Filipino mothers who have immigrated to Canada (after 1975) and who currently have a teenager in their household. Please feel free to pass my information along to any family or mother who is eligible or interested in this study. Or, if you personally know of anyone who would be eligible for my study, please pass my information along.

I have attached one of my posters for you to view. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (my information is below).

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Warm regards,  
Jacqueline de Guzman

Subject heading: RE: Research study on Filipino immigrant families

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for taking an interest in my research on Filipino immigrant families. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the strengths that keep family bonds strong in Filipino immigrant families draw upon as they adjust to Canadian society.

Let's schedule a time to talk on the phone. Please reply to this email with a phone number that I can reach you at. Or if you choose, you can call me at 519-824-3252.

I hope to speak with you soon,

Jaqui

*Appendix D*

## Consent form



**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**  
**Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition**

*Resilience and Filipino immigrant families:  
 Navigating between two cultural worlds*

You are asked to participate in a study conducted by Jacqueline de Guzman as part of a Masters Thesis, from the Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition at the University of Guelph.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: Jacqueline de Guzman, deguzman@uoguelph.ca, Masters student, University of Guelph or, Dr. Susan Chuang (advisor), schuang@uoguelph.ca, University of Guelph: 519-824-4120 ext. 58380

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

To gain an understanding of how Filipino immigrant families describe the challenges of living in Canada and raising, or being part of, a family with adolescent(s) in Canada and the cultural and family strengths to help overcome these particular challenges.

**PROCEDURES**

**If you volunteer to participate in this study**, you will be asked to take part in a 45 to 60 minute interview related to Filipino immigrant families. You will participate in this research at a location that is comfortable to you. Your total time commitment will be less than 90 minutes.

If you wish to obtain information regarding the results of the study, please write your email on the consent form. Results will become available in the fall of 2010.

**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

Some people may be embarrassed or feel uncomfortable discussing family relations, or family issues, in general. However, you may stop answering interview questions at any time if you feel uncomfortable, or skip questions (during the interview) you do not feel comfortable answering. Also, if you desire, you may utilize the Counseling Services Resource sheet, which provides names and numbers for counselors who can discuss with

you some of the issues participating in this study may have raised. There will be no negative consequences should you stop or not answer certain questions.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO YOU AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There are some benefits to participating in this study. Many people enjoy participating in social science research of this type. You will learn about the process of conducting research on Filipino and immigrant families. You will also benefit by knowing that you are contributing to our understanding of how you or your family adjusts to Canada, the strengths and supports that your family gives you, and a deeper understanding of family relationships in Filipino families. .

### **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Your family will be provided with a \$10 gift card for participation in this study. You can choose one \$10 gift card for a family restaurant of your choice. You will receive the gift card even if you do not answer some or all of the questions during the interview or questionnaire.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

**We cannot guarantee anonymity for persons participating in this project as it is possible the participant and interviewer may know each other. However, every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with this study. Your name will be substituted for an ID number (e.g., 25) and no names will be mentioned in the thesis/reports.**

You will not be asked to provide any identifying information in the interview or demographic questionnaire. The interview will be tape recorded to assure accuracy of the content, and then transcribed by the lead investigator of this study, Jacqueline de Guzman. Transcripts will not include identifying information and will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked office. Study data (including transcripts) will be saved on a password-protected computer. Your identity will be protected: Your name will be substituted for an id number (e.g., 25) and there will be no names mentioned in the reports/thesis.

### **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

**You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time while participating in the interview or while completing the questionnaire without negative consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.** If you would like to have your data removed from this study at a later time, email the principal investigators listed at the top of this information letter, and your statements will be removed from the transcript. The investigator may withdraw you from

this research if circumstances arise that warrant doing so (e.g., deliberate falsification of information).

## **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

**You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this study.** This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Guelph Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

**Research Ethics Officer  
University of Guelph  
437 University Centre  
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1**

**Sandra Auld  
Telephone: (519) 824-4120, ext. 56606  
E-mail: sauld@uoguelph.ca  
Fax: (519) 821-5236**

## **SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

**I have read the information provided for the study “Filipino immigrant families: Navigating between two cultural worlds” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

[OPTIONAL]

If you are interested in the results of this study, please leave your email address below. Your email address will only be used to send information regarding the completion and results from this study:

---

*Appendix E*

Background Questionnaire

Interview ID # \_\_\_\_\_ (Filled out by researcher)

Date of interview (mm/dd/yy): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Date of birth (month, date, year) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Were you born in the Philippines? (Please mark the appropriate response)
 

Yes                       No      If no, what country? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you consider yourself a Filipino citizen? (Please mark the appropriate answer)
 

Yes                       No
4. What is your first language? (Please mark the appropriate answer)
 

Filipino                       English                       Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. a) How well do you speak your first language? (Please circle your answer)
 

1	2	3	4	5
Completely fluent				Not fluent at all

b) How well do you read in your first language? (Please circle your answer)

1	2	3	4	5
Completely fluent				Not fluent at all

b) How well do you write in your first language? (Please circle your answer)

1	2	3	4	5
Completely fluent				Not fluent at all
6. If you did NOT list English as your first language, please answer the following:
 

a) How well do you speak English? (Please circle your answer)

1	2	3	4	5
Completely fluent				Not fluent at all

b) How well can you read in English? (Please circle your answer)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Completely                      Not fluent  
 fluent                      at all

c) How well can you write in English? (Please circle your answer)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Completely                      Not fluent  
 fluent                      at all

7. What is your religion? (Please mark the appropriate answer)

Catholic                       Muslim                       Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

8. a) Have you lived anywhere else (other than the Philippines), prior to moving to Canada?

Yes                       No                       N/A

b) If yes, what country(-ies) have you lived in before and how long?

Country(-ies)	# of years
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

9. When did you immigrate to Canada? (month, year) \_\_\_\_\_

10. a) What was your initial immigration category?

Economic immigrant                       Family Reunification  
 Spouse of economic-immigrant                       Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

b) What was your immigration status?  
 (Please mark the appropriate response)

Temporary resident (Student or Working visa)  
 Permanent resident  
 Refugee  
 Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

11. a) Did your family migrate with you?                      Yes                       No                       N/A

If you answered N/A, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

- b) If you answered yes, who migrated with you, if applicable?  
(Check all that apply)

Spouse                       Other (Please specify who): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Children

- c) Who in your immediate family was left behind, and for how long?

Family member	# of years
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

12. Please list all family members who currently reside in your household:

First name (or pseudonym)	Relation to you	Age (years)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

13. a) Do you have any extended family in Canada?

Yes       No       Unsure

b) # of extended family members in Canada: \_\_\_\_\_

14. a) Do you have any extended family in the Philippines?

Yes       No       Unsure

b) # of extended family in the Philippines: \_\_\_\_\_

15. What year did you become a Canadian citizen, or are expecting to become a Canadian citizen? \_\_\_\_\_ (year or expected year)

16. What is the highest level of education (prior to immigrating to Canada) for:  
(Please check the appropriate answers)

Yourself

- No school  
 Elementary school  
 Some high school  
 High school  
 Some university or college  
 Bachelors degree/College diploma  
 Masters degree  
 Ph.D  
 Other (Please explain):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Your Spouse (if applicable)

- No school  
 Elementary school  
 Some high school  
 High school  
 Some university or college  
 Bachelors degree/College diploma  
 Masters degree  
 Ph.D  
 Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

17. a) Have you or your spouse (if applicable) pursued any higher education since being in Canada?

- Yes                       No                       N/A

- b) If so, at what level? (Please check appropriate answer)

Yourself

- High school  
 Some secondary education  
     (e.g., university, college)  
 Bachelor's degree/Diploma  
 Masters degree  
 Ph.D  
 Other (Please explain):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Your Spouse (if applicable)

- High school  
 Some secondary education  
     (e.g., university, college)  
 Bachelor's degree/Diploma  
 Masters degree  
 Ph.D  
 Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

18. a) What was your occupation in the Philippines? (Please mark the appropriate answers)

Your occupation in the Philippines:

- Labourer  
 Semi-skilled  
 Clerical  
 Semi-professional  
 Executive  
 Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's occupation in the Philippines  
(if applicable):

- Labourer  
 Semi-skilled  
 Clerical  
 Semi-professional  
 Executive  
 Other (Please explain): \_\_\_\_\_

b) What was your job title?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What was your spouse's job title?

\_\_\_\_\_

c) # of work hours  
\_\_\_\_\_ /week

c) # of work hours \_\_\_\_\_ /week

d) # of jobs \_\_\_\_\_

d) # of jobs \_\_\_\_\_

19. What was your family income (annually) in the Philippines? (in CDN)

- 25,000 or less
- 25,001- 45,000
- 45,001-65,000
- 65,001-85,000
- 85,001-100,000
- 100,000 or more
- Do not want to answer

20. a) What are your's and your spouse's CURRENT occupations? (if applicable)

Your current occupation:

- Labourer
- Semi-skilled
- Clerical
- Semi-professional
- Executive
- Other (Please explain):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's current occupation  
(if applicable):

- Labourer
- Semi-skilled
- Clerical
- Semi-professional
- Executive
- Other (Please explain):  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) What is your current job title?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) What is your spouse's current job title?

\_\_\_\_\_

e) # of work hours  
\_\_\_\_\_ /week

e) # of work hours  
\_\_\_\_\_ /week

f) # of jobs \_\_\_\_\_

f) # of jobs \_\_\_\_\_

21. What is your CURRENT family income (annually)? (in CDN)

- 25,000 or less
- 25,001- 45,000
- 45,001-65,000
- 65,001-85,000
- 85,001-100,000

- 100,000 or more
- Do not want to answer

22. List the three (3) biggest challenges your family has experienced/are experiencing due to immigrating to Canada:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

23. List the three (3) biggest daily challenges your family has experienced/are experiencing regarding raising a family with teenagers:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

24. Please list the top five (5) people, groups, or organizations that have helped and/or supported your family with the challenges of being an immigrant family.

Name/Group/Organization

Relation to you

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

25. What advice would you give to other Filipino immigrant families living in Canada?

*Appendix F*

## Interview Guide

[Introductions will include a brief conversation about hobbies, work, and why the mother and family was interested in participating. Researcher will begin the introductions, including specifying herself as a child of Filipino immigrants]

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. My name is Jaqui, and I am a Masters student at the University of Guelph. Dr. Susan Chuang is my advisor. This interview is part of my thesis research. This interview will be recorded so that your valuable information does not get missed.

I have with me a consent form, which we will go over together. If you agree to participate, please sign the consent form and hand it back to me at the end. Near the top, we can see the purpose of the study: We are here to talk about family relations, challenging family and immigrant experiences, and the strengths that help Filipino immigrant families get through hard times. I'll be asking about your thoughts on these topics. You are here today to discuss your thoughts, perspectives and beliefs regarding these topics. The interview should last somewhere between 45 to 60 minutes. Also, I have a questionnaire asking demographic questions. This survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You can include an email address on your consent form if you wish to receive a summary of the results from this study.

There is very little risk in taking part in this study. You may feel uncomfortable discussing your experiences or thoughts related to your family relationships and issues, but it is your choice to not answer any of the too personal or too uncomfortable questions. Your thoughts, ideas and feelings, however, are always welcome and highly valued. Please remember: There are no right or wrong answers. Therefore, I invite you share your ideas and experiences. You can also choose to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and still be eligible your gift. In participating though, you might also enjoy having a discussion about the experiences of being part of, and raising, a Filipino family in Canada.

I also want to go over some important points related to confidentiality and anonymity. I cannot guarantee anonymity, as we are doing this interview face-to-face. Nevertheless, you can choose to use your real or a fake name during the interview. If you choose to use your real name during the interview, that information along with the information from your questionnaire can be linked back to you via the consent form. However, it is not required for this study. If you do not use your real name, then the information cannot be linked back to you. I won't ask you to give any personal identifying information during the interview. I will keep the recordings from this

interview, along with the ensuing transcripts, and the questionnaires in a safe and secure space in a locked office.

Any questions about the consent form?

It will become very important to speak clearly and audibly. If at any time you need to take a break, just let me know and we can pause the interview.

Alright, if you are ready, let's begin the interview.

- 1. I am interested in learning more about how and what you think about different cultures:**
  - a. How would you describe Filipino culture?
  - b. How would you describe Canadian culture?
  
- 2. I am also interested in learning more about what you think about families, in general.**
  - a. What does it mean to be a “strong” and “close” family?
  
- 3. Please think about one of the daily challenges from raising teenagers that your family experienced/is experienced that you listed in the demographic questionnaire.**
  - a. Can you please describe the context/nature of this issue that your family has experienced/is experiencing?
  - b. Is this challenge difficult for your family? Why or why not?
  - c. What strategies did your family use/are using to overcome this challenge?
  - d. What did your family do during this time to keep the family relationship close?