Now(here): Exploring the Experiences of Displacement and Relocation of the 1.5 Generation Colombian Refugees Living in the Lower Mainland through Narrative Inquiry

by

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Ethics Statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

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Abstract

The experiences of displacement not only entail fleeing a threat against one's life; it means re-writing one's story in a new location and often in a new language and a new culture. The journey of the refugees also includes coming to terms with one's own refugeeness as an identity and making meaning of experiences of displacement and relocation. The purpose of this study is to answer the question: "How do Colombian refugees who belong to the 1.5 generation living in the Lower Mainland make meaning of their experiences of displacement and relocation?" Narrative inquiry in combination with art-based elicitation was the primary method used. Findings from this study will be relevant for counsellors and social service providers who work with this population. The opportunity to have a better understanding of the challenges that 1.5 generation refugees will offer information to design meaningful support strategies for both clients and mental health service providers.

Keywords: Displacement and relocation; 1.5 generation; Colombia; refugees; refugeeness; accented Beings.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the participants, thank you for sharing your time, your stories, and your lives with me. Your stories are a testament of the struggle of the refugees, but at the same time, they are a tribute to the resilience and power of an entire generation of Colombians who have been forced to leave their country.

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Esta tesis no hubiera nunca empezado y mucho menos terminado si no fuera por el entusiasmo, la perseverancia y la compañía de Hollman y Lola. Mis aliados, mis guerreros, mis amores.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

Colombia is the fourth largest country in South America, with a population of more than 47.5 million. For more than 60 years the internal conflict among Colombian security forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and narcotics traffickers has created social and political instability in the country.

Colombia has 6.7 million internally displaced people- “around 13% of the entire population. Moreover, 360,000 officially recognized refugees have fled abroad, most to Ecuador… and to Venezuela, home to around 170,000 Colombians in need of international protection” (UNHCR, 2016). From 2001 to 2016 Canada received 29,680 Colombian refugees; almost 29% were between 0 to 24 years old when they arrived in Canada (CIC, 2017).

Little research has been done in Canada with Colombian refugees, and most of what has been done has primarily focused on the experiences of adults that come as refugees (Riaño, 2008; Weibe, 2011, 2013; Arsenault, 2009, 2010; Munoz, 2011; Kebede, 2010). Even fewer studies have focused on the experiences of Colombian children and youth who have accompanied their parents or older siblings in the journey of displacement and relocation.

In the last couple of decades, there has been a growing interest in youth arriving as refugees; the 1.5 generation (Kebede, 2010; Kumsa, 2006; Smith, 2014) has become relevant, and their experiences have gained a place in the academic literature. The 1.5 generation has been defined as the children of immigrants born in the country of origin of their parents and who migrated during their formative years (Smith, 2014, Kumsa, 2006, Kebede, 2010, Pham, 2012). There is evidence that adaptation experiences of the members 1.5 generation are different from those of the first and second generations (Pham, 2012). In addition to dealing with issues of adaptation and belonging, language learning and the stress of having to relocate, the members of the 1.5 generation have to deal with new family dynamics. One of the main characteristics of the 1.5 generation is that given their age they often learn the language faster than the older members of the

family. The acquisition of the language brings with it the opportunity and responsibility to move back and forth between two cultures and serve as cultural bridges, brokers for their family (Pham, 2012). These new-found roles often create issues around role reversal for the 1.5 generation, who find themselves taking care of parental responsibilities such as dealing with banking and healthcare needs of their families (Smith, 2014, Kumsa, 2006, Kebede, 2010, Pham, 2012).

My interest in working with refugee populations comes from both my previous work and my personal experience. Since my arrival in Canada in 2003, I have been involved with the refugee community in different capacities. During my first year in Vancouver, my involvement was mainly as a client. My position as a refugee allowed me to get involved with the Vancouver Association of Survivors of Torture (VAST), where I attended therapy; soon after I became a volunteer and started helping other refugees in different capacities. Once I managed to improve my English, I enrolled in the Community Counselling program at VCC and returned to VAST as a counsellor to complete my practicum. I can say without hesitation that my experience as a refugee has significantly changed my life and my relationship with the world around me. Having had the opportunity to work with refugees as a therapist has also been a very significant experience in my life. Working as a counsellor with refugees has given me the opportunity to see how people make meaning of their experience and develop coping strategies that allow the refugees and their families to navigate a very complex experience. At the same time, I was able to witness the deep emotional and even physical impact of the experiences of displacement and relocation. These two experiences have allowed me to develop an experiential understanding of some of the struggles of the refugees.

It is through these experiences that I became interested in working with refugee youth. I was 21 years old when I came to Canada; I felt out of place and lost; too old to be part of the youth groups, too young to be with the adults, but at the same time able to awkwardly move between the two. I could see how both groups struggle to adapt, and I could also see how the voices of the youth were rarely heard; making the process of relocation much more difficult and alienating. As a result of these experiences, I want to focus on how the 1.5 generation tell their story of identity formation, how they made and continue making sense of their experiences of refugeeness.

As a counsellor, the knowledge and the skills that I have developed and continue to develop will inform my role as a researcher as I accompany the participants in their journey of exploration. In my role as a counselling psychology researcher, my goal is to co-create a safe environment where a collaborative process can unfold, a process in which both the participant and I as a researcher have a voice with which to tell [our] stories (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007, p. 463). From a professional perspective, there is a need to better understand how the 1.5 generation navigates and understand their process of identification in order to support them in the process of creating spaces where they can re-connect, re-collect and recover a relationship with themselves and their environment.

Rationale for the Study

The process of refugee's identity formation is a complex and under-researched process; most of the research done in the areas of mental health and psychology that work with this population focuses on trauma and PTSD (Kebede, 2010). This project will focus on working with a community that has just developed a sense of belonging and is suddenly uprooted from that which hitherto had given them meaning. They have been forced to start anew, and maintain a constant broken dialogue with their past while trying to negotiate their present. In the Canadian context, this negotiation usually includes learning a new language and dealing with multiple forms of alienation. The understanding of the role these factors play in their experiences of relocation could be used to develop strategies to help other 1.5 generation refugees in their process of adaptation**.**

The 1.5 Generation

The 1.5 generation can be seen as the companion generation, they have witnessed their family's struggle to adapt to their new locale, learn a new language and navigate a new socio-political context. In their new context, refugees in general lack not only the cultural references to navigate their new environment, but also social support to facilitate their process of relocation. In addition to these, interrupted education, racial discrimination, lack of Canadian work experience and the limited recognition of academic credentials from the global south make the access to well-paying jobs in their

fields of expertise very challenging (OCOV, 2015; ISSofBC, 2014). Simultaneously, the 1.5 generation is dealing with issues of adaptation and belonging, language learning and the stress of having to relocate. The members of the 1.5 generation have the advantage of learning the language faster than their adult parents and older siblings (Pham, 2012). However, at the same time given their age and the experiences they have of their country of origin they struggle with the idea of belonging and identifying themselves as part of a complex cultural context (Kebede, 2010). The 1.5 generation first-hand knowledge of their country of origin is often limited. Their recollections of their previous locale are often complemented with a vicarious knowledge that comes from their parents and older siblings' recollections and narratives of the country of origin. Often these vicarious recollections are charged with sentiments of longing and nostalgia (Plaza, 2001; Park, 1999). These understandings shape the 1.5 generation's views of their country of origin and their new locale.

Relocation Challenges

For refugees and their families, the process of relocation presents significant practical challenges for the survival of the family and its members, according to Wiebe (2013) housing, employment, social network and mental and physical health are the main challenges experienced by the refugee population in Canada.

The most immediate challenge the refugees face is finding suitable accommodation in the host country. The refugees lack language skills and social networks to navigate the housing system, pair with this the refugees also struggle with discrimination and stigma in relation to their race, and socioeconomic status. In the case of the Lower Mainland, these challenges are exacerbated by the low vacancy rates and the high housing costs (Francis, 2009).

Employment can also become a barrier to the success of refugees in the host country. Discriminatory hiring practices, language proficiency, lack of Canadian work experience, as well as the lack of recognition of foreign credentials often force both immigrants and refugees to accept low paying jobs for which they are overqualified (Ferede, 2010; Krahn et al., 2000; Lacroix, 2004; Hiebert, 2009).

The limitation of the language learning process and the structural differences between the host country and the country of origin educational systems often have a negative impact on the psychological development of the refugees. This impact is particularly significant for adolescents and young adults since they often struggle with the inability of the system to place them in the appropriate educational setting. The criteria used for the schools to place the refugees in a particular class often does not consider the specific needs of the students, their previous level of education, or their level of maturity. Students are often placed based on their biological age without taking into consideration cultural differences or previous educational achievements. The feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration associated with school further complicate the experience of relocation for the 1.5s. In addition to the emotional and educational considerations, being placed in the inadequate educational setting could have a significant impact on the ability of the refugees to develop meaningful peer relationships that are very significant for the identity development process during adolescence and early adulthood. In addition to this, it is important to mention that “School adjustment is generally regarded as the primary sociocultural and developmental task for children and adolescents. Within many immigrant communities, the importance attributed to school adjustment is particularly high; newcomers tend to see schools as avenues to participation and mobility” (Gibson, 1991, p. 504).

Refugeeness

In the case of people who came to Canada as refugees, the experiences of displacement and relocation are marked by the events that prompted their exile; they have not left their country of origin voluntarily, and the challenges of the relocation process with regards to housing, employment and credential recognition only exacerbate the issue of belonging (Kebede, 2010; Gluszek & Dovidol, 2010).

From the moment they arrive in Canada being labelled as refugees delimits their interactions with the world (Kebede, 2010; Kumsa, 2006); being refugees places them in a vulnerable position in the host country. People's perceptions of their status and their economic limitation hinder their ability to move freely in their new social environment. According to Jenny Francis (2009) “members of these “groups” experience well-documented challenges related to low incomes and discrimination based on skin colour, source of income, family size, and immigration status (p. 18).

Being a refugee entails a crisis of identities, a loss of socio-economic status, social capital and cultural uprooting (Riaño, 2008; Weibe, 2011). Although how each person understands and identifies with the label of refugee has different implications in their everyday life, not all refugees see themselves as victims or even survivors. In particular, the experience of refugeeness of the 1.5 generation is unique; they do belong to a collective and legal refugee status that has granted them the opportunity to be part of the Canadian society, but on a more subjective level the relationship with their status and what it implies can be very complex (Kebede, 2010; Kumsa, 2006). Having attained the official refugee protection status does not necessarily do away with the fear of persecution or alleviates the uncertainties of their locale.

Accented Beings

A significant aspect of the process of relocation for most refugees is learning the language of the host country. For the 1.5 generation, in particular, being accented often means attending ESL classes at school and being othered or bullied by their peers. The language learning process is complex and brings new challenges regarding social mobility, employment and education. In the process of learning a new language, the presence of an accent becomes a marker of difference, stigma and outsider status. Speaking a language with a particular accent becomes a marker; assumptions, stereotypes and stigma associated with a particular accent are part of the relocation struggle. The concerns around accent are not about language proficiency, however "non-native speakers in Canada experience 'accent discrimination' and are stereotyped by native speakers as less educated, less intelligent and less affluent" (Gluszek & Dovidol, 2010, p. 137). Accent is usually the first of many othering markers such as skin colour, dress, and customs, among others that are highlighted in social interaction and play a role in recognition of self as an accented being, an outsider.

Identity Formation

The identity formation process is an ongoing process. For the 1.5 generation, the identity formation process that has been identified as an integral part of adolescence (Mercer, Crocetti, Branje, Van Lier, Pol, & Meeus, 2017) is compounded with the processes of displacement and relocation. Adolescence as a developmental "period is

an integral part of identity formation as it provides the necessary opportunity for adolescents to explore their interests, views, and beliefs in order to make different identity commitments, distinct from those internalized during childhood" (Mercer et al., 2017, p. 2182).

The process of identity formation can be understood as a constant re-invention, re-authoring process of construction of multiple understandings of the self in relation with itself and others within different contexts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988; Massumi, 1988; May, 2005; Ertorer, 2014; Kogen, 2014; Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014). Regarding the conditions needed to enhance the formation of agentic identities, there is a need for flexible and rich environments where the individual feels safe and welcomed regardless of the pre-existing conditions that might limit her exploration process (Kebede, 2010). In the case of the 1.5 generation refugees finding a suitable environment where the process can happen can be very challenging. The process of identity formation is an essential part of the relocation process of the 1.5 generation refugees. The uncertainties of the new locale present an obstacle for the identification process and in consequence to adaptation as well. In a time when the 1.5 should be given the opportunity to explore; "most immigrant adolescents are busy with the basic tasks of survival, including learning a new language, finding means for physical existence, and creating new social networks" (Tartakovsky, 2009, p. 665). For the 1.5 refugees, in particular, the presence of an additional layer of complexity brought by their new-found legal status as refugees adds to the already complex process of identity formation and relocation. These children and youth not only have to negotiate a new locale or learn a new language, but they also have to negotiate what it means to be a refugee from the global south.

In addition to the already mentioned challenges of displacement and relocation, this newfound categorization as a refugee could also pose other challenges to the individual. The process of displacement and relocation deeply affects the well-being of all the members of the family regardless of their age and roles. In a psychological study including the cases of two adolescents who were forced to immigrate to Greece, Anagnostopoulos, Vlassopoulos & Lazaratou (2006) concluded that "there is considerable evidence that forced migration, apart from more wide-reaching consequences, has a severe psychological effect on the immigrant-refugee, as well as on his or her offspring" (p. 225). Some of the potential psychological effects associated

with forced migration include PTSD, anxiety, depression, as well as emotional and somatic disorders (Fazel, Reed, Panter-Brick, & Stein, 2012).

Researcher's Personal Inquiry

I came to Canada with my husband from Colombia in 2003. Young and inexperienced I struggled not to lose myself in translation. In the last 15 years, I have been living in a constant succession of in-betweens, and that realization gives the title to my project: Now(here). During this process, I gave myself permission to tell others - and most importantly, myself - that regardless of all the wonderful things these last years have brought, and how hard I have worked to make the best of my time here, I still feel nowhere. Quite often I feel that I have lost at least 12 years waiting for things to get better, even when I have taken charge of my life, overcome obstacles, and pursued my goals.

I am not part of what is considered the 1.5 generation, but given my experience, I see my role as that of a companion, a witness of the struggle, a shared struggle but at the same time an outsider. I left with my husband. It was not my life on the line. It was not my actions that brought us here, but at the same time, I knew that I had no other choice but to leave. *Losing one life, gaining another… in limbo*. Too young, deemed strong and lucky. Do I call myself a refugee? Is that something that belongs to me? The status of refugee itself has more value to me than what I can express with my words. For me it was the chance of being with someone I loved and continue to love, it was the opportunity of learning a language and living a different life; for my partner, it was the need to stay alive. There is nothing more valuable than that, his relationship with this land, the label and the experience is entirely different than mine. Being a refugee is a legal categorization that saves lives; refugeeness is a liminal space. Refugeeness carries the struggle of compound marginalization based on the intersection of race, class, gender, disability and immigration status (LIP, 2016, p. 20). So, from a personal perspective, what does it mean to be a refugee?

The identified patient

Forced to leave, with nothing to lose, and nothing to take…
Forced to leave, full of fear & sorrows, lost…
A bittersweet victory, alive, but empty, broken, almost dead

Cold, mute, alone

The words that forced us here are long gone
Unable to speak, no longer a threat to someone else's reign
Almost dead, someone else's charity case,
A lost soul that needs help
Today a different number, but a number nonetheless
At least alive, really? Is this better than dead?

Cold, mute, alone

A new city, new fears, new sorrows, new me?
No longer me, I will say
Empty, mute, afraid, nothing to bring, nothing to lose
Broken…
This is a new journey, an unwanted journey.
A new life, what life?

Objective and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the stories of refugeeness of Colombian refugees who belong to what has been defined as the 1.5 generation (Kebede, 2010). To accomplish this, the main question of my research is: How do Colombian refugees who belong to the 1.5 generation living in the Lower Mainland make meaning of their experiences of displacement and relocation?

My research will also be informed by the following questions: (a) How do they make meaning of the process of being recognized as a refugee? (b) What are the significant aspects of the relocation process identified by 1.5? (c) How do they make sense of being accented beings?

Significance of the Study

Considering that between 2001 and 2016 Canada received 132,960 refugees who were less than 24 years old (CIC, 2016); this study will be relevant for counsellors, teachers, and social service providers who work with this population. Developing a better understanding of the particular challenges that the 1.5 generation faces during their process of relocation will offer an opportunity for parents, counsellors, social workers and, teachers to engage in more meaningful processes of support. At the same time, this project could also offer significant information that could be used to develop

programs and support groups for new 1.5 generation immigrants and refugees in particular, as well as their parents and service providers/supportive structures.

Overview of the Thesis

In chapter one, I presented the research questions and the topic and situated myself as a researcher, a counselling practitioner and as a refugee. In chapter two, I locate my research with a review the literature on 1.5 generation, identity formation, refugeeness, refugee policy and resettlement practices in Canada, and a description of Colombia as a source country. In Chapter three, I review the method, data analysis processes, my position as a researcher and the credibility of this research. In Chapter Four, I present the findings of this project using the narratives of the 1.5 Generation refugees and their collages. In Chapter Five, I discuss the relationships between the data gathered with the participants and the pertinent literature, as well as a reflection on the possible repercussion of this study. Finally, I reflect on the perceived limitations and strengths of this study and explore opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2.
Literature Review

Colombia, Conflict and Migration

The current instantiation of the Colombian conflict has its origins in a historical period between the late ’40s and early ’50s called “La Violencia.” During this time, a violent political conflict amongst the Liberal and Conservative parties evolved into civil war. The civil war ended in 1958 with the creation of the “Frente Nacional” a political coalition between Liberal and Conservative parties supported by the church and military forces that opposed the dictatorship of General Rojas Pinilla.

By the end of the “Frente” in 1974, the most important guerrilla movements such as FARC, ELN and M-19 had formed (Ayala, 1999; Banco de la República, 2015). The guerrilla movements emerged as self-defence campesino movements and focused their operations in the rural areas, targeting wealthy landowners and businesses to finance their operations. Right-wing paramilitary groups were created by the landowners to combat the constant harassment from the guerrillas. The financial support that the paramilitary groups received from landowners and their involvement with drug trafficking allowed these groups to expand throughout the country. There is evidence that the Colombian army and different levels of national and local governmental institutions aided and encouraged the actions of the paramilitary groups in different regions of the country (UNHCR, 2013). For decades “leftist militia groups and right-wing paramilitaries continue[d] to terrorize the country, forcibly displacing civilians and perpetrating human rights abuses such as mass killings, torture, abduction, hostage taking, use of child soldiers, extrajudicial killings, and mistreatment of captured combatants” (UNHCR, 2013, p. 29).

According to Renan Vega Canton (2015), the United States has also been a direct actor in the Colombian conflict due to “its prolonged involvement during most of the 20th Century” (p. 731). On in its early instantiations, the US involvement in Colombia was framed as an attempt to prevent the “Bolshevik danger... from fateful planting the seed of Communism.” As such, in 1947 the US and Colombia signed The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, which fully articulates under the guise of the

Monroe doctrine, the general guidelines of the defence of the continent against extra-continental threats.

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower will explicitly tie economic assistance to Latin American countries to their efforts against the communist threat. In the case of Colombia, such economic assistance is materialized through military assistance concentrated in the regions where US companies make a presence (Randall, 1992). The subsequent policy that will guide the presence of the US in the region, namely the Alliance for the Progress, will guide President's Kennedy's plan to reshape the hemisphere. However, the growing rural discontent in Colombia will see pockets of Campesinos who are distrustful of the Colombian Army, their role in quashing social and political conflict, as well as their ties with regional landowners, will create movements of self-defence, which will eventually be understood as insurgent movements dealt with under the Anti-Communist crusade of the US government. As part of the cooperation in counter-insurgency training, the US Government created the School of the Americas in order to train military personnel in anti-Communist and counter-insurgency training; according to Vega (2015) "50% of the total of military trained in the school were Colombian" (p. 767).

Until the 1980s Communism and Counter-insurgency were the two axes under which the US government aid was deployed in Colombia; however, the government of Ronald Reagan shifted the emphasis to the War on Drugs. As the paramilitaries and the guerrilla movements began to participate in the drug trade, the Colombian government lobbies the US to include the armed groups in the War against Drugs. Moreover, it is not until 2001 with the geopolitical shift to the War on Terror after the attacks of September 11, that the Colombian guerrillas as well as the paramilitary groups, began to be understood as active participants of not only the drug trade but also international terror as defined by both the European Union and the US government.

The 1999-2002 failed peace talks of the Pastrana's government brings to power the right-wing government of Alvaro Uribe Velez who asked the US government "to direct the bombings as well as assume control of the war intelligence" (Vaga, 2015, p. 776). During the Uribe government, the presence of military and civilian US personnel in Colombia were critical to the presence and development of the paramilitary forces who benefited from training, armament and support (Human Rights Watch, 1996). According

to studies referenced by Renan Vega Cantor (2015), in areas where US military aid was received, there was a 138% increase of paramilitary attacks (p. 785) pointing to the direct link between paramilitary activities and the US role in the Colombian conflict.

The already established close links between the Colombian army and the paramilitary movements meant that in many cases the paramilitary acted with the protection and approval of the Colombian security forces. According to official reports between 2003 and 2006 more than 30,000 members of the United Self-defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) participated in the process of demobilization with the Colombian Government (Nussio, 2011). Although the AUC demobilized, factions of the group mingled with emerging drug traffickers and organized crime groups in what they called “Emerging Criminal Groups” (Glade, 2011).

While the Colombian government was negotiating with the paramilitaries, it deployed a military offensive against FARC, the largest guerrilla group in Colombia, killing some of its most important leaders. With the change in government and the guerrilla forces decimated, the government and FARC, agreed to peace talks to be held in Cuba in 2012. In what is the most significant advancement of the many peace talks that the Colombian government has had with FARC on its years of existence, the government and FARC have agreed to end the armed conflict by transitioning the guerrilla movement to a political party (WOLA, 2016). Although the peace agreements with paramilitaries and with FARC have de-intensified the armed conflict, social and political unrest continues in the distinct regions of the country as the jostling for regional power intensifies.

According to the 2017 UNHCR yearend report, Colombia has 7.7 million registered internally displaced people, it also has the second largest displaced population in the world, at 7.9 million people (UNHCR, 2017 p. 6). Canada has been a major host country for Colombian asylum seekers, and between 2002 and 2011 Colombia was designated as a source country (CIC, 2011).

Understanding the Canadian refugee system is imperative to move forward with the exploration of refugeeness. The section below is an overview of the refugee categorization within the Canadian immigration system; after the overview, I will explore

the implications of those policies in the construction and conceptualization of refugeeness for the members of the 1.5 generation.

The Canadian Refugee System and the construction of Refugeeness

The Refugee System in Canada

The Canadian Refugee system is designed to offer protection and resettlement support to "people who have fled their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution, and who are therefore unable to return home" (IRCC, 2016). International and Canadian immigration policies determine who meets the criteria to be granted refugee status in Canada. Since 2002 with the implementation of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), the focus of the Canadian refugee selection process has been granting status to those considered "most in need of protection" (Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, 2010, slide 14). Before 2002, the focus was on accepting people that were considered highly adaptable based on the Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's criteria (ISSofBC, 2014).

The Canadian refugee system has two main parts:

- Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, for people who need protection from outside Canada; this program recognizes two refugee denominations: Government Assisted Refugees (GARs), and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs). It is important to mention that Source Country refugees also fall within this program;

> The source country class allows Canada to resettle persons who are in a refugee-like situation but remain in their country of origin, and therefore, they do not come under the protection mandate of UNHCR. In order to be eligible, applicants must live in a country that has been designated as a source country (CIC, 2011).

- In-Canada Asylum Program for people making refugee protection claims from within -Canada known as refugee claimants.

Government Assisted Refugee

Government Assisted Refugee (GARs) is "a person who is forced to flee from persecution and who are located outside of their home country" (CCR, 2010), and has

been granted asylum by the Canadian Government. People who meet the criteria for refugee status are usually referred to Canada by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations. Upon their arrival in Canada, GARs receive financial and settlement support from the Canadian Government or the Province of Quebec for up to one year. The settlement services the GARs can access include initial orientation, banking support, housing, as well as basic language classes, and training. In addition to these services, basic health care for GARs is provided by the Interim Federal Health (IFH) for the first year.

Privately Sponsored Refugee

The Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSRs) denomination is identical to the GARs except that instead of being sponsored by the Canadian Government they are privately sponsored. Refugees can be sponsored by sponsorship agreement holders, Groups of five private citizens or community sponsors. Sponsors agree to offer financial and settlement support for PSRs for a year upon their arrival. In addition to these services, PSRs also have access to basic health care, government-funded language training, and settlement support services.

Refugee Claimant

Refugee claimants are people who have been forced to flee their country of origin and initiate their refugee claim after their arrival in Canada, at their entry point or inland at a CIC office. Claimants enter Canada via regular channels (tourists or on temporary permits) or irregular channels. “Refugee claimants are assessed by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), an independent administrative tribunal responsible for hearing asylum seekers and determining whether they should be accepted as refugees” (ISSofBC, 2014, p. 4). While their case is evaluated, some refugee claimants are eligible for social assistance. However, most of the settlement support claimants receive is provided by small NGOs and community-based organizations; their access to CIC funded programs as well basic health care is extremely limited.

Refugeeness

> Refugees are people with an identity, a past, a history, a cultural heritage. They are people who have been forced out of their countries by political

> turmoil, ethnic wars, religious, social or gender persecution. Those fleeing persecution are not only restricted in their movements and possibility of resettlement, but they are also caught up in practices which put them in a state of legal limbo for possibly many years. This has an impact on who they were, who they are, and who they will become. (Lacroix, 2004, p. 147)

According to Marie Lacroix (2000), “refugeeness is a socially constructed subjectivity produced by immigration and refugee policy” (p. i). People could become refugees for many different reasons, but the moment someone has to flee his or her place for residence due to fear of violence or persecution that person is a refugee based on the UNHCR definition (USA for UNHCR, 2016). For many people living in exile, being a refugee has a romantic connotation. Lee and Brotman (2011) citing Luibhe´id (2005) describe it as a ‘‘a narrative of movement from repression to freedom, or a heroic journey undertaken in search of liberation’’ (p. 245). It has also been described as “universal [,] in that crossing of borders and uprootedness is shared by all who are forced out of their countries” (Lacroix, 2004, p. 148). However, for most being a refugee is a struggle, a rupture, a loss (Lacroix, 2004; Riaño Alcalá et al., 2008; Weibe, 2013).

Lacroix (2004) argues that displacement is the start of becoming a refugee. However, I think that the process of refugeeness begins when one comes to terms with the need to flee. The process starts when people as agentic beings come to recognize that their safety and that of their family is in danger because of political, ethnic, religious, social or gender persecution. This understanding of refugeeness goes beyond the policies that validate its existence as a humanitarian immigration strategy. The understanding of one’s refugeeness might not be consolidated until the refugee status has been granted and the process of relocation has not started; research shows that the status determination process inland or abroad is a critical component of refugeeness (Lee & Brotman, 2011). The legal and political understandings of their narratives of displacement are validated by international humanitarian laws; “their experiences of persecution in their countries of origin contain traumatic stories which ultimately shape their conceptualization of refugeeness” (Lee & Brotman, 2011, p. 255).

Relocation, on the other hand, brings additional challenges; feelings of being othered, different, an outsider are common among refugees (Kumsa, 2004; Lacroix, 2004). Coming to terms with refugeeness is to recognize one’s own precarious social location within the host culture. Issues around housing, employment, and education

further complicate the process of relocation. Refugees also experience systemic discrimination and stigma due to their new status as racialized outsiders (LIP, 2016). The socio-political context of the Canadian society makes these less frequent or severe, but they are part of the everyday interaction of the refugees. Lee and Brotam (2011), argue that during the refugee determination process discourses of racism and demonization of countries of origin used to demonstrate the validity of a given claim contribute to the perpetuation of discourses of discrimination.

Accented Beings

> Your accent carries the story of who you are-who first held you and talked to you when you were a child, where you have lived, your age, the schools you attended, the languages you know, your ethnicity, whom you admire, your loyalties, your profession, your class position: traces of your life and identity are woven into your pronunciation, your phrasing, your choice of words. (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1392)

The process of adaptation after migration has for many as a significant component, the acquisition of a new language, or the recognition of a distinct accent within your language (Gluszek & Dovidol, 2010). The way we speak and the things we say or how we say things become a space of difference. According to Gluszek and Dovidol (2010) “a nonnative accent is one of the most salient characteristics of people from other countries who come to live, work, or study in a host country that identifies, and potentially stigmatizes, them as not being native born” (p. 2014).

Having a nonnative accent transforms how we interact with others. It becomes a marker. All sorts of assumptions are made about the speaker, based on the way she speaks (Goffman, 1963). In this process of identification and recognition, the speaker clearly becomes othered, labelled and racialized based on her accent and the cultural implications and assignations that have been given in general to the people with a common language and specifically from the same country. Research shows that “individuals who speak with a nonnative accent are likely to experience stigma” (Gluszek & Dovidol, 2010, p. 216). Language and accent as markers are just a part of the equation, our physical self, what we eat, how we dress and the things we do among others cultural elements complete the picture of an “other” that has now come to inhabit a new culture, a new geographical and linguistic space (Goffman, 1963).

"An accent, which represents one's manner of pronunciation, constitutes an important part of a speaker's social identity and conveys a considerable amount of social information" (Gluszek & Dovidol, 2010, p. 215); being an accented being, is a process of convergence in which all the nonnative aspects of self become salient. The speaker stands out, her abilities and understanding of her current location are questioned and then she is placed in a position of disadvantage. Becoming an accented being is not about language proficiency, "research [has] shown that those who speak nonnatively accented language, in general, are perceived more negatively than are speakers with native accents" (p. 217), it is also about learning to recognize and overcome the limitations imposed by prejudice and stereotyping based on speaking with a nonnative accent (Goffman, 1963; Gluszek & Dovidol, 2010). Gluszek and Dovidol (2010) referencing Cook (1999) talked about how "speaking a nonnative language constitutes a unique identity that should focus on the speaker in its own right as a multicompetent speaker" (p. 230).

1.5 Generation

The term 1.5 generation has been defined by different authors as individuals who were born in the same country of their parents but migrated to a new country during their formative years (Pham, 2012; Kebede, 2010; Kumsa, 2006; Smith, 2014; Kanagala, 2011). The work of Rubén Rumbaut and Kenji Ima (1988, 1994, 2004) in this topic has been very significant on the classification and exploration of the different migration experiences based on the age and life stages at the time of the migration (Rumbaut, 1994, 2004). Rumbaut (1988, 2004) argues that the 1.5 generation are those children who migrate between the ages of 6 and 12. This cohort is characterized by pre-adolescent children who have for the most part already learned to read and write in their first language and have also developed a relationship with their culture and their traditions. Other authors have been less specific in their efforts to define the age bracket of the 1.5 generation (Pham, 2012; Kebede, 2010; Smith, 2014; Palmer, 2001; Plaza 2006). For the purpose of this research the working definition of the 1.5 generation will include what Rumbaut (1988) called the 1.25 generation (ages 13 to 17) and up to 19 years of age, particularly those who arrive with their families or had to go back to school to complete their high school education in Canada. This is a significant aspect of the experience since school is a vital part of the adolescent's socialization and identity

development process; “the peer context is thought to be a social laboratory for adolescents to try out different roles and identities in the process of self-exploration while receiving feedback from their peer group” (Mercer et al., 2017, p. 2191). The idea behind combining these two cohorts as part of the 1.5 generation is to get a better understanding of the experiences and identification process of a larger section of the immigrant population (Smith, 2014), and include a part of the refugee youth that was left in the limbo of the categorization of youth, because they were too young to be included with the adults but too old to fit in with the other youth in their high schools. “The designation of an immigrant of the 1.5 generation highlights potentially different adaptation experiences that these individuals may have in comparison with either the first or second-generation immigrants” (Pham, 2012, p. 4).

Some of the main areas of concern for the 1.5 generation are family relations and roles, adaptation process in general and issues associated with their sense of belonging and identity formation. Considering the age range of the 1.5 generation, complex experiences in these areas could be expected, but migration and especially forced migration in the case of refugees could complicate these processes (Tartakovsky, 2009).

In relation to the family life the 1.5 generation, Pham (2012), in a ethnographic study involving 1.5 generation Vietnamese-American highlights the impact of role reversal in the family dynamics. Children are often asked to translate for their parents, making their parents dependent on their children to navigate their new environment. Pham (2012) citing Bassnett and Trivedi, states that "translation is a highly manipulative activity that involves all kinds of stages in that process of transfer across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (p. 6). The 1.5 generation has now been given the opportunity to affect in a very significant and direct way the lives of their parents and their family in general. In addition to that, the 1.5 generation takes on more responsibilities and become "central figures of the household both financially and in decision-making, and thus have gained a general sense of independence in the household despite having an elder member of the family living in the home" (p. 39). These newfound roles could hinder the 1.5 generation’s own process of adaptation by reducing the opportunities to spend more time developing new relationships and creating significant connections with peers (Pham, 2012). In addition to this, their new position within the family could create conflict and generate high levels of anxiety and stress (Kebede, 2010).

For the 1.5 generation the process of adaptation might be considered closer to that of the first generation than the second, if the language learning process is considered, however, “the designation of an immigrant of the 1.5 generation highlights a potentially different adaptation experiences that these individuals may have in comparison with either the first or second-generation immigrants” (Pham, 2012, p. 3).

The ability of the 1.5 generation to communicate with their parents in their mother tongue and with the second generation in their second language gives them the opportunity to experience two worlds concomitantly. According to Claire M. Smith (2014), for the members of the 1.5 generation “being bilingual, the ability to understand and communicate with more than one culture, and having a more culturally aware perspective are the most common attributes” the 1.5 generation members identified as positive (p. 226). In contrast, Kebede (2010) argues that in many cases the 1.5 generation are perceived by the first generation “as not having adequate knowledge about their cultures, and their language skills are viewed as being relatively simple and only basically conversational” (p. 21); at the same time, the second generation sees them as closer to the first generation than to themselves. “This leaves the 1.5-generation young people in a limbo state of not belonging anywhere…they simply do not belong to either group; perhaps they sit on the fence between the two worlds” (p. 21).

According to Kedebe (2010), one of the major difficulties of the 1.5 generation is to develop a sense of belonging. The idea of belonging is closely related to identity and identity formation process, a topic that will be described in the following section.

Identity & Identity Formation

Identity

Indispensable to discussing the process of identity formation is to clarify what definition of identity I have chosen to guide my inquiry. To commit to a definition of identity has been in itself a process of formation, both a personal and intellectual exploration. One of my goals when finding a working definition of identity or identities was to accommodate both practice and theory in an attempt to allow multiplicity.

I have come to understand identities as multiple, processual and relational narratives of self (Sommers, 1994, p. 614). This definition comes from an understanding

of humans as agentic beings immersed in a social and cultural context in which interactions are mediated by language (Kebede, 2010; Park, 1999; Kumsa, 2004, Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014).

Identities are constituted by narratives that come from our interaction with our world and are based mostly on our roles, our positionality and our relationships (familial relationships, professions); as well as socially constructed and individually performed notions of race, gender and class. In the case of the 1.5 generation refugees, race, familial relationship, language and social location are some of the interlocking systems of power that permeate the process of identity formation. In understanding identities, it is important to recognize the presence of pre-existing cultural, social and individual systems that precede the agentic process of identity formation such as race, gender, class, etc. Identities are created in relation; the process of formation is that of witnessing processes of transformation in inter and intrapersonal contexts. The individuals define, describe, recognize and position themselves and that which they recognize as part of themselves when in conversation with others. (Kebede, 2010; Park, 1999; Kumsa, 2004; Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014)

Finally, those identities that become more present are the result of a narrative understanding of who one is and what one decides to bring to the forefront as significant regarding social context, cultural negotiations and personal preferences and environmental demands (Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014).

Identity Formation

Multiple authors have described the process of identity formation as a challenging process (Rumbaut 1994; Singer, 2004; Tartakovsky, 2009; Erdogan, 2012; Liu, 2015). Based on the understanding of identities presented in the previous section; the process of identity formation can then be understood as a lifelong process mediated by language in which cultural, social and individual elements are in constant communication and “exist in time, space, and emplotment” (Somers, 1994, p 622; Ertorer, 2014; Quintana, 2007). In the case of refugees, this process transpires during displacement and relocation. Based on the understanding of identities as socially constructed and beings as immersed in a cultural context in which interactions are mediated by language; multiple issues could arise during the process of relocation, and

even more in the case of Colombian refugees relocated to Canada, since relocation entails “a radical cultural-contextual change” (Ertorer, 2014, p. 269). The identity formation process is a narrative process in which stories about who one is are created and re-created in relation. The context in which this process takes place plays a very significant role.

Regardless of the humanitarian values that the Canadian immigration is system is said to be based on, it falls short, and refugees still have to face multiple layers of discrimination that, in tandem with their issues around displacement, could have a severe impact in the success of the relocation process.

Some authors have focused on the experience of immigrants, but very few have worked with refugees. The unique conditions of displacement and relocation experienced by refugees make their process of identity formation very challenging (Rumbaut, 1994). Anagnostopoulos et al. (2006) argue that “the processes of identity formation in adolescents belonging to minority groups are extremely difficult within a cultural and social framework with double and often conflicting values” (p. 237). In a time when youth should be exploring the potential of their individuality within a safe and known social and cultural context, the 1.5 generation refugees are forced to engage in basic survival tasks; they must learn a new language, meet the demands of a new social and cultural context, and perform new roles within their families (Tartakovsky, 2009). The conditions of the new locale have a significant impact in the process of adaptation and in facilitating the identity formation experiences of the refugees in general, but for the 1.5 generation in particular.

In addition to the difficulties around housing, employment, health and community that refugees face upon their arrival to Canada (Wiebe, 2013); the 1.5 generation refugees also face the challenges related to their developmental stages. Preadolescence and adolescence have been described as a complex biopsychosocial phenomenon, a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. The youth experience significant biological and social changes, “these subjective changes in the adolescent take place within the context of a specific social environment” (Anagnostopoulos, Vlassopoulos & Lazaratou, 2006, p. 226). The processes of identity formation are taxing processes that entail, in some cases, internal and external changes and challenges for the individual and her environment.

The compounded and unique challenges that the 1.5 generation refugees face go beyond learning a new language and navigating a new environment as an individual but are also as a part of a family. Arriving as an adolescent or a young adult is both an advantage and a challenge. Typically learning the language faster than their parents place the 1.5 in the position of a cultural broker and representative of the family of most issues related to the relocation process, and as a result, acquiring responsibilities they would not typically have to face. In addition to this adolescence is a complex developmental period of identity formation and exploration, that requires a level of stability and support that are often not present during the process of displacement and relocation.

Methods

To explore the displacement and relocation process of 1.5 generation Colombian refugees in Vancouver, I worked together with the participants to remember and narrate the most significant experiences of their journey after arriving in Canada. The purpose of this project is to contribute to the growing research that has been done with the 1.5 generation, and give the 1.5 generation refugees the opportunity to narrate their process displacement and relocation, identify the most significant aspects of their journey, and narrate how relevant the ideas of refugeeness and language have been in their process of adaptation. In order to facilitate this exploration, I invited the participants to use collage as a medium to explore their experiences of displacement and relocation. Art based elicitation facilitates the meaning-making processes and offers great opportunities for the participants to illustrate their narratives. The idea of the collage comes from the understanding of identities as plural, and variable, rather than singular and fixed (Kohler-Riessman, 2000).

In this chapter, I will describe Narrative Inquiry. I will also describe the usage of art, particularly collage, as an elicitation tool; as well as participant recruitment strategies, data collection, and analysis. Finally, I will present an overview of ethical considerations and possible ideas to report findings.

Research Paradigm and Design Rationale

The use of a qualitative research method was decided as the most appropriate, to facilitate the process of exploration of the 1.5 generation refugee's journey and narrate their experiences. Qualitative research methods have been described as "valuable in providing rich descriptions of complex phenomena; … [listening to the] voice to those whose views are rarely heard; [and] conducting initial explorations (Sofaer, 1999, p. 39). Narrative inquiry in combination with art-based elicitation will be the primary method to be used to explore the identity formation process of the 1.5 generation refugees living in Lower Mainland.

Narrative Inquiry

As indicated above, narrative inquiry was used as the primary research method for this project. Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk (2007) have defined narrative inquiry as an approach in which the stories are used as data; "the idea of narrative inquiry is that stories are collected as a means of understanding experience as lived and told, through both research and literature." (p. 459). According to Mello (2007) "conceptualizing experience narratively [is] a powerful way to provoke reflection and transformation." (p. 205).

Based on these understandings, narrative inquiry allowed me the creation of a research strategy where the participants and I can explore how they not only make sense of their experiences of refugeeness, but also of their displacement and relocation process, and their relationship with their mother tongue. Narrative inquiry understands that "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Exploring the process of displacement and relocations of the 1.5 generation refugees through narrative inquiry allowed the emergence of both individual and social narratives that are constitutive of the meaning-making process of the 1.5 generation experiences. "Personal narratives are, at core, meaning-making units of discourse. They are of interest precisely because narrators interpret the past in stories, rather than reproduce the past as it was" (Reissman, 2000, p. 20). Narratives can be considered the oldest way of transmitting knowledge (Monro, 2009), from cave paintings, to trovadores, and all the way to social media outlets.

> People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which, their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375).

Art-based Elicitation

Using art elicitation to inform the process of narrative inquiry comes from the idea of representing the understanding of identity as something fluid, and multilayered (Kebede, 2010; Park, 1999, Kumsa, 2004) that can be depicted through a collage. It is also important to mention that the usage of art "as an instrument to promote reflection and make us, as human beings, go deep inside our own conflicts and our emotional selves." (Mello, 2007, p. 207) The collages were primarily used as a medium to enrich the conversations with the 1.5 generation refugees; the goal was that through the art-making process the 1.5's could explore the significant aspects of their past experiences, considering their new-found social location and their current positionality. As Mello (2007) states, art can help researchers, using narrative inquiry, to create spaces where lived experiences can be shared with others.

The use of collage as part of this project also comes from the understanding of art as an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their experiences of displacement and relocation in a different way, the making of art involves additional cognitive and emotional resources and that in turn could create the possibility of a deeper and more insightful discussion (Coperland & Agosto, 2012). Harper (2002) explains the use of art as an elicitation method as follows:

> The difference between interviews using images and text, and interviews using words alone lies in the ways we respond to these two forms of symbolic representation. This has a physical basis: the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus, images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words. (p. 13)

Finally, the making of art also allows the creation of a more engaged research process in which the participant are the creators of the experience, narrowing the gap

between the researcher and the participant by conceding the power to the participant as the expert and the driver of the process of creating knowledge (Packard, 2008). In addition to this, using art-informed research as a way to generate data in a nonconventional way, using a non-dominant language could be more effective at "captur[ing] the everyday nuances and complexities of migration and health of refugees" (Guruge, Hynie, Shakya, Akbari, Htoo & Abiyo, 2015, p. 2). Guruge et al., (2015) following Coles and Knowles (2011) also argue that "knowledge advanced in arts-informed research is generative rather than propositional and based on assumptions that reflect the multidimensional, complex, dynamic, inter-subjective and contextual nature of human experience" (p. 124).

Stories are told in multiple ways, both images and words have been used to re-present and re-tell stories and to share with others how we make meaning of those narratives that constitute our experiences. Including the making of the collage in my research complements the narrative process by allowing me and the participants to look at the stories in a creative way. The process of creating the collage is a narrative process in which the participants engage in a meaning process in relation to the images selected to be used as part of the collage. The collage becomes a complementary route for the exploration of the experience; a symbolic medium that situates the individual in relation to the experience through images. The narratives then become multidimensional and enriched by the tangentiality of the collages. The images and what they represent thicken the stories and transcend the spoken language.

Participant Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment

The recruitment process was carried out through social media, community agencies and social and professional networks. A total of 5 1.5 generation refugees from Colombia who have been living in Canada for more than five years were recruited to participate in this study. It took longer than I expected to be able to recruit all the participants for this project; some of the feedback received was that the selection criteria were very narrow. In other cases, when people met the criteria, they expressed no interest in discussing issues around refugee experiences.

Participant criteria

The following criteria were used to select the participants for the study: (a) be from Colombia; (b) were between 12 to 19 years old when they arrived in Canada; (c) arrived in Canada as Convention Refugees or Inland Refugee Claimants; (d) have been living in Canada for more than 5 years.

Data Collection Procedures

Once I was ready to start with the recruitment process, the posters (Appendix A) were uploaded to social media platforms and distributed to community agencies with their prior approval. I also distributed the poster amongst members of my social networks that work with refugees and immigrant communities. Potential participants, who showed interested, were asked to contact me via phone or email to complete the initial screening interview (Appendix B). Once it is confirmed that the selection criteria is met by the potential participant, an interview with the individual was being scheduled at a mutually agreed upon location and time. During this interview, the participants were informed of the details of the study. A consent form (Appendix C) was given to the participant to sign. Both the researcher and the participant retained a copy of the consent form for their records. With the approval of the now participant the rest if the interview was recorded; following the guidelines of narrative inquiry, unstructured interviews will be the primary data collection tool. Unstructured interviews allowed me and the participants to explore multiple aspects of their experiences offering significant, relevant and even unrelated information about the experiences of the participants that helped enrich the narratives that I will present in the upcoming pages. The interviews between the researcher and the participant were transcribed and member checking (Creswell, 2000) meetings were scheduled when needed to allow the participants to access the transcripts and offer feedback; these are also part of the narrative records (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

The initial contact with all the participants was over email. Given the how challenging the recruitment process was, I initiated the contact with all the participants acting on referrals received by common acquaintances. Over email, we talked about the recruitment criteria and scheduled our first meeting to go over the details of the project. It is important for me to mention that at the time of the interview I had known 4 of the 5

participants for some time. When we met in person, I spoke about the project, my interests and clarified any questions they had about the process. All the participants provided consent during this meeting, after that, we started the recording our conversation. The interviews were conducted in different settings, a restaurant, a coffee shop, the house of one of the participants and a private office. All the settings offer the privacy and comfort needed to conduct the interviews without interruptions or confidentiality concerns. The participants were offered a meal or a drink before or after the meeting depending on the preference of the participants. Snacks and refreshments were also available during the interviews. The interviews took an average of one hour, towards the end of that time I asked the participants if it was OK to end our meeting and invited them to share how they were feeling. I encourage the participants to reach out to me if they had any additional questions or concerns regarding the study and offered a list of resources (Appendix G) in case they needed additional support.

In preparation for the second interview, I read more about the best way to use art and art expressions as part of a research project. The work of Anna Bagnoli (2004) with art forms for her research about identities offered much great insight on how to help participants connect with their experiences. Once the transcripts were completed, and the initial analysis was done. I contacted the participants for a follow-up interview. Two of these follow up interviews were conducted at private library rooms and two at the participant's house. In this session, participants were invited to illustrate with images their narrative of displacement and relocation focussing on the most salient aspects of their identities. For this session, I provided a variety of art supplies for the participants to use in the creation of their collage.

Figure 1. Collage Supplies

The participants were briefed about the dynamics and objectives of the follow-up session. “The goal of the session is to use the potentiality of art to motivate participants to engage and share their stories; “storytelling is a relational activity that gathers others to listen and empathize. It is a collaborative practice, and assumes tellers and listeners/questioners interact in particular cultural milieu—historical contexts essential to interpretation” (Reissman, 2000, p. 5).

The use of collage as an art-based elicitation technique not only enriched the narratives of the participant but also allowed a different exploration and presentation of the topics pertinent to this research. The participants represented and expressed their experiences in a creative way. For a methodological perspective the use of art also facilitated the conversation, the participants looked more relaxed, and it was somehow easier to stay focused on the ideas and experiences around displacement and relocation.

Participants were compensated with a meal and an honorarium of $20.00 in the form of a gift card.

Data Management and Analysis

The sessions were audio recorded and transcribed after each meeting. The conversations were transcribed in the language used during the meeting, Spanish in all

cases. I took field notes, recording my impressions, and questions, and highlighting the presence of recurrent themes or narratives within the client's narratives (Weibe, 2013). Once the transcripts were completed, I listened to each interview while reading the transcript and, following Hunter's (2009) narrative analysis process, I summarized each participant's story, coded the information by themes, describing each theme using the participant's language; placing special attention to narratives of relocation and displacement. I also noted significant statements or phrases from each participant to represent them within the research (Hunter, 2009, p. 50).

Through this process of thematic analysis (Reissman, 2005) I was be able to identify specific types of narratives, common themes and significant patterns related to how Colombian refugees who belong to the 1.5 generation make meaning of their experiences of displacement and relocation; as well as narratives about what it means to be a refugee, landmarks in their process of relocation, and the significance of language in their stories. Once the analysis was completed, I was able to describe each theme using statements or phrases from each participant to represent the themes (Hunter, 2009; Weibe, 2013, Reissman, 2000, 2005). The focus of the theme analysis was to find common elements within and between the stories of participants; the main "interest lies in the content of speech, analysts interpret what is said by focusing on the meaning that any competent user of the language would find in a story" (Reissman, 2005, p. 3). The data used from the interviews conducted in Spanish was translated into English.

Trustworthiness and Rigour

One of my main concerns when using Narrative Inquiry as a method is keeping the stories of the participants intact during the research project. It is essential for me as a researcher to honour the experiences of the participants, by ensuring their stories are not misconstrued or distorted in any way in the course of this research. Given the nature of the method, it is paramount to ensure the integrity of the raw data, the accuracy of the interpretations, and the final representation of the stories of the participants.

Member checking was used to establish the credibility of the information used in this project (Cresswell, 2000). Participants were also offered access to transcripts and notes. During the second interview, the participants were consulted about the main themes that had been identified to make sure they were accurate. The feedback

received from the participants was included as part of the final report (Cresswell, 2000; Riesman, 2000, 2005).

Ethical Considerations

This project was submitted to the Simon Fraser University's Research Ethics Board (REB) for approval. Participants gave written consent to participate in this study. Following professional regulations, the limits of confidentiality were explained to participants as part of the informed consent process. Participants were made aware that they are free to withdraw from the project at any point.

The quality and integrity of this project were enhanced by using member checking strategies, consultation and supervision with my thesis advisor as well as peers and other professionals when needed. The identity of the participant was kept confidential by changing their names; the participants were given the opportunity to choose their "research name." Possible identifying details of the participants were managed with strict confidence unless the participant offers explicit consent to have some of their identifiable information used as part of the final narratives for this study.

Finally, the priority of this research has been to ensure the safety of the participants. The participants were encouraged to seek support in the case of any distress responses during or after an interview. A list of counselling and community support resources was given to the participants (Appendix A). In addition to this, I have the relevant skills and knowledge to offer support during our interviews. The participants were also being reminded at the beginning of each interview/session that they were free to end the interview at any point and that they could also choose not to answer specific questions.

Maintenance of Confidentiality

Transcripts and art materials were redacted of identifying information. The data was collected and stored in a manner that protects confidentiality. Data collected includes: hard copies of arts-based elicitation methods (e.g. collage), audio-recordings from interviews, notes from interviews and transcripts from interviews.

Retention and Destruction of Data

As listening to audio recordings was an essential part of data analysis, audio recordings were held throughout analysis as password protected digital files. All recordings were destroyed after the analysis was complete. All transcripts of audio recordings will be held for a period of 7 years after data analysis, in accordance with the Canadian Psychological Association Code of Ethics at which point they will be destroyed. Until it is destroyed, all data will be held in a confidential password protected files on a computer in the SFU Surrey Education department, Room 5210 or SFU Radar.

Meaning Making

My academic curiosity for this research project comes from my own experience as a refugee, as I mentioned before, I arrived in Canada when I was 21 years old, and much like the 1.5's came as a companion. I think that it is important to recognize that beyond the academic challenges a research project entails I experienced some unexpected personal and emotional challenges.

I think the personal closeness with all aspects of this project proved to be at time overwhelming and quite draining. In a way, listening to the participants' stories was a constant invitation to revisit my own stories, and perhaps at times, I spent too much time wondering in my past and questioning my future. As you will see in the findings chapter, the idea of going back to Colombia became one central part of the conversation with the participants. It was not a part of the topics I wanted to inquire about, and for certain the narratives, the participants shared offer an interesting light into some dark corners of my relationship with Colombia.

To successfully and professionally manage these academic and personal challenges I used a few different strategies: First, I had acknowledged the importance of my own experience while at the same time taking a healthy and professional distance from the stories of the participants without losing my ability to relate, empathize and share. I took breaks during the listening and reading sessions and kept a constant dialogue with the text by questioning my assumptions and interpretations to ensure I was true to the narratives of the participants.

Then, time, I had to give myself the gift of time. I had to accept that this project was going to take longer than I expected and to make it happen, I needed to give myself time. I needed time to think and write, time to cry and be mad, time to grieve. Time to process and look after my refugee self. So, time to do nothing was one of the primary self-care strategies I used during the writing of this process.

Time was also very important when I was working with the stories. I scheduled the interviews with the participants at a few weeks apart to be able to spend time with the narrative and familiarize myself with their individual stories before inviting new narratives to the process. In order to feel close and familiar with the narratives of each participant, I listened to the interviews at least two times before transcribing them. I was looking to connect with their stories and the participants. Once the transcriptions were done I read them several times; I focused on identifying the main themes that guided the narratives of the participants. I read the transcripts selecting key responses that illustrated the different aspects of the displacement and relocation journey of the participants. Once that was done, I wrote down questions and comments that I brought to the second interview. I used this material as a path into the art elicitation part of the process as well as an opportunity for the participants to see the work I had done and reflect on the topics we had already discussed (Mello, 2007).

The actual process of using the collage was very interesting. There was some hesitation at first and a serious preoccupation for the aesthetics of the final product. After a brief explanation and discussion of the idea behind art-based elicitation as an alternative method to generate data, the participants dived in the process of creating a collage. This was both intriguing and refreshing for the participants and me. The various images guided the conversation and allowed the participants to elaborate further on some already explored topics as well as bring new topics.

Findings

To present the finding of this project, I first introduced the participants using pseudonyms. I included their collage as part of vignettes to illustrate their experiences of displacement and relocation. Then, I presented the common themes that were identified during the analysis and interpretation of the data. I reported how the research questions were answered and highlighted the significant aspects of the participants' narratives of

their relocation experience. I used significant quotes and statements from the participants to illustrate the findings (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). A digital copy of the completed thesis will be catalogued in SFU library and email to the participants if requested.

Chapter 3.
Findings

Overview

Re-telling stories of displacement to different service providers and government organizations is a typical experience for refugees as a way to prove that they deserved to be here. After a while telling the story of one's displacement becomes a practice to be avoided. For me asking the participants to talk about their experiences was a challenge. I did not want to cause any distress or disrespect their process. Having the opportunity to share the stories of the participants was a privilege. It was also a challenge for them to tell the stories. It was a time to revisit wounds and understand themselves in relation to who they were, how they got here and the chain of decisions that they took. Each of the participants told their specific stories and situated themselves not only in relation to who they were when they arrived here, but also the chain of events that took them to where they are. It was almost as if the interview allowed them to go through a period of self-reflection that is so intimate and difficult at the same time.

The interviews for this project were all conducted in Spanish. All the participants are fluent in English; therefore, fluency was not a reason for doing the interviews in Spanish. Fernando talking about this during our first interview said:

> I did not know if the interview was going to be in English or Spanish ... I thought I hope I feel calm to speak English well ... For me, it would be very strange to be in an interview with you in English, because things would be completely different ... I would be telling the same story but in English, and what we say and how we say it for me it loses a little of its meaning, and it sounds strange, even if we are talking about the same thing. English, for example, is very formal for me, I usually speak it with people I do not know very well. We have known each other for a while that is why I think it would be very strange to speak English with you.

Speaking Spanish during the interview came about very organically; there was no previous discussion or agreement regarding the language to be used during the interactions. This worked perfectly fine with me, I am completely fluent in Spanish and working with Spanish interviews allowed me a closer relationship with the narratives of the participants. As it is usual in the interactions between bi-lingual speakers, there were instances where English words were used as part of the conversations.

In this chapter, I present the stories of displacement and relocation of the 1.5 refugees who participated in this study. I introduce each participant with a short vignette to give the reader some context; this is intentionally general to ensure confidentiality. The introduction will include some details for their family of origin, their current marital status and a few other details that seem relevant to this project. I will include their collage as part of vignettes to illustrate their experiences of displacement and relocation. Then, I will present the common themes that were identified as significant during the analysis of the data and grouped as follows: Force to Leave; Relocation; Accented Beings, Refugeeness and I will also add a section on what the participants narrated about Colombia, called: Longing.

The participants

According to the Human Right Watch Report (2000), in the early 2000's Colombia saw an intensification of the conflict, violence against human right activists, journalists, lawyers and union leaders was at its peak "paramilitary groups working in some areas with the tolerance and open support of the armed forces continued to massacre civilians, commit selective killings, and spread terror. Guerrillas also flouted the international humanitarian law, executing and kidnapping civilians and carrying out indiscriminate attacks" (HRW, paragraph 1, 2000). The mothers and fathers of the participants belong to this group of people, who due to "the work that they did and not who they were" - as one of the participants put it- were forced to leave Colombia with their families and finally relocated in Canada. In a report released in 2000, Francis Deng, the U.N. secretary-general's representative on internally displaced persons, described Colombia's situation as "among the gravest in the world... [D]isplacement in Colombia is not merely incidental to the armed conflict but is also a deliberate strategy of war. (HRW, 2000, paragraph 21). As indicated in the selection criteria the two women and three men who participated in this study are Colombians who arrived in Canada during their formative years and have been living in Canada for more than ten years. Four of the participants arrived in Canada with their families directly from Colombia as Government Assisted Refugees; one arrived as a Refugee Claimant on his own after leaving his family in the United States.

All the participants arrived in Canada as part of a "family," and as I will discuss later, this fact has been one of the most significant aspects of their process of

adaptation. Today the participants are all in their late 20's or early 30's; they have pursued different levels of education that go from high school to Graduate School. They are all currently working or attending school or both. Four of them are involved in long-term romantic relationships; four out of the five participants are now young parents, and all maintain different levels of contact with their parents and siblings. As indicated in the methods chapter they have been given the opportunity to pick their "research name," only one picked the name I used in this manuscript; the rest of the participants asked me to pick one for them. Their names are Manuelita, Salvador, Julian, Fernando, and Carlota.

As the reader will see, the description of each participant is very basic. As a refugee and as a researcher I am very concerned with making sure that the identity of the participants remains anonymous and information that could in any moment help the reader identify the participants has not been included. The main focus of the section below is on the experiences of the 1.5s as a way to honour their journey and the courage it takes to share one's stories.

Manuelita

Manuelita was 17 when she arrived in Canada in 2000 with her mother, father and two siblings; Manuelita is the middle child. She is currently living on the Lower mainland with her two children and her partner. She is now working and has been with the same company for some years. Manuelita has a very close relationship with her family. During our interview, she mentioned on several occasions how important their support has been in her life.

Salvador

Salvador is Manuelita's older brother; he was 18 years old when he arrived in Canada. He is currently separated and has two young children. He also has a very close relationship with his family and with Colombia. Salvador works in the social services field and is very committed to social justice issues both here and in Colombia. Salvador did not complete high school, but he has managed to build an impressive professional career based on his grassroots work in the social services field.

Fernando

Fernando was 19 years old when he arrived in Canada with his family in 2003 and has lived in the Lower Mainland since his arrival to Canada. Fernando has three siblings, and he mentioned that he has a close relationship with his family; he is the oldest of the children. Fernando also indicated that his family has played a very significant role during this time in Canada. He is married and has a young child. He has attended college and is currently working.

Carlota

Carlota was 18 years old when arrived in Canada in 2003. She came with her biological mother, her stepfather, two half-siblings and a stepsibling; she is the oldest of the children. Carlota had not been living with her biological mother at the time of relocation and stated that she had a distant relationship with her and her mother's new family. Carlota is currently living in the Lower Mainland; she is attending University and working as a service provider. She has been married for several years and has a young child. Carlota remains in contact with her family here and describes the relationship as distant.

Julian

Julian, his mother, younger and grandmother left Colombia together in 2003 when he was 15 years old. They arrived in the United States. A short while after their arrival Julian decided to leave his family. After two months, Julian decided to leave the United States and apply for refugee status in Canada. His case was approved. After his arrival, Julian became part of a chosen family of four, and some years later, his mother and sister also moved to Canada, although they have never lived together as a family unit since they left Colombia. Julian has a master’s degree and is currently looking for a job in Vancouver.

The Themes

The following section contains the common themes that were identified as significant during the analysis of the data: Forced to Leave; Relocation; Accented Beings, Refugeness and Longing.

Forced to Leave

> *"No one ever sat down to talk to me; I did not understand, I was lost.*
>
> *.... I remember I was very confused, confused because I did not understand why we left"*
>
> *Manuelita*

The experience of displacement is the axis of the refugee journey. The reasons for the displacement are the catalyst for that journey. Even though the understanding of the idea of the refugee is of someone that is forced to leave, there is a decision made to become a refugee; that one moment in time of anguish when a person realizes that her life and the lives of those whom she loves are in danger and decides to flee. This is a coerced decision. However, it can be said, that there is an understanding of the need to flee that makes the journey of the relocation logical regardless of the complexity of the idea of being persecuted and therefore displaced. This logical decision does not make the journey more comfortable, however not having this understanding only makes the experience of displacement and relocation that much harder for those in the family who do not know the reasons why they have to leave. Leaving is in itself difficult to fully comprehend especially considering that the decision to flee is often made under duress, without having a full understanding of the conditions of the relocation and the challenges the family will face once they leave this country of origin and arrive at the host country.

The following section will highlight two of the main topics that came up when exploring the narratives of relocation during the interviews: No one told me and Material loss.

No one told me

A significant aspect of the 1.5 displacement and relocation experience is a sense of inability to make decisions related to their present and even of their future - especially

during the first few years. This lack of control brings feelings of anger, disorientation, and an overwhelming sense of confusion since the 1.5s are in many cases unable to understand the reason for their need to flee. As Manuelita explained it, this anger comes "because all this was imposed on me and I did not have a way of choosing." Just like her family, her life was also at risk, but her limited understanding of the situation only made her experience harder, which is also how Julian talks about the start of his own experience of displacement:

> I left because of my dad's situation... but it was not my own choice, I did not want to leave... to tell you the truth they told me we needed to leave Colombia a month before we left...fifteen days before I came here, and just like that my life changed.

There is a clear distance between what the 1.5s know and the reasons for fleeing. However, there is not a sense of the parents being guilty or at fault, but there is a sense of imposition and frustration for having to leave because of something that is not directly linked to the 1.5's actions.

Carlota who was 18 at the time of migration mentioned how she felt about this

> I was treated like a child, a 3-year-old child... I did not feel valued; I did not feel respected, I did not feel that what I had to say mattered. What I had to say was not important enough. They never asked me for an opinion, they never told me about it.

There is a sense of distance between the experience of being forced to leave and the reason why they had to flee. The perceived imposition and lack of choice are evident in all the interviews when the participants talk about the experience of leaving Colombia as part of a family unit. Fernando summarized this part of his experience as follows:

> F: It was not my choice
>
> Int: No one asked you?
>
> F: Exactly. I only had to leave because I was related to my father.

The 1.5s just like the rest of their family have now been forced to distance themselves from what has been until now all they know. Who they are and the persons they have become or have started to become in relation to their environment and their

peers will soon be challenged and the need to continue that process of development into late adolescence or early adulthood will be further complicated by the experiences and consequences of displacement and relocation.

The reasons for the displacement are overwhelming for all the members of the family, and often the parents and the older siblings are unable to verbalize the situation to the younger members of the family leaving them confused by the urgency of their relocation. In many cases not even the adults have a complete grasp of what needs to be done, just a realization of how taxing their situation is for the entire family. This urgency and lack of understanding of the situation can generate feelings frustration, anxiety and confusion for all the family members and from the start foster conflict and even hostility within the family unit. At the same time, the experiences of displacement and especially relocation forced the family to work together regardless of the differences and disagreements.

Material loss

Material loss exacerbates the sense of defeat and frustration that accompanies and defines the experience of both displacement and relocation. In these particular cases, the families lost their houses:

> We lost the house, and that was very hard, to have lost the house. My dad and my mom worked so hard to get that house, and it was like a family dream, for us at that time it was an achievement, the best house in the world only to have lost everything (Manuelita).

Material objects give people a sense of achievement, or pride, security, the stability of having succeeded, so losing those objects comes with the opposite feelings of being defeated. Julian also speaks to this: “my mom was very attached to her house, and she fought hard for her house and fought a lot in fact to renovate her house, and all that and from one moment to another it was gone.”

The sense on being defeated is exacerbated by the experiences of relocation, the places where they live, the difficulties that they face, the temporariness of the spaces, while the space that was lost was somewhat 'safe.' Fernando talked about this challenge as follows:

> The change was incredible, one thing was the language and being dependent, and the other was the space because in Colombia we lived

> in a big house. Here when we first arrived we moved to a three-bedroom house, and we felt tight, and tight it is tight because in Colombia everyone had their room, where I shared a room with my little sister, and my other two brothers shared a room, and my parents had the third room, and sometimes it was a problem. I was 19 years old when we arrived, and my two of my siblings were still children, so we had to be careful with what we said and how we said it. We also had to be very organized; we could not have many things because there was no space; at first, it was annoying, you could feel the shock.

In many cases, the living conditions and physical spaces refugees can access in the host country are very inadequate and precarious. Manuelita, Julian, and Carlota also mentioned during the interviews that getting used to their place here in Canada was very challenging physically and emotionally because of the difference regarding the quality of the spaces in comparison with their houses back in Colombia.

Relocation

"It is starting over, it is an exercise of loss and gain, of relearning"

Carlota

Relocation seen as the second part of the refugee journey could be even more challenging and traumatic that the displacement process. The relocation process seems never-ending, unlike the displacement that seems to end once the refugees land in the host country. The relocation process has so many layers of complexity, and it could take years before it could be said that the process of relocation has ended.

Based on the interviews it can be said that there is an ambivalent relationship with the relocation experience as painful and positive at the same time. Displacement is understood as negative given the reasons that create the need for it, but relocation as the only alternative to being hurt or losing a family member becomes in a way positive. However, the experience of relocation is also in itself a complex experience. Manuelita talked about this complexity in relation to her father:

> I know that we all have many pains, but at the same time, we no longer had any options, so we just had to leave, so we just have to look at the good side because what else can we do... I was very grateful that my dad was alive....so I said that compared to many people, we were very fortunate because he was alive.

There is an awareness of being fortunate and feeling thankful for the opportunity to leave Colombia with one's family alive, however unfair the situation is in itself.

Fernando said that even though his family had to flee [he] did not lose much; [he] came here with [his] family."

Relocation can be seen then as an opportunity for many; it is the possibility of being alive, to start a new life and learn new things, but at the same time the emotional, personal, familial and social cost of the displacement and relocation process are very taxing. Carlota described relocation as follows:

> ...It is as if you believe in reincarnation, it is as if you were yourself again, it is you, but you changed a lot, your temperament, your physique, your reactions... what you expect, your fears.

The new locale presents challenges to the newcomers, for people coming from Colombia getting used to the weather and learning English, are some of those challenges. In addition to these, there are other challenges, such as learning to navigate the social and bureaucratic systems and getting access to goods and services and finding a job without Canadian experience and foreign credentials.

The relocation was described as a "bittersweet experience" by Carlota not only for its relation to displacement but for the implications it has in the lives of the refugees. Relocation is in itself a forced experience, but it comes with the opportunity to craft a new life. Perhaps this can be seen in the lives of the 1.5s who have decided to stay in Canada, pursue their education, start a family or work hard at building a professional career.

The displacement and relocation processes exacerbate common developmental and transitional issues in the lives of refugee families and in particular for the 1.5 generation children. The time that they should have spent answering the questions of their adolescence as well figuring out who they are is spent on trying to solve day to day issues from which they were not responsible before arrival. Everyday life experiences and everyday situations such as attending school, socializing and family roles and dynamics are disrupted and become very demanding or even problematic. Parents also find themselves on a very precarious situation unable to adequately respond to the demands of the new locale and the new challenges of raising a family while trying to learn a new language, find a suitable job, and dealing with the consequences of traumatic experiences. All these changes happened almost at the

same time, and discriminating what is more salient is virtually impossible. This is how the participants talked about these aspects of their journey.

Agency and Identity

So far, the stories of the participants have illustrated a narrative of forced experiences, imposed responsibilities, and challenging lessons. However, the substrate of how the 1.5s narrate their stories is full of small agentic decisions, everyday resistance, and personal growth.

A common narrative is that of "I decided to stay," "I knew I need to," and "I decided to learn English." Fernando talks about those agentic decisions that become part of the everyday life of the refugees, "only those who are strong… have the ability to say ok, I am here, and I will do what I need to do to adapt, and they do it."

Some of these decisions are directly linked to the 1.5's identity, and often in relation to the different components of their culture (e.i language, dance, history). Deciding to teach it to their siblings and children as a clear connection to their roots, who they are and where they come from, this was something all the participants who have children place particular emphasis when talking about identity.

Carlota talks about language in connection with her identity and her legacy as a mother:

> I think I have never stopped thinking that my first language has to continue to be my first language. Now that I am a mother, I am not a daughter anymore; I am a mother. I see more value in the language, I've always believed that the language connects you to where you come from, and if my daughter does not know where she comes from and does not know how to speak the language as I hope she does, how do I expect her to believe in what I believe or learn from where I come from if I did not give her the necessary tools, the language.

Most of the agentic decisions the participants talked about were related to their families. Most decided to stay with their families as the best option to face the challenges of the relocation process; even if staying represented the loss certain freedoms and maintaining a lot of the responsibilities that were given to them in the process.

For most of the participants, the process of identity formation was constituted by belonging to a family. The relationships, the new roles, and responsibilities that were

acquired were in relation the others in the family. Julian was the only one of the participants who after leaving Colombia decided to leave his family, a challenging decision to make especially when one is 16 years old in a foreign country without the language. His experience of relocation is unique:

> I have been making my own decisions since I was about 15, 16 years old... I went with my mother and my grandmother to the United States, but we separated when we got there, and I started to make my own life.

For Julian relocation is a process of learning to be in relation to the absence of a family unit. It is important to note that Julian mentioned that after some time in on his own, he became part of a chosen family, it created a sense of belonging: “we were all in that same process. We were all get together. We all made a community”. This chosen family provided some sense of security and comfort when he first arrived in Canada.

Julian’s family was composed of other Colombians who also arrived in Canada as refugee claimants, Julian describes them as his family, even after all these years he mentioned that he knows that he will always have a placed to go to where they are.

When talking about the process of becoming in the midst of the relocation Fernando spoke about the need to adapt and change: “you have to be constantly planning, when you are a newcomer, the plans change every week, every month sometimes with the day.” Carlota also talked about how the urgent and basic needs of relocation process impose a moratorium in the process of identity formation:

> ...one has to have those things to the side (thinks we like) because they are not important, but then after several years of being here living and one begins to understand, well, this was what I liked so much. I will go back to that. This was what I longed to do when I had my days off. I will see if we can do it.

This process of formation can be seen in different aspects of the 1.5 narratives, which goes for the everyday challenges to taking a personal and political stance by continuing to work for social causes as it is the case of Salvador, who has done social activist work for Colombia while living in Canada:

> I was working, I was working three jobs studying English, and I started going to [youth groups] because anyway something had to be done because how the hell? this is the life we had to live, and on top, they forced us out of our country for being a defender of human rights

> and all that... then I started to learn about the world and the systems and all that then I dedicated myself to activism.

Carlota talks about how in the process of relocation the idea of being different became a significant part of her identity:

> Int: And for you is it important to prove that you are Colombian?
>
> Part: Not to prove that I am Colombian, but to show that I am different
>
> Int: What is the need to be different?
>
> Part: Because I understand that difference is not bad, being different is not bad. At first, I thought that being a refugee was bad. When I compared the good with the bad, the bad was more, and my understanding was negative, and now it is not. Being Colombian or being an immigrant is good because it brings a very different perspective of cultural things, of the "normal" things that happen here, things that for me are not normal, because I have a different perspective.

The process of identity formation is a complex multilayer experience that traverses all four axes of personal power (Brown, 2010). It is not only about finding a place in the family or the community. This process is about recognizing the most salient aspects of one's experiences of the world and embracing them as part of that which one recognizes as self:

> We are all learning to fit into a world that was not made by us or for us. And we have to adjust one way or another. And many times, we forget where we came from. So that resilience that we have has to keep us grounded for us to be us again ... maybe we will never be who we were because maybe new experiences that teach us to evolve as people and we could never return to be the same (Carlota).

Based on the narratives of the participants the process of identity formation of the 1.5 generation refugees during the first few years of their relocation seems to revolve around two main categories, being part of a Family and Language. Both of these aspects of the everyday life became particularly significant for the 1.5's identity. The understanding of family and its composition changed in ways that they were not expecting and that in consequence changed relationships, roles, and expectations. This is particularly significant considering that identity is understood as "relational, distributed,

performed, and fluid" (Combs & Feedman, 2012, p. 1043) and mediated by perception, participation and the changing relationships we have with others.

Before relocation, concerns about one's ability to communicate, or even one's accent were not present. These are new concerns that will profoundly affect the immediate present and future it the 1.5s and their families. The sections below will look at family dynamics and how language, both English, and Spanish, shape the experience and the identity of the 1.5 generation in their host country.

Adolescent or Adult

Given the age range in which all the participants arrived in Canada, there was an evident difficulty in establishing whether or not they were considered by others and even by themselves as adolescents or adults. Based on the narratives of the participants this became a liminal space in which they were neither nor. They were not adults in the sense that they could not simply take decisions for themselves and move on. They were not adolescents in the sense that most of them had to play roles that were not their immediate responsibility.

This liminal space became a site of contradiction not only within the family structure but also within the school system and had a significant influence on the identity formation process of the 1.5 generation participants.

The 1.5s continued to be considered children while being asked to perform tasks that under different circumstances they would never be asked to do. Carlota explained that they now have:

> ...responsibilities that did not have before, one has to go to work before did not have to. The living space is smaller (than in Colombia); the rents are expensive, here you have to share the responsibility, and one does not have time to do things of one's age.

It is almost as if adolescence, the doing of things according to 1.5's age was simply a luxury that they could not afford due to the roles that they had to play, and it does not allow them to be either full adult nor completely adolescents... "It is funny there we were children, and here we were adults" (Carlota).

The following section will explore some of the most salient aspects of the adolescent/adult dichotomy of the 1.5 generation. All these "issues" are happening in

tandem and have been separated to narrate the different aspects of the process. Even though these issues have been separated, there is a common element present in the narratives, and that is the English language. It can be said that the English language is then the protagonist of these stories and its role will be elucidated through the chapter.

Family Dynamics

In some situations, the 1.5s are unequivocally treated as adults and asked to attend to and be accountable for everyday responsibilities that given the complexity of the relocation process the parents or older family members were not able to accomplish, mainly due to language proficiency limitations. Some 1.5s go from not being old enough to be included in the pre-migration process to be the caregivers and the decision makers of the family within a very short time. Fernando talks about the changes and the pressure of his new situation:

> I felt much pressure, incredible pressure because they (family) asked for things that were simple but that I did not want to do because I did not feel safe doing them: like going to the landlord and telling him that the heat is not working or asking how you use it, or where is the nearest store, things like that. Everyone is asking for something, four people asking to call this person and ask or when we go to school, or call somewhere when I arrived I was 19, and the last thing I wanted was to have dependents.

The change in roles and responsibility acquisition is part of the transition needed to adjust to the relocation demands; this is something that happens organically; it is a survival strategy used by the family as a unit to overcome the barriers of the new locale. Fernando talked about this:

> my family depended almost completely on me to talk to people just because I had... a level of English higher than them.... then I felt much pressure in that sense, and you start to think a lot about what are we going to do here as a family?

Taking on new responsibilities it is not necessarily an imposition, but an indirect demand of the family unit that the 1.5s assume. Salvador spoke about this too:

> From the whole family the one who understood four or five little words in English was me, and then I also felt it was important to use what I could because I was the one that suddenly could do more than most.

In other cases, the 1.5s understand that learning the language is primordial for the survival of the family, Carlota talked about this quite clearly:

> I felt forced to learn English faster because I was already an adult…I had to help my family more; I had to translate…it was an extra pressure that was put on me, that I put on myself to be able to learn fast.

The evolution of each family during the process of relocation is unique, in part due to the pre-migration history of the family, the constitution of the family unit, and especially for the ability of the family members to adapt to the demands of the new locale. For some this experience of being part of a family was a unique experience. For Julian, who left his mother and sister in the US, his chosen family became very significant, “to be together, to know that there was always someone to talk to, yes, and we had a family… that support was very important.” Carlota’s idea of a family aligns with what Julian mentioned:

> The family can also be friends who are very close to one. Family can be the great-great-grandfather who is alive; or an uncle who spoiled you since childhood. For my family, it is never just a father, mother and children because I never had a family like that.

In Carlota’s case, she was not living with her mother pre-migration “I started being a daughter when I was 17, and I came here as a daughter, and I was a daughter for two years living under the same ... roof”. Carlota also mentioned the cultural pressure she experienced during this time for being a woman:

> In my family, I have always been considered the oldest of all, even though my brother is the oldest. However, they put more pressure on me because I am a woman. So, what do women have to do? Women have to be more successful because they are smarter than men. They have to finish school faster, they have to have an education, they have to help at home, and the parents or the adults expect that one is excellent in everything, but the cultural issues are not taken into account. They (parents) expect you to be there with them. That is, I became the temporary parent for them, while they are learning their things, and how to navigate the system.

In contrast with Carlota's experience, Manuelita felt that her brother took a more significant role for being a man: "My brother, he had more understanding of what was happening and being a man, my dad talked more with him." However, that also change over time; this is how Salvador, Manuelita's brother explains how their roles evolved:

> Well, I do not know if it was something in the house that was given as something predetermined by the parents. I think it was a little bit more like social dynamics...but that is how it was I was the one who took the expenses of the house...I dedicated myself to take care of the

> family, but right now I feel that my sister is the one that supports many things because my sister is the responsible one, I was responsible at that time but right now I am a bit less organized, and my sister is very dedicated.

For Fernando who was living in the same house with his family there was also a change of dynamic:

> In Colombia, I did not see my dad for weeks because he worked away and had to travel, and my mom looked after my two small brothers. I was in college, then that concept of family was not as clear as when we arrived here.

Being part of a family became imperative to survive; even when it brought much pressure to the 1.5s: “one has responsibilities that one did not have before...” (Carlota). Fernando described that he “went from being a dependent in Colombia to be an arm of this family”; there is a “reconfiguration [of the family] that means that you have a different role, you are not necessarily the son, as the lone satellite, but now you are almost in the center of that family”.

For Salvador and Manuelita, their family is the axis of their life; both of them express immense gratitude for their family:

> I feel grateful for them, but not only for having a family, but for the family that I have. I feel that I am very privileged for that, for the family that I have… however, also for the legacy that somehow, they have left us (Manuelita).

Changes in the family dynamics are expected; relationships between parents and children do change as they both age and take on different paths; what make these changes important to mention here is how they happen and the implication they have in the stories of the 1.5 generation children and their families. Carlota also spoke about these changes:

> For someone who does not know the language and who does not know anyone, even if one has a family here it is very complicated. Even if we come from the same family, the experiences are not the same. Moreover, some things are not even spoken in the same family... There were things that I could not talk to them about, because they were simple but at the same time, I thought I needed to know them for myself.

The particularities of the changes in the family dynamics also have to do with the unexpectedness of the experiences of relocation. No member of the family was prepared

for the roles that they will have to assume upon arrival. Even those who have had some familiarity with the process of relocation did not see that they could have had to assume such a prominent role in the family in their new locale. Moreover, while all of them did what they could with the resources that they had, there is a sense that the responsibilities that landed on their lap were imposed even if not directly, without giving them the option to situate themselves in relation to them. Salvador expressed this quite clearly, he knew the economic situation of his family so well that the felt compelled to continue helping them even when he was no longer living under the same roof:

> I felt that I had no choice. Yes, there was no option, because I knew the finances of the family I was very aware of what they had, they were never wasteful so I felt… it was what needed to be done.

This sense of being needed by the family is something Fernando touch on when explaining that he just knew his family needed him:

> We are a family of 6 and … it sounds bad, but at 19 you are thinking about yourself, where you were going to go, where you were going to work and what you wanted to do. There were a couple of times where I had planned to go live alone but thank goodness I did not do it.

Carlota also spoke of a sense of belonging and responsibility in relation to her experience and her family:

> Int: What would you do different today?
>
> Part: I believe nothing. I had a unique experience because I did it with my family. Moreover, I can see the results. Then I do not think I would change anything because at this moment I am what I am thanks to my experiences. Good or bad, they are part of me.

School

There are significant structural differences in the educational systems of the host country and the country of origin. These differences are one of the main challenges faced by the older end of the 1.5 generation refugees. In many cases, they are "too old, or too young" for the criteria of the schools here in Canada. Some are forced to go back to high school and enroll in lower level grades or have to attend adult education classes. This seems to have a huge impact on the dropout rates for immigrants.

In addition to this, the participants complained that the way the ESL classes were conducted were discouraging, and frustrating (Manuelita; Carlota, Fernando). When Manuelita arrived in Canada she had already completed her high school diploma in Colombia, but it was not recognized here, she went to high school but left because she felt her classmates were "immature." Fernando's experience was different. He had just turned 19 when he arrived:

> I did not qualify to go to high school. I went to study with adults...40, 45, 50-year-olds...I was 19. I was still a child...I was learning a little bit faster, and I was getting frustrated with the group... I felt that they were holding me back, slowing me down.

Julian also had a difficult experience with his education here in Canada:

> When I arrived in Canada, I was forced to go to high school… (But) I could not do it…. I had already gone through so much…. that I felt like an adult, even though I was the same age as everyone else. So, I could not adapt to High School… I also went to a high school for adults, but it did not work, I was only there for two months.

Eventually, Julian managed to complete the requirements to enroll in University and has already completed a bachelor and a master's degree from a prestigious Canadian University.

Salvador on the other hand, was feeling comfortable in high school "I had the opportunity to go to high school here for six months...at that time it was like more or less normal life, I was learning like all young people". However, he had to leave high school and work with his father. Salvador, later on, registered for night classes as an adult but never completed his high school diploma. He talks about the implications of this in his life as follows:

> I am 35 years old I am super employable, but I do not have credentials, so I know that although I still manage to get a job, I know that it has affected some things that I wanted to have...For example, last year I applied for a super good job I was called to interview, and they said, Salvador what an incredible professional career... but... I had not understood it; it is hard for me but I have already realized on what level not having a degree has been a limitation.

Adolescents who remained in contact with their peers back in Colombia also felt the pressure of reaching significant milestones in their lives. Two of the participants referred to feeling "quedados" -left behind- because their peers in Colombia had

graduated or continued with significant activities they used to do together, such as youth groups or sports teams or University. The advancement of their peers often increased the frustration of how long learning English was taking or how much longer they needed to find themselves in the position they were in Colombia (Fernando).

Also, given their new role in the family, the participants mentioned that they were aware of the financial struggles of the family and that pressured them to choose a path that would allow them to help their family financially or become economically independent to avoid being a burden for the household.

Accented Beings

As mentioned before, being accented is not only about speaking English with a second language accent, a distinction that seems important to make given the understanding that everybody has an accent. Being accented is about being othered for being considered foreign, for having a different cultural background, for being an immigrant and looking different. Regarding language, in the following section, I will explore the participant's experience of learning a new language and their relationship with their mother tongue and their culture. Also, we will look at experiences of racism in the host country.

Learning English

> *"If I lose my accent, what's left of me?*
>
> *How nice that when you hear me talking, you know that I come from somewhere else".*
>
> *Manuelita*

Of all the various challenges that the new locale presents learning a new language seems to be one of the most salient. Not speaking the language represents a distinct challenge for everyday interactions with landlords, neighbours and service providers to mention a few. It is also the biggest obstacle to pursuing one's educational and professional goals. As we have seen so far, it is also clear how family dynamics are disrupted by language proficiency. Also, the influence of language proficiency and acquisition has an impact on different layers of the 1.5's experience: personal, familial

and communal. Learning a new language takes time, and that can be very frustrating, Carlota talked about the need to be patient:

> Arriving here at eighteen, at nineteen, I wanted to learn English fast. I wanted to learn English in a month and leave the house. However, no, I could not leave, because a language is not learned in a month. I wanted to be independent a week after I got here…Learning to be patient costs us a lot like human beings, not only as immigrants but also as human beings. Understand that things have their time and place. For everything, you have to stand in line. For everything, you have to make applications…We have to learn to be aware that we have to negotiate and wait.

We can talk about a personal layer where self-esteem and self-confidence are deeply affected by one's perception of one's language skills, and accent. If this perception is negative and most often is, it could represent a significant barrier to the development of the 1.5s. Fernando and Carlota, in particular, talked about how at some point all their decisions were taken based on how confident they were with their language proficiency level and how comfortable they felt with their accent. Carlota postponed the possibility of a promotion for two years because she felt she was not ready, and Fernando decided to pursue a technical career because he felt acquiring the language proficiency level for a professional career was going to take too long:

> I gained confidence, I passed the basic English course quickly, but once I was on the street…I realized that my English was not enough to go back to school. That is when I started thinking about that perhaps University is not for me because I was still behind in my English. That is when I started thinking…that a trade program might be something better for me.

Julian spent three years of his undergrad without participating in class because he did not feel comfortable with his language skills: "there was a certain fear. I also felt judged… this guy is sitting here when he does not even speak well".

The personal relationship with one's accent is also very complex, for some is it a site of pride and for other a site of embarrassment, or a concern. Being accented is an opportunity to be identified, to be othered and in some cases even to be discriminated.

Salvador tells me that he knows he has lost good job opportunities based on people's perceptions of his competence based on being accented. Today, he says he has lost his concern with his accent, according to him; he now works in spaces that are not concerned about his accent. This is his response when asked about his relationship

with his accent: “I have never lost my accent, sometimes I pretend to lose it, but people realize that I have not.”

Carlota mentioned that the concern about language is always present, “either talking or writing, but somehow you do not feel completely confident.” When talking about being accented, she mentioned that the need to lose her accent is always present:

> It does not disappear completely, it is less but continues... it will always go on. As immigrants, we always want to improve our accents, because in an interview if you explain things better, you have a better chance of getting a better job.

In addition to this, she mentioned that “the less accent one has, the fewer people will differentiate you from the rest.” For Carlota “language is what connects you with the community if you do not know the language you have it hard in here” that is one of the reasons she felt pressured to learn English fast.

Fernando also talked about his concern of being othered because of his accent: "I used to hate my accent at the beginning. Sometimes one wants to mingle and that nobody realizes that one is new here..." He also mentioned that he has stopped fighting his accent, “I am not saying that I like my accent, but I just accept it” however there are situations in which he prefers not to share, and “I still feel embarrassed…” he said.

Julian mentions that his accent never worried him “I thought that everyone has an accent...I understood early on that I have an accent, and everyone has theirs, so I do not care about my accent.” His concerns with language were more about proficiency than accent. Julian never had formal English classes; he managed to learn enough skills to be successful at University. He mentioned that he is satisfied with what he has achieved regarding his command of the English Language.

Manuelita, on the other hand, has a very positive relationship with her accent. For her, her accent is a very important part of her identity. For Manuelita her accent is a reason to feel proud. It is constitutive of the person she is. Keeping her accent “is a choice”; this is how she explains the importance of her accent: “if I lose my accent, what's left of me? I feel it would be a bit of a betrayal of my roots. So, for me, my accent is very important”.

In the unique experience of Manuelita, there is no shame in being accented. In her position, she has recognized that keeping her accent is an agentic decision: “I feel that if I lose my accent, I will enter into a crisis because I feel that I would lose myself." She mentions that she embraces her accent and faces the everyday implications of having an accent by confronting others with their inability, discomfort or challenges they face when interacting with her. In her relationship with her accent, there are no feelings of inadequacy or limitation: after being here more than sixteen years, I find things that I cannot say, or I say another word or my co-workers start trying to help me say it how do they say it”. Manuelita uses the challenges of the language as an opportunity to learn and connect with others. Making her challenges known by those around her becomes a space of community and growth.

For Manuelita and Julian having an accent becomes normalized by the realization that everybody speaks with an accent: here we all have an accent, but that you do not notice [yours] it is something else” (Manuelita). This is how Julian talked about this accent:

> The accent never worried me because I thought that everyone has an accent. Even a person on her first language has an accent. So, if you talk to a person from the southern part of the United States, a person from the north or the west or one speaks to a British one talks to an Australian, or a person from South Africa the whole world speaks differently. Everyone has an accent. I understood early on that I have my accent, and everyone has theirs, so I do not care about the accent.

The negative connotation of having an accent is not necessarily part of these participants’ understandings of being an accented being. However, for Manuelita being accented is a huge component of her understanding of self:

> I have always been proud of my accent. Moreover, I have a very strong accent, but it is also something conscious. Whenever someone tells me something about it I tell them, do you understand me, because that is what matters because my accent has to do with my identity, so I feel proud of that ...

Being accented became a very salient part of her identity. She is proud of her country of origin and speaking with a very marked accent is part of making that sense of pride visible to others. Being accented is not necessarily a negative aspect of the immigration/refugee experience.

Experiences of Discrimination

A complex issue experienced by many refugees are acts of discrimination in the host country. All the participants mentioned that at some point during their life in Canada, they have experienced different acts of discrimination, at work, at school, at the airport, in public transit or on the street.

Fernando spoke of discrimination as follows: “I have noticed it, nobody has ever shouted at me or told me just told me to go home, or called me names, but what I have noticed, is a group tension, that one knows one is not welcomed.” He also mentioned he has been profiled by his physical appearance: "They have done to me, because of my appearance, random checks at the airport, I am just standing there, waiting, and someone comes up behind me, and touches me on the shoulder, and tell me: random check! *Again*, random ...? Carlota responded with no hesitation that she too has also felt discriminated against:

> Of course, for being a Latina, for being Colombian, for being a woman, for having an accent…because my skin colour is not dark enough to be Colombian, because I should be European…people questioned my “Colombianness”…also because people think that because I am an immigrant I should not aspire to certain jobs.

Salvador also spoke about being profiled by police; questioned without reason, yelled at by people on the bus. He has also experienced discrimination at work; he has lost job opportunities for being brown and accepted: “In many jobs, I have been discriminated against due to my English.” Manuelita also mentioned that she has experienced discrimination due to her accent.

These are specific acts of discrimination directed towards the participants. However, in their stories, there are traces of structural discrimination that represent serious challenges to the relocation process of the 1.5s and their families, such as challenges around housing, employment, social networks, and mental and physical health to mention some.

Spanish and Culture

Spanish is the other side of the coin of the language conversation. For many, their mother tongue is a safe space. That space one can always go back to and feel welcomed. It is also interesting to note that the accent that makes us othered is precisely

the presence of our first language in our tongue. The 1.5's relationship with their mother tongue is very diverse; for some after many years of exile it seems a distant place, for others, it continues to be home, for others just like English a challenging space. However, for all, a place where some very significant relationships are grounded, developed and maintained. As I mentioned earlier, the interviews for this project were all conducted in Spanish, not as an imposition, but as an organic evolution of the relationships with the participants.

The question about the relationship of the participants with their mother tongue opens an interesting space where not only language seems to matter; it is about the relationships and pre-relocation experiences that are important for the participants to maintain. As we have already seen for Manuela, her connection with her roots is mediated by her language. The presence of Spanish in her English accent is a reason to feel proud. She mentioned that she has done everything she can to ensure her children speak Spanish as a way to stay connected with their Colombian roots - "what matters is not to lose where you come from."

Language offers a sense of belonging and pride. What keeps the connection with Colombia alive goes beyond the family ties, it is deeply related to the language. Here language is perceived as more than a communication tool; it becomes a connector, a symbol, a very significant part of how she sees herself in relation with her environment both in Canada and in Colombia.

Carlota's description of her relationship and experience of speaking Spanish is also very profound. She describes the relevance and presence of Spanish in her life as follows: "Language is important for me because it connects me to my country." The experience of the language seems to gain greater value when it is shared with other family members. Carlota also spoke about the challenges that learning a new language represented by her, her family and her significant relationships. She specifically mentioned that she had a hard time when her brothers started speaking only English:

> Then my brothers got used to speaking English with each other very early since we arrived. It was very important to me that they always spoke Spanish with me. I only speak Spanish with them, even when they have friends in the house. I always speak Spanish to my brothers.

Carlota shared how dedicated she was to ensure that her younger brother was fluent in Spanish. She brought reading books every time she visited Colombia:

> I went to Colombia I brought books and songs, things that made him curious and ask. Any little thing I saw that I thought he was going to like it. I brought him *Nacho* books, *The Little Prince* in Spanish, and we learned together. I learned to be patient with a boy, and he learned at least to write words other than mom and dad in Spanish.

She spent time with her brothers and shared stories from Colombia to ensure they knew about their country; she also mentioned that in addition to this they have learned to dance together:

> I asked my younger brother to dance, and he knew how to dance Merengue.
>
> Then I said: And you who taught you to dance Merengue? That is great, you are good. Who taught you to dance Merengue?
>
> Moreover, he tells me, do you remember when you made me dance when I was little in my room? Well, that is how I first learned to dance Merengue... and he tells me, do you remember that time we went on holidays, and we were there for a week? I said yes. There you asked me to dance too. Moreover, there I learned more. I like dance classes, and I teach my classmates too.
>
> So, for me it was not the language, but it was something that belongs in the language. It gave me much joy to know that I was able to contribute a little... That was something nice, something that is a part of my culture if someone is interested, and more if it is my family there is an extra conversation point, that is not the usual.

When asked about his relationship with Spanish Fernando also mentioned that Spanish has become more present in his life after his daughter was born, he mentioned that he wants her to speak the language and be fluent. Although he mentioned that over the years his relationship with Spanish has become “weird,” perhaps because his most significant relationships happen in English, his wife and most of his family now speak only English. For Carlota and Manuelita having their children speak Spanish is also very significant. Carlota expressed her concerns about this:

> I feel that she will lose the Spanish she has learned. Then I feel that it has also been a negotiation between us. My first language is not going to be her first language. However, if she and everyone in the house cultivate that language that we all have as our first language, maybe she will also be interested in the future to learn a little more.

Julian spoke of a very interesting experience of language, both English, and Spanish:

> I studied at the university in English. That created a conflict because neither (Spanish nor English) is perfect here nor perfect there. My Spanish is not perfect because I did not start a career in Spanish and my English is not perfect either. For example, I thought that doing my master in Spanish was going to be super cool. Because it was going to be in my language and that would allow me to excel; until I realized that I was thinking in English and writing in Spanish. It is very funny because I have always been in these situations like this in the middle of everything.

It seems that after a few years of being immersed in the English language the relationship with Spanish changes in one way or another for all the participants. However, it is clear that language continues to be a very significant part of the 1.5's identity and sense of belonging.

Refugeeness

The 1.5 generation refugees come to the host country due to situations outside their control. In most cases, they have minimal information regarding the reasons why they have to leave, and in most cases, refugees do not know where they are going or how they are going to get there.

Their understanding of refugeeness is often formed and transformed during the first few years of the relocation experiences. In the beginning, the label of refugee comes charged with variegated and in some cases challenging assumptions, but at the same time is a way to access much-needed services.

Canadians as hosts are not strange to the presence of refugees in their schools, hospitals, churches, jobs and community centers. There are social and educational programs geared towards helping the relocation and adaptation process of the new immigrants and refugees both at the governmental and not-for-profit levels. The 1.5s and their families not only have to deal with the "normal" challenges of the relocation of other immigrants do. They also have to grapple with their displacement, and the relocation under a label that regardless of its good humanitarian nature it is still charged with a negative undertone and in some cases can even be a reason to be discriminated, segregated and isolated. This aspect of the relocation experience was explored in this

project by asking the participants what it means for them to be a refugee. Manuelita defines a refugee as follows:

> [A refugee is] a person who cannot return to her country. It was not because of me; it was because of my dad, and it is not for whom he is but for the work that he was doing… Being a refugee is not being able to stay. I am not sorry to say that I am a refugee. I do feel proud because I am who I am because of that. So, I feel, in a way proud that I have that legacy (refuge). We are not people with money. But for me, the legacy of my dad and my mom is what they did with their lives, and what they gave us.

This is a very interesting exploration of the idea of being a refugee - there is a personal component, as well as a socio-political understanding of the figure. The participant has a clear understanding of the figure that keeps guilt and shame away from her, and her family. This understanding allows the participant to see her experience as part of a larger social dynamic and context. This view also allows her to make sense of the social compromise of her family and the consequences of that compromise.

For some others what it means for them to be a refugee has changed, this is how Fernando spoke of his understanding of being a refugee when he first arrived:

> A refugee was always seen as someone who does not belong to a place. So, when I saw myself as a refugee, I did not like to feel like I was out of place… I felt out of place and that for me at that time meant the word refugee… abandoned because I had nowhere else to go. That was my understanding, and I did not like it. If people asked me why I was here I did not say I was a refugee, I gave them other reasons, to study to work… I was ashamed to say that I was a refugee… There was a time where I felt ashamed to be a refugee. But not everybody can go to a new place and change and adapt to that new place, only those who are strong can do it, in a way they can say ok, I am here, and I will do what I need to do to adapt, and they do it. Some other people simply say no, I cannot do it, and because they have the choice, they leave. [But when you are a refugee] There are no options; there are no options, so that is when I understood the concept of a refugee as something more significant, something stronger…

Fernando here talks about two very significant aspects of being a refugee: “feeling out of place and unable to go back home.” He also highlights how those two experiences can make the journey of those who have to stay away from their country of origin as a challenging experience that requires the strength to be overcome it.

It is also important to notice how the preconceived ideas regarding the term refugee can affect one's process and exacerbate the sense of isolation and lack of belonging experienced by the refugees during the early stages of the relocation process. Carlota also talked about the evolution of her understanding of the refugee experience; she mentioned how this change in her understanding of what it means to be a refugee came from working with others:

> Being a refugee is something unique, even if you come from the same country. Now I do not see it as being weak. It gives me the ability to understand certain concepts… I could not understand before.
>
> I always say that I was always a refugee. To my understanding I was always a refugee; I was never a resident unless it was a legal thing. Because that was what we were: Refugees in another country. Every time I refer to myself in the past, I am Canadian now, but then, I was always a refugee.

Carlota highlights how the experience in itself has offered her the opportunity to learn new things and understand and relate to others in ways she was unable to do prior to her displacement and relocation journey as a refugee. Salvador spoke of a difference between being a refugee and being in exile:

> A refugee is a label that is added to the person who cannot stay where they are. Within the public policy, the political term does not give space for the refugee to have power. There is much talk of the refugee as the one who needs more than us. Sometimes the concept of exile has a more political side. It offers you the opportunity to be autonomous and take a political decision about where you want to continue doing your job.

For Salvador, the evolution of his understanding of being a refugee takes him to find a more meaningful term that grants him the agency and political power needed in his experience of displacement and relocation. Julian had a different experience of being a refugee:

> I did not feel that the process defined me as a refugee or that others define me as a refugee, no. Besides, I usually do not tell everyone that I am a refugee. Or if I tell them, I tell them as something that already happened. That occurred already. I cannot continue thinking that I am a refugee 14 years later. I know that it can also be related to what happened to me. Perhaps what happened to me was not as strong as what could have happened [to others].

Julian establishes a distance between his past and his present regarding his understanding of being a refugee. In his response, there is a sense of closure that recognizes the importance of what it means to be a refuge for him. The experience of what it means to be a refugee seems to be an ongoing exploration that for most of the participants starts with a very negative connotation.

> …Maybe I was confused at the beginning. Maybe I felt ashamed. However, I think once I understood the value of that word (Refugee). The empowerment that that word brings to the person I appropriated that word, and I started using it more than I used it before (Carlota).

There is a clear evolution of that understanding towards a more dignified and respectful appreciation of the figure and experience of self and other in relation to the term. There is also a need to distance themselves from that label either by using a new one or choosing not to call oneself a refugee after several years. Whichever path the participants have taken, being a refugee continues to be a significant aspect of whom they have become.

Longing

> *"I would not like to end up in a place where I am not from… I live in Canada, I am a Canadian citizen, but that is all ... being Colombian is never going to change."*
>
> *Fernando*

The idea of longing emerged as part of the conversation around language as a connection with family and Colombia as a place that continues to be a very significant aspect of the 1.5s experience of relocation.

The 1.5 refugees in particular experience a sense of uprooting and loss regarding their previous life in Colombia. The participants had for the most part already started to have ideas and expectations regarding their future in Colombia. Some had already started to pursue an academic career, others were in the process of making important educational decisions, or about to reach important personal milestones, but all had a sense of belonging and social and familial ties that make their relocation process even more complex. It could be for some not difficult to imagine that given the reasons why they left that Colombia would not be a place refugees would want to go back to, but contrary to this, all participants expressed a strong desire to go back "home." Some

spoke about roots and connections, others about belonging and others spoke of unfinished business and lost opportunities.

Does the desire to go back "home" ever end? This time voluntarily and taking everything, we love with us? Is this what keeps us is going? All the participants mentioned a desire, even plans to go back to Colombia at some point in their life, not for a visit, but to stay, to live there. No hesitation, no doubt. Yes, I will go back!

The participants expressed different reasons to go back. Carlota mentioned that she sees Colombia as a place of retirement. Salvador spoke of a more elaborate plan:

> I am waiting for the peace process to calm down. I have a plan like five years there....it is very utopian because I have children, I mean, I do not know if I can separate myself from the children, but those are negotiations that I will have to live in the moment. Now I do not have to worry about that because they are very young, and it is not realistic to think about going back because I do not have money. I do not have the school. I do not have anything yet. However, in the future, if I see that in Colombia you can have a different point of view without getting shot (then I will go back) that is the plan, that is the plan I have for the next five years.

Fernando also expressed his decision to go back:

> My idea is to return, and not stay here forever, and it is not that I have a bad life here or anything that. I like it here, but the idea of returning is always in my plans, to go back and grow old there. Being old here I do not know... one is always alone and even when your family lives in the same city...
>
> The idea of going back, when I am old, is having that opportunity to say; now I can return, and nobody can say no... If you ask me, are you not worried about leaving everything, without anything planned, again?... no, this time it is a choice…
>
> If I could earn what I earn in here in Colombia or if there was a greater appreciation for what I do here, I would have already returned.

Manuelita also mentioned a desire to go back; however, she has concluded that it might not be an option for her: "No, I could not. It is not an option that I can take. For her, Colombia means family and half of her family and kids are here."

Julian who has been away from Colombia since he was 15 years old also speaks of a different type of longing:

> I feel that at some point I want to go back and do something there, I do not necessarily have to stay for life, but it is like doing something there like I needed to live that piece ... to do something worthwhile or do something that is significant.
>
> Moreover, it is weird; I have always had something that pulls me like wanting to discover something that maybe I have not discovered.

There seems to be a sense of temporality that does not change over time. The 1.5 generation stills long for lost connections to Colombia even after being in Canada for most of their adult life. Considering the reasons for their displacement and the current conditions of the country the question remains, why do we want to go back?

The collages

For our second interview, I invited the participants to use different art supplies to illustrate what they considered as the most important aspects of their identities. As the reader will see during the interviews, the participants were mostly focused on their process of relocation, highlighting the importance of their families as well as their relationship with Canada and Colombia.

Using the collage as part of the research added a new level of complexity to the interviews. I needed to ensure to the participants that the actual aesthetic characteristics of the final piece and the participants' artistic skills were irrelevant for the research. I clearly explained that the value of using the collage during the interview was the process of creation itself and what the images individually and as final product represented for them in relation to their identity and their process of displacement and relocation (Rouse, 2013; Bagnoli, 2009). For some participants, there was no worry about doing the collage, they were satisfied with my explanation and very quickly moved into selecting the images and putting them together. Fernando was very curious about the use of collage as part of my research. When I initially contacted him for the second interview I mentioned the collage, and as soon he saw the material on the table when we met for our second interview, he asked about it:

> Part: Where did this come from? (using collage).
>
> Part: I ask you because this is the first time I do it… Obviously, when you are a child, you do it, but before I was given some materials in front of me and I did not know what to do, I was like how and now what…

> Int: it is used a lot in therapy too... it is not about how nice it is, or how well it is done, is more symbolic…
>
> Part: But I like to do pretty things… hahaha

For Julian, the idea of creating the collage was more challenging; following the literature "researchers have reported that a minority of participants are uncomfortable with using visual methods" (Rouse, 2013, paragraph 13, referencing Bagnoli, 2009) so this was something I had already considered. Julian struggled with the idea of the symbolism of the images and how they were related to his experience and his ideas:

> The truth is that my fear is to give something a symbolism that may not have that symbolism for me. To see me forced something that perhaps I did not see that way. I feel like I am betraying myself a little... it is like forcing me to find something where there is not.

The process of creating the collages as an elicitation method enriches the narrative process and allows the participants to tell their stories creatively. The section below includes the final artwork created by the participants and their explanation.

Manuelita

Figure 2. Manuelita's Collage

Manuelita was very enthusiastic about the collage; she quickly scanned the materials I brought and started pasting them on her canvas. Manuelita starts describing her collage by talking about the woman in a forest:

> She is alone watching. I chose this because I always feel that way, very lonely... because I always feel that I am inside my head, and I feel that it is challenging for me to relate in depth with people.

Then she quickly moves to talk about the image with the colourful hands on the top of the page:

> I like that they are of many colours, because of the variety of people that we are, whether it is of skin colour, or where we were born, or, the kind of people we are. That is why I like that they are different colours, and hearts because I think that each person brings one to the world.

Then she talks about how much she loves to travel

> I love travelling and getting to know people and places ... because I think people should travel around the world and learn more so that we are less ignorant ...

> Well, the other one I chose was one where there are many balls with languages. On the one hand, because I tell you I am not a patriot, but I feel like a citizen of the world even though I also identify with being Latino ..., there is so much to learn, I like to learn, and to travel and to learn about other cultures.

She then starts talking about Colombia and Canada

> The possibility of leaving, the peace of mind of having a Canadian passport and not a Colombian... When you think about being lucky, some things are lost, being here is an opportunity that is priceless, but at the same time, you pay a high price...because the cost of being here is very high; you lose one thing and gain another.

> There is a little image that says Colombia, with a flag, and then a Canadian flag, but this has the flag in pieces, I liked that because Canada is like in constant reconstruction, we each put a bit, but at the same time, there are many things that make Canada...

Towards the end, she talks about her family. “There is a small tree, which has to do with my family. I have "importance, thank you & support," all those things have to do with my family. Identity and support also had to be with family.”

Then she starts listing the different words she added

Welcome because they welcomed us.

Memorable because my life I feel that it has been that, and the people that have passed through my life, I think that people are not disposable, they are not disposable...I am not spiteful...I continue, I move on, I think that people are memorable…

This is about communication; when I was growing up we were not punished, my parents sat us down to have a family meeting and talked about what happened. I think a lot about communication, I believe that if we communicated more, there would be fewer wars.

And this one with lots of coloured triangles that say tolerance, diversity, equality, respect, and justice, because I think that from the teachings that my family has given me, both politics and values and everything, those are important things.

Fernando

Figure 3. Fernando's Collage

Fernando seemed like he had a plan from the start he took his time selecting his images and placing them very carefully in his canvas, this is how he described his collage. “I was looking for an image to put in the center like “me,” “me” ...right, then I chose this” while pointing at the silhouette of a woman in the middle of his canvas. Then he started talking about the beans on the left side of the picture:

> This reminds me a lot of where I come from, which is something I do not do here, this is the grain that has been harvested, you go to harvest it and bring it back. I grew up on a farm...I put it in the back where I come from...

He also made a reference to a part of our previous interview when we talked about how much he missed the sense of community he had in Colombia, “You remember we talk about community, there it is, there they are all in the neighbourhood, in front of the house, my roots, that's why I put it here at the bottom”.

Then he starts talking about the images on the right of the canvas:

> I put it in front, before and after arrival to Canada...getting here, hahaha
>
> snowboarding -this was something that when I knew I was going to come here, I always wanted to do.
>
> Things, the gadgets, the new acquisition, the new toy.
>
> Family very close to me, and options.
>
> Options that well here one has options, there are not many, one can see that.
>
> I saw the word marriage, and that is that.
>
> Welcome - felt welcome not when one arrives but afterwards...it was not when I first arrived, but more when I was a bit more adapted, and I did a bit of work here and there, day by day, the constant cycle in which one lives here.

Carlota

Figure 4. Carlota's Collage

Carlota seemed to know what she was looking for, she looked at the material chose what she wanted to use, she started cutting and pasting. Carlota started by clarifying that the placement of the image with the word Colombia was a mistake, she wanted that image in the middle. She also explained the numbers she selected, “I put the numbers anywhere because I do not think there is first place or last place, so I put them everywhere.” She placed particular emphasis on talking about the significance of the words family and community.

> The family; the community, now that I have a daughter, I feel that this is very important. What's more, if I want my daughter to have a lot of where I come from, I need help, and I need my community. So, it takes many things, but I know what I have to do to get help, and I know when I need to seek help, so I believe that my community helps me a lot.

Then she started listing the images and what they meant:

The umbrella because here it rains a lot.

You have to take the time to learn the language. This is obvious: the language.

Age. I think that at this age is when there is more pressure on the family about having a job and owning something.

Moreover, this, the mountain is because both here and in Colombia there are many geographical accidents.

The other half of the doll is a mystery. That is what is hidden behind each one of us.

These are representative dates.

Moreover, the dreams that everyone has, that sometimes one puts them aside and does not follow them, but when things are a bit calmer, we should go back to the things we wanted.

Julian

Figure 5. Julian's Collage

As I mentioned earlier, for Julian the coming to terms with the creative process of the collage was somewhat challenging. He was not only worried about his “lack of artistic skills” even though he is an excellent guitar and ukulele player and a remarkable photographer. He was also concerned with being true to his ideas and not imposing any meaning that was not there. After taking some time to look at the images and choosing what was interesting to him, the meaning-making process was very productive. Here are some of Julian’s remarks:

He started by talking about what he wants to do “Oh well, this s something I would like to do photojournalism. These are things that I have always wanted to do, that idea of recording those moments maybe of social protest and things like that. Then he started talking about his connections with his family and how he feels about them:

> This is a family tango dancing this is something else I feel I am missing. Because of my family, the southern part of the continent, of Uruguay, from Argentina and all that, I feel a little attached to that, to these people. Moreover, that seems a bit horrible to me because I feel attached to them, but I do not have anything. I do not belong to them either.

He also elaborated on what it means to be living away from his family by reflecting on the image that reads “tired of being tired.”

> Tired of being tired, maybe this, this is about that process that I told you. When I get closer, when I begin to hear what is going on with them [family in Colombia] it starts to affect me. I know I cannot be there, and I have to be far away, and it is complicated. Then there are times when I have felt tired of being tired of some of those things.

He mentioned that the images at the top of the canvas made him “think of Canada, multiculturalism, religion. He also talked about the mountains, “the mountain I liked them a lot since I arrived here. I like the anatomy of the landscape; I like it a lot.

Then he started talking about Colombia

> I studied political science because I always wanted to understand at a certain level what was happening in Colombia. Well, what happened in the world, but also in Colombia. Moreover, this, the pen goes to that, it also symbolizes the question of peace, to stop shooting, the educational question, to study instead of shooting each other.

Moreover, he concluded by saying

> Yes, if you look closer there are some connections here, it gives an idea of what is in my head, right? Here is a part that is about Colombia, another part my about my individuality, another part my connection with Argentina, travel, processes, and Canada, because is what allowed this life.

Reflecting on the interviews when we use the collage I can see how the narratives became alive in different ways; they can now be seen and understood without having to be transcribed or translated. Manuelita's lady in the forest transmits a message of solitude, and the placement of the images of Fernando gives you a sense of rupture. Carlota's emphasis on the importance of community can be seen in her collage and Julian's connections are there for everybody to see.

The collages are an extension, a continuation of the stories narrated by the participants they complemented the process and allowed the participants and me as a researcher to see them more creatively and tangibly.

Chapter 4.
Discussion

> *"People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories."*
>
> *(Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375)*

Telling one's story of displacement and relocation allows the teller to make sense of the experience, to look more closely at those moments that have taken us to where we are today. Sharing our stories is an important part of the process of adaptation, the identity that follows from that adaptation process and the creation of community. Our stories are more than simply a recapitulation of one's live events in order to convey them to someone else. Our stories constitute us in ways that afford meaning and identity to our life experiences. As such, the question that guided this study is: How do Colombian refugees who belong to the 1.5 generation living in the Lower Mainland make meaning of their experiences of displacement and relocation? The main goal of this project was to listen to the stories of displacement and relocation placing particular attention to the experiences of refugees from Colombia who had to endure the disruption of their lives during their formative years.

The stories of the 1.5 generation refugees elucidated three major aspects of the displacement and relocation experience: Family, Language, and Longing. The following section is a discussion of the main aspects of the displacement and relocation journey identified in this study. I will also discuss the implications of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Importance of Family

In the stories of displacement and relocation narrated by the participants, the presence of a family was at the center of their experience. The participants characterized their families as their allies even when the relationships among its members were not ideal. It is important to mention that the family structures of the participants were all very different; there were some nuclear families, stepfamilies, and chosen families. The commonality between all these families' structures was that regardless of how distant or conflictive the relationships among the family members were before displacement, they worked together as a team to overcome the challenges

for the displacement and especially the relocation experiences. The experience of relocation forced them to put aside the differences that they have had before arrival and brought them together to work in their new place. In addition to this and again regardless of how challenging family relationships can be, all the participants maintain close contact with their families even when they no longer live together or even in the same city.

For the participants, family offers a sense of belonging and continuation, a place to be safe with others and be close to all that was left behind during the relocation. It might not always be the most comfortable place to be, but it is a known place, and for all the participants, at least at the beginning of their relocation it was a safe place. It might not always be the best place, but there is a common sentiment for the participants that it was a place to be with someone in the midst of the uncertainties and unknowns that they are experiencing, the family becomes a gravitational axis around which the 1.5s understand themselves and their immediate environment.

However, in the process of helping the family adapt to the demands of their new locale can be very taxing for the 1.5 generation. The younger members of the family usually learn to speak the language faster and with that new roles and responsibilities are given to them. These new roles and responsibilities force the 1.5 generation refugees to learn how to navigate the systems in their new locale. However, these new responsibilities can also be quite limiting, daunting and very stressful for 1.5s; following the literature the 1.5 become central figures in the household by being involved in financial matters and decision-making processes usually relegated to older members of the family (Pham, 2012).

Language plays a significant role in the process of relocation. Family dynamics are significantly disrupted by the power imbalance generated by the gaps in the language proficiency between the members of the family. The traditional hierarchical structure of the parents on top and the children at the bottom is shaken fundamentally when suddenly the children are the conduit through which the parents communicate and gain access to understanding the system that is foreign to them.

Reflecting on the stories of the participant I was able to identify an interesting grey area that arises with the acquisition of these new roles and enhances Pham's (2012) discussion in relation to a perceived sense of independence gained by the 1.5s.

For the 1.5 and their families, it is the cultural expectation of the parents to continue to be the ones in charge of making the critical decisions in the family and those with the most power in what continues to be a very hierarchical relationship. The power given to the 1.5's by their new roles then creates a new dynamic in which the parents continue to be acknowledged as an authoritative figure even when they are no longer in a position of independence due in most cases to language proficiency limitations. There seems to be a permanence of the perceived hierarchical structure of the family even when the roles performed by each family member are in some cases in apparent contradiction with what is expected of their position in that structure.

The responsibility of making or helping their parents to make important family decisions can be very overwhelming for the 1.5s and many of the participants expressed how they felt this was a burden they were not ready for and did not necessarily want to carry.

In some cases, the implication of the 1.5s taking these new roles had some very negative consequences for their future. Many 1.5's had to sacrifice their opportunity to access education or youth programs to find employment or to help their parents or other family members deal with everyday demands of their new locale such as doctor visits, banking and even shopping. However, again, as a member of a family that needed to work together, the participants who were given these roles assumed them and helped their family to move forward. It was not a question of willingness or unwillingness to fulfil the roles that were required; it was more that the roles were much more onerous than they were ready to assume and required different levels of complexity that they were not necessarily prepared for them. Reflecting on the contents of the interviews the participants did not express any regrets or resentment for having assumed these roles, they recognized they were challenging and in occasions unfair demands, but they are often seen as needed for the survival of the family. There is a sense of unity and partnership in the narratives related to these roles; I could even say that the 1.5 generation refugees feel a sense of pride in performing these during, but always emphasizing how taxing they were at the time

The relationships between the 1.5 generation and their families highlight the needs for connection, proximity, and protection of refugee children and youth. In the midst of the unknown, they seem to be looking for a place where they feel like they

belong while recognizing that they are no longer in the place they came from and not fully in the place where they are now. The role of the family in the process of relocation is clear; the family unit needs to work together and support each other. The family as a unit and its members are at the center of the experience of displacement and relocation. The family becomes a default social unit through which the issues of relocation are to be dealt with as a team.

Being an Accented Being

Being accented can be understood as being visible to others due to the way we speak, the way we look like, or the way we behave. Being accented is a marker, a clear indication to others that we are not like them, that we are different and for some that could be seen as problematic. Being accented is a way of giving oneself away without one intending to do so. It is an ever-present vulnerability that one is not equipped to deal with, at least not yet. A Separation. A distinction. A being put aside as other than, as different from (Kumsa, 2004; Lacroix, 2004).

However, the central aspect of being accented is to have a second language accent or a non-native accent. Moreover, this was an interesting reflection during the data analysis. The initial question of having an accent was in specific reference to having a second language accent. However, for many of the participants, the idea of an accent was generalized, and it included all types of accents even first language accents. From an intersectional perspective, there is a significant class distinction between these two types of accents, especially for refugees from the global south (Goffman, 1963).

It was interesting to notice that some of the participants intentionally blurred the line of what having an accent meant and found solace on the idea that everyone has an accent, so theirs is just a different variance of everybody else's. Some of the participants did not seem to question the social capital of certain accents that are understood as desirable and appealing versus others that are perceived as complex, hard to understand and not so socially appealing. After some time in the host country having an accent become normalized by the realization that everybody speaks with an accent.

However, the significant distinction here is that our accents are second language accents and carry with them the stories of our country of origin and the reasons we are

here. The negative connotation of having an accent is not necessarily part of all participants' understandings of being an accented being. However, being accented is a huge component of the understanding of self of the 1.5 generation refugees who participated in this project. There is a clear recognition of the narratives of the participants that having an accent makes us stand out positively or negatively depending on the participant's stories, but regardless of their experiences being accented is a defining piece of the relocation experience and following Gluszeck and Dovidol (2010) it provides a great deal of social information.

I was also able to identify that for some participants having an accent can at times generate feelings of shame, embarrassment, and inadequacy which is how Gluszeck and Dovidol (2012) and Goffman (1963) refer to the presence of a non-native accent. These feelings often subside with experience and familiarity with the language and social milieu. However, these feelings can represent a significant barrier to the adaptation process and the success of the 1.5 generation refugees. Language is the way we access social services, education and develop significant relationships outside of one's culture; feeling inadequate when using the language of the host country is a serious issue the 1.5s have to overcome.

As I mentioned earlier being accented is not only about speaking with a second language accent. Being accented transverse all the aspects of the 1.5's lives. Things that go from having a foreign sounding name to lacking relevant cultural references, having international credentials as well as having no Canadian job experience are also part of being accented. Being accented is in other words, being physically here without all the tools to move around socially without unintentionally giving away that one is from somewhere else. The way one looks and where one comes from are almost inseparable. These two factors offer a great deal of information about us to the people we interact within our lives. Information that based on our interlocutor can be very misleading and even dangerous for the 1.5's.

Our looks as much as our accent and our past experiences and behavioural repertoire can help others see us as outsiders, as others and this, as expressed by the participants, can foster precarious situation of discrimination not only from peers at school but also by service providers and police.

Longing

This theme was not part of the original design of my research proposal. It was a found theme during the first round of interviews and came from the conversations about the participant's relationships with Spanish and Colombia.

All participants mentioned this idea of returning to Colombia at some point in their lives. What makes this theme quite interesting for me is that all the participants have contemplated the idea of going back to live in Colombia even when their significant others might not be from Colombia. Most of the participants have a very clear understanding that such a change requires planning and negotiation. Others have plans in place, and others only know that Colombia is the place where they want to end their days.

At the time when these interviews were done, most of the participants had spent a third or almost half of their lives in Canada. What makes them long for Colombia? What keeps that connection and yearning alive after all those years away?

There seems to be a sense of belonging and that idea somehow self-developed early in life that helps that connection stay alive. From a critical perspective, one could argue that given the reasons why they are here in the first place Colombia might not be an alternative, but fear of going back was never mentioned. Perhaps, there was enough emotional distance from the displacement reason not to make it a deterrent. Perhaps, behind the desire to go back is more a nostalgia to go back to where they feel they really belong to and no markers of “not from here” can be easily recognized by their interlocutors.

There is an estrangement, like a wound that is concomitant with being in Canada, an emotional wound that has not healed given how taxing the experience of relocation can be, so it could be said that the longing to return might be a need to face that wound, to heal that nostalgia. The desire to go back, whether real or imaginary can be precisely a way to assume that estrangement as ‘temporary’ and dream of going back to where they feel they belong.

Important Findings

The focus of this project was to listen to the stories of displacement and relocation of 1.5s refugees. The literature and research have focused mostly on the experiences of the older members of the family, especially the parents. Listening to 1.5s narrate their stories about their journey made me reflect on the importance to support them as individuals with specific needs in relation not only to their displacement and relocation experiences but also with their developmental stage. From an educational perspective, the findings are very relevant for teachers and school counsellors, the focus of their interventions when working with the 1.5 should be on helping them navigate the school system and offering support and guidance for them to find the appropriate educational settings and enhance their educational goals. The need of the 1.5 to receive guidance and support comes not only from the challenges of the adaptation process and the desire to build a better future in the host country. Depending on the age of arrival of the 1.5 the requirements vary. For some who are young enough to attend high school, their needs are more towards finding a place within a very complex environment while meeting the demands of their families. For the ones that are deemed too old to attend high school the challenges are different, they also need support finding a sense of belonging and dealing with the pressure to catch up with their peers back in their country of origin, and all these are happening while there are struggling to learn English and support their families.

Concomitant with this individual support it is of paramount importance to work with the family as a unit in transition. A transition that not only implies the relocation experience in itself, but also the new roles, and the changing needs and the demands this unit has to face in the host country. These findings are important for mental health professionals, and other service providers who work with the 1.5s and their families. To understand the new roles given to the 1.5s, and the implication these have on the family dynamics is of vital importance to help support the process of adaptation of the 1.5s. The family as a unit needs support to be able to serve its members, adapt and grow in their new locale. The 1.5 need to be able to rely on their family unit as a source of support and companionship; a strong family will offer the 1.5 the stability they need during their adolescence and early adulthood. This finding makes me question how to best support the 1.5s while they help their family navigate their new locale. The question then is: How

do we offer culturally sensitive support to the 1.5s and their family that is not intrusive, patronizing or colonizing?

Implications and Recommendations

The stories of the 1.5 generation refugees who participated in this project offer a retrospective look at the process of displacement and relocation. Their stories are a testament of the struggle of the refugees, but at the same time, they are a tribute to the resilience and power of an entire generation of Colombians who have been forced to leave their country. The social and political reasons why they have to flee are beyond the scope of this thesis, but as a society, it is essential to recognize that violent conflicts have profound repercussions in all our lives even when we see those happening miles away from our doorsteps. There needs to be a deeper understanding of the implications of the displacement and relocation experience of the 1.5 generation. Reflecting on the experiences of the 1.5 refugees and their families, we can look at being a refugee is a trip with two legs, displacement, and relocation.

The displacement part of the journey is a very traumatic experience. In addition to the often-violent nature of the threats, the experience of uprooting and fleeing can have severe emotional consequences in the lives of the now refugees. Some of these experiences take too long to be addressed and in some cases are never addressed or discussed merely because the nature of the journey itself does not allow the time to mourn the losses and look after the emotional well-being of the refugees until they are deemed safe from any physical threats. When that time comes, the refugees have to deal with the demands of the relocation.

The relocation process is very challenging; the 1.5s are carrying the baggage of the displacement while facing the demands of the relocation. The issues faced by the 1.5 in the new locale are many, and systems in place often fail to offer the support they need. It is important to understand that conditions in the host country are less than ideal. Precarious living conditions, language barriers and difficulty finding decent paying jobs represent a serious challenge for the refugees. In the case of the 1.5, in addition to the challenges faced by the family as a unit they also have to deal with learning a new language, adapting to a new school and their new roles in their family.

I encourage mental health professionals, teachers and other service providers who work with the 1.5s and their families to listen to their stories and offer culturally sensitive support. It is important to listen to the stories of the 1.5 and the roles they have in their families; all the stories are not the same, listen to the particularities of their narratives, treat them as equal and offer culturally-informed support. Remember that the 1.5 are learning to be whom they are while living in a foreign country, after losing their peers, their extended family, and their social network.

I invite those you are involved with the 1.5 generation refugees to reflect on the finding of this study and the literature reviewed. Service providers should remember to listen to the stories of the youth that are often hidden behind the needs of their families. The voices of the 1.5 generation have often been lent to their families and paying attention to those stories behind the stories is an opportunity to support the process of those children and youth that could be struggling while helping their families to adapt.

Strengths

There are several aspects of this project that can be considered strengths. Regarding content, one significant point is how the findings and the narratives of the participants are consistent with the literature reviewed and offer additional information that can contribute to better support the 1.5 refugees and immigrants in general. This study is unique in its attention to the different aspects of the displacement and relocation experiences of the 1.5 generation Colombian refugees in Canada, contributing to the understanding of the needs and challenges this group faces during their process of migration.

Concerning the findings, the various family structures, ages, genders and pre-migration characteristics of the participants and their families provided valuable information regarding the impact of the displacement and relocation process has on identity development processes, family dynamics and relationships.

Regarding the method used and the usage of art-based elicitation, my direct first-person experience with the process of the inquiry brought me to select the methodology. The benefits of using art-based elicitation are the centring of the voices, and the

opportunity of the participants to strengthen the connections with their stories and their capacity to witness their journey.

As the reader knows by now, I am a brown accented Colombian female who arrived in Canada as a refugee. I have known most of the all the participants for a few years now and some of them I even met the week we arrived in Canada back in November 2003. Their stories and mine have crossed a few times over the years, but having them be part of this chapter in my life as a student is very significant for me. It is important to highlight the significance of my positionality and my role as a counsellor in doing research about refugees in a field in which people of colour have been historically underrepresented. As a researcher, my own position as a Colombian refugee, as someone who belongs to the community of Colombian refugees in Canada sharing the same roots, the same language, longing to go back home allows me to relate, question and analyze the complexity of the displacement and relocation experiences of the participants from a vantage point. This also becomes one of the most significant strengths of this project, me as a writer belonging to the community I have chosen to be the focus of my research. This project not only offers valuable information about the experiences of the 1.5 during displacement and relocation it also highlights the importance of refugees sharing and re-claiming their stories and creating knowledge to help each other.

Limitations

One aspect of this study that could be considered as a limitation is that all the participants are all from Colombia; it is possible that 1.5 generation refugees from other countries have unique experiences of displacement and relocation. It is also important to mention that the topic itself can be seen as a limitation as not many people are willing to share their experiences of displacement and relocation since them might still carry with them the emotional consequences of their journey even after many years in the host country. The experience of relocation is for some of them an open wound and willingness to participate in studies that stir the open wounds is not so readily available.

I also think that not being able to run a focus group with all the participants was a limitation. Due to schedule conflicts, the participants were unable to meet each other and share their stories with each other. Reflecting on the information collected during the

interviews having a focus group would have allowed the construction of a richer narrative, the clarification of some points and the creation of a group narrative regarding their experiences of displacement and relocation.

Suggestions for Future Research

I think future research should focus on developing a deeper understanding of the various themes described in the findings chapter. It would be ideal if these themes can also be explored as they develop as a way not only to document the process but also to accompany the 1.5 as they face the challenges of their journey. A theme that requires additional research is the implications of the new roles and responsibilities given to the 1.5's during relocation on how best support them while they perform these roles. It will also be interesting to explore further if gender has any relevance in the assignation of these roles.

The use of art-based elicitation was a very significant part of this project. Future studies should explore the use of additional art-based elicitation components to explore the experiences of the 1.5 generation refugees further. Using art allowed me and the participants to deepen the narratives and create a symbolic representation of their meaning-making process that can be shared, viewed by others.

Future studies could also include the experiences and expertise of mental health professional, teachers and service providers who have had experience working with 1.5 refugee children during their relocation process. The input for the service provider will help to build a more holistic view of the experience, allowing their narratives to enhance the understating of the challenges the system posed onto the 1.5 and helping explore possible solutions and strategies to accompany the journey of the 1.5 and their families.

As I have mentioned before, the bulk of the research on refugee issues focuses mostly on the narratives of the parents and older family members. Future research should continue to listen to the stories of the 1.5s, their experiences and needs are unique, and offer an invaluable perspective on the issues related to displacement and relocation both as an individual and as a family member.

When I reflect on the narratives of the 1.5, some questions remain unanswered. Is there a way to help the 1.5's and their families to deal more effectively with the

challenges of relocation? How can teachers and counsellor at school support the 1.5 so they can be successful at school? Future research could explore the creation of non-intrusive programs to support the 1.5 and their family to develop healthy and effective adaptation strategies.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore how Colombian refugees who belong to the 1.5 generation living in the Lower Mainland make meaning of their experiences of displacement and relocation. Narrative inquiry in combination with art-based elicitation was the primary method used to do this exploration. During the interviews the 1.5s engaged in a meaning-making process that allowed the re-telling of their experiences of Refugeeness, identity formation, changing family dynamics and navigating the school system.

The findings of this project suggested that the complexity of the experiences of displacement entail not only fleeing a threat but also losing one's social location and material goods. The findings also highlighted how during the relocation process the 1.5 need additional support to navigate the school system and manage their new roles within the structure of their family.

The experience of relocation is a very complex experience; in addition to the emotional and physical consequences of the displacement process the 1.5 and their families are faced with challenges that go from having to learn a new language and build a social network to systematic and compounded issues related to appropriate housing, suitable employment, education and professional training.

As I mentioned in the discussion chapter one of the findings that impacted me the most was the intention of all the participants to go back to Colombia permanently at some point in their lives. The connection with their roots, their language and their families play a significant role in the narratives of self the 1.5s shared with me during this process.

In addition to this, the being an accented being findings were also very significant for me. The centre stage that language and especially accent play in the process of adaptation makes it very challenging. The interactions with the new locale are mediated

by language and having limited command of the new language compounded with the sense of shame that accent means for many 1.5 makes the experience even more difficult. It is also important to mention that presence of accent it is not only perceived as negative for those who have a non-native accent, the literature also suggests that having a non-native accent is a marker and those who have one are likely to experience stigma, and discrimination (Goffman, 1963; Gluszek & Dovidol, 2010). The work here is not only to empower the 1.5 to embrace the presence of a non-native accent it is also with the with host communities to re-evaluate and create more inclusive spaces for those perceived as others.

Recognizing that I as a researcher play a significant part of this project was not a surprise, but it was a challenge to write about it. The research question for this project comes from my own experience as a refugee and my work with the refugee community in my role as a counsellor. The methodology comes from my academic journey as a researcher and a counsellor in training. Even though this project is not about me, I am embedded in it not only as a writer but also as someone who can empathize, recognize and share the stories of displacement and relocation of the 1.5 refugees and their families. This project is a small contribution not only to the counselling field, and the refugee literature; it is also a contribution to a community that needs to be empowered and recognized.

Figure 6. Carolina's Nowhere Composite

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Appendix A.

Recruitment Posters

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

Now(here): Exploring the Experiences of Displacement and Relocation of the 1.5 Generation Colombian Refugees Living in the Lower Mainland through Narrative Inquiry

Researchers in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University are looking for volunteers to take part in a study of identity formation process of 1.5 generation Colombian refugees in Canada.

Seeking participants who:

- Are from Colombia
- Were between 12 to 19 years old when they arrived to Canada
- Arrived to Canada as Convention Refugees or Inland Refugee Claimants
- Have been living in Canada for 5 to 10 years

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to:

- Participate in 2 to 3 one on one interview with the researcher, each of which is approximately 30-90 minutes.

- One focus group session, approximately 2-3 hours.

Your participation would involve a total of up to 4 sessions

In appreciation for your time, you will receive a meal during the interview and an honorarium of $20.00 in the form of a gift card.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Faculty of Education at [Phone Number] or Email: […]@sfu.ca.

Appendix B.

Phone Screening Interview

If interested, possible participants will be invited to phone the researcher for a screening interview or to answer the following questions via email.

Questions

1. How old were you when you arrived to Canada?
2. Are you Colombian?
3. How long have you been living in Canada?
4. Did you and your family arrive to Canada as Convention refugees or refugee claimants?

Appendix C.

Consent Form - Adult

Now(here): Exploring the Experiences of Displacement and Relocation of the 1.5 Generation Colombian Refugees Living in the Lower Mainland through Narrative Inquiry

Principal Investigator: Diana Carolina Rojas

Faculty Supervisor: Sharalyn Jordan, Assistant Professor, Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education. Email: […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number]

This research is being conducted to complete a thesis for a Masters in Counselling Psychology degree.

Why are we doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore how Colombian refugees who belong to the 1.5 generation living in the Lower Mainland make meaning of their experiences of displacement and relocation.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you arrived to Canada 5 to 10 year ago as a refugee and you were between 12 and 19 years old at the time of arrival.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to leave the study at any time without any negative consequences to the education, employment, or other services to which you are entitled or are presently receiving.

How is the study done?

You are invited to participate in:

- A screening interview of approximately 10 minutes by telephone.

- An individual interview of approximately 90 minutes.

- A focus group of approximately 2-3 hours. During this focus group collage will be used as a way to explore stories of displacement and relocation.

- Notes from the interview will be written and shared with you for your comments and feedback during a follow up interview of approximately 30 minutes. We will also ask you to check research narratives for accuracy and identifying information.

- The interviews will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated by the interviewer or a transcriber.

In appreciation for your time, you will receive a meal during the interview and an honorarium of $20.00 in the form of a gift card.

Potential Risks

This study is considered “Minimal risk” as it is not expected that there will be any risk to those interviewed; however, there is a possibility that the discussion of your experiences of displacement and relocation might cause distress. Some of the questions we ask may seem sensitive or personal. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to. You can let the interviewer know if you have any concerns or if you would like to take a break, or to stop the interview. The interviewer will check with you at the end of the interview to see how you feel. A list of Counselling Services will be provided to all participants in case they need follow-up support to deal with memories or issues that came up during the interview.

Potential Benefits

There are no direct benefits to research participants; however, you may experience positive psychological benefits through building a sense of empowerment

gained from participating in a group. Some participants may benefit from having their experience listened to in an affirming, validating, environment. Participation may also foster a sense of agency, as participants are contributing to enhanced support for refugee communities generally.

In addition, developing a better understanding of the particular challenges that the 1.5 generation faces during their process of relocation will offer an opportunity for parents, counsellors, social workers and, teachers to engage in more meaningful processes of support. At the same time, this project could also offer significant information that could be used to develop programs and support groups for new 1.5 generation immigrants and refugees in particular, as well as their parents and service providers/supportive structures.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law.

Interviews will be conducted at SFU (Surrey or Harbour). All documents will be identified only by a pseudonym and kept in a locked filing cabinet in the SFU Surrey Faculty of Education, and computer data will be password protected. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study or transcripts.

The Principal Investigator and Faculty Supervisor will have access to the data.

Strict confidentiality cannot be maintained in a group setting. We encourage participants not to discuss the content of the focus group to people outside the group; however, we can't control what participants do with the information discussed. Share only what you are comfortable.

All recordings will be destroyed one year after analysis is complete. All transcripts of audio recordings will be held for a period of 7 years after data analysis, in

accordance with Canadian Psychological Association Code of Ethics at which point they will be destroyed.

What If I decide to withdraw my consent to participate?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any point. In case of withdrawal all material related to your participation will be destroyed. The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles or presented at academic conferences**.** In order to receive a copy of the findings of the study, please provide your e-mail below.

Contact for information about the study:

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Principal Investigator: Diana Carolina Rojas Email: […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number] and Faculty Supervisor: Sharalyn Jordan. Email: […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number].

Contact for information about the rights of research subjects:

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics Email: […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number].

Consent

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your employment, access to further services.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.
- You do not waive any of your legal rights by participating in this study.

_____

Participant Signature Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

_____

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

e-mail address to which findings should be sent:

_____

Appendix G.

Counselling Services Information Sheet

Counselling Services Information Sheet

Here is a list of services where you can find someone to talk to, if you have something on your mind. If, at this time, you aren't ready to use one of these services, you might want to talk to a trusted family member or friend that you would normally go to when you need to talk.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Counselling Program - 604-874-2938
http://www.fsgv.ca/programpages/counsellingsupportservices/counsellingprogram.html
Counselling fees based on household income. Locations: Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster and Surrey.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Service Options - 604-731-4951
https://www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/providers/family-services-of-greater-vancouverlgbt-service-options. Professional counselling for LGBTQ individuals and couples.

Oak Counselling - 604-266-5611
http://oakcounselling.org/
Reduced fee. Individual, couples and family counselling.

Adler Centre - Counselling Clinic - 604-742-1818
http://www.adlercentre.ca/clinic.html
Sliding scale individual and couples counselling.

Scarfe Counselling - UBC - 604-827-1523
http://ecps.educ.ubc.ca/cnps/scarfe-counselling-clinic
Free. Clinic runs from September to April.

UBC Psychology Clinic - 604-822-3005
http://clinic.psych.ubc.ca/
$10-$40 per hour.

New Westminster UBC Counselling Centre - 604-525-6651
http://ecps.educ.ubc.ca/clinical-instructional-resources/new-westminster-ubccounselling-centre/
Free counselling for the general public by counselling psychology graduate students, supervised by a psychologist.

Simon Fraser University - Counselling Clinics
Surrey Clinic - 604-587-7320 - http://www.sfu.ca/education/centres-offices/sfu-surreycounselling-centre.html
Burnaby Clinic- 778-782-4720 - http://www.sfu.ca/cpc/mandate.htm
Services at the Surrey clinic are free and at the Burnaby clinic are offered on a sliding scale.

Vancouver Coastal Mental Health - Vancouver Hospital - 604-875-4794
http://psychiatry.vch.ca/opt.htm
Group therapy for depression, anxiety, stress. Referral through your family doctor, or a walk-in clinic.

Catholic Family Services - 604-443-3220
http://www.rcav.org/olmf/Office_of_Life_Marriage_and_Family_Counselling/
Individual, couple and family counselling available to Catholic and non-Catholic families. Sliding scale. Offices in Vancouver and Surrey.

Jewish Family Services - 604-637-3309
http://jfsa.ca/counselling/
Sliding scale counselling to the Jewish and non-Jewish community.

SUCCESS - Individual and Family Counselling Program - 604-408-7266
http://www.successbc.ca/eng/services/family-youth/counselling-service/611-individualand-family-counselling

Living Systems Counselling - 604-926-5496, ext. "0"
http://www.livingsystems.ca/counselling/locations-fees-services#Counselling
Lowercost counselling provided by supervised interns.

Moving Forward Family Services - 778-321-3054
https://movingforwardfamilyservices.com
Pay-by-donation counselling for individuals and families. Surrey and South Vancouver.

Broadway Youth Resource Centre - City University Community Counselling Clinic 604-709-5729
Offers counselling and support services in the areas of youth and family, anger management, and sexual orientation/gender identity issues. Free.

Surrey Youth Resources Centre, Community Counselling Clinic - 604-592-6200
Free counselling provided for individuals, youth and families - must be have a child or youth it the family to access services.

Qmunity - Free Counselling Program - 604-684-5307
http://www.qmunity.ca/older-adults/resources/counselling/Counselling for members of the GLBTQ communities.

Vancouver Association for the Survivors of Torture - 604 255-1881
www.vast-vancouver.ca/
Counselling for refugees and immigrants who have experience political violence.
Source - https://willowtreecounselling.ca/wp-content/themes/willowtree/reduced-cost-counselling.pdf