A Transnational Perspective of Latin American Immigrant Families in Canada

by

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ABSTRACT

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This research is an investigation of the question, what is the relationship between the experience of changing cultural identities and conflict within immigrant families? Applying a transnational perspective, this thesis presents original qualitative research that examined the perceptions of 16 Latin American immigrant individuals of their own cultural identity, their family life, and how their relationships have been affected by the process of immigration. Examining the data through a transnational lens, as well as incorporating theories of performative identity, I propose herein that immigrant families to Canada have fostered a perspective of Canadian family life typified by a lack of family-focused attitude. As a result, families seeking to perform Canadian cultural identity may end up performing this perceived lack of family-focused attitude in their own family lives.
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Policymakers and scholars alike have made considerable effort to identify how best to help immigrant families successfully and happily integrate into North American daily life. Whereas other disciplines examine the issue seeking to answer questions about human development, socialization, psychological health, and the structural or institutional inequality that immigrants face, socio-cultural anthropology concerns itself with ethnicity and cultural identity. Immigration has been explored within socio-cultural anthropology seeking to answer more general, macro-level questions about ethnicity and cultural identity such as what motivates immigration (Massey et al. 1994; Gonzalez 1961), how collections of immigrants experience their cultural identity in reaction to that of other cultures with which they interact (Chavez 1991), how immigrants network and support each other (Wilson 1994), and how genders experience immigration differently (Pessar 1999). Remarkably, in a discipline like socio-cultural anthropology which is historically and contemporarily concerned with kinship and familial relationships, it is interesting that the experience of immigrant ethnicity and cultural identity within the family unit has not received as much anthropological attention.

This research and its subsequent findings utilize socio-cultural anthropology’s theory of transnationalism (Hannerz 1997; Basch, Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994; Rouse 1992) and cultural identity performance (Durham 1989; Butler 1990). The purpose is to address anthropologically a question that has been explored within the fields of sociology and psychology for the last several decades through quantitative-based, acculturation research: what is the relationship between rates of acculturation and conflict within immigrant families? For
reasons laid out in Sections 2.0 through 2.6, this question will be re-worked to better fit the anthropological perspective, such that the final research question that this thesis seeks to explore is: what is the relationship between the experience of changing cultural identities and conflict within immigrant families?

To address this question, I conducted a qualitative study in which I conducted semi-structured interviews with five Latin American families living in the Greater Toronto Area. The interviews were conducted with three main goals:

1) Investigate how each individual perceives the nature of their culture of origin and Canadian culture

2) Determine how individuals’ changing cultural identities are perceived by other members of the family

3) Determine if changing cultural identities is related to any conflict within the family.

This research not only gives insight into the ways individual members of families experience the transnational behaviour of other family members, but also adds to the body of anthropological literature concerning the theory of ethnicity as a performative phenomenon.

Section 2 of this thesis serves as a literature review that will set the groundwork for the theories of research that I draw on. More importantly, this section contains the literature and theories that I used to reword the initial research question above to better fit the anthropological perspective. To do so, Sections 2.1 and 2.1.1 will discuss the terms acculturation and the
acculturation gap. This discussion will serve as a source for the initial research question, which is rooted in sociological and psychological analysis of acculturation. Once the initial research question is established, Section 2.2 introduces the guiding theoretical framework of this thesis, transnationalism. It is through this theoretical framework that, in Section 2.4, I reword the initial research question to match the anthropological perspective. In Section 2.3 I draw on feminist-rooted theories of performative identity, which becomes useful in the final analysis of my data. Section 2.6 will discuss current findings in socio-cultural anthropology concerning family-based research with Latin American families, since this group serves as the target participant group of my research.

I offer Section 3 as a small autobiography in order to adhere to the anthropological notion of reflexive writing, wherein my own identity as researcher is considered relevant data. This section will speak to my own interest in the subject matter, my relationship to it, and offer some thoughts about my authority on the topic.

Section 4.0 lays out the methodology I used to conduct this research. It also includes small, ethnographic descriptions of the participants in Sections 4.3.1 through 4.3.4.

The data, which is presented as ethnographic writing, is found in Section 5. The ethnographic data contained in this section is structured following the same pattern in Section 2.2 in order to maintain conceptual consistency.
Section 6 offers my analysis of the data presented in Section 5, as well as my answer to the research question. It discusses how Canadian family life is perceived by the participants, and draws on the theory of performative identity laid out in Section 2.3 to support my conclusions regarding how this perception affects the behaviours of the participants and conflict within their families.

**Literature Review: Anthropology and Immigrant Cultural Identity 2.0**

As Brettell (2008) notes, socio-cultural anthropology has been a discipline concerned with typologies since its conception. As anthropologists engaged with the task of identifying and defining types of immigrants, it became increasingly clear that the reality of the immigrant experience is “varied within a population, and subject to change over time as larger contextual conditions change” (Brettell 2008:118). In other words, the approach of identifying and defining types of immigrants was inherently flawed: the typologies do not hold.

In the face of ever-changing, and ever-more-connected global processes, socio-cultural anthropology beyond the 1960s could no longer argue that ethnicity and culture were the deep-rooted and inherited identities we once thought they were, a conceptualization perpetuated by the typological approach (Banks 1996). Ethnicity and culture were instead recognized as complicated systems of different sources of cultural learning, changing circumstance, and individual agency. With respect to immigrant ethnic identity, “there is no single profile of the
typical migrant” (Lessinger 1995:72) that could speak to the lived realities of whole populations of immigrants.

With the eventual decline of a typological approach to the anthropological study of immigration, anthropological theory was now free to examine immigrant ethnic identity as something that fluctuates, is subject to change, and is dependent on circumstance. Ethnic identity became less a thing or state of being, and more an experience. This shift in perspective required a conceptual model that could account for the relationship between the ever-changing identity of the individual and the ever-changing identity of the group. This conceptual model, transnationalism, will be explored in Section 2.2.

However, as anthropological analysis of the immigrant experience was working towards this new and emerging perspective, there was another theory of research at work in socio-cultural anthropology’s allied disciplines: that of acculturation research.

**Acculturation 2.1**

In order to situate the emergence of transnational theory within the greater discussion surrounding immigrant family research I must first discuss the concept of acculturation, despite
its rejection by the greater community of anthropological researchers, for two reasons. First, because so much of the research that has been conducted within the field of immigration study by all disciplines (socio-cultural anthropology included) has its roots in acculturation studies. The second is because the research question that this thesis seeks to explore will be developed in response to a similar question being investigated within the theory of acculturation research: what is the relationship between acculturation and conflict within immigrant families? The answer to this question has been varied in the social sciences.

An examination of the turn of the 20th century studies of acculturation, both within and without the discipline of socio-cultural anthropology, overwhelmingly results in a portrait of acculturation that assumes a dominant and non-dominant culture come into contact, with the gradual assimilation of the latter into the dominant cultural group. The reason for this generalization is perhaps that, at least on the surface, this is the immediate perspective an onlooker may have of what occurs; individuals holding onto their non-dominant cultural norms at some point shed some (or all) of their ways to conform to the society in which they now find themselves.

However, even as early as 1935, acculturation was already understood by anthropologists and sociologists alike to be a two-way street, with acculturation being defined as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into direct and continuous contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits 1935: 229, emphasis mine). Phinney (1990:501),
fifty-five years later, similarly defined acculturation as dealing “broadly with changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors that result from contact between two distinct cultures.”

As a definition often cited as being between “two distinct cultures”, most of the research on acculturation, at least within the field of immigration studies with which this thesis is concerned, studies the experiences of groups or individuals relocating to a new nation, wherein they acculturate to their new cultural surroundings. The result is numerous journal articles and book chapters covering topics like the Chinese acculturating to Canadian society (Deng & Walker 2007), the health of Koreans acculturating to American society (Shin & Lach 2014), and the acculturation of Nigerians to the Minnesota area (Akinde 2013), and the clothing choices of black African women acculturating to life in London (Gbadamosi 2012).

While several models for acculturation research exist, there are trends that carry throughout the most notable models. First, is that the model describes a mutual change when cultures come into contact, something that Kramer (2009), described as co-evolution. Second, that a useful model of acculturation accepts that assimilation, or the eventual swallowing up of the non-dominant culture, is not the inevitable result of acculturation. Instead, as Berry (1997) suggests, acculturation can take on multiple meanings or roles, one of which may indeed, but not necessarily be, assimilation. He proposed that there are four predominant strategies an individual or group uses in order to manage the acculturation progress: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration.
The four strategies are each a response to two different aspects of the acculturation decision-making process; first, the decision by an individual or group of to what degree should they should relinquish or retain their cultural norms. The second aspect is the decision by an individual or group of to what degree should they adopt or reject new cultural norms. Each strategy addresses these two aspects in different ways. These decisions can be illustrated across two continuums, as in Figure 1.

*Figure 1: Berry’s Continuums of Choice*

Assimilation (applied to the continuums of choices below in Figure 2), as an acculturation strategy, refers to instances in which the acculturating individual or group rejects their own cultural values or norms and instead adheres to that of the dominant group. This has been demonstrated to be a commonly practiced acculturation strategy (Kingsberg 2014; Darboe 2003). This strategy is essentially what earlier models of acculturation were describing: the process through which a non-dominant group loses its original cultural characteristics, opting instead to adopt those of the dominant culture surrounding them.
Separation (Figure 3) is the strategy that reflects an attitude where the individual or group rejects the values and norms of the dominant group. They instead actively practice and defend their culture of origin. Identifying total separation in the academic literature has been more elusive, as it does not appear to happen on a large scale, despite being present in smaller, more delineated groups (Zhou & Yu 2011; Grzywacz et al. 2009) such as gender or class. These investigations conclude that while a large group may tend to employ any of the other acculturation strategies, resistant individuals, or smaller sub-groups, may opt for a separation strategy.
Marginalization (Figure 4) is a strategy in which the individual or the group reject both the host and the culture of origin, effectively shutting themselves off from the communities around them. This phenomenon may be a self-determined marginalization, though often the marginalization occurs because the host culture rejects the incoming cultural group, and the latter finds no recourse, even with others of their own culture of origin. The widespread marginalization of Latin American immigrants in the United States has been, and continues to be, an issue of both academic and political concern (Sleeter 2012; Marcus 2009b; Hurd 2008).

![Figure 4: Marginalization](image)

Finally, integration (Figure 5) is the strategy wherein the individual or group actively accepts norms and values from both the host and the culture of origin, often forming a sort of liminal cultural group. Following the interest here in Latin American acculturation, the creation of the “Chicano” cultural group in the United States is a well-known and documented example of this acculturation strategy (Sanchez 1998).
While Berry openly recognized the difficulty of generalizing these four strategies and projecting them onto a problem as complex and varied across the world as immigration, he simultaneously argued that these four strategies are “universal factors, ones that operate everywhere, but whose specific influence will vary in relation to features of the particular cultures in contact” (Berry 1997:26). In other words, individuals or group may occupy any combination of decisions across these continuums. For example, an individual or group may adopt assimilate to the host language, maintain their home religion, integrate their food choices, and so on.

Since Berry’s initial argument was made, researchers as recently as 2013 (Miller et al. 2013) continue to test this hypothesis. Indeed, perusing the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* alone, there are numerous articles written in the last twenty years that explicitly seek to investigate acculturation strategies. See Pham & Harris (2001), Neto (2002), Ward & Kennedy (1994), Kosic & Phalet (2006), Kosic, Mennetti & Sam (2006), Navas et al. (2007), and Maisonneuve & Testé (2007) to name a few examples.
Elaborating upon the concept of acculturation, researchers from the various disciplines needed to find a way to operationalize degrees of acculturation. One of the most obvious variables researchers have been able to operationalize is language use (Lau et al. 2005; Gil & Vega 1996). Determining whether or not, and how much, an individual or group tends to use their language of origin versus the language of adoption is easily counted, and at first glance may offer a clue as to the degree of acculturation an individual or group has experienced. However, researchers recognize the limitations of taking one (or two, or three) aspect of acculturation, such as language, and using it to measure degrees of acculturation. Instead, researchers have attempted to address the multi-dimensional aspect of acculturation and thus approach its operationalization from that multi-dimensional perspective. Researchers (Hwang & Wood 2009; Birman & Taylor-Ritzler 2007; Lee et al. 2000) have argued for acculturation indexes that include not only language, but involvement with the host culture/culture of origin, self-representations of ethnic identity, child-rearing norms, etc. These indexes are generally created by researchers who recognize the limitations of simple operationalizations of such a complex concept as acculturation. However, there is no clear point at which “too simple” becomes “sufficient”.

Arguably, this general move towards a more complex measure of degrees of acculturation is a step in the right direction. Building on the work of others and forever refining the scientific method is a general guiding principle of scientific research, after all. However, what I note in reading these reports is that while the researchers argue for the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of acculturation, they nonetheless conclude their reports using
terminology that gives the impression that they are still conceiving of acculturation as if it existed on a continuum that goes from “not-acculturated” to “acculturated”.

For example, some of the most compelling researchers (Birman & Taylor-Ritzler 2007) who strove to create a multi-dimensional (which they termed “mediational”) model for the operationalization of acculturation, finished off report concluding that levels of “American acculturation” predicted levels of psychological distress for immigrating Russian adolescents; that “greater American acculturation” was a predictor of “less distress”; that “elevated” levels of American acculturation was an indicator of “lower levels of distress.

It is from this “more than/less than”, “higher/lower” language, inherent to numerical analysis, that the concept of the acculturation gap emerges.

The Acculturation Gap 2.1.1

Sluzki (1979), an early researcher similarly engaged in this problem of acculturation, attempted to rationalize a way in which we could create a “culture-free” model of the process of immigrant acculturation. In his proposal he described four “steps” to the processes of migration
that he believed were universal across acculturating populations. Perhaps the outcomes were not always the same, but he believed that the process was.

Of his four steps, the one of most importance for this discussion is the last, which he described as the “transgenerational impact” (1979:5). He begins his description of the transgenerational impact by recounting the often-told narrative of a family migrating from their home culture to a new one, through which a period of “adaptation” is required. This adaptation period requires the first generation of migrants to choose which cultural norms to adopt, and which to reject, and he then goes on to argue that:

It comes as no surprise then to discover that any long-term delay in the family’s adaptive process will tend to become apparent when a second generation is raised in the country of adoption. Whatever has been avoided by a first generation will appear in the second one, generally expressed as a clash between the generations. (1979:6)

This marks one of the first descriptions of what has come to be called the acculturation gap. This acculturation gap concept first requires the assumption that acculturation is a process where individuals within a group are all acculturating to the dominant culture at different rates. Often, the phenomenon is observed such that children are quicker to adopt the norms of the dominant culture than the parents or guardians. This results in a “clash” (as Sluzki describes it) or “gap” (Hwang & Wood 2009; Portes & Hao 2002; Luo & Wiseman 2000).
Ho (2009) further elaborates on this term *acculturation gap* in the context of her own investigation:

Previous studies [on the acculturation gap] have examined the link between acculturation of either the child or the parent and family relationships. When significant effects were found, authors inferred that the link exists because one family member’s acculturation level (such as the child’s) can imply a smaller or wider acculturation gap with the other family member (such as the parent), which in turn impacts family relationships. (22)

It is at this point that the initial research question emerges: if an observable phenomenon like this occurs, then *what is the relationship between rates of acculturation conflict within immigrant families?*

Nguyen, Messe & Stollak (1999), strong proponents of the multi-dimensional approach to acculturation, noted that when degrees of acculturation are compared to degrees of conflict within immigrating groups, great contradictions arise in the literature. Speaking quantitatively, some researchers conclude that the relationship is positive (Salgado de Snyder 1987; Yu & Harburg 1981) as illustrated in Figure 6. Some researchers conversely conclude that the relationship is negative (Pasch et al. 2006; Sorenson & Golding 1988) as illustrated in Figure 7. Others, including Nguyen, Messe & Stollak, argue that the relationship is “curvilinear … (where moderate levels of acculturation are associated with positive adjustment)” (1999:6) illustrated in Figure 8. Having examined the contradictions that have arisen while attempting to measure acculturation, Nguyen, Messe & Stollak suggest that ever more complex methods of operationalization are required. This argument has been recently echoed by other researchers as
well (Birman & Taylor-Ritzler 2007), striving to including more and more dimensions into their mathematical conceptualizations of acculturation.

Figure 6: Positive Relationship

Figure 7: Negative Relationship
It seems that the acculturation research theory has been unable to agree on an answer to the question: there is still significant disagreement over the effect that degrees of acculturation have on family conflict. Whereas researchers engaged with this question have tried to increase the depth of their multi-dimensional, quantitative analysis of acculturation in order to explore the question, my hypothesis is that perhaps the question is better answered through a different theory of research altogether: one that avoids the continuum-based language and its consequently restricting perspective of the experience of immigrant culture change.

*Anthropology’s Transnational Theory 2.2*

Acculturation research is limited by its tendency to be talked about as a continuum-based concept. It is because of this that socio-cultural anthropologists, who often shy away from the
quantitative method that necessarily results in these kinds of continuum-based terminology, have adopted a transnational theory for the analysis of the immigrant experience.

Anthropology recognized that immigrants maintain aspects of their original culture through continuing interaction with the culture of origin, while learning what was needed to function and connect within the host-culture’s society (Margolis 1995:29). This idea that immigrants can participate in, and maintain ties to, their home-culture while creating an identity within the host-culture became known as transnationalism (Schiller, Basch, & Szanton Blanc 1994; Rouse 1992). The transnational conceptualization of the immigrant experience challenges the perspective that immigrants experience the culture change process along continuums of choice, or that the experience of culture change could be measured by degree.

Hannerz (1997) proposed that terminologies are of critical importance to the transnational perspective: boundaries, flows, and hybrids.

Despite a growing tendency to view globalization as a process through which nation states and cultural enclaves are becoming ever more permeable, with rapid and increasingly voluminous exchanges of cultural and social information, borders are of key importance to a sound understanding of the transnational perspective.
In the world of environmental and ecological studies, there is growing understanding that border ecologies like river-delta wetlands and coral reefs foster some of the greatest diversity of life on the planet. These places are where two ecologies meet. In the case of river-delta wetlands, this is where freshwater and saltwater meet. In the case of the coral reefs, this is where the shallow seas and deep seas meet. It is in these spaces where biologically based exchanges of predator/prey relationships push the process of natural selection and biodiversity into overdrive, producing vast numbers of species unseen in other ecologies.

Unlike the wetlands or the coral reefs, cultural boundaries are not real. They are entities of social organization that function to demarcate who is, and who is not, a member of a given group. Within the perspective of the transnational theory these boundaries are like the wetlands and coral reefs of the cultural world. The borders between cultures become meaningful grounds of negotiation across which a comprehensible exchange of culture can exist. Without the notion of distinction between cultural identities, there can be no exchange.

Allow me to rephrase. Cognitively, the concept of cultural boundaries exists so that one cultural group can confidently define their identity as being different from another. However, that very distinction does not mean that divided cultural groups are independent from each other. Indeed, the boundary serves as a meeting point which fosters a relationship, rather than impedes it. Drawing from an earlier anthropological theorist, Hannerz describes the usefulness of boundaries in the following way:
Barth (1969) emphasized that ethnicity is best seen as a matter of social organization, and suggested that there is no simple relationship between ethnic group membership and the distribution of cultural items among populations. In the normal case, ethnic group membership, as a matter of social identity, would be either one or the other; in or out… Barth's 1960s work did much to make us think of boundaries as something across which contacts and interactions take place; they may have an impact on the form and extent of these contacts, but they do not contain natural isolates. (Hannerz 1997:9)

It is important, he argues, that a transnational perspective not fall prey to the notion that globalization is somehow dissolving cultural borders. Borders may have become more permeable, but cultural identities that distinguish one cultural group from another are still as prevalent as ever. The borders that do exist, do so not only to distinguish, but also in order to facilitate exchange across time, space, and between cultural groups.

The transnational perspective describes this relationship of exchange as “flow”. Hannerz elaborated, stating that this perspective is concerned with “…macro anthropology, a reasonably comprehensive review of the (relative) coherence and dynamics of larger social and territorial entities than those which the discipline have traditionally dealt with” (1997:9). With this perspective, socio-cultural anthropology is concerned with the idea that culture, at a macro level, does not stabilize. It is changing, interchanging, and always moving. Welz described it as a perspective that “… captures cultural processes that stream across borders of nation states” (2008:2, emphasis mine). She used verbs such as grow, and emerge to describe the experience of transnationalism.
This aspect of socio-cultural anthropology’s perspective on transnational identities is of key importance to this research. Much of what I designed the research to explore was not a cultural destination, but a process; I was not concerned with what cultural identities were turning into, but simply that they were turning. The flow of identity is the target variable, as well as whatever coherence (to use Hannerz’ word) can be discovered behind it.

By focusing on the way cultural and ethnic identity ebbs and flows across perceived cultural borders, anthropologists are required to describe this cultural process in qualitative ways. Since, the vocabulary of continuum cannot capture the complexity of these ever-shifting, multi-layered changes. Instead, identity has to be described using terminologies alluding to notions of mixing, morphing, and blending.

The third keyword for the transnational theory, hybridization (or one of the other terms used to describe mixes like creolization, third culture, mestizaje, synergy, etc.) captures the needs of this new descriptive theory. These terms are replete in the anthropological transnational literature, describing the transformation that identities experience as individuals and groups begin to mix aspects of their own cultural identity with those of another culture.

Prominent in my mind, when it comes to examples of this, is the literature on Chicano culture in the southern United States (Melville 1989; Keefe & Padilla 1987). Ethnographers first began to describe Chicano culture in the early 1970s. The term was used to describe how a
growing number of Mexican immigrants were beginning to identify themselves as not quite Mexican and not quite American. They existed as a third culture that grew out of a hybridization of American mainstream culture and Mexican culture. Later, it became clear that as a minority culture the Chicanos found themselves marginalized, unable to seek much community with their more Mexican relatives, as they no longer quite related on the same level. Similarly, unable to seek community with mainstream American culture, the Chicano experience became one that epitomized the marginalized immigrant experience.

The narrative of Chicano culture, however, differs slightly from the hybridization of the transnational theory. The Chicano culture is described as a new, third culture born out of the mixing of two existing cultures. Hybridization as it applies to the transnational perspective tends to be more subtle in its application. It describes instead a growing reality in which individuals and groups can simultaneously be two or more different cultural beings; much of this is thanks to technological advances in communications and transportations that allow immigrants to partake richly, and directly, of their culture of origin.

This new hybrid experience is more complicated as it demands recognition that individuals and groups have agency and power in their experience. This is not an instance in which separation from the culture of origin causes the emergence of a third, new cultural group. Instead, this kind of hybrid experiences all cultural influences and makes relevant cultural choices simultaneously.
To summarize, socio-cultural anthropology’s transnational theory seeks to examine the immigrant experience of cultural and ethnic identity as one delineated by *boundaries*, which allow individuals and groups to distinguish their own identity from that of another. Utilizing this cognitive distinction, the transnational theory highlights how culture continually *flows* across these borders, enriching the total combinations of identities that an individual or group can experience. With all these identity-related choices becoming available, the transnational theory focuses on how individuals and groups manage their own *hybrid* identities (plural). It is a perspective that strongly maintains that agency that exists when it comes to cultural identity, that multiple cultural identities can exist simultaneously within an individual or a group, and that identity can only be described, not defined (which would result in static images of something that is very much so a process).

*Performative Identity 2.3*

I have thus far elaborated on two major theories used for research on the immigrant experience. The first, acculturation and the acculturation gap: much more psychologically and sociologically based in conceptualization, method, and use. I offer the second theory, that of transnationalism, in order to situate my research within the discipline of socio-cultural anthropology.
There are two more key concepts I must cover before getting into the body of my research: performative cultural identity, and a quick discussion about the scale used in this research.

Within the framework of transnational cultural identity, socio-cultural anthropological theory accepts that immigrant individuals and groups have a choice in how to manage the relationship between the home- and host-cultural identities. Here, I would like to extend that perspective by borrowing from some of Butler’s (1990) ideas surrounding the performative nature of identity.

Butler’s theories on identity are aimed specifically at notions of gender. The general thesis of much of her work, rooted in linguistic theory, describes how individuals “do” the expected and required social roles in order to be identified as male or female. For example, by acting the part that society describes as “female”, individuals reiterate that role, reinforcing its validity, and thus perpetuate the ruling notion of what defines female identity. Her argument is that this is a choice: individuals are consciously trying to “do” their gender (or, in the case of drag and transgender individuals, the opposing gender culture). She offers the term “performativity” to describe this type of phenomena.

This kind of agency-based interpretation of gender identity has been extrapolated into the realm of cultural identity. Negra’s (2006) book about immigrant Irish cultural identity is a
compelling tribute to the performative nature of cultural identity. Bell (1999) offered a comprehensive look from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and socio-cultural anthropology, describing how culture, and the identity one wishes to embody, is made up of choices to either belong or distinguish oneself from a particular group.

Performativity has slowly seeped out of its linguistic origin (Austin 1962), into feminist theory, and outward, evolving into an interdisciplinary term allowing us to analyse the actions of individuals and groups as coherent, choreographed, and purposeful choices. Indeed, Sissons (1993) offered an example in which he described cultural performativity not only as a choice, but a strategic one, wherein groups collectively leverage their cultural identity to attain some collective goal. The strategic nature of performativity is an aspect that this research does not address and I refer the reader to Sissons’ book for a discussion about it.

The parallels between the performative perspective and the transnational perspective towards identity are apparent. The transnational perspective argues for a cultural identity that is subject to perpetual change, but that simultaneously relies on identity distinction in order for the hybrid experience to occur. The performative perspective requires that identities be defined by cultural discourse in order for individuals to actively choose to “do” aspects of each identity. The end goal of this “doing” is so that individuals can claim belonging to any given identity. In each case, individuals or groups first distinguish aspects of different identities that are different from each other (borders), make a choice to participate in the behaviours relating to the different identities (flows), and experience new identities as a result (hybridization).
Three different theories combine to make the gaze through which I designed this research to be viewed. First, the acculturation theory of the sister disciplines of sociology and psychology informs the fact that conflict exists within immigrant families and that much of this conflict stands in some relation to families experiencing cultural change. However, acculturation research has been unable to agree on what the relationship is between acculturation and immigrant family conflict. I have argued that continued disagreement exists due to the persistence of continuum-based conceptualizations of the cultural change process despite best efforts to address the complexity of the experience of immigrant cultural change.

I believe that socio-cultural anthropology can lend a hand to discover another potential answer to this question by employing a transnational perspective that focuses on a qualitative analysis of how immigrants experience the borders, flows, and hybrid nature of cultural change. In order to do so, I reworded the research question to better fit this anthropological perspective. As a result, the research question that I seek to explore is related to, but not identical to, the question being addressed within acculturation studies. My reworded research question avoids the use of the word *acculturation* so as to avoid alluding to any sort of continuum-based interpretation: *what is the relationship between the experience of changing cultural identities and conflict within immigrant families?*
With respect to scale of analysis for this thesis, I will be observing the transnational phenomena by examining the experiences of family units, rather than larger cultural or sub-cultural groups. The historical and typologically-based theory of anthropological research looked at immigrant cultural identity through a macroscopic lens, examining whole immigrant populations. When it became evident that this perspective produced too many generalizations the perspective was narrowed to focus more on how the agency of smaller sub-groups affects the cultural identity of the macro-level immigrant groups. For example, Ui (1991) narrowed the focus by employing *ethnic enclaves* as a unit of analysis when studying immigrant cultural identity, useful when investigating how immigrants form communities and assert their new and developing cultural identity as a sub-cultural group. Continuing this movement from the macro to the micro, my focus here further narrows the anthropological gaze down to the level of the family unit.

The way in which individuals behave and how relationships between individuals within a family are negotiated may be considered an area of study more related to sociology or psychology. However, socio-cultural anthropology has historically been very interested in kinship, lineage, and how "households" are defined. Because of this, Oscar Lewis (1950) argued for the use of the family units as the focus of study within the discipline of socio-cultural anthropology. He remarked that anthropologists have historically described the family as a "stereotype" within a community:
We are not told about a particular family but family life in general under headings such as composition, resident rules, descent rules, kinship obligations, parental authority, marriage forms and regulations, separation and so on. And always the emphasis is upon the presentation of the structural and formal aspects of the family rather than upon the content and variety of actual family life. (470)

He went on to argue that there exists a "challenge to anthropology and the other social sciences to devise new and better methods for studying the relationship between the individual and his culture" (470). Indeed, his particular vision for the study of the family within socio-cultural anthropology was that it be utilized by graduate students, since “a reasonably complete family case study can be done within a relatively short amount of time, about two or three months” and that it is an “excellent method of introducing anthropology students to field work.”

Though his challenge is coming to us from over 60 years ago, I sought to take him up on it and here address the issue of immigrant cultural identity and family conflict as a series of family case studies.

As recently as 2014, it has been argued that the existing literature concerning Latin Americans living in Canada is comparatively “scarce, while a great deal of research has
been devoted to other immigrant communities in this country,” and that this lack of attention “cannot but hinder our understanding… regarding the increasing interconnectedness of the Americas” (Armony 2014:8). However, the Latin American immigrant population has received a great deal of attention in the United States for obvious reasons: whereas in Canada the Latin American population, according to Statistics Canada, made up about 1.6% of the total population in 2011, according to the 2012 US Census Bureau report, the Latin American population made up 17% of the American population. The heightened scholarly attention given to Latin American populations living the United States is most certainly also linked to the perception that Latin Americans in the United States are a “problem” population, whereas in Canada they have been described as Canada’s ‘invisible’ minority (Houpt 2011). However, this is beginning to change, as the Latin American population in Canada is experiencing “burgeoning growth” (Ginieniewicz 2010:501) and has begun to attract more scholarly attention as a result.

For logistical reasons described below, this research engages with Latin American families living in Toronto. The circumstance of Latin Americans living in Canadian cities is strikingly different from those living in the United States, so much so that any direct comparisons seem incongruous (Armony 2014:9), especially when considering the presence of Quebec, which resides within Canada’s national borders, but has such significant control over immigration and cultural integration that it could be described as if it were a nation within Canada; indeed, it was defined as such by Canada’s government (CBC 2006). In fact, Armony argues that the experiences of Latin Americans in Canada vs. those in the United States are so distinct that any discussion surrounding Latin Americans in Canada need adopt a “two-level comparative approach – United States/Canada and English-Canada/French-Quebec” (2014:9).
For this reason, when speaking about Latin Americans living in Canada, I am excluding the Latin American population living in Quebec from that definition. This thesis is not a comparative reflection, and consequently draws lightly on the literature that has been written about Latin Americans living in the United States. However, by virtue of the lack of domestic scholarly work I reference international work where the argument requires. Incidentally, the anthropological, Canadian scholarly literature is even scarcer.

Early census records (Ginieniewicz & Kwame 2014) indicate that before the 1990s, most Latin American immigrants arrived in Canada as refugees due to factors that include the 1973 coup in Chile or the civil war in El Salvador during the 1990s. After the 1990s, the immigrants arriving to Canada were no longer made up mostly of “economic” immigrants. Recently, the trend has shifted yet again and now more than a quarter of Latin American immigrants admitted into Canada arrive as “family class” migrants. Speaking to the situation of Latin Americans living in Toronto, the target population for this research, Veronis (2010) highlights that Toronto’s Latin American population is at a significant disadvantage: Latin Americans in Toronto occupy some of the lowest levels of income and home ownership, and higher rates of poverty. However, Armony (2014) notes that there is a significant distinction, economically, between “older” and “younger” Latin American immigrants to Canada: Chileans and Salvadorians who arrived in Canada as refugees before 1990 show lower levels of poverty when compared to “younger” immigrants such as Colombians and Mexicans who show higher levels of poverty.
This highlights the idea that the Latin American population in Canada is not homogenous. When discussing identity, “Latin American” as a term is likely too broad when taking into consideration all the evidence of intra-categorical distinction between generations of immigrants and nationality of origin. Landolt, Goldring & Bernhard (2011 & 2009) address the ways in which the Canadian Latin American population is experiencing a growth in the number of nations of origin, and how that has disrupted what was initially a fairly unified group. The Canadian Latin American community was once defined by pan-national organizations such as the *Hispanic Development Council*. However, there is evidence that current trends within Canadian-Latin American identity politics are to strengthen regional or national identity, rather than adhering to a supposed “shared” Latin American identity. Despite this evidence, it has proven very “difficult for scholars, government agencies and community organizations to reach an agreement on ‘who qualifies as a Latin American’” (Ginieniewicz & McKenzie 2014:263). Until greater distinction is made in the literature between the different sub-groups of Latin Americans living in Canada, I will adhere to Brubaker’s (2002) argument that Latin Americans can be discussed as a ‘category’, rather than as a ‘group’. Following this suggestion, and due to the limited scope that this thesis can cover, I do not engage with the question of the definition and distinction between Latin American sub-groups within Canada and leave that to researchers with more resources and time. At the same time, I do not ignore the limitations of speaking about Latin Americans as a category, understanding the existence of intra-categorical distinctions and identity politics that are at work within this category.

Interestingly and directly related to the idea of transnational identities, some studies in the United States have shown that Latin Americans strongly maintain a culture-of-origin identity
which does not seem to prevent Latin Americans’ ability to simultaneously obtain new identities (Gracía 2012; Fraga et al. 2010). Mazzolari (2011) found that a sense of dual-national identity in fact resulted in greater rates of integrative socialization. If this dual-national identity trend is also prevalent in Canada’s Latin American population it may stand as supporting evidence for the idea of multiple identities residing within an individual or group as a matter of hybridization, according to transnational theory. Furthermore, it was shown (Martin, Demaio & Campanelli 1990) that declared ethnic identity may be dependent on context. Latin Americans asked about how they self-identity in an interview situation more often identified as American, but when answering censes or questionnaires more often identified as Latin American. Problematically, these studies were conducted within the United States and their translation to the Canadian context is questionable. However, it is possible that a strong sense of culture-of-origin identity in conjunction with a strong desire to be able to identify with the host culture may be a trait of Latin American immigrants, regardless of to where they migrate.

Speaking to commonly held notions of characteristic Latin American cultural identity traits, researchers have identified that, when compared to “White Americans” described as self-focused and individualistic, Latin American culture is more collectivist and family-focused (Carter, Yeh & Mazzula 2008). However, other researchers recognize that beyond those two values trying to determine exactly what values make up Latin American identity is problematic. This is due to the vast differences between sub-groups within the category of Latin Americans. However, that does not mean that investigations of this topic are without value:

While it seems obviously futile to attempt to fully grasp the U.S. Latino cultural identity because of its extraordinary heterogeneity and
its multi-layered evolution as a key component of American society, I argue that the challenge of pinpointing its core value orientations is worth the effort, as long as this pursuit is framed by the assumption that any element of a ‘Latino identity’ is the negotiated or imposed result of a confrontation between different cultural outlooks. (Armony 2014:25)

As I will discuss later in Section 4 concerning my methodology, it is because of this great diversity of cultural value that in my research I do not attempt to set out the parameters of what makes up Latin American identity for this research. Instead, I allow participants to self-define those cultural values that they believe identifies them best.

Engaging with the Canadian Latin American immigrant population is daunting, not only because there exists little home-grown literature on the topic, but because the great difference between the Latin American experience in the United States makes any direct comparisons problematic. It is made even more difficult by the fact that Latin American identity is hardly homogeneous. Despite this, the more literature that can be produced about this swift-growing group within Canadian society is a step in the right direction towards being able to create a Canadian literature that distinguishes itself from American literature.

Reflexivity 3.0

Before continuing with the details of my research, I need to make note of the tone and writing style that I will utilize. Agreeing with Clifford & Marcus (1986), I strive in this thesis to avoid the “I/eye” authoritative writing style, in which the ethnographer remains unseen and
unexamined in his or her writings. I believe that the ethnographer’s personality and personal perspective is an integral part of any writing that an ethnographer produces. Readers of ethnography need, to a certain extent, to understand who the author is, where he or she is coming from, and what spurs his or her interest in the subject matter. Being a primarily interpretive discipline, socio-cultural anthropology requires as much description concerning the lens through which it is being interpreted as possible. In this case, that lens is me, the researcher. My experience engaging with my participants, and our subsequent discussions, were the result of a process that led to our making contact, building a relationship, and the eventual exchange of ideas and information. Much of this process began before I even considered doing a master’s thesis, and because of this, I seek to offer as much detail as possible.

There have been many arguments made against a narrative-style ethnographic method. “...self/subject-reflexivity is sometimes seen to spell the end of significant social/cultural analysis... Such responses are not difficult to find in professional journals and conferences of sociologists and anthropologists today” (Schneider 2002:462). Concerns about the accuracy and/or objectiveness of ethnography are understandable as the poetic nature of a narrative could get out of hand. However, I argue that because the end result of ethnographic research is in large part an interpretation by the researcher, including myself as part of this narrative enhances objectivity. No amount of literature review and distancing steps taken to disconnect the results from the researcher can compensate for the fact that any and all information presented in ethnographic research is viewed, heard, interpreted, organized and reorganized through the researcher.
Participants in my research seemed as interested in knowing who I was as I was interested in them. This was an interesting part of the process for both the participants and me. In a way, I had to justify to my potential participants not only why my academic self was interested in them and their families’ experiences, but also why I was personally invested in the topic. It was never enough for them to have me say that it was simply so that I could do my thesis. They wanted to know what connections I had to the immigrant world, as if to qualify my interest as genuine. This required a significant amount of reflection on my part: questioning my own motives, trying to figure out if I actually cared about these people’s experiences, or if I was only casually invested.

It took a bit of introspection before I could really articulate just who I am and why I cared. When I talked about myself with my participants, it justified my curiosity in their eyes, and assuaged any concerns they might have that I would misuse or distort any information they could potentially give me about their lives. Similarly, I believe that publishing a bit about who I am in this thesis lends some context to it.

In 2006 I became a missionary and priest for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (“LDS”). Through the LDS missionary program I was sent to labour voluntarily in what
was called the California Oakland Mission. While I never actually served in the city of Oakland, I spent my time in the surrounding East Bay region, including Hayward, Union City, Richmond, Concord, Pittsburg, and Livermore. I was charged with interacting exclusively with Spanish speakers for the purpose of ecclesiastical instruction, evangelizing, as well as to provide some welfare, drug addiction, and personal counseling services. As part of my training for this position, I was taught effective and up-to-date tactics for approaching strangers in the street, doing door-to-door contacts, sifting through referrals from internet and media sources, and, most importantly to the missionary effort, garnering referrals from existing clients or churchgoers. As a byproduct, I received an education in the types of skills and strategies that I would require to meet people and invite them to participate in an ethnographic study such as this.

My time as a missionary also had me interacting with "illegal" immigrants living in the East Bay region. Inevitably I encountered immigrants who had strained under the pressure of living in a politically, socially and economically hostile environment. (I say hostile very deliberately, having seen how not only individuals, but also economic structures and political processes actively caused emotional and physical harm to "illegal" immigrants.) These strained individuals would often seek solace in illicit substances or alcohol abuse. However, the overwhelming majority of individuals I encountered, both within and without the LDS Church, had a remarkable single-mindedness towards the well-being of their family.

It was through this missionary program that I learned to speak Spanish. It was through this experience that I decided that I was fascinated with the immigrant experience. It was through this experience that I defined the next several years of my life.
After completing my two-year mission, I relocated to Victoria, B.C. where I took up my undergraduate degree. My chosen field of study, socio-cultural anthropology, was a decision that I had made before going to California. However, leaving California I felt that my interest in the topic had more purpose, as I had now chosen an area of study in which to specialize.

The University of Victoria had, at the time, a very broad undergraduate program as far as anthropological sciences are concerned. I was trained in a variety of archaeological, physical, socio-cultural, and linguistic theories. It was in the vein of socio-cultural anthropology that I found it easiest to say what I needed to say about the immigrant experience.

It seems prudent to point out that much of the training I got from the University of Victoria Department of Anthropology seemed, at least to me, to stress the necessity to be as objective and uninvolved in the lives of your participants as possible. It could be that many of the faculty was from an earlier age of anthropology or it may be that I simply understood the material through that lens. Regardless, I left my undergraduate program feeling that socio-cultural anthropology is not, should not be, and should forever strive not to be, involved, meddling, activist, political, humanitarian, etc.

This was likely why the program at the University of Guelph so intrigued me. The program, titled Public Issues Anthropology, opens a door to a type of anthropological work wherein anthropologists are engaged in a good cause, "good" being measured by fulfilling the
needs of a community, rather than just the needs of academic interest. It is also worth noting that the department was invariably a department made up of socio-cultural anthropologists, in contrast to the wide array of expertise that I encountered in my undergraduate department.

I entered the University of Guelph with the impression that, as an anthropologist, it was sufficient to study something because it interested me. I then learned a whole other line of thinking which affirmed that we, as socio-cultural anthropologists, should actually be trying to accomplish something with our skills.

This meant that I somehow had to transform my master’s thesis from being a project that simply satisfied my curiosity, to being a project that served to answer some question or problem of a public nature. This was no small feat for someone who had spent several years hearing all the best reasons why this was a bad idea.

At this stage in life, I am but a master’s student. When I was an undergraduate student I thought that as I progressed to the graduate studies level, I would somehow "become" an academic. I quickly discovered I am far from that ideal I had envisioned for myself. I have a very limited and untested skill set. In the classroom, I heard much about methods, theories and application but this is my first foray into the world as a self-declared anthropologist. It felt contradictory interacting with my participants as an anthropologist, while at the same time
knowing that they were participating in my research for the strict purpose that I can become an anthropologist.

This sort of "being, yet not being" that I experience as a master’s student is pivotal to the kinds of activities that I sought to engage in with my participants. Not being what I would consider a "true" anthropologist, I often felt I was overstepping imagined boundaries. I found myself apologizing for taking up so much of my participants’ time. I felt as if I were asking them a favour by participating - which I was - yet simultaneously trying to get across to them this idea that this research actually mattered in the world. And all the while I knew that it was more likely that this thesis would simply serve as a stepping stone to my future: no grand policy changes would come of it, no government officials would read it, and no national newspapers would pick up on the plight of my participants. I asked my participants to participate in a study that, while conducted by an unaccredited anthropologist, was nonetheless conducted with all the professionalism I could bring to bear, all the while hoping that this thesis could legitimize my accreditation as a professional.

I realize that saying all this may make the importance of my findings and the strength of what I argue herein appear less valuable. However, I hope that those who understand what I mean by reflexive writing, and the importance of including myself in this thesis, know that this can go a long way to understanding why I discovered what I did and why I reach my conclusions.
"Truth eludes us;" Fernandez-Armesto (1997) says, "we have no satisfactory definition at our disposal, no agreed or reliable truth-recognizing technique; but we have some working assumptions about the reliability of our feelings, our senses, our powers of reason or the authority of our sources of counsel" (11). I am relying on my feelings and intuitions as well as my intellect to produce this thesis. I have, per the brief autobiography provided, a modest skill set and am granted only a limited authority in the eyes of the public as a truth-teller. Yet I affirm that this research, and all that is reasoned and concluded therein, is based upon genuine feelings and intuitions shaped by the experiences described above. I seek support for those conclusions by calling upon the authority of other sources of counsel, but do so through the lens of my personal experiences making those experiences as relevant to my final analysis as the literature review above.

**4.0 Methods**

This research focuses on the perceptions of sixteen Latin American immigrants, from five different families, concerning their own cultural identities, and those of their family members. It acknowledges and embraces transnational theory (Hannerz 1997; Basch, Schiller & Szanton Blanc 1994), and subsequently highlights the agency of family members when negotiating their *hybrid* cultural identities. As such, this research required a qualitative investigation through which the perceptions of family members could be rooted out. This chapter will include a description of recruiting strategies, sample size, how I identified the sample targets, what data I
collected, how I collected the data, and how that data will be used to explore the research question.

*Location and Recruitment 4.1*

For mainly logistical reasons of shared language and general familiarity with Latin Americans, I aimed to engage with Latin American families to determine the relationship between changing cultural identity and conflict within the family. According to Statistics Canada, about 50% of immigrants choose to settle in Ontario, making it the ideal province wherein to locate a large number of Latin Americans for potential participation. This research was conducted in Toronto where census data shows 2.3% of the population identifying as “Spanish”, “Latin American” or “Hispanic” in origin. By comparison, Vancouver’s census data shows 2.1%, Calgary’s census data shows 1.7%, and Edmonton’s 1.3%.

As previously discussed, I have been trained for door-to-door and street interactions through my time as a missionary. I am also aware of the LDS missionary effort within the Greater Toronto Area and have contacts within that world. As such, my plan to recruit families to participate in my study was two-fold.
My first approach was to 'cold-contact' the owners of Latin American restaurants around the city and discuss with them the purpose of my study to garner their interest. I did this initially through e-mail, sifting through internet search results for Latin-American restaurants in the city and sending introductory e-mails to the business owners.

My second approach was to engage the LDS missionary program in Toronto. I contacted missionaries in the area by telephone and asked them to refer me to families who might be interested in participating in this study. Since the missionary effort is organized by language, the Spanish-speaking missionaries were able to provide me a wealth of information on which areas of the city had high concentrations of Spanish speakers, as well as some specific families that they suggested I contact. I went alone to meet families referred to me and described the study to gain their interest.

In each case, whenever I met with an individual, I asked them if they knew any other people who would be interested in participating in the study. This process of referral became the most effective tool for finding participants; the first person I contacted was usually not as interested as I had hoped. However, they then would refer me to other people who turned out to be excellent contacts and eventual participants.

With those individuals with whom I met, I held an initial recruitment meeting with the head(s) of the household. They were given copies of a letter of consent and assent (for minors),
translated into Spanish, (included in the appendices of this thesis) and we discussed the terms of participation. I asked them to take the letters of consent/assent (included in Appendix 2) to their families and to discuss their potential participation with the rest of the family. I asked that they call me when they had decided whether to participate.

When a family called me to notify me of their intent to participate, I then met with the family in their home and answered any questions they had before scheduling a date to come back to the home to conduct the actual interviews. I notified the family that I would require about an hour with each member of the family and that I would prefer to conduct all the interviews on the same day.

Concerning the Timeframe 4.2

Throughout the interview process I was keenly aware that the relationships I had with my participants was temporary. As such, I cannot claim to have to the sort of insight that a long-term ethnographer would have after living in a community for many months or years. Instead, I relied on my personality, and training as a missionary to build a short-term relationship of trust. That being said, while conducting interviews I was made aware of stories of familial conflict that were alluded to, but to which I was not privy. So, while I am able to make interesting observations, the
pragmatic constraints of time precluded me from truly seeking after the types of information that I would have really rather been able to obtain.

The Sample 4.3

Participating families could be any combination of three or more individuals acting as a family: a single parent with two children, two parents with a single child, or any mix of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. The actual presence of lineage was less important to this research, since, the study seeks to determine changes and stresses in relationships. Thus, the key for finding participants was to find participants that believed they have a familial relationship with each other, regardless of actual kinship.

This self-defined image of family is important as many Latin American families tend to have mixed housing with other families or individuals that are of no blood relation at all. This is often in response to the economic stresses of living as an immigrant of precarious status. While working in California, I often encountered two or three bedroom apartments housing a dozen or more individuals with a variety of blood and non-blood related individuals.
The goal was to conduct fifteen to twenty interviews. Assuming each family I encountered met the minimum numerical criteria (three people), this would mean that I would have had to interview about seven families meeting that minimum criteria. In the end I interviewed five families, resulting in a total of sixteen interviews. The table below (Table 1) shows the general make-up of each family.

Table 1: Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Total # of members</th>
<th># of members interviewed</th>
<th># of guardians</th>
<th># of dependents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familia Arozco</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familia Beltrán</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familia Corzo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familia Delgado</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familia Emanuel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The family names given above are pseudonyms as per the requirements of confidentiality provided the participants by the ethics approval of my guiding institution. The pseudonyms were chosen such that Family A, B, C, D, and E relate to surnames Arozco, Beltrán, Corzo, Delgado, and Emanuel respectively. Given names follow this same pattern, with all given names from Family A beginning with the letter a, all given names from Family B beginning with the letter b, and so on. In the actual families, surnames were not always shared. However, for the ease of discussion and sake of continuity, I have given all members of each family a united surname following this pattern.
Not all of the families I interviewed fit into the notion of blood-relation, immediate, nuclear family. As an example, the Familias Corzo and Delgado lived together in the upper and lower parts of a single home. Though each family shared no blood relation to each other (they were even from different countries), they considered themselves a “family” despite having no legal or relational ties to each other.

The reader will note that I did not interview all of the members of each family. This is because the ethics authorization for this research precluded me from interviewing anyone under the age of 13. The Familias Corzo and Delgado each had dependents under that age whom I did not interview.

I have listed the number of guardians and dependents in each family. I chose these terms over “parent” and “child” because it was the case that not all the children and parents were related. In the case of Familia Arozco, one of the guardians was not the biological father to the children. In the case of Familia Emanuel, one of the guardians is a grandparent, and there were no dependents. It also is consistent with the working definition that does not require blood relation or lineage as a marker of familial ties.
Below I have provided an introduction to each family, how I met them, the process we went through together to have them become participants, and some context as to their situation living in the Greater Toronto Area.

*Familia Arozco 4.3.1*

*Figure 9*

This family was one of the families suggested to me by the LDS missionaries. I was told that Adrian Arozco would expect to meet me after their church services one Sunday afternoon and, knowing nothing more about the family, I went to wait for him the following Sunday services outside of his church. Having spoken to Adrian only on the phone, I didn’t really know who I was looking for but I must have seemed conspicuous enough because, as people came
pouring out of the church’s front doors, I was approached by a man only slightly shorter than me displaying a small, timid smile.

Introductions out of the way, I recited a rehearsed summary about who I was, what I was studying, and a quick instruction to the concept of being interviewed for the purposes of my study. All of which we had done over on the phone but, being the first interested family I had encountered, I was feeling a little less comfortable than I expected. Adrian, too, seemed to feel not wholly confident and said very little. We agreed that I come by their home the following Sunday to meet the family and to discuss the letters of consent and assent that they would need to complete before participating in the study. I went one way, he went the other, and we didn’t speak again until the agreed date a week later.

This particular part of town wasn’t exactly known for cheap housing, being only a few blocks away from a major grocer and a few blocks more from a large high school; it was also about 5 minutes away from the church they attended.

The doorbell was broken and I spent several minutes buzzing it before realizing that no one was coming. One knock and immediately I heard footsteps coming down some stairs. Adrian greeted me at the door.
He ushered me past a secondary doorway in the entrance which led to a lower suite and up some stairs that opened up to his family’s home. There was a bedroom directly in front of the door that had a double bed whose box-spring rested on the floor. Directly to the right was another room with no windows and a larger, likely queen-sized bed. There was a bathroom just down the hall on the same side as the first bedroom, and the hallway finally opened up into a living room. The kitchen was just off to the left of the living room, in which I found Ana, the mother, cooking pozole, a Mexican-style pork or chicken hominy soup traditionally reserved for larger events or family gatherings.

The two children emerged from their rooms. The son, Ángel, was wearing sportswear and the daughter, Angelica, wearing a casual tee-shirt and jeans; they had both changed out of their Sunday best, whereas both the adults still wore their Sunday garb having just arrived from Church an hour or so before my arrival.

Ana left the soup to simmer and we all sat in the living room. We spent the first half hour or so essentially talking about who I was. They were interested in the fact that I had previously lived in Mexico and we talked a great deal about foods that we missed and the fact that, despite having all the same ingredients available in Toronto, things just didn’t taste the same. That day I learned very little about the family beyond what I saw since I shied away from asking any questions until we had agreed upon the letters of consent/assent. However, what I did observe was that the mother invariably brought everything she said back to her children, their well-being, and what she hoped for them for the future. Adrian seemed preoccupied with work, mentioning
several times how they had come to find work and that they were having little to no success finding anything beyond casual labour. Ángel and Angelica said nearly nothing the whole time I was there.

After talking about the letters of consent/assent, Ángel was dismissed to go out with some friends to play soccer and Angelica retreated to her room. I, too, was about to take my leave when Ana indicated that the pozole she had made was for me. As a missionary we were trained to never to turn down food from a Latino since the offer usually represented a significant sacrifice on their part. Knowing how fantastic pozole was, I wasn’t about to either. It was the first time I’d eaten pozole in several years and we talked the whole dinner about food and how important it was to Mexican culture.

I left full and feeling much more confident about my plans, even if I had yet not even started.

A week later, again on Sunday, I arrived back at the Arozco household, recorder and notebook in hand. I knew to knock and again it seemed as if Adrian was waiting for me. Everyone seemed a lot more talkative this time around, in a sort of “nervous chatter” way; I suspected all were feeling wary about just what the interview process would be like and I counted myself among them.
After I finished the interview process with the Familia Arozco, as I had promised them before, I asked them if they knew of any other families that may be interested in participating. This was how I met the Familia Beltrán.

One of the reasons the Familia Arozco referred me to the Familia Beltrán was because the two daughters, Angelica Arozco and Beatriz Beltrán, went to school together and were close friends. Thus, the parents had had extensive interaction and now, knowing what I was looking for, the Familia Arozco felt that the Familia Beltrán would be a perfect match. They called the Familia Beltrán for me the last day of our meeting together and together we set up a time for me to go and meet them.
When I arrived at the apartment building in which the Familia Beltrán lived I was significantly earlier than anticipated. I was unfamiliar with this part of Toronto and opted to give myself more time to get there and ended up about forty-five minutes early. I lingered a bit in my car, preparing and killing time. After about twenty minutes, I decided to simply go up early.

I buzzed the apartment through the building’s intercom system and whoever answered on the other side of the line didn’t even ask who it was and simply buzzed me in. Taking the elevator, I arrived at their door and knocked, waiting, but got no answer. I knocked again and this time heard whispering on the other side of the door. I smiled at the peephole through which I assumed the people on the other side of the door were looking at me, yet no one opened the door. I waited five or six minutes and then decided to go back down to my car and check the address. I confirmed I was in the right spot, and double-checked again with the building buzzer directory; this was indeed the Familia Beltrán’s home. Using my cell phone, I called up the number that the Familia Arozco had given me that was the cell-phone of the mother, Bernicia Beltrán. It rang, but I got no response.

Confused, I returned to my car and was about leave when my phone rang; it was Bernicia. She was calling from her workplace and informed me that the whispers I heard behind the door were from her children, Bernardo and Beatriz, who were home alone. Though they were expecting me and Bernardo and Beatriz weren’t sure if they should open the door for me.
I apologized to Bernicia for being early and indicated that I would wait for her in the lobby until she arrived from work; I was in no rush and didn’t want to make her children uncomfortable.

When Bernicia arrived, she came bearing gifts; *arepas*, a Latin American foodstuff that takes on various forms depending on the country from which they originate. The variety that Bernicia brought were savoury, typically found in Central America. Strangely, they are not a traditional Mexican dish, where the Familia Beltrán originate.

Similar to the Familia Arozco, though the purpose of the visit was to discuss the terms of participation, the letters of consent and assent, as well as the general goals of the study, most of the time was spent talking about me, who I was, and how it is I came to speak Spanish. When all the questions were answered, we set up a time to meet again the following week at the same time to conduct the interviews. Bernicia’s children, Bernardo and Beatriz would be there, but her third, Berto, was away working in the Alberta oil patch. However, she said that hopefully she would be able to get him to be available for me over the phone sometime, if not at the same time the following week. There were no male figures in the home and I later learned that the father, with whom Bernicia had not spoken in years, was back in Mexico and no longer considered a part of the family.
When I arrived for the interviews a week later, I was sure not to arrive early. When I finally buzzed, Bernicia answered, and opened the door. We made small talk for a bit and then commenced the interview process.
During the finding stage of my research I contacted dozens of Spanish speaking restaurants in the area via e-mail to request an in-person meeting. Of the many to which I sent e-mails, most did not respond and, of those that did, none eventually became participants in my study. More often than not I was informed that they were so busy running their business that they didn’t have time to meet with me; that it would be next to impossible to get all the family together for an afternoon. However, one of the restaurant owners directed to me to one of their cooks, who did agree to participate in the study.

Her name was Camila Corzo, and she had three children: Carmen, Carlos, and Cristián, from youngest to oldest. She lived in the basement of a duplex that she rented from the Familia Delgado who lived upstairs. The Familia Delgado was headed by Delinda, and consisted of her and her five children: Deysi, Danica, Dani, David, and Diego. While Camila and her children
were from Mexico, Delinda and her children were from Argentina, with the exception of the youngest, age 10, who was born in Canada.

When I first arrived to meet Camila Corzo and her family I was unaware of the Familia Delgado. Camila referred to all the children that came in and out of the living room and kitchen as *m’hijo* or *m’hija*, terms of endearment that are gendered variants of “my child”. It wasn’t until about an hour after my arrival that Delinda Delgado came home from work, introduced herself, and pointed out which children were actually hers vs. those that were Camila’s.

The whole time I was there, children were coming and going at almost a constant flow; only the youngest stayed beside her mother the whole time, though she never spoke. Both Camila and Delinda, however, sat down with me and we spoke for several hours, even the first time we met. I was not prepared for such a long discussion, and did not record the discussion, though I did, with their permission, take notes. We discussed the letters of consent and assent and also talked extensively about their living arrangement. They had met in Canada and were each single parents who had raised their two families together for years; they had been living together for three years at that point. The children never referred to each other as brother or sister unless they were part of the same bloodline. However, both Camila and Delinda made scant observable distinction between the children, with the exception of Delinda’s eldest son, Diego, who seemed to be regarded separately from Camila’s family.
Before leaving, Delinda invited me to the kitchen to share some *yerba mate* tea with her, which she prepared in the traditional *gourd*; a wood-crafted traditional cup. She explained that sharing *yerba mate* with guests is a common practice in Argentina; one that can often last several hours since you can continually pour more hot water over the tea leaves. So, while we sat down for a long tea-drinking session, Camila decided to start cooking and prepared a spaghetti dish, which was not a dish traditional to her roots. We drank and ate and wrapped up the evening by agreeing to meet again in a week’s time. While I indicated that I hoped that all the children would be able to be interviewed, they made it fairly clear to me to expect nothing and that those who were home would be home and those who weren’t would not.

The following week I arrived and all the children but Diego were at home, all recently returned from school. The majority were in their rooms, watching TV or using their computers. However, a few were sitting at the table with Camila and Delinda, and it was with these that I presented the letters of consent and assent initially and interviewed. After those interviews were finished, I was able to interrupt some of the others that were going in and out of the home and get them to sit down for a short interview. These being my third and fourth families interviewed, I was feeling much more confident and was able to move through the interviews at a faster, more even pace.
Familia Emanuel was referred to me by Diego Delgado. He indicated that he knew a couple about his age that lived not far from the Corzo/Delgado home and whom he knew well. After I met with Adrian, he called the Familia Emanuel and set up a time for me to go and meet them.
I arrived at the Familia Emanuel’s home well after I had conducted the other interviews with all the other families. At that point I had already begun listening to, and trying to code the information from the previous interviews and, as such, had a clearer view of how I needed the following interviews to go if I were to gain the needed information.

The Familia Emanuel included the young couple Diego had mentioned to me, Elena and Elías. The individual that completed my required three-person minimum was Elena’s grandmother, Eloisa. Eloisa had been in Canada for a few decades but Elena and Elías had arrived only a few years previous, prompted by Eloisa, as the increasing violence in their home region in Mexico caused them to look abroad for a new place to live. Since Elena knew that her grandmother was in Canada, they decided to come live with her. Both Elena and Elías were there on temporary work visas but had made applications for permanent residency on the grounds that they were the caretakers of Eloisa.

Being ethnographic in nature, the principal tools of investigation were open-ended questions directed towards determining how members of the family felt that their relationships had been affected by their experiences with each other’s changing cultural identities. I sought to let participants describe how they felt themselves and family members to be experiencing the
cultural change process, to describe how they felt they and their family members had changed their identities, and then asked them to reflect on how each individual’s experience has affected their family.

*Appendix 1* contains a list of some of the guiding questions and probes used in the interviews. Being semi-structured in nature, not all questions asked were planned in advance, nor are they all listed in *Appendix 1*. However, the reader will note that I chose to begin almost every question with a request for description. Asking for descriptions would result in rich and self-directed, rather than short and prompted, responses.

Questions 1 and 2, as well as their follow-up probes, were intended to allow the participant to define for themselves what it meant to be member of their culture of origin or to be Canadian. This allowed participants to define those behavioural and cultural traits that they deemed characteristic of their culture of origin or of Canadian culture so that we could then contrast those definitions later to the actual behaviours of the different family members. Referring back to the discussion in Section 2.2, these questions were designed to address the concept of *borders* and how the participants perceived of those *borders*.

Questions 3 through 6 were designed to ascertain if individuals actively sought sources of cultural know-how. I believed this to be important because if an individual were actively looking for sources of cultural knowledge it would indicate a proactive attitude towards
taking control of his or her cultural identity. Such an attitude might later explain some of the ways that their familial relationships have changed since coming to Canada. However, if an individual were not seeking out cultural knowledge, it may indicate a passive or subconscious attitude towards his or her cultural identity. Referring back to the discussion in Section 2.2, these questions were designed to address the concept of flows, or the ongoing, changing nature of the participants’ identities.

Questions 7 through 10 were designed to get participants to reflect on whether or not they perceived their own cultural identity as something that changed. Referring back to the distinctions the participants made in questions 1 and 2, the theory was that they would identify instances in which their identity may have changed for whatever reason. These questions are targeted at uncovering instances of identity hybridization.

Question 11 was a launching point to elicit from participants any feelings or instances of conflict that they might have experienced as a result of changing cultural identities. Being unable to form deeper bonds of confidence with participants due to time constraints, the expectation was that if asked directly about conflict, participants would not feel comfortable answering fully. Instead, by asking about their feelings with regards to instances in which family members’ identities change, the sharing of feelings might give into more detailed stories about specific instances of conflict.
In all cases, I sought not to use continuum-based terminology for the reasons cited above. The questions were not about whether or not participants felt their fellow family members were more or less acculturated, but instead how the participants have experienced cultural change, how it affected them, how they’ve managed cultural change, and how they feel others have managed cultural change.

Perception 4.5

Throughout all this interviewing I was also writing down any observations about how I saw the family interact with each other; these notes turned out to be less interesting than the interviews, as well as less voluminous. Though I could observe small things like facial reactions to questions I asked, or stories they told, and though I could observe small instances of interaction between the family members, I believe that I was constrained by time such that I could not rely on the ethnographic tool of participant observation to shed any light on the subject. Instead, I had to rely principally on the interview responses and my interpretations thereof.

As a study on perception, I would also note that I was not interested in discovering the reality behind what the participants described to me. What I mean is if they made an assertion that something was a particular way, the assertion what interested me, rather than whether or not the assertion was true. For example, if a family member were to describe another as often
behaving particularly Latin American when they are angry and particularly Canadian when they’re calm, I considered the truth of this to be irrelevant. What was relevant was that this is the way one family member perceived the hybrid identity of another. This reliance on described perception rather than actual observed behaviours also highlights the importance that my interpretive lens has on the resulting data.

The Stories 5.0

Here I have collected some of what I believe are the most important stories told to me during my research. Following the discussion held in Section 2.2, I have structured this ethnographic data in such a way that it follows the three keywords that describe the transnational perspective: \textit{borders, flows, and hybridization}.

In Section 5.1 I detail those stories told to me about what individuals felt it meant to be Canadian, Mexican, or Argentine. Returning to Hannerz’s (1997) keywords of a transnational perspective, these stories were about establishing the \textit{borders} that exist between what the participants felt was “them” and what they felt was “other”. I have presented and structured these stories to highlight how the participants make sense of the borders that define the different identities with which they engage. The stories highlight how participants were able to comprehend their potential, and potentially conflicting, identities as a matter of comparison. Out
of this discussion comes key data concerning characteristic behaviours that the majority participants felt particularly Latin American or Canadian.

Having allowed the participants to define the boundaries that they feel exist between these two cultural worlds, Section 5.2 is presented as stories about how individuals felt their cultural identities were changing. These stories are about flow in the cultural identities of the participants. As you will see, a conversation about flow was not possible until the borders were established, re-affirming the theory that conceptually defining the imagined borders that exist between cultures allow for an understanding of how cultures merge, shift, change, and exchange between each other.

Finally, under Section 5.3 I provide stories that describe how participants are experiencing their hybrid identities, identities in which participants are constantly negotiating between their culture-of-origin self and their new Canadian self. This is also where feelings of conflict or changing relationships within the family became apparent.

The stories are presented as ethnographic narrative, adhering to my previous argument that such a narrative lends itself best to the need to explore these highly complex issues.

Returning to the purpose of this thesis, it was developed in response to the continued disagreement within acculturation-based studies concerning the question about how the experience of cultural change is related to family conflict. As previously stated, my hypothesis is
that by employing this socio-cultural anthropological methodology, and by interpreting the data through the lens of the transnational theory, an additional potential answer for this research question can be found.

My analysis of these stories is found in Section 6.0. As such, Sections 5.1-5.3 will strictly be my account of the interviews told as ethnographic narrative.

Stories About Borders 5.1

“What does it mean to you to be Mexican?” I asked Ángel. I remember distinctly the look of thoughtfulness that took over his face, as if he had never actually considered the question before. In much the same way that I remember in Junior High School being asked by a social studies teacher to consider what it meant to be Canadian. Identity, and what it means to belong to a particular group is a difficult and slippery topic to tackle, no matter your cultural background.

Ángel, with only a dozen or so seconds of hesitation, went on to describe all the traits he identified as characteristically Mexican. “Hard working, loyal, appreciative of what one has in life, always defending the patria [term denoting a sentiment towards one’s nation similar to notions of motherland], united with the family, respectful of elders.”
When I asked the same questions to his sister, Angelica, I got a similar response, citing deep respect for the family, a reverence for the Mexican nation, and dedication to hard work. Carmen Corzo replied that being Mexican meant to always respect one’s roots and to hold onto the values your parents taught you.

Carlos Corzo responded quickest of all, “To be Mexican is to be loyal to the family, the teachings of your parents, and to work hard to provide for your family.”

In fact, every one of the children whom I interviewed mentioned hard work, and the unity or strength of the family as inherently Mexican and, in the case of the Familia Delgado, Argentinian.

When I asked the guardians of the families the same question, I could sense much more thoughtful deliberation but the answers were much the same.

Camila Corzo said, “El hacer todo para velar por la familia” An idiom that reflects the idea of doing everything one can for the family’s well-being.

Delinda Delgado replied, “Working hard to support the family even when life makes itself hard for you, and the things don’t come easy.”
Eloisa Emanuel: “Never give up. Never forget home. Family first.”

There was, in effect, nearly total agreement amongst all my participants on the kinds of values that were important to their culture of origin. The real difficult questions came when I asked how those values played out in their behaviours, actions, and ways of being. “If those are the values that are characteristic of your culture,” I pried, “what do you do in your daily life that is characteristic of your home culture?”

This question was unanimously met with puzzled looks and a few awkward jokes about eating tacos or dancing *banda*.

Pushing the previous question further yielded no useful results. Beyond the vague guiding principles that each participant had described, none could come up with any specific behaviours or activities that defined themselves within their culture. At least, not until I abandoned the question and moved forward, asking what it meant to them to be Canadian. As soon as they started to compare Canadians to themselves and their families, that is when the participants began to point out more specific behaviours that were characteristic of their home culture.
During our discussion about being Canadian, Delinda began to make comparisons about how she would have behaved as a mother in her country and how she now behaves as a mother since being in Canada. The topic was her eldest son’s choice of making friends in Canada who were, from her perspective, influencing him to get involved with drugs.

“I reflected, not too long ago,” she began, “and when I first came here, if one of my children came home simply drunk, I would have died! But since then I’ve become more flexible. And now, if one of my children came home and they were drugged I would say – well, it is their decision and they are also adapting to a different culture that accepts those things more.”

“What would you have said if you were in Argentina?” I asked.

“No. (laughter) Never. But I believe there’s something interesting there, because, after all, the Argentines do drugs too, but you can’t do it so openly. The culture doesn’t let you because of all the criticism you’ll receive. The people are very aware of what you do, and they always have many opinions, and you worry about that in Argentina. In Canada no.”

In this story, Delinda was highlighting a number of the things that were characteristic of Argentine and Canadian culture, but also some behaviour that resulted from it. Not only did she believe that being in Canada made her more flexible with the choices of her children, but she believed that, in general, the people around her in Canada cared less about her personal life. This
sentiment was reflected often in her stories. She often talked about Canadians as being more distant, keeping to themselves. She compared them to the much more involved, open, and at the same time strict, Argentine people. For her, being a Canadian meant giving more leeway to her children, whereas being Argentine meant being more controlling.

Bernicia Beltran, at the time of the interview, worked cleaning homes with a large house-cleaning company. Many of her interactions with Canadians came from being in Canadian homes cleaning, and observing how they behaved amongst each other. She noted that she was mostly in the homes of wealthy Canadians, so her observations were not to be generalized, but at the same time she felt that much of what she saw was more a results of the culture than the money.

“Canadians feel that they have the right to everything. They’re good people but the parents put up with many things that I could not. I was cleaning a home and I saw that from the bedroom came a girl about the same age as my daughter, high school, and she comes out with the boyfriend to eat breakfast together and I (dramatic gasp). Like – for me that’s not – aside from the religion – it just doesn’t happen. And then they [the family] all eat and go back to their bedrooms. Whereas we are all about passing time in the living room. If you’ve been punished then you go to your room! But we all sit together as a family and watch the same TV shows and see the same things. Here they’re all about going to their individual bedrooms and each bedroom has its own internet, computers, televisions, video games, like that.”
Similarly, Ángel Arozco described Canadian family members as being very independent of each other.

“You’re encouraged to go out and do your own thing. My friends aren’t invited to sit and watch TV with their parents. Their parents tell them to go to the movie, to go outside. But when my family had more time together, back home [in Mexico], we were told to stay home, to watch the *novelas* together, to eat with the family every night. It was like my parents actually wanted us to be together, but my Canadian friends, they don’t want to be together. They want to be independent.”

Throughout these comparative discussions, the following topics reoccurred. In the table below I have ranked them from most mentioned to least mentioned. Missing from this table are characteristics that were mentioned only by one or two individuals.
### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin American</th>
<th># of individuals who mentioned this</th>
<th>Canadians</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th># of individuals who mentioned this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strict parenting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting the parent’s authority</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Flexible or tolerant parenting</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating/Enjoying traditional cuisine</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Make multicultural friendships</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children not leaving home until married</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Children leaving the home young</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of soccer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Always want to buy more things, materialistic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping in the home</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Not friendly or forthcoming with strangers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sticking up for siblings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do not seem to worry much for physical personal safety</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating ethnic special dates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ignorance when it comes to poverty</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living happily with less</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cleanliness of the cityscape</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional dance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tend to make friends within one’s own cultural community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps it was the eldest son of Bernicia Beltran, Berto, who put it best when we talked on the phone.
“I didn’t really understand what it meant to be a Mexican until I looked at the Canadians and discovered that we are not the same. I see them, and I look at my family, and while we are all good in different ways, I see all the ways we are different and I learn about myself.”

It became quickly apparent, that the most important themes that emerged time and time again were strictly related to parenting strategies. With 100% of the participants making at least one remark on the very hands-on approach of Latin American parenting and 87.5% of the participants talking about how Canadian culture seems to foster a more hands-off approach.

Beatriz Beltrán described to me how she felt when she would visit her Canadian friends’ homes:

“The times that I have gone to my friends’ homes, they have a reference that tells them that this chore belongs to this person, and the bathroom has to be done by this person. We also have chores, things to do in the home. But we do end up doing them all together. No one person is in charge of the kitchen. Everyone is. And no one person cleans the bathroom: we kind of all are responsible. The chores are the same but they do it by themselves.”

When speaking to Beatriz about media choice, she was one of the participants who spoke most about consuming Latin American media. She indicated that she had a significant amount of music on her iPod and that she was watching a few novelas (popular serial dramas) with
regularity. When I asked how she discovered this media, “Mi papa” she began, “My father has a lot of music that I would search through. And when I watch the novelas, it is with my mother; she has novelas she likes and we watch them together.”

By contrast, when I asked Beatriz about Canadian sources of media and cultural knowledge, she did not indicate that she sought out new sources through her friends or other persons. I had supposed that that her friends and peers would have been her number one source of Canadian media. Instead, she said she would search through music charts or decide what TV shows to watch based on what was creating the most buzz on social media. She would independently seek out sources of North American cultural knowledge but look to her guardians to find cultural knowledge when it came to learning about Mexican media. I asked, and she was well aware of Latin American pop music charts; she could tell me what novelas were popular in Mexico right now. However, she indicated that she mostly consumed the media her guardians shared with her.

A particular point that arose out of a conversation with Elena Emanuel also touched upon this idea that, within Canadian culture, you stand as an individual rather than in a unit.

“In Mexico, there is always a society judging you. Those of us that are Mexican, we like to judge.” She then turns to me, “You understand, right?”
“No,” I replied, and I remember her looking at me as if she were quite surprised. Perhaps knowing that I had lived in Mexico, she thought I would be aware of this. But I wasn’t at all.

“We really like to criticize. We criticize a lot.”

“And here you don’t do that?”

“Here you don’t feel criticized. At least me, with my family, which is a very large family, we feel very criticized; it is a family where you always have to keep – the norms.”

I continued, “And you, who have moved here and changed from that environment, do you feel less critical here than you did there?”

“I am less critical. And I feel less criticized. And I feel very free that I don’t have siblings laughing about me telling me this thing or that thing about what I do. And despite that, here, I now put what I want, the clothes I want, I act how I want, and if I’m going to go out I’m not worried about them saying ‘Oi, how could you dare wear that?’, ‘Oi, how could you dare say that?’, ‘How could you have dared to…’ it’s because there you grow up within a society that is called ‘your family’ that is called ‘your extended family’ and you’re always surrounded by them. And perhaps you can’t understand because Canadians are not like this. Canadians let you do, be
free and you aren’t as involved in each other’s lives. Not Mexicans, though, Mexicans are built into their role of criticizing. And they tell you that you shouldn’t do this, or you shouldn’t do that, and then the grandfather jumps in, and the aunt, and they tell you ‘How could you study that if there aren’t even any jobs for it?’ and they’ll even make a family dinner simply to tell you ‘you’re wrong’.”

This description of the large amount of family involvement in the personal life of Elena went on for a few minutes more. Listening to her speak I did not agree with her perspective that “Canadians are not like this” or, at least, this is not how I would have described my own experience. However, as she told it, it was clear that this perspective came from her personal experiences engaging with Canadian society. What she saw in Canadian society was a boundary between your family and your personal life, a boundary that she felt did not exist in Mexico.

As I listened to her speak about “your family”, as some sort of third-person, high-level concept, I found that she was not always referencing her family. In the way I initially understood her words, I was applying my own perspective that makes a distinction between my family and the society in which I live. She seemed to say that to her, in Mexico, the society in which she lived was her family; it was the society that imposed all the social norms and education. What struck me even more was that reviewing the interviews, it wasn’t the first time someone had mentioned that to me. A few weeks earlier, in one of my first interviews, Ana Arozco had said something very similar.
“When we were in Mexico, the only people we saw were our family, our extended family. I had never gone to school. I just learned at home. I only went to school when I got married and my husband sent me to the school. I learned from my mother, and then my mother-in-law, and my aunts. I learned everything from them and they were my culture. Here, everyone is going to school. My children have to go to school.”

Whereas I understood “society” and “culture” as the world around me, or the macro-level framework of world-understanding that surrounds me and my family, the older participants were describing society and their extended family in much the same ways.

Stores about Flows 5.2

When interviewing Danica Delgado, one of the youngest of Delinda’s dependents, she was noticeably nervous about speaking with me. This was despite the fact that she had sat through my conversation with her mother and Camila that lasted well over an hour the first day that we all met. She was quiet all throughout that earlier conversation and, as I started into the interview, it did not appear as if she was going to be any more talkative.

“Danica, do you remember why I’m here?” I asked her, testing the waters.
“You want to know how we have changed since we came here,” she replied without looking at me.

“How much of Argentina do you remember?” I asked, knowing that she couldn’t have more than a year or two worth of memories from Argentina.

“Not a lot.” This was the answer I expected but then she continued, “But I know how we have changed.”

My conversation with Danica was one of the shortest as she was clearly reluctant to chat with me; up until that point I had found all the youth very talkative. However, it was curious to me that she could tell that her family had changed from when they were in Argentina, even though she didn’t have much memory of Argentina. What she was able to recall was how her mother, and her father whom they left behind in Argentina, were always telling them what to do. *Mandón*, a word that is derived from the verb “to command” would be the closest equivalent to *bossy*. This was the word she applied to her mother the first few years they were in Canada. But since then, Danica remarked, that her mother had relaxed a lot when it came to certain things and now the children are doing more or less what they want, as long as they are safe and respect Delinda.
When talking about how the families had changed since moving to Canada, and following on the heels of the previous distinctions made between what the participants felt were typically Canadian and typically Mexican or Argentine behaviours, it followed that any discussion about how things had changed would revert back to those distinctions. Individuals like Bernardo Beltrán, who was fairly adamant that he remained thoroughly Mexican at heart and strived only to socialize with other Mexicans, noted that he felt that “I have more responsibility because my parents give me more freedom here in Canada.”

Even returning to what Elena said in the last section about growing up surrounded by one’s family, she noted that in Canada she felt less concerned about what people thought about her (she felt less criticized) and thus did what she wanted, wore what she wanted, and so on.

Though there were instances of guardians sticking to their principles, those same guardians described how they had become more relaxed in this thing or that. It was Elena who first described how she would be sure any and all of her children got a higher education. “A fuerzas” she would say, or “by force” if translated literally. But she was the same person who expressed some of the greatest relief with respect to how free she felt here and how much she valued that liberty.

It was in this discussion surrounding change that it became very clear to me that contradictions abounded. Camila Corzo:
“Latina mothers are like this; there are a lot that are super-protective. I am protective. I say to my children, especially here, that they can do whatever they want but that I will always be with them, beside them, until I’m sure nothing will happen. I’ll stay with them, I’ll see what they are doing, who their little friends are. Until I gain enough confidence that they’re okay. And if I don’t like something,” she claps her hands together and flattens them out like an umpire at a ball game, “that’s it.” She pauses, watching me. Then she sits back in her chair and casually adds, “Here my children can do whatever they want, as long as they’re safe. I’m open for them to do that.”

Even within that short story there seems to be some contradiction. However, when I compare that to what she told me earlier (which I included in Section 5.1), it became clear that there was a consistency within the contradiction.

“I reflected, not too long ago, and when I first came here, if one of my children came home simply drunk, I would have died! But, since then I’ve become more flexible. And now, if one of my children came home and they were drugged I would say… well, it is their decision and they are also adapting to a different culture that accepts those things more.”

This kind of perspective appears to me to be in stark contradiction to her affirmation that if she did not feel like her dependents were making safe choices, she would put a stop to it.
It was stories like these that highlighted how it was obvious that there was a change occurring, and perhaps a change that not even my participants perceived. I was hearing that there still existed a will for the parents to exert some control over the lives of their dependents. I was also hearing from the dependents that respect and obedience to one’s guardian was of utmost importance. However, I was simultaneously hearing that guardians wanted to give their dependents more freedom and that their dependents expected and felt that enhanced freedom since arriving in Canada.

Stories about Hybridization 5.3

All of the questions I asked participants about how they learned their cultural knowledge, what they felt it meant to be Canadian or Mexican or Argentine, or about how they felt they were changing having moved to Canada, were set to lay the groundwork to draw out stories about whether or not family members experienced plural identities. The expectation was that if plural, hybrid identities were to be discovered, that these contrasting identities may be a source of conflict within the family, since members would respond to these identities differently.

I expected that if I simply began to ask about conflict, essentially a stranger to them, that a direct question of that sort would always be answered through rose-coloured glasses; I
wouldn’t expect family members to start telling me all the problems they have had as a family and that they would instead tell me only positive things about their family’s level of unity. Thus, it was my job to draw out the stories that would highlight conflict or contradiction if they existed.

Angelica Arozco, as an example, spoke much about how she had changed, but felt that her brother Ángel had purposefully chosen to try to remain as Mexican as possible. When I asked how she felt about that, she spoke about how proud she was that her brother would hold onto his cultural roots in that way. Ángel, when probed about this determination, did not express any concern that he and she were leading what they perceived to be culturally different lives. He expressed that she could behave as Canadian as she wanted but that she was still Mexican, and she expressed that he could try as hard as he could to be Mexican but that he was still Canadian.

When I spoke with Berto Beltrán, it was over the phone, as he was no longer living with the family in Toronto. He had found work in the Alberta oil industry, and had moved there just a few months before. He indicated to me that Bernicia fully supported him in his move to Alberta, suggesting that if he were still in Mexico she would never have let him move so far away from the family. Bernicia herself, told me that she was proud that her son had taken such a strong and independent step and that it was his courage to leave the family that essentially supported their lifestyle (through which I learned he was sending money back to the family).
However, later while talking with Bernicia, she expressed several times how she felt her family was being torn apart after having moved to Canada. The missing father figure had apparently opted not to go with Bernicia and her dependents when they moved to Canada. Berto had left the family for the oilfields and Bernicia told me how Beatriz and Bernardo both talked about moving to different cities to study.

“How am I supposed to live here by myself? They are all off following their dreams, while my dream was to be a family here in Canada where it is safe and there are opportunities.”

And while she talked about this as if she were proud of them for finding their way, it was clear to me that this was a point of sadness.

Diego Delgado, another eldest son, came through the home only briefly on the day of the interviews. He was passing through, heading off for work, but when I talked with him he mentioned how much he liked the freedom he felt here in Canada. He noted how he liked knowing him and his siblings could do “lo que sea”, a sentiment related to “whatever”. However, he indicated that it was also difficult for some of his siblings to know what they should and should not do, or what they could or could not do, as the expectations always seemed to be changing. They knew they were expected to behave in an Argentine way, but that they were encouraged to become their own person, which often did not quite square up with the notion of adhering to “being Argentine.”
Upon gathering the data and organizing the interviews in such a way that the prevailing themes could be parsed out, this section will provide my interpretation of the stories above, my analysis of them, and finally seek to address the research question.

In the preceding sections I recounted stories gathered during the interview process. As discussed in Section 2.2, the intended analysis for this qualitative data is to be processed through the lens of the transnational theory. This lens seeks to highlight:

1) the way in which borders help immigrants to distinguish between different cultural identities,

2) the way in which interacting cultural identities cause a flow of cultural practices between these borders, and

3) the way in which multiple, hybrid cultural identities are created.

Following this pattern, I narrated the stories accordingly.

During the interviews, I sought to allow participants to define for themselves what they felt it meant to be part of their culture of origin and Canadian culture. Much of what came out of that
discussion was a description of how they perceived family behaviours from each culture. When describing specific familial behaviours, common themes arose across participants.

1) That their culture of origin was very family-focused; that the family made up the principal unit of cultural instruction, socialization, and entertainment.

2) That within Canadian society, the participants perceived a culture that was much less family-focused; that the Canadian lifestyle is one that promotes individuality, seeking one’s own way in life, and learning outside the home.

What was expressed to me was a description of family life for each culture that stood in contrast to each other. Rarely did participants describe how similar family life was between the two cultures and instead chose to describe differences as a matter of contrast. This supports the affirmation that cultural borders are mentally constructed to distinguish the “us” from the “them”.

In and of itself, this idea of cultural borders is not remarkable; the comparison of cultural practices forms the historical foundation of socio-cultural anthropology as a discipline. However, establishing where these imagined borders existed for the participants was of critical importance for the rest of the interview, as it laid out the working definitions of “Latino-ness” or “Canadian-ness” that the participants subscribed to. This approach of self-definition allowed participants the opportunity to articulate what demarcates the border between their perception of the culture of
origin and their perception of Canadian culture, which became useful as the interviews went on to ask participants to describe their cultural behaviour.

It was clear to me that participants often articulated the different cultures by reciting well-established social representations or stereotypes of the cultures. Participants were tapping into shared constructions of “Mexican-ness” or “Argentine-ness” or “Canadian-ness”. Borrowing again from socio-cultural psychology, “collective culture is a relatively stable entity” (Valsiner 2000:56) composed of agreed upon meanings that make up a culture’s shared identity. This fits well with the idea of borders, as larger groups made up of many individuals agree upon an identity. That identity is stabilized and defined by those who choose to agree with it. This, in turn, reiterates the validity of that identity and strengthens it. When an individual or sub-group begins to differ in the strength of their agreement with the collective meanings, they may find themselves outside of that collective identity, having crossed the border that defines “us”.

The interviews contain supporting evidence for three of the acculturation strategies that Berry outlined: assimilation, separation, and integration. For example, Danica described how her mother Delinda had changed from her previously “mandón” attitude, and instead had integrated some notions of Canadian freedom into her parenting style. According to his sister, Ángel had sought a separation strategy, seeking to be as Mexican as possible. And according to Ángel, Angelica sought more of an assimilation strategy. When family members were asked about other members in the family, these sorts of portraits of different acculturation strategies came out.
However, when individuals described their own experience of cultural change, it was much more complicated.

For example, Angelica, whom Ángel had described in a way that adhered to an assimilation strategy, described her own cultural experience as much more varied. She described how she consumed sources of media from each culture, without putting an emphasis on either, and how she had a mix of Spanish-speaking and English-speaking friends. Delinda simultaneously described embracing some of what she perceived as Canadian parenting, while still adhering to perceived, traditional, Latin American parenting values. Bernardo Beltrán, whose description of his own acculturation strategy could be described as separation, also expressed how he felt the weight of the freedom his Canadian life gave him, resulting in an increase in feelings of responsibility toward his family. In these cases and in many others, any given acculturation strategy is insufficient to capture the experience of cultural change individuals were experiencing. Instead, there was a variety of experiences and mixed feelings used to describe how individuals were experiencing their personal cultural identity.

Furthermore, while this may seem to suggest that individuals’ experiences may exist to different degrees along Berry’s continuums of choice (i.e. an individual may occupy any point along those continuums and may slide up and down them), what is interesting is the simultaneous nature of attitudes towards different cultural behaviours that was evidenced here. It was not the case that Bernardo accepted the freedom that his perception of Canadian culture afforded him while rejecting what he perceived to be a very Latino need to be responsible and
engaged with his family (this would indeed be a case of a separation strategy). He instead simultaneously spoke positively about the “Canadian” freedom from family and spoke positively about the “Latino” expectation of a deep responsibility to the family, while also speaking negatively about how “Canadian” freedom from family distances family members from each other and speaking negatively about the weight of responsibility that “Latino” family expectations put on him. Delinda spoke positively about her traditional “Latino” parenting ideals and spoke positively about the more hands-off “Canadian” approach, while simultaneously speaking negatively about how the “Canadian” family is less controlling and speaking negatively about how the “Latino” family is too controlling.

If I were forced to place these experiences on a Berry-esque decision continuum, it would look something like Figure 14, which does not reflect any of Berry’s acculturation strategies. The complexity of these experiences highlights instead how a continuum-based perspective may be limited in its ability to account for these experiences. These changing and simultaneous descriptions of how cultural change is experienced and perceived more closely relate to the notions of flows and hybridization, where individuals experience an influx of cultural
expectations and modified values from both sides of their cultural identity (flows), accepting and rejecting them at the time (hybridization).

Camila Corzo describing how she, as a Latina mother, is protective and controlling, also describes how she is open to her kids doing whatever they want and does not force decisions upon her children. Dependents described how they felt living in Canada had afforded them a much greater amount of freedom to do what they wanted but simultaneously still felt that there was a deep responsibility they had to fulfill to respect and honour their parents in a way that they characterized as typically Latin American, not Canadian, even if that respect meant not being able to do what they wanted. Participants were experiencing multiple identities all at the same time: identities that are not singular, but plural, shifting and co-existing. What is most interesting about these identities, for this research, is that they are based on the flow between a perceived Canadian identity defined by a lack of family-focused attitude and a perceived Latin American identity defined by a family-focused attitude.

Evidence of multiple and mixed identities have strong implications for the research question. Returning to the discussion from Section 2.1, researchers engaging with acculturation have been attempting to determine what the relationship is between acculturation and family conflict by creating ever more complex measurements of acculturation levels (or, the acculturation gap) between individuals and attempting to correlate those models to meaningful measures of conflict. This has resulted in contradictory conclusions: some research shows the relationship as positive, some as negative, and some as curvilinear. I argued in Section 2.1.1 that
the lack of consensus was an inherent result of the utilization of the continuum-based conceptualizations of the immigrant cultural change process. I proposed that by employing a qualitative method together with a transnational theoretical perspective, instead of adhering to an acculturation-based model, socio-cultural anthropology could offer a unique perspective to this debate.

The result has been varied. There were instances in which individuals would describe each other as being more or less like their culture of origin or Canadian, echoing the same kind of continuum-based language I argue against. However, when individuals would describe their own cultural experience, the description of cultural change was more varied. The way that individuals described others more closely relates to the idea of the acculturation gap: that individuals can be more or less acculturated than others, as a matter of continuum-based comparison. Yet the way that individuals described their own cultural experience more closely relates to the ideas of flowing and hybrid identities.

The appearance of the continuum-based comparisons of others’ cultural identities in these interviews may be a result of a flaw in my questioning. In most lines of questioning, I asked participants to describe how they felt, or how they thought others felt, or how they experienced processes of change. However, when asking whether or not participants’ family members were particularly like their perceived culture of origin vs. Canadian culture, I was asking participants to place their family members on a continuum that went from “more like your culture of origin”
to “more like Canadian culture”. Despite my best efforts, I too fell back onto language of comparison, rather than asking questions about process.

At the same time, evidence of the process of cultural identity as a *hybrid* experience as described above is also present, and is still useful to determine a soft answer to the question of the relationship between changing cultural identity and family conflict. In the following section, 6.1, I highlight how participants used conceived *borders* to distinguish what they perceived as Canadian family life. In 6.2 I return to my analysis of performativity and how it relates to these *hybrid* identities. Therein I propose that the relationship between the experience of changing cultural identity and family conflict is directly correlated to the strength of the perception that Canadian family life is defined by a lack of family-focused attitude.

The key analysis I would like to draw from this research is the prevailing perception on the part of the participants that, culturally, Canadian family life is characterized by participants as lacking a family-focused attitude. This was clear throughout all interviews surrounding Canadian family life. Speaking speculatively, this perception may be a result of immigrants not fitting into the social structure of greater Canadian society in such a way that would allow them the opportunity to witness or experience the degrees of family-focused attitudes that exist within Canadian society. Or, it may be that this is a type of projection: that as immigrants feel less connected to their own family, thanks to their relocation, that they conceptually relate Canadian life to deteriorating family-focus. It may even be that the way in which Canadians express their
family-focused attitude is not shared by the immigrants I interviewed. Or, it may be that Canadian family life is in fact less family-focused.

These are all questions that future research would need to address. However, accepting that this is how my participants perceive Canadian family life we can use this information to address the central question of this research. Allow me to return to the discussion about identity performance.

Accepting Butler’s (1990) general thesis that identity is a performance, we can relate this performative nature of identity in interesting ways to the problem at hand. According to this research, immigrants perceive that Canadian family life is more focused on the individual than on the family unit. As a result, immigrants may (perhaps inadvertently) perform this attitude towards their family life in order to meet their own expectations about what life is like, and should be like, in Canada: performing a less unified family life would create the kinds of conflict that acculturation researchers have been observing in their research.

It is also the case that when the participants described their own culture, they characterized it by the family-focus that they perceive as typical for those of their cultural group. Thus, when applying this attitude towards their family life in Canada, they are conceptually relating that attitude to their culture of origin, rather than to life within Canadian culture. In a way, they are entrenching their own perspective that their culture is the one that focuses on the
family unit, strengthening the stereotype. As one can imagine, there is potential danger in a cultural perception and subsequent performance of this kind. Families moving to Canada who perform this interpretation of Canadian life would be at higher risk of dissolving the socially nurturing threads that bind family units together. Participants in this research echoed this very idea, expressing both concern about their children as they appeared to draw away from the family while simultaneously suggesting that the freedom and growing individuality of their children were some of the principal reasons for which they appreciate life in Canada. They accepted the perspective that Canadian family life is epitomized by these traits, while lamenting their result.

Much of this conceptualization can easily be understood when examined through the lens of transnationalism as I have presented it here. Immigrants conceptually divide and distinguish between their culture of origin and Canadian culture. These conceptual borders allow the individual to reflect upon what it means to them to be a part of either culture, and entrench collective notions of identity and authenticity with respect to each culture. Across these conceptual borders, individuals can adhere to differing behaviours that fall in line with either culture and, in doing so, reinforce them.

It is important to recognize the agency wherewith the individual can choose how to act. It is out of these ever-changing choices that hybrid cultural identities appear. That is, individuals adjust their own cultural strategy according to the circumstance and according to which cultural identity they wish to invoke at the time of choosing. This research did not intend to, nor does it,
address the strategic element of identity, but future researchers may want to identify the strategic element of performing family life in these ways. Returning to my research’s data, when extolling the virtues of Canadian familial life, the participants often referenced freedom, individuality, leeway in parenting and a lack of discipline. As a result, when parents or children try to be more Canadian, they will perform these attitudes and behaviours. Alternatively, when parents or children try to be more like their culture of origin, they perform family-focused attitudes and behaviours that express this perception. Whereas I encountered no strategic element to when and why participants would adhere to either cultural attitude, this would be a valuable topic of future research.

To summarize, researchers have been attempting to find a concrete answer to the question to how acculturation is related to family conflict. By avoiding the persistently continuum-based model of acculturation, my analysis suggests that, at least in the case of Latin-American immigrants to Canada, inasmuch as immigrants believe Canadian culture to be individually-focused rather than family-focused, and inasmuch as immigrants perform this attitude towards their family life in Canada, there will be corresponding conflict.

Encouraging a Family-Focused Perception of Canadian Family Life 6.1

If immigrants to Canada perceive Canadian family life to be typified by a lack of family-focus and they perform this cultural expectation resulting in conflict within their own family, and thus entrench the perception that disunion is a part of Canadian family life, then it becomes
necessary to somehow break the cycle. If immigrants could be taught to perceive of Canadian family life as one that is family-focused, the result of such efforts would be that immigrants to Canada perform this family-focused perspective when experiencing their hybrid identities. Social workers and policymakers concerned with ensuring that new immigrants to Canada are well-adjusted and socializing within Canada positively would thus be encouraged to highlight within their programs and policies all the way that Canadian life is supported by, embraces, and fosters the family unit.

It is not my place to say exactly how to go about doing this but instead to highlight that this cycle (where a negative perception is followed by a performance of that perceived characteristic, followed by the subsequent reinforcement of the negative perception) is potentially damaging to immigrant community in Canada. I would recommend that social workers and policymakers invest in discovering to what extent immigrant families are affected by this perception Canadian family life and how this perception is causing conflict in those families. If that is indeed the case, promoting a health family life may be best aided by promoting the notion that Canadian culture is family-focused.

A Direction for Future Work 6.2

With the proposal of every new perspective, rigorous testing needs to occur. What I have proposed here is an argument in favour of approaching the issue of immigrant family
socialization within Canada from the perspective that encouraging successful socialization within Canada will be best served by encouraging a vision of Canadian family life as being more family-focused. I would encourage researchers who are interested in this problem to begin to investigate two primary questions.

First, what occurs in the day-to-day lives of immigrants that produces the perception that Canadian family life is one of disunion? Second, what can be done to promote the idea that Canadian family life is family-focused?

Changing the perception someone has of any topic is a difficult task, but changing the perspective someone has of an entire culture is an extraordinarily difficult task. However, it is not unheard of: the Canadian government took great strides in the 1920s and 1980s to promote the vision of Canada as a multicultural institution (Kobayashi 1983). Similar policies may have an effect on the way that Canadian family life is perceived.

I would also, of course, invite researchers to revisit my proposal that a qualitatively-based, transnational perspective on the experience of immigrant cultural change can shed light on a divisive topic such as the relationship between acculturation and conflict. As mentioned in Section 2.5, the scale of this research was relatively small. Time and resources allowing, I would have liked to perform this research over several years with several dozen participants. Recognizing the flow that exists in transnational lives, I would recommend a longitudinal...
qualitative study aimed at discovering what the transnational perspective can do to shed light on the question of how the experience of cultural change affects family conflict over time.

Summary 6.3

The research question for this thesis was: what is the relationship between the experience of changing cultural identities and conflict within immigrant families? This is a question that acculturation researchers have been attempting to determine using an acculturation gap model. In Section 2.1 I argued the limitations of this model and in Section 2.2 I presented instead the hypothesis that analyzing the problem using qualitative research and transnational theory would offer a different perspective on the question. The results were varied. Whereas some of the line of questioning I used in this research resulted in descriptions of experiences that would best be described through popular acculturation models, some descriptions of experiences indeed adhered to the transnational model. To address the research question, I determined that instead of there being a direct link between degrees of acculturation and family conflict, there be a link between the way in which immigrants perceive of family life within the new culture and family conflict. I argued that if immigrants believe Canadian culture to be characterized by family life that is not family-focused, then immigrants may perform this attitude towards their own family life which can cause conflict.
Following this argument, I presented the case that in order to better support immigrant families coming to Canada, and in order to promote positive socialization in Canada, social workers and policymakers make strides to combat the perspective that Canadian culture is not family-focused.


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Appendix 1: Interview Questions 8.0

Below I have provided the guiding questions that represent the general layout of the semi-structured interviews. The questions do not compose an entire list of all questions asked, and were reasonably changed when circumstance dictated (e.g. when speaking to the Familia Delgado, instead of “Mexican” I asked about “Argentine”).

1. Can you describe what it means to you to be Mexican? (Probe: What are some behaviours that you believe to be particularly Mexican? Could you tell if someone was behaving like a Mexican? What would they act like?)

2. Can you describe what it means to you to be Canadian? (Probe: What are some behaviours that you believe to be particularly Canadian? Could you tell if someone was behaving like a Canadian? What would they act like?)

3. Can you describe to me how you learn Canadian values/behaviours/culture? (Probe: Do you have a particular source of cultural knowledge you often consult? Who is the best example in your life for what Canadians are like?)

4. Can you describe to me know you learn Mexican values/behaviours/culture? (Probe: Do you have a particular source of cultural knowledge you often consult? Who is the best example in your life for what Mexicans are like?)

5. Do you consume more Mexican or Canadian media? (Probe: What makes you consume one more than the other? Do you actively seek out Mexican/Canadian media? Why?)
6. Describe to me your best friend? (Probe: What are some of the things you’ve learned from this friend?)

7. Are there ever times you feel more or less Mexican or Canadian? (Probe: Can you tell me about an instance in which you felt you were more Mexican or Canadian? How about at home?)

8. When you are at home, do you behave more like you described Canadians behaving, or Mexicans? (Probe: When you are interacting with your siblings/parents/children/spouse, how would you describe your behaviour?)

9. Do you believe that your family members behave more Mexican or Canadian? (Probe: Are they usually this way? Does this ever change? Can you describe a time when a family member was behaving particularly Mexican or Canadian?)

10. What do family members do when they act Mexican or Canadian? (Probe: What do you do when you try to act Canadian or Mexican? Does it come easily to you? Describe you how feel when you act Mexican or Canadian. Are there times you when you feel more comfortable acting Mexican or Canadian? Under what circumstances would you act more Mexican or Canadian?)

11. How do you feel when family members act Mexican or Canadian? (Probe: What do they do when they act Canadian or Mexican? Does it seem to come easy to them? Describe how you feel when you see family members acting Mexican or Canadian. Are there times when others seem to feel more comfortable acting Mexican or Canadian? Under what circumstances do other seem to act more Mexican or Canadian?)
CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UNA INVESTIGACIÓN

Título: Strategic Cultural Performance Within the Family

Se solicita participantes para una investigación dirigido por C. William Campbell y bajo la supervisión de Belinda Leach, del colegio de Sociología y Antropología de la Universidad de Guelph, asesora de tesis. Los resultados de esta investigación serán utilizados para presentar la tesis para optar el título de maestría de C. William Campbell.

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta o duda acerca de la investigación, favor contactar a Belinda Leach (519-824-4120 ex 52699).

PROPÓSITO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN

El propósito de esta investigación es para conocer como las familias mexicanas viviendo en Canadá luchan por comprender su propia identidad con respeto a los otros miembros de la familia. También ha sido diseñada para observar los comportamientos que los miembros de la
familia adoptan de acorde al ambiente en el que ellos se están desarrollando según sus beneficios.

PROCEDIMIENTO

Para participar como voluntario en esta investigación, se requiere hacer los siguientes pasos:

Reunirse con el investigador C. William Campbell para leer juntos y platicar de ésta carta de consentimiento y firmarla.

Participar en, por lo menos, una entrevista de entre 45 minutos a 1 hora con C. William Campbell, la cual será grabada y utilizada para que él pueda escribir la tesis para su maestría. Dicha entrevista se llevará a cabo en la casa(s) de cada voluntario, y ninguna otra persona tendrá acceso a la grabación excepto el entrevistado y el entrevistador, C. William Campbell y su asesor de tesis.

Cuando la tesis final haya sido terminada, defendida ante la Universidad y publicada el voluntario puede solicitar una copia de los resultados de la investigación.)

RIESGO POTENCIAL E INCOMODIDAD

No se percibe ningún riesgo relacionado con su participación. Sin embargo, si en cualquier momento usted desea retirarse como participante, síéntase libre de hacerlo. También puede elegir no contestar cualquiera pregunta que le haga sentir incomodo.

BENEFICIOS POTENCIALES A LOS PARTICIPANTES Y/O LA SOCIEDAD

Además de la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre cómo usted (voluntario) maneja su propia identidad cultural, y comprende el comportamiento cultural de los miembros de su familia, no hay un beneficio potencial previsto para su participación en la investigación.
Esta investigación se utilizará para hacer frente a varios debates teóricos dentro de la disciplina antropológica, y es probable que la disciplina se beneficie de la adición de este material para un futuro debate.

**REMUNERACION POR LA PARTICIPACIÓN**

Usted no recibirá ningún pago por su participación.

**CONFIDENCIALIDAD**

Cada esfuerzo estará hecho para asegurar la confidencialidad de cualquier dato o información que podría ser utilizado para identificarle a usted como participante en esta investigación.

La única persona que podrá tener acceso a la grabación de su entrevista será el investigador C. William Campbell y su asesora. Él guardará la grabación y los datos transcritos digitalmente en su computadora personal, la cual está protegida por clave y un programa de código. Después de un año de haber sido publicada la tesis final para optar a su grado de maestría, todos los datos serán borrados por completo.

El voluntario tendrá acceso a la grabación de la entrevista si lo solicita, y si no está de acuerdo con la grabación el voluntario tiene la libertad de censurar cualquier parte de la entrevista que no esté de acuerdo. El entrevistador tendrá esta opción hasta el día que la tesis se defienda delante del comité para publicación.

Sus grabaciones y copia de ella no se podrán acceder por cualquiera otra persona sino el investigador, su asesor, y usted mismo; quiere decir, ningún otro miembro de la familia tendrá acceso a su entrevista y usted reconoce también que no puede tener acceso a la entrevista de cualquier otro miembro de la familia.

**RETIRO DE SU PARTICIPACIÓN**
El participante puede decidir si participar en esta investigación o no. Si usted desea en cualquier momento puede retirar su participación sin consecuencia alguna. Usted puede ejercer también la opción de retirar cualquier dato que hayas contribuido a la investigación hasta la fecha de su retiro. También, usted puede negar a contestar cualquiera pregunta que usted no desea responder y aun así seguir como participante. El investigador puede retirar al voluntario y sus datos de la investigación si la circunstancia lo requieren.

DERECHOS DE LOS PARTICIPANTES

El entrevistado puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento y dejar de ser participante en la investigación sin sanción alguna. Usted no está renunciando cualquier afirmación legal, derecho, o recursos a causa de su participación en esta investigación. Esta investigación ha sido revisada y se le ha dado aprobación por el Departamento de Investigación y Ética de la Universidad de Guelph. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de sus derechos como participante en esta investigación, favor de contactar a:

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

Telephone: (519) 824-4120, ext. 56606
E-mail: sauld@uoguelph.ca
Fax: (519) 821-5236
FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE/REPRESENTATE LEGAL

Yo, ____________________________________________, he leído la información dada para la investigación titulada “Strategic Cultural Performance Within the Family” y descrito arriba. Mis dudas han sido contestadas a mi gusto, y yo estoy de acuerdo a participar en la investigación. Se me ha dado una copia de este trámite.

__________________________________________
Nombre del Participante (favor de usar letra molde)

_________________________  __________
Firma del Participante               Fecha

También doy mi permiso para que la persona, menor de edad, alistado para que pueda participar en la investigación descrita.

__________________________________________
Nombre del menor de edad (favor de usar letra molde)

_________________________  __________
Firma del representante               Fecha
FIRMA DEL TESTIGO

____________________________________
Nombre del Testigo (favor de usar letra molde)

____________________________________
Firma del Testigo

Fecha

[Es preferible que el testigo NO sea el mismo investigador, pero si no haya ninguna otra persona disponible, el investigador entonces puede hacerse de testigo.]
C. William Campbell es un estudiante de la universidad. Él está estudiando cosas acerca de nuestra cultura, y nuestra experiencia viviendo acá en Canadá. A él le gustaría platicar contigo por como una hora acerca de tu vida acá en Canadá

**PROPÓSITO**

A William le interesa la cultura Mexicana. También está muy interesado en la forma que tu vives como Mexicano acá en Canadá. Además, le interesa nuestra familia y como nos llevamos.

**PROCEDEMIENTO**
Si tú deseas participar, él te pedirá lo siguiente:

Juntarte con él para discutir de, leer, y firmar éste documento.

Participar en una entrevista de entre 45 min a 1 hora. Se te entrevistaría C. William Campbell, y él grabará el audio de la entrevista. Se te entrevistará dentro de tu propia casa y nadie, sino el mismo C. William Campbell y sus supervisores podrán saber de tu entrevista; siquiera tus papas.

INCOMODIDAD

William no cree que te sentiría incomodo durante la entrevista. Sin embargo, si tu no quieres hablar de algo, por supuesto no tienes que.

BENEFICIOS

Si tu participas, es probable que no te beneficiará o ayudarte. Sin embargo, William está tratando de contestar algunas preguntas que a él y a otros como él les interesan. Por medio de tu participación les ayudarás a ellos.

PAGO

Tu no recibirás nada especial gracias a tu participación.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD

William se va a asegurar que nadie pueda saber de tu entrevista.

C. William Campbell va a guardar la grabación de la entrevista en su computadora personal, la cual está protegido. Además, no va a quedarse con la grabación por más de un año. Nadie, sino el mismo William y sus supervisores de la universidad tendrán acceso a la grabación.
PARTICIPACIÓN

En cualquier momento puedes decidir no participar; hasta después de la entrevista. En tal caso, no habrá ninguna consecuencia para ti, y tu entrevista será borrada.

FIRMA DEL PARTICIPANTE/RESPRESENTATE LEGAL

Yo he leído la información aquí acerca de “Strategic Cultural Performance Within the Family”. Pude preguntar y recibir respuestas a mis dudas, y yo estoy de acuerdo a participar en la investigación con la permisión de mis padres.

____________________________________
Nombre del Participante (favor de usar letras en bloque)

____________________________________
Firma del Participante  Fecha

FIRMA DEL TESTIGO

____________________________________
Nombre del Testigo (favor de usar letras en bloque)

____________________________________


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Firma del Testigo  Fecha

[Es preferible que el testigo NO sea el mismo investigador, pero si no haya ninguna otra persona disponible, el investigador entonces puede hacerse de testigo.]