

Elderly Latino Immigrant Women: Identity and Home

by

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Abstract

This study explored the stories of six elderly Latino immigrant women living in Winnipeg based on their talk about identity and home. Using narrative analyses, the research focused on their life stories before and after immigrating and made use of pictures to discuss their notion of home. These women provided rich narratives of how people and places shaped their identities during their formative and pre-immigration years. At the same time, the circumstances that compelled them to emigrate, the places to which they arrived and live now, the people they met in Winnipeg and elsewhere, and the new roles they embraced in Canada have all contributed to a renegotiation of these women's identities. These women showed that home is family, but that family is often symbolized by objects, places, and pictures that represent the memories they have of, and share with, their family members.

Key words: identity, home, immigrant, women, Latina, elderly, narrative, photo-elicitation.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Understanding people's identity or "who they are" has been a subject of study for decades and there is almost no agreement regarding the nature and boundaries of identity (Taylor, 2010). According to Taylor, "[i]dentity is about the interface between what might variously be characterized as the macro and the micro, the exterior and the interior, the peopled social world and the individual person within, as well as other people's views of "who I am" and how I see myself" (Taylor, 2010, p. 3).

"Home" is another concept that has been widely explored since it has been recognized as framing people's lives and consequently their well-being. Over the last three decades, extensive literature regarding home has emerged (Lewis, 2006). "Home" is where people belong (Chaudhury and Rowles, 2005) and includes physical places and symbolic spaces, being both entailed and inseparable (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). In that sense, home includes people's territorial attachments and sense of belonging to a specific place, and it also embraces a sense of self and identity (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). According to Chaudhury and Rowles (2005) "it is widely accepted that home provides a sense of identity, a locus of security, and a point of centering and orientation in relation to a chaotic world beyond the threshold" (p. 3). Yet, this concept has been mainly explored among young adults and elderly 'white' communities (Cloutier-Fisher and Harevy, 2009), neglecting other minority groups such as racialized people, in particular racialized elderly women.

On this note, it is unclear when a person is considered part of the elderly population. For instance, Beekman, Copeland and Price (1996), and Stout, Graves,

Smith, Hartman, Cramer, Beck and Harris (2008) considered that a person over 55 years of age is part of the elderly population (Beekman, Copeland and Prince, 1996; Stout, Graves, Smith, Hartman, Cramer, Beck and Harris, 2008). Yet, commonly, an “elderly” person has been defined as a person whose chronological age is 65 years old or older (Orimo, Ito, Suzuki, Araki, Hosoi, and Sawabe, 2006). The reasons for which the age 65 is often chosen as the threshold for being a senior are unknown. However, it is speculated that the origins may be linked to the age chosen by Prince Bismarck of Germany over a century ago as the age in which citizens of his empire were entitled to receive the benefits of the national pension plan (Orimo et al., 2006).

Although the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) states that a person is entitled to retirement at the age of 60 (Service Canada, 2012), there are many institutions that permit an early retirement as soon as 55 years of age (i.e. Human resources University of Waterloo). Thus, in this study people over 55 years of age were considered as part of the elderly population.

Lewin (2001) recognized that the notion of home relates greatly to the elderly no matter their ethnic background, as there is a direct relationship between age and the amount of time aging people spend at home. Indeed, he argues that indoor activities constitute an important part of elderly people’s everyday life, especially as this appears in the lives of elderly immigrants who may not have an extensive social network. A lack of social network for this elderly group tends to isolate them and constrain their activities to their homes. As Lewin (2001) nicely phrases the issue, “[e]lderly immigrants who live a life separated from the social and cultural life in the dominant

society are even more restricted to the home than are other societal groups” (p.358). Thus, he researched and suggested further exploration of this phenomenon, especially in the multicultural context of Canada. Furthermore, focusing on the experience of migration, identity and notion of home among elderly immigrant women would contribute to the literature as it is widely recognized that gender provides important information regarding not just people’s personal adaptation following migration, but also their cultural adaptation in the receiving culture. This experience offers insights about the challenges that the entire family faces since the expectations and responsibilities within the family and the new society might be at odds (Dion and Dion, 2001). Additionally, understanding the notion of home among elderly immigrant women, especially the ones who immigrated during late adulthood, is of particular interest as they already have a meaning of home attached to their experiences prior to immigration (Lewis, 2006). Furthermore, understanding what is home for elderly immigrant women and what factors make them feel at home is important for improving their well-being. As Lewin (2001) claims “[h]ow we perceive the significance of the home for the elderly can have direct consequences for political measures and decisions regarding resources allocation to different forms of care for the elderly, as well as for how we view elderly people’s decisions about their own living conditions” (Lewin, 2001, p. 354).

Given the projected population increase not only of older men and women (Anderson and Hussey, 2000), but those who are immigrants (Shakeri and O’Connor, 2006), this will become a more important topic in years to come. Consequently, in order

to understand the factors that help immigrants to feel – or not – at home in Canada, this topic couldn't be more timely and appropriate. In this thesis, I will explore how a particular group of “elderly Latino immigrant women” define and in some cases re-define their identity based on their experience of migration; and, ultimately how this identity shapes their notion of home.

This research draws on elements of the social identity theory (SIT), which explores individuals' identification and membership to a group,¹ and the emotional attachment of this belonging (Tajfel, 1981). Furthermore, as Berry (1999, 2001) highlighted, research of this type could have a large impact and a potential contribution to policy and program development, improvement, and actions that could avoid intergroup conflict and ensure a positive experience of adaptation for the receiving culture and for immigrants.

This research explores six elderly first-generation Latino immigrant women's identity and notion of home through narrative inquiry, seeking to provide insight into their identities, culture and social worlds (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashian and Zilber, 1998). This research also uses photo elicitation (Gold, 2004, 2007) as “images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words” (Harper, 2002, p. 13). Thus, through the telling of their life stories prior to coming to Canada, their experience of migration, and descriptions of the pictures they took, these six elderly Latino immigrant women explore their identity and notion of home.

¹ A group is a collection of people that see themselves as members of the same social category (Tajfel, 1981).

CHAPTER TWO: Literature review

2.1. Immigrants in Canada

Immigration to Canada is not a recent phenomenon. Canada is a multicultural country, and immigration is an integral part of its identity (Hou, 2004). By the seventeenth century, a steady stream of immigrants was coming to various regions of the geographic area that would come to be known as Canada. These newcomers came from France and England (Kelley and Trebilcock, 1998). By the twentieth century, although immigration from Europe continued, immigration trends started to switch. Asians, Africans, and Central and South Americans started to form a larger segment of those people immigrating to Canada. Canada's 2006 Census portrays the majority of newcomers as part of the "visible minority group" (Statistic Canada, 2008). On July 15, 1998 the term "visible minority" was approved as a departmental standard. This term has been used to refer to persons who are identified according to the *Employment Equity Act* as being non-Caucasian in race or non-white in skin colour (Supreme Court of Canada, 1995). Under the *Act*, Aboriginal persons are not considered to be members of visible minority groups.

From 2001 to 2006 the total visible minority population in Canada increased by 27.2%, five times faster than the total population (Chui, Tran and Maheux, 2008). By 2006, about 66% of the visible minority population has been born outside Canada. In Manitoba, the immigrant population also increased significantly by 4.6% compared with population growth the year before (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2008). As Shakeri and colleague noted in 1996, approximately 900,000 of first-generation

immigrants were 65 years old or older. “Although Canada is a relatively young country, population aging is a driving force in Canadian gerontology and the presence of an aging immigrant population raises important concerns about the well-being of this elderly population” (Shakeri et al., 2006, p. 74). Furthermore, the immigration of younger adults stimulates the subsequent immigration of their elderly parents (Boyd 1991; cited by Lewis, 2006, p. 5). Yet, there is little attention regarding the conceptualization of the notion of home among immigrants, especially immigrant women, which overlooks the importance of home and the well-being of this elderly population in Canada (i.e. Brotman, 2003a, 2003b).

2.1.1. Racialized Immigrant Women in Canada

Being female and members of a specific racial, ethnic, or class group affected what women could or could not do, how they saw themselves (and others), and how others in turn saw them (Epp, Iacovetta and Swyripa, 2004, p. 3)

As it has been said so far, nowadays Canada is a multicultural nation formed mainly by immigrants from all over the world, and Aboriginal peoples. However, Canada did not always have a multi-ethnic and inclusive agenda that encouraged the immigration of different ethnicities. For instance, in the first Immigration Act of 1869, the Canadian Government only encouraged immigration from Great Britain as a way of ensuring a white settlement country (Dua, 2004). However, shortly after, in the early 1880's, Canadian immigration policy changed towards allowing immigration from other ethnic groups such as Chinese, Japanese, and Indian as there was a great need for labour for the construction of the railway and other types of infrastructure that facilitated the

settlement of more people especially in Western Canada. Yet, the conditions of these new waves of immigration were very different than those of British immigrants. For instance, Chinese, Japanese and Indian women were not allowed to enter the country. Even though the policy that prohibited the immigration of Asian women was unofficial it was persistent and visible in public discourse as a way to prevent the permanent settlement of Asian men (Dua, 2004). Dua (2004, p.75) clearly illustrates this point by citing Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's speech, in the House of Commons in 1887: "I do not think it would be to the advantage of Canada or any other country occupied by Asians for members of the Mongolian race to become permanent inhabitants of the country". Macdonald's words demonstrated that while there was not a written document which specified the prohibition of female immigration of these ethnic groups, this idea was present within the language used among members of the parliament at the time. Thus, women of non-European descent were considered a threat to the formation of a "white" Canadian society. In this sense, it was assumed that the formation of communities was not the result of male migration but female migration (Dua, 2004).

Nevertheless, the tendency to not allow immigration of female members of these respective ethnic groups changed as the number of men eligible for marriage increased. Subsequently, Chinese, Japanese and Indian men were considered a threat and potentially dangerous (i.e. sexual assaults, intermarriages) to "white" women and their integrity. Thus, immigration of female members of these ethnic groups became welcomed as a measure of protecting the "white" Canadian Nation and their women (Dua, 2004). For instance, pictures of Japanese brides (phenomenon that consisted of

arranged marriages between Japanese women in Japan and Japanese immigrant men settled in Canada) described by Ayukawa (2004) might be understood in this manner. Indeed, by 1919, 59% of the total Japanese immigration to Canada were women.

The latter half of the twentieth century, the attraction of immigrants into Canada has continued as a national strategy to address the lack of skilled workers within the Canadian labour market. Indeed, the immigration of women just as partners of male skilled workers started to shift as the need for female labour also increased. For instance, after the Second World War, there was a need for health practitioners, especially nurses. As this discipline was a female dominated profession, the number of immigrant women that were the principal applicants also increased (Flynn, 2004). However, there was still racialized profiling within the Immigration Acts. As Flynn (2004) illustrates, “the 1952 Immigration Act allowed the Minister of Immigration wide-sweeping discretion to prohibit or limit the admission of people on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, geographic origin, peculiarity of customs, unsuitable of climate or inability to become assimilates” (p. 382).

Finally, the last statistical report of Citizenship and Immigration Canada in 2009 portrays that 64% of women immigrating to Canada during that respective year were the principal applicants within the different categories of immigration (skilled worker, Canadian experience class, entrepreneurs, self-employed, investor, provincial/territorial nominee and live-in caregiver) (Citizen and Immigration Canada, 2009). This would suggest that the role of these women within Canadian society has also changed, situating them as active agents of change, and as less dependent on their partners.

2.2. Identity

People's identities or "who they are" are not immobile (Hauge, 2007). Rather, they are in a constant process of formation and adaptation (Hockey and James, 2003). As mentioned before, a person's identity has internal and external components or dimensions. Those components may have created an artificial division between a personal identity and social identities. Yet, both dimensions are inseparable, as 'identities are socially produced' and 'there are not aspects of identity that lie outside social relations' (Lawler, 2008, p. 143 cited by Taylor, 2010, p. 3). Consequently, "[i]dentity is about the interface between what might variously be characterized as the macro and the micro, the exterior and the interior, the peopled social world and the individual person within, as well as other people's views of "who I am" and how I see myself" (Taylor, 2010, p. 3)

As the identity of a person is socially produced, understanding their social interaction and the factors involved in that process becomes an important phenomenon to explore. One of the theories that explore these social interactions based on a person's group membership is the Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT developed by Tajfel (1981) explores individuals' identification and membership to a group and the emotional attachment of this belonging.

Some of these identities will be freely acquired, such as sport affiliation and hobby activities, while other identities are imposed by physical characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and age. Hockey and colleague (2003) noted that, for instance, "in the West, our age impacts very powerfully on the way we see ourselves - and are seen by

others. Indeed, here we argued that it has become one of the key bases for the production of social identity, acting as a way to classify and order the passing of time in an individual's life" (p. 3).

Along these lines, elderly immigrant women, as all individuals, will have multiple identities depending on the different groups they belong to. Lum (2003) uses the term *intersectionality* to refer to an individual's membership to multiple social groups that shapes that individual's life experiences (cited in Shakeri et al., 2006). The intersectionality of people's identities could bring positive or negative intergroup relationships with others. For instance, Shakeri and colleague (2006) found in their study of Iranian women aging in Canada that the intersection between gender, age and ethnicity facilitated some instances of discrimination, stating that "[t]o be a female member of an ethnic group is to bring to the aging situation, both the past history of disadvantage and discrimination based on values and belief, in addition to the hardships of old age and history of oppression based on gender" (p. 76).

SIT is well suited to understand the renegotiation of people's identities, as identity is not produced in isolation. In fact, as Taylor (2010) explains, our identities are socially produced. Thus, the intersectionality of people's identities, especially the ones who are potentially victims of discrimination, become more salient in the interaction with other cultures (Berry, 2001). Consequently, our identity provides information about one's self to others, but it is also reaffirmed and shaped by others through their acknowledgment and recognition. And, the lack of recognition, or a negative social

recognition could make people feel alienated, depersonalized, and even without an identity.

Abrams and Hogg (1990) suggested that there are three strategies a person can use to deal with a negative identity given to them by others. The first one is social mobility that implies the acquisition of a new identity by changing social groups; the second is to change the characteristics of comparison with the others; and the third one is to compete with the group of comparison. Thus, in their attempt to change the circumstances, some members of a group could try to change their group membership. Nevertheless, there are some circumstances in which the devalued group could adopt a different response towards discrimination and not see themselves as inferior; instead they might counter oppressive situations by retaining their cultural identity, feeling pride towards their heritage and transmitting their traditions to their offspring such as the case of the Japanese pioneers in Canada (Ayukawa, 2004). There is another strategy that has not been described by Abrams and colleague that does not involve changing identities or any kind of confrontation, an actual ‘physical social mobility’. That is migration (Berry, 2001). In other words, a person could leave the place in which his/her identity is being threatened and go to another place.

As Reicher, Hopkins and Harrison (2006) noted, an individual’s decision to migrate to a particular place could reflect their sense of capability to “fit in” in the host culture. Migrants usually decide to go to a place where they feel and think they will share some norms and values with the members of the host country, and where they feel familiarity with their social practices (Berry, 2001). In other words, people will migrate

to a place where they think their identities will not be at odds with their host country's population. Most importantly, migrants will go to a place where they believe others will accept them, and where they see the possibility of maintaining their identities (Reicher, Hopkins and Harrison, 2006; Berry, 2001); in other words, people will migrate to places where they believe they will feel at home.

2.2.1. Identities of elderly Latino immigrant women: the Dominant narrative

Dominant narratives, also called master narratives, “are the complex, interlocked sets of ideas that accompany themes in our dominant ideologies that, consciously and unconsciously, suggest the nature of the world” (Rubinstein and de Medeiros, 2005, p. 54). As Rubinstein and colleague (2005) point out “habitual” narratives concern elements such as gender, race, socioeconomic status, and age. Thus, as the focus of this study is elderly Latino immigrant women, I describe three dominant narratives based on gender, race and age.

Western societies have a high appreciation towards youth and beauty, two concepts of mainstream media and culture that are at odds with the characteristics of elderly people. As Shakeri and colleague (2006) noted the process of aging is not held in high regard among people in Western societies, including Canada. Dossa (1999) noted that elderly people are socially constructed as the “others”. She claims that older women in Canada are confronted with a casual stereotype of middle-aged (menopausal) women and a significant amount of prejudice in the workplace. Elders are typically considered as people who have lost their physical and cognitive abilities, and have become a burden

for their families and the 'system'. Therefore, they are often separated from the labour force because they are seen to be slow to learn (Dossa, 1999), which constrains them to performing domestic activities. Even though it is true that elderly people experience a decline in their physical and cognitive capacities (Oswald and Walh, 2005), that does not necessarily mean that they become a burden to their families. As Spitze and Gallant (2004) show, elderly people tend to be independent as long as they can.

Unfortunately, the dominant narrative for a racialized person is not any better than the dominant narrative for an aging person. People who belong to a minority group could be subject to many incidents of discrimination including systemic racism (Ontario Human Rights commission, 2010). For instance, as Dossa's (1999) study shows, in Canada immigrants face significant difficulties getting a job suitable to their academic credentials. Visible skin colour, religious identification, clothing, and physical disabilities are just a few of the characteristics that interact in complex ways to augment or attenuate oppression (Maynard, Afshar, Franks, and Wray, 2008). Indeed, a racialized person is likely to be subject to discrimination based on one of these characteristics or the intersection of their different social group memberships. McIntosh (2003) suggests that this racially-based hierarchical scale is an inherited legacy from colonialism.

Furthermore, society still has characteristics of a patriarchal society where belonging to the female group may imply inferior hierarchical position to men. To be a woman means to have fewer opportunities, social status and recognition than men in the majority of the circumstances (McIntosh, 2003; Maynard, et al., 2008). As portrayed in Waldfogel's (1998) study women with the same educational level and amount of

experience tend to receive lower wages than men while performing the same job (Waldfoegel, 1998). Women are usually placed by society in fixed roles that have domestic connotations, which are not monetarily compensated; therefore, they are generally devalued.

Consequently, the dominant narratives of the three identities described in this section, suggest that the “intersectionality” of these identities might have a negative connotation for the female participants of this study. Yet, it is important to mention that the dominant narrative is not necessarily the reality lived by everyone (Rubinstein et al., 2005). Thus, it is important to hear their own voices and not just what theory suggests.

2.3. Home

The existing literature on this phenomenon suggests that there could be as many categories as people describing the notion of home. Yet, these categories are usually divided in two big dimensions: those referring to the physical places and those referring to the symbolic spaces, being both dimensions interwoven and inseparable (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). In that sense, as Al-Ali and colleague stated, home does not include just territorial attachments and sense of belonging to a specific place, but also embraces a sense of self and one’s identity, where transportable cultural ideas and values are reproduced or reinvented in a new place.

People’s notions of home are different, depending on the gender, age, cultural background, life history, and current circumstances (Lewin, 2001). In Al-Ali and Koser’s words “‘homes’ are gendered spaces, inhabited by people of various social

classes, different generations and political orientations with diverse experiences of previous and current homes and the movements between them” (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002, p. 6). Furthermore, different individual’s definitions of home will vary even within the same culture (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Lewin, 2001). An example of some categories that could be explained using these two dimensions is Depres’ study (1991) as he describes that for some people home is a place where they feel secure and have control, home is the mirror of personal views and values, home is the place where they have some influence and control of change, home is the place that offers continuity and permanency, home is the centre of family relationships and friendship, home is the centre of different activities, home is the place that provides a space to escape outside pressures, home is the place that reflects their status, home is the concrete structure, and home is the place to own. Yet, grouping the categories in these two dimensions is not always an easy task as in many instances the content of these categories overlap, highlighting their interweavement and inseparability, as mentioned by Taylor (2010).

Other studies add that for some people home is also the community they are part of, and the relationships they hold with that community and its members (Cloutier-Fisher et al., 2009). Additional studies done with immigrant populations found that for some people home is the place they left (Lewis, 2006). Thus, home becomes an abstract ideal attached to feelings of longing for a nostalgic past or a utopian future (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). Another researcher that has worked with an immigrant population is Lewin (2006). In her attempt to understand the notion of home among elderly immigrant women, she created a new model called the Model of Expanding Meaning of Home.

This model illustrates that immigrants' meaning of home has to expand due to the changes with their physical, social, and psychological environment in order to function effectively in the new environment. In other words, her model portrays – as well as the transnational approach – elements of 'here' and 'there' within the conceptualization of home, where the 'here' includes the current physical and social circumstances within the new environment, as well as the cognitive and symbolic expansion of the meaning of home; and 'there' includes the past social and physical circumstances that are used as references in the cognitive process of expanding the meaning of home (Lewis, 2006).

This inclusion of the concept of 'here' and 'there' in the explanation of the notion of home opens up a possibility of multiple localities and identities among immigrants who have multiple social and physical locations as a referent of home (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). For instance, some people have had multiple migrations such as diaspora communities (Abdelhady, 2008). Nonetheless, this multiplicity in localities and identity cannot be understood without acknowledging the importance of new technologies in communication and transportation, which basically make it possible to move the notion of home from a local to a global scale (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). As Cloutier-Fisher and colleague (2009) indicate, people's notion of home within a new context is usually based on previous experiences, but it is also based on what the new circumstances are in the 'host' environment. In this manner, people's notion of home is not static (Moore, 2000). The notion of home is in fact constantly modified and reshaped by individuals in order to increase the congruence between the past and the present situation (Lewis, 2006).

The transnational approach suggests that for some ‘transnational immigrants’² the notion of home is multi-dimensional and not fixed, involving dynamic processes of imagining, creating, unmaking changing, losing and moving ‘homes’ (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). Yet, as Al-Ali and Koser (2002) highlight, not having a fixed notion of home might make some transnational immigrants feel a sense of fragmentation, uneasiness, tension or even pain. Lewis (2006) clearly conveys that house is a critical concept that shapes the meaning of home, but they are far from synonymous. Indeed, Lewin (2001) nicely points out that “[h]ome does not only mean a residence, but also mental capacities, emotional relationships and social ties. The home resides at the centre of our psyches” (Lewin, 2001, p. 356). Therefore, it is important to understand not just the categories of the physical dimension (the place) especially where someone lives, but also the categories of the symbolic and/or social dimensions (the people that inhabit it) as they have an exceptional importance for understanding people’s identity (Taylor, 2010)

2.3.1. Elderly Latino immigrant women’s home

Being an aging Latino woman might have an impact on the construction of the notion of home. For instance, Oswald and colleague (2005) state that the meaning of home among elderly people might acquire a new meaning in order to compensate the reduction in physical and cognitive capacities as they decline in the process of growing older. Some places within the house will become the most favourite as they provide

²These immigrants experience their daily lives, activities and social relationships within two or more nation states.

comfort and control on daily activities (Oswald et al., 2005). Another study that shows how the notion of home might be shaped by gender and the process of aging is Vikko's (1996 cited by Lewin 2001). In his study, based on elderly Finnish women's autobiographies, he shows that women claim that home is closely connected to the family and family life with small children; that is, home derives its meaning in the context of family. Along this lines Vikko's study shows that elderly Finnish women's notion of home is based on the old days where everybody in the family lived in the same house (Lewin, 2001). Furthermore, being an immigrant might also set up a platform for the construction of the concept of home. As Lewin (2001) indicates, "the fact that many immigrant groups live segregated from the host society can be expected to influence their conception of home" (p.150). In this sense, their homes become a physical and psychological space where they can be themselves and practice their own rituals and traditions such as speak their own language, eat their traditional food, listen to their music, and pray. Their homes become enclaves that provide protection from external society that usually represents a threat towards aspects of their ethnic identity.

As it has been described in previous sections, there is vast amount of research that addresses the concepts of identity and home. Yet, it is important to explore identity and the notion of home in different elderly immigrant populations as three major deficiencies remain in the literature, especially related to the notion of home. First, most of the research has been conducted in a gender-neutral way, overlooking the differences in the experience of migration, identity and home between women and men. Dion and colleague (2001) highlight the importance in considering gender when studying

immigrant groups since gender provides an enormous amount of information regarding not just women's personal adaptation, but possibly the entire family's experience of migration and cultural adaptation to the receiving culture. Second, the vast majority of studies of home focus their attention on young adults, failing to explore the relevance of aging in people's notion of home. For instance, Lewin (2001) has found that there is a direct relationship between age and the amount of time aging people spend at home. And finally, the attention on these studies has been mainly conducted on white groups, overlooking the voices of racialized people.

Furthermore, using narrative analysis in the telling of the process of immigration, identity and ultimately, the notion of home of different groups of immigrants, in this case Latino women provides an ad hoc platform for a case-centered analysis. This type of analysis produces a context-dependent knowledge that would provide valuable information that could be used for the development of programs and the elaboration of policies.

Additionally, for many people, the possibility of telling their stories facilitates a process of healing and reconciliation with some traumatic events. Rosenthal (2005) explains that the interview, especially in a narrative biographical style, is already a kind of psychological intervention as the conversation might set off an initial healing process for some people who experienced acute life events. Finally, this research could also provide a reference for further studies with different ethnic groups and other family members.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the notion of home of six elderly first generation Latino immigrant women, based on their identity and experience of migration.

This goal was reached by focusing on the following objectives:

1. To describe the identity of six elderly Latino immigrant women and their experience of migration.
2. To describe the notion of home of six elderly Latino immigrant women.
3. To understand to what extent their identity shapes their notion of home.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

Through a social constructivist philosophical approach (Josselson, Lieblich and McAdams, 2003; Creswell, 2009;) and the use of a narrative inquiry (Riessman 1994; Lieblich et al., 1998; Riessman and Quinney, 2005, Riessman, 2008; and Taylor 2010), six elderly first generation Latino immigrant women's narratives of identity and home were explored. By keeping their stories "intact" the narrative inquiry allows theorizing case by case rather than from component themes across cases (Riessman, 2008).

Furthermore, a narrative analysis provides insight into people's identities, culture and social worlds (Lieblich et al., 1998; Elliot, 2005; Benwell and Stokoe, 2006), creating possibilities for social identities, group belonging, and collective actions" (Riessman, 2008). This form of inquiry also provided a voice to those who have been marginalized (Flynn, 2004) which in this case refers to racialized elderly first-generation immigrant women. Specifically, this research used a narrative thematic analysis and some aspects of the performance analysis. A thematic analysis focuses its attention to the content of the telling, "what" is said, and a performance analysis focuses its attention on "why", "for what purpose" and "to whom" is that been told, underlining the collaboration between the participant and the interviewer in the co-construction of that particular story (Riessman, 2008).

Through people's stories we learn how they as individuals and as groups make sense of their experiences and construct meaning and identities (Taylor, 2010). We also learn the complexities and subtleties of social worlds they inhabit (Chase, 2003). In this vein, narrative allows individuals to create who they are and to create meanings of their

situations in everyday interactions, making connections between the past and present, self and society (Riessman, 1994). For the participants of this study, stories were a way to narrate their life story prior to coming to Canada, their experience of emigration and immigration, and a way of describing the pictures taken by them that represent their home.

3.2. Participants

Six elderly Latino immigrant women were interviewed. These women were between the ages of 56 -75, had immigrated to Canada when they were between 30 - 45 years of age, and had been living in Canada for at least 10 years when interviewed. All the interviews were conducted in Spanish, as all the participants' first language is Spanish. A more detailed biography of each participant is provided in the next section.

3.3. Recruitment

The study used snowball and intensity sampling (Patton, 2002) to recruit participants. Flyers and handouts were posted in different immigrant associations and Latino gatherings in Winnipeg. The researcher contacted the presidents and directors of several agencies and associations. These individuals forwarded the research information via e-mail to women associated with their associations. Some of the women who were contacted by e-mail already knew the researcher from previous women's gatherings hosted by these associations. Thus, some women directly replied to the researcher and/or through to women's associations. After initial contact, all of these women were

contacted by phone and set up a first meeting to explain the study in more detail. In the first meeting the ethical protocol was explained and the participant was given a hard copy (Appendix E).

After the participants gave and signed their written consent the researcher provided one disposable camera with a set of oral and written instructions on how to use them (Appendix C). Used during interviews, photographs can elucidate dynamics and produce insights that otherwise would not have been found through other methodological approaches (Clark-Ibanez, 2007; Stanczak, 2007). Auto-driven photo elicitation as well as the regular photo elicitation can have a narrow focus. Thus, the participants' photographs can be used to answer a specific research question. Samuels (2007) claims that when the subjects take the pictures, they "are likely to reflect more accurately their world, and thus, using them is better suited to bridging the culturally distinct worlds of the researcher and the researched" (p. 199). Thus, when researchers use photographs taken by the participants in the interview, they can create their own sense of meaning of their own world and frame their own experiences.

The participants were given a one-month period to take the pictures, after which the researcher contacted them by phone and arranged to pick up the cameras at a location of the participant's choice and to schedule the first interview. The recruitment of participants stopped when the interviews provided a rich range of narratives of identity and notions of home. Following the transcription of four interviews, it appeared that I had collected more information that I could analyze. Nonetheless, two more

interviews were held as the participants were already recruited and the interviews were schedule.

3.4. Data collection

Following the camera retrieval and photo development in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews were informal. Questions about the participant's life prior to migration and the participant's pictures were used as part of the interview protocol. Interviews were held in the houses of participants, except for one that was held at a restaurant close to this woman's office. The interviews lasted between two to three and half hours, they were tape-recorded and field notes were taken after the interview to record interview environment, participant reactions and presentation, and any non-verbal communication.

Following the interview, tape recordings of the interviews were transcribed. As mentioned above during the process of translation some "messy" spoken language has been transformed and "cleaned up" to some degree. Yet, some disfluencies and irregularities of ordinary talk were retained such as repetitions and "uh". Although, I did not follow any formalized transcription pattern or convention, I used punctuation such as capital letters, comas, and periods to separated sentences. A series of stops represented when the participant was making a pause or did not finalize an idea. In addition, I replaced the name of people, countries, and certain places by letters or other kind of descriptions, to make sure the participants were not to be identified. I wrote phrases in Spanish or some research clarifications in Italics. I stored transcriptions and

digital recordings in a password protected electronic device. I assigned pseudonyms to each participant and any identifying information was changed to ensure anonymity. As not all the pictures could be presented in this study, I selected the photographs that best described these women's notion of home. Consequently the participants were approached and asked for written permission of their image and copyright release (Appendix F and G-1). After each interview, I took reflexive notes, providing the space to explore and emphasize the importance of my own self-awareness, political and cultural consciousness, and my own perspective.

3.5. Data Analysis

Because all the interviews were conducted in Spanish the data needed to be translated into the English language. Larson (1998) defines translation as the process in which an interpreter conceptualizes and reconstructs statements and meanings of a source language to a target language, changing the vocabulary and grammatical structure to make it understandable in a new cultural context (Larson, 1998 cited by Esposito, 2001). With this in mind, I decided to examine the data using primarily a thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) rather than structural analysis because the process of translation inevitably alters the narrative especially in the structure of the talk. Thematic analysis considered the language or content of speech as a resource; consequently, the transformation and simplification of a "messy" spoken narrative is expected (Riessman, 2008). The nature of the stories, however, was not altered; that is, if the story presented some kind of ambiguity, that ambiguity remained in the story. Yet, during the process of

translations it is not possible to keep the meaning completely congruent and intact, as not all concepts are universal (Esposito, 2001). Furthermore, certain narratives or words will have a different meaning in different dialects or regionally-based languages. Marin and Marin's (1991) study shows the differences in the meaning of words amongst regional dialects in Latino groups (Esposito, 2001). Therefore, I presented some of the participants' quotes in the original language, as there were not suitable translations in English or because in the process of translation the meaning was inevitably altered.

Following the transcription of the interviews, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant and names were changed from the original transcript. I worked with a single interview at a time. I read each interview transcript several times. Then, I used the "review" tool from WORD software to separate relevant episodes from each interview transcript. It is important to highlight that the order of events was not modified to maintain the biographical pattern inherent in the interview transcripts. In a new reading, I assigned some themes to each episode and in some cases I wrote some initial interpretations, comments, and thoughts.

Furthermore, I created different documents for each participant that included all of the themes that I identified. I also included some "key" fragments of the narratives. I compared and contrasted the initial results from each participant.

Afterwards, I elaborated a chart that included all the identified themes and all participants' "key fragments". In the chart, I assigned a column to each participant, and I highlighted the rows with the themes and kept un-highlighted rows with the participants'

“key fragments”. I used the participants’ “key fragments” as clues to remind me of that particular episode of the narrative.

I translated the chart into English, as I am fluent in both Spanish and English. At this point, I sent all of the charts to my supervisor to obtain her guidance and comments. Then, I subdivided the chart into three files that were labeled according to master themes: identity, immigration and home. I created an additional column in the chart to synthesize the initial themes (e.g. “Safe and danger”) into the broader themes presented in the Findings (e.g. “Departure and arrival”). My supervisor reviewed the charts one more time. Afterwards, I used the “key fragments” to return and retrieve the entire episode located in the full transcript, preserving sequences and a wealth of detail contained in the sequences from the original transcript for translation, interpretation and analysis, as is required in narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008).

Furthermore, while working with the narratives elicited by the participants’ photographs, I observed the pictures at the same time as reading the narratives. I organized the photos according to the “home” sub-themes along with the story that the participant had provided with it. Yet, in many instances more than one photograph represented the same sub-theme, in which case they were grouped. As each participant provided around 13 pictures, and not all of them could be included in this study, I selected one and in some cases two photographs that represented the sub-themes. The criteria of selection were based on how clear the images were, and preferably if they did not portray the participants’ faces. However, in some cases, all of the participants’ pictures included people.

I also read my reflexivity notes several times and used them in the process of describing the personal interactions and feelings that the interviews generated for me. I also used them in the last section called reflections and discussion as they provided a basis for my reflections and discussion.

3.6. Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness or, using the terminology of the positivist paradigm, the “validity” of this study has been ensured using some facets of Riessman (2008) and Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria. As Riessman (2008) highlights there are two levels of validity that could be questioned by different audiences while using narrative analysis: How truthful is the story and the analysis told by the researcher? And, how truthful is the story told by the research participant? In that sense, to ensure the trustworthiness of this research, I used several facets of validity. Yet, it is important to bear in mind that, as Riessman claims, narrative truths are always partial-committed and incomplete.

The first facet that was relevant to this study is persuasiveness (Riessman, 2008). I strengthened persuasiveness by tape-recording the interviews, so I could represent the talk with greater accuracy. When possible, I included the context and my own interventions in the segments of their narratives. I also produced reflexivity notes throughout the entire research project. Although this research was not situated in a realist epistemology, some of the elements found in the participants’ narratives could be

labeled as ‘historical truths’ (Spence, 1982) as there is correspondence between their personal narratives and factual historical events.

Another facet of validity that I used in this study was transferability and dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Transferability refers to the researcher’s responsibility to provide thick descriptions of the data so that future researchers can make their own judgment as to whether the transfer of the sending and receiving contexts is possible. Dependability refers to the researcher’s compromise to provide a very detailed description of the study methods and analysis so that narrative research can be replicated. Thus, I have provided a very detailed description of the participants, context, data, and a detailed description of the study including methodology and analysis.

Validity can also be improved when researchers adhere to what Riessman (2008) calls “pragmatic use”. This means that, when appropriate, it is important to make primary data available to other investigators. In the case of this research, however, the participants’ consent agreement only provided access to the principal researcher, supervisor and committee members. Thus, for ethical reasons sharing the raw data is not possible.

Finally, for ethical reasons rather than validity purposes, the findings were taken back to all the participants because they each requested to see the results at the opportunity, and also because I needed to show the participants which pictures I planned to use in the thesis and obtain their copyright waiver. Yet, I personally found that this exercise improved the accuracy of my results, since in one case a participant found a

mistake in the description of her age while another requested that I change her pseudonym because it reminded her of a person who she strongly dislikes. The process of reviewing the results with the women increased their understanding of the research, increased their participation in the research process, and further strengthened the relationship between the researcher and participant.

CHAPTER FOUR: Findings

This section presents the findings of the study involving six elderly Latino immigrant women's narratives about their meaning of home. In doing so, this section also looks at how these women described their identities and experiences of migration. The first section provides each participant's background and a brief summary of their emigrational circumstances by elaborating on information collected during the interviews and the investigator's reflectivity notes. Presenting the participants' background and the circumstances prior to immigration to Canada provides a more adequate setting to understand and analyze the photographs and consequently the narratives of these women's meaning of home. The participants' names have been changed and their countries of origin have been intentionally kept vague in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

In the following sections, I discuss the findings in relation to the participants' narratives. The findings are divided into two different groups. First, I portray the women's accounts describing their identities and experience of migration. Second, I present their accounts regarding their description of home based on their photographs. However, because the participants' narratives related to identity and home are inseparable, the content of both sections are interrelated. The findings demonstrate how the participants' identities shape their definition of home and how their notions of home are part of who they are. It is important to mention that in the process of translation, the meaning of the participants' narratives might have suffered an inevitable alteration, as I, the translator, had to reorganize the Spanish statements and meanings into a meaningful

English statement.

4.1 Participants' backgrounds and emigrational circumstances

Paz: I met Paz a couple of months before the interview was held. She is a woman in her early sixties who was born and raised in a large city of South America. Paz is a mother of one child and a grandmother of two children. She studied graphic journalism in her country of origin. In her twenties she married her husband and moved to another province in the mountains to work in the mining industry. After almost eight years of living there, a *coup d'etat* occurred. Due to the change in government, they were persecuted and had to go to another South American country (N2) where they lived for one year. While living in N2, they applied as refugees to Canada. Paz was 30 when they immigrated to Canada. In Canada, she obtained a Master's degree in Social Work, a field in which she worked for several years. Now, she is retired.

The interview with Paz took place at her house. Paz made lunch for us and we talked about current events in her country of origin, as she explained that every morning she reads the news from her country and also from Canada. During the interview, Paz looked very comfortable and engaged in the conversation. She was very open and shared very intimate events. I felt very comfortable talking with her.

Victoria: I met Victoria three years ago at a women's event through the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba. Victoria is a woman in her late sixties born in a

Central American country. Her parents moved to another Central American country (M2) for work when she was a teenager. She joined her parents in country M2 after she finished high school and studied social work, a field in which she built a successful career working for the government in numerous management positions. She is married and has five children. A revolution took place in M2, and they became enemies of the government since she was involved with the church. They moved to Canada when Victoria realized that her only son was in danger of being taken by the army. She was 40 when they arrived in Canada.

The interview with Victoria took place in a restaurant. She expressed that she was helping me in my thesis because she recognized how hard it is for immigrants to pursue higher education. While describing and remembering the hardships of her life, she became very emotional and her voice often staggered. Nonetheless, Victoria seemed to enjoy being able to talk about her experience.

Isabel: Isabel is a woman from Central America in her sixties who I met through another research participant. Before she came to Canada she used to work as a beauty consultant, an area in which she succeeded and gained vast experience. Isabel did not conclude her university studies in languages as the political situation in her country interfered with her studies and classes were suspended for an extensive period. She was married and soon got divorced, the reason for which she decided to immigrate to Canada. She came to Canada with her seven-year-old child when she was about to turn 40. She was able to begin work as a hair dresser after a local college licensed her. She

married again and now lives with her husband. Isabel retired several years ago due to health problems that she believes are the consequence of working for so many years with chemical products in salons.

During the interview Isabel talked in a slow tempo. Although we both are native Spanish speakers I found it hard to understand what she was trying to tell me at times as she used some analogies and other linguistic resources that were unfamiliar to me. She also showed me some parts of her house so I could have a better idea of the pictures she took.

Celia: Celia is in her mid fifties and is from a small town in a South American country. She is married and has three children. The first time Celia moved to a large urban centre was when she started her university degree as an accountant, a field in which she reached a top managing position in a multinational company. In the late 90's she moved to the United States with her family for a couple of years as she pursued her Master's degree. They returned to their country and realized that the safety and crime situation had deteriorated, which motivated her to immigrate to Canada. She came to Canada when she was 45 years old. Nowadays she lives with her husband, one of her children, and one of her nephews, and continues to work in her field.

The interview took place at her house. During the interview Celia looked very comfortable sharing her life story, talking about every important event in great detail. During the second interview, her entire family was in the same room watching television, a situation that did not appear to bother Celia. However, it took me a couple

of minutes to forget that they were so close to where our conversation was taking place. Yet, I did not even notice when all they left. Celia decided to talk also about old pictures and showed me old albums.

Gloria: I met Gloria a couple of years ago at an event held by the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba. She is from a Central American country and is married with three children. She lived in her country of origin until her late teens, but then she moved to her husband's country after their marriage. She studied special education but never practiced. They came to Canada due to increasing political instability and the potential danger her family faced. In Canada she studied education and started working in a daycare facility for low-income families.

The interview took place at her house. Gloria became very emotional during part of the interview. She requested that I stop recording parts of the interview as she thought it was important to share them with me but did not want to make them public. This is the reason why the description of her background is much more superficial. I felt very honoured that she would trust me with her more personal and intimate events and emotions.

Dora: I met Dora three years ago through a ladies' group from her country. She is from a large urban center in South America. In her country of origin she was a medical doctor. Dora married a German-Canadian and moved to Canada when she was 36. Before coming to Canada, they lived in a European country for two years. In Canada,

she did her Master's and began work in the biomedical field. Now, she is a widow in her early sixties who worked and continuous to work in the biomedical field.

The interview with Dora took place in her house. I felt that we have numerous things in common as we both moved to Canada after marrying a Canadian man. However, I felt that she did not want to talk about her personal issues, as she tended to respond to my questions with very short answers. However, when the conversation turned to her professional life, she was much more comfortable and open in the interview.

4.2 Identities and experience of migration

Each of these women came to Canada with different identities. They were mothers, daughters, and wives, and each had a profession. In other words, they came with a particular history that shaped their experience of immigration.

4.2.1 Before migration

The Dominant Narrative of Identity: Biographical patterns

All the participants transported me through their narratives to their place of birth, childhood and early adulthood, describing how not only their parents but also the place they were born and raised had an influence on their identity. Taylor (2010) highlights that people tend to follow a biographical pattern for telling a life story, and also learn to establish a connection between family and place, which could be described as the dominant narrative. Although I did not analyze the biographical patterns in these

women's narratives in detail, it is possible to identify how the body of their narratives follows this pattern.

Place, Family and Identity

Paz and Isabel explicitly talked about the direct influence of the place they were born and raised on who they are and the activities they enjoy. The following account describes how the neighbourhood and the social interactions held there, shaped the way Paz thought about her government and how these circumstances had a tremendous influence on her political affiliation, that later on, compelled her to leave their country and to become part of a diaspora community.

Interviewer: Tell me about your life and yourself before you came to Canada
Paz: Ok, I was born in (South American Country). I always lived right downtown. So, I always noticed that there were many differences between my friends from school and me. For example, I walked faster than them because I knew that in my neighbourhood I could not vacillate. My city was always very political with conflict and because I lived right downtown through my childhood and youth. I witnessed many protests. I learned very early that things are not fair, that my country is not fair.

In Paz's narrative she described how her city, especially her neighbourhood, made her realize the government's unfairness and shaped the development of her political views. It also had an enormous impact on her behaviour, such as the way she walked, and that feature distinguished her from others, making her, probably for the first time, feel that she had a unique identity. Based on Taylor's (2010) research on identity and place in women that have changed residences through their lives, she argues that people who live in a place can give a character or identity to it, and that place and its characteristics can

also reinforce that identity on certain residents. Thus, the political activities that were frequently held in Paz's neighbourhood shaped and gave content to her identity.

Isabel's account also describes how the place shaped an important part of her identity. She makes the connection between her activeness and love for nature related to the vast variety and possibilities her country's landscape provided.

Interviewer: Tell me please about your life before you came to Canada.

Isabel: Well, I was very active. I like nature so much. My entire family likes to go to the beach, you know. In my country, my country is a very small country but with a lot of things, lakes, rivers, volcanoes and everything. I liked...we were members of a club called A and we went for walks, what here people called hiking, right. So, we climbed volcanoes, and my "*comadre*" (the godmother of her child) and I went hiking together all the time. And, we got to know beautiful places of our country that you could not go by car but only walking.

In this account, Isabel made a direct connection between the variety and beauty of her country's landscape and her activeness and love for nature, her identity. She also mentioned that the landscape facilitated different activities with her family and friends. By saying "I was very active...my country is a very small country but with a lot of things..." Isabel elucidates how the physical landscape could facilitate different activities and different interactions with people. In that sense, a place, the activities held in that place and the people that a person interacts with in that place could facilitate the development of one's identity. Wiles (2008) also found a strong connection between the physical landscape and the sense of home and identity in the transnational social space of New Zealanders living in London. One of her main findings was that people who are physically active tend to describe their identity and sense of home based on the landscape and outdoors activities. We will notice later on, through her narratives, that the landscape is what Isabel feels more nostalgic about, as outdoor activities connected

her with her family and friends.

Nonetheless, the characteristics of a place not only provide opportunities to its residents; its characteristics can also limit one's opportunities. For instance, Celia had to move to another city to pursue a higher education since there was neither a high school or a university in her town.

Celia: Before I came to Canada my life had different faces as I imagine it is the case for everybody, ok. I was born in (*South American country*), and I always dreamed of graduating from college and having a profession and being able to pay for a maid because I never liked to do the house chores. My mom was a single mom but I knew my dad. We did not live with him. We are 5 children, two girls and three boys. We lived in a small town called X situated 40 minutes from two very important cities. My town only had an elementary school and did not have a high school or university. So, we had to go to one of those big cities to finish school. My mom thought of eventually moving to city Y because my sister and I commuted everyday to the school in that city, and because we might move there in the future to go to the university.

In Celia's account, she did not directly link the place where she was born with any part of her identity but her desire to be a professional and avoid household chores, which is part of her identity. More specifically her 'class-identity' (Lawler, 2008), made her move away from her small town. In that sense, place is also connected to the people's social class as Lawler notes (2008). Thus, place has its own identity that provides and facilitates the development of the identity of its residents. While a place's identity might be appreciated by its residents, in Celia's case, she rejected her home based on its negative association with a certain class identity, reflecting Celia's rejection of a certain social identity. Consequently, in an attempt to take on the identity of another place a person might move (Taylor, 2010).

The accounts presented so far have described a connection between place and family and its implications in these women's identities. The next section will continue describing biographical patterns portrayed by the participants, describing their professional paths and their marriages.

Building Identities: a professional, a wife and a mother

After describing parts of their childhood and the influences people and places had on their lives, the women talked about their professional careers and their marriages. It is important to highlight that in their narratives regarding their marriages a new dominant or master (Rubinstein et al., 2005) narrative emerged. More specifically, these women described their marriage using the "coupledom" narrative described by Reynolds and Taylor (2005), which states that single adults typically become heterosexual couples and then parents.

In the following account Victoria describes how she built her professional career as she started her studies in the country where she had recently joined her parents. During the same period of time she married and had her children.

Victoria: I lived in M2. I studied in M2. I studied social work in the university Z, and I started to work during my second year in the Institute of Social Safety as a social worker assistant. So, I worked and studied at the same time, and after I finished I got a full time position in the same institution. I got married when I was in my second year of school. I also had my kids. But, I was blessed that I had the help of my mom, my dad and my siblings.

Although Victoria does not narrate any particular event, she provides a brief description of some landmarks that interconnect and interrelate with each other, such as her bachelor's degree, her marriage, and the birth of her children, which portrays the

‘intersectionality’ between several social group memberships (Lum, 2003). She also briefly mentioned how blessed she was to have social support from her family. The social support she received from her parents and siblings could be described as another intersection of other identities (i.e. daughter and sister), which facilitated the development of the identity based on her career.

In the following account, Paz portrays how marriage does not only mean that they have a new social status, but it also implies more changes, including the place they live.

Paz: Then I met my husband when I was 18 or 19, and we moved to his neighbourhood. We were dating for almost 7 months and then we went to the north of the country because my brother-in-law had a good position in a mining company and he offered a job to my husband. We lived there for seven or eight years and then the coup d’etat occurred.

Interviewer: Was that the first time you moved from your city?

Paz: Yes, and it was very traumatic because the geography was totally different from what I was used to. We lived at an altitude of 2800 metres. So, I had respiratory issues because the area was very polluted.

Paz’s account reveals that getting married is a very important landmark for any individual’s life that changes that person’s identity greatly (Pals, 1999). In this quote, she described that as a married woman, she had to move to the place where her husband found a job. This account also reveals that place again has an impact on people’s identities and lives, as she described that moving to this place meant the deterioration on her own health. Again, as in her childhood, the place Paz lived shaped her identity powerfully.

This section has described some of these women’s narratives of their identities before they came to Canada, describing in a biographical pattern how the place they

were born and raised as well as the connection between family and place influenced their identity.

4.2.2. Departure and Arrival

The experience of migration is very different for everybody. It depends on factors such as a person's experiences, identities, and reason for migration, the place they leave, and the place they arrive (Berry, 2001). This was particularly the case for the participants of this study. In this section I explore the reasons for which each of the participants came to Canada, the challenges and difficulties they faced while adapting to their host country, and how their experience of immigration had an impact on their identities, which in some cases turned them into an unknown person even to them.

An enemy in my own country: my identity was persecuted

The women interviewed in this study came to Canada due to revolutions, *coup d'états*, civil wars, increasing crime in their country of origin, distress generated by marriage failure and love. Therefore, in some cases emigration was not only an option but also a necessity. The following account describes how Paz and her family came to be persecuted by the government and why they decided to emigrate.

Paz: So after the coup d'état two of my brothers were arrested. One of them was sent to a place one hour away from the area we were living in. So, we visited him very often and realized that the prisoners did not have enough food or medicines. So, we started collecting medicines from our neighbours and friends and sent them to the prisoners. That is why we were accused of political activism.

In this account Paz explains that the political situation changed the dynamic of her family. Even though Paz and her husband were not involved directly with politics, they were considered activists and enemies of the State because they were helping family members who had been imprisoned. Abrams and colleague (1990) suggest that there are three strategies a person can use to deal with a negative identity given to them by others. The first one is social mobility that implies the acquisition of a new identity by changing social groups; the second is to change the characteristics of comparison with the others; and the third one is to compete with the group of comparison. Yet, Paz and her family did not use any of these three strategies. She and her family kept their identities and moved to another country in which that identity was not persecuted. Thus, we could describe a fourth strategy that does not involve changing identities or any kind of confrontation, an actual ‘physical social mobility’; in other words, to leave the place in which the identity is being threatened and to emigrate (Berry, 2001).

The following account explains the journey of Paz and her family and how they lived in another South American country for one year before finally ending in Canada.

Paz: So we went back to the capital city but the oppression was awful and we were afraid of being arrested because we were young and the government could think that we were still involved in politics. So, we went to N2 (a neighbour country) for a year, thinking that we would be able to buy a house and find a job but the oppression in that country at that moment was even worse than in our country. Every night people from that government (country N2) came to the hotel we were living in looking for people. So, we had to hide in the washroom...can you imagine? We had to hide with my four-year-old child. If they had looked thoroughly, they would have found us, for sure! It was awful! I remember a white coat my mom sewed for my child because the winters in country N2 are very cold and I remember the powder milk that was the only thing we could have. So, in the end we decided that we could not wait any longer. So, somebody told us that Canada had its doors open to politically persecuted people. So, we applied and in three months we got approved.

In Paz's case, the lack of safety of their temporary home compelled her to move to another place that would provide better conditions for their well-being. In Taylor's (2010) words, "there is pressure to move on to find a new place of residence, which is amenable to an interpretation closer to the unflawed ideal" (p. 108).

In this account, Paz also remembers a piece of clothing that her mother made, which protected her child from the cold and provided some cosiness, but it was also something that reminded her, and still reminds her, of family and the things she was familiar with. The idea of telling stories about meaningful objects will become more evident in the next section as Paz links home and family to blankets and things that continue to keep her warm and cosy.

In Victoria's case, she was not directly persecuted by the government but she was profiled as an enemy and counter-revolutionary and was continually threatened due to her involvement with the church and refusal to adhere to the political views of the governing party. The following account shows how she became immune to the government's threats and actually continued to live and survive under those conditions for six years of revolution.

Victoria: I was very involved with the church and after one year of revolution the new government declared itself a communist government, and started a religious persecution because religion was the opium of the people, right! So, in their eyes I became a counter-revolutionary even though I never touched a weapon. But ideologically in their minds I was against the revolution because I was part of the Catholic Church and I never wanted to be a member of their political party.

In this segment of Victoria's account, she narrates how she became persecuted for who she was and her religious affiliation, but how she did not change her religious affiliation.

In fact, Victoria describes how her identification with God strengthened because he was protecting her and her family (segment illustrated later).

As mentioned before, social identity theory (SIT) suggests that in some cases people change social groups in order to avoid social depreciation attached to their identity (Abrams et al., 1990). This suggests that Victoria would have changed or hidden her religion affiliation in order to remain safe. Berry (2001) suggests that another strategy could be to move to another place where the individual's identity is not devaluated or persecuted, which Paz and her family did. Victoria, however, as the previous and following accounts illustrate, adopted neither of these scenarios. To the contrary, due to the social support of her peers and the realization that the government was merely trying to scare their family, Victoria appears to have never self-identified as a depreciated group. Basically, she considered herself on the "good side". The government was the bad guy.

Victoria: I was threatened by the government constantly... my house was located in a corner and on the walls the revolutionary painted graffiti that said "Here lives a counter-revolutionary using religion as an excuse" and "*paredon- paredon- paredon*" (which means to put somebody against the wall and shoot him). It was an emotional torture. They sent people to my house with rifles and made noise screaming "*Paredon! Paredon!*" Almost daily at first but less often later. But after so many visits, I realized that I could not live like that and I thought "well they either have to kill me or get tired." So, I started to confront them. God was always protecting us. My neighbours also told me "do not worry Victoria. We are here in case they do something else." So every time they arrived making noise with rifles and music I was not afraid anymore. So, when they came I turned on the lights of my bedroom, I opened my windows, I stood up over my bed and then I looked at them. I did not say anything. I just looked at them and they were there for several minutes and then they would leave.

In her narrative, Victoria also decided to stay at her house, as its physical structure was never physically violated. Aside from the graffiti, the house was never

breeched. Therefore, her house remained a safe haven. She felt some kind of control and she was able to protect her family. It was not until Victoria realized that her son would likely be forced to join the military that she finally made the decision to leave the country.

Victoria: So, the entire situation was getting worse and the government started to recruit young men for the army even though it was supposed to be voluntary. So, one day a female member of the official party asked me “so how old is your son?” When I naively answered “12”, she said “well, he can become a little pioneer of the revolution.” To be honest with you she did not have children so I said “first learn how it feels to have a child and then you give him away to the revolution. Once you have done that then come back for my son.” That was a very shocking experience.

The following account describes the specific event that made Victoria feel endangered and finally decide to leave the country as soon as possible.

Victoria: We decided to leave the country when one day I arrived at my workplace; but instead of going in the morning shift I went in the afternoon shift. When I arrived, the doors of the parking lot were closed and I needed to show my ID to get in. So, I saw that in the parking lot there were army trucks and what I heard when I got inside was awful: people crying and screaming. I went to see what was happening and in one of the rooms the army had grouped a large number of men who they were recruiting involuntarily. And there were their mothers and wives crying. They were saying, “please do not take them away”...so I thought “I need to leave.” They (the soldiers) said “this revolution is ours, so we are not asking you for permission. These men will go to fight the revolution.”

Again, as Taylor (2010) mentions, one motivation to immigrate is to seek a place that is perceived as safe. In this sense, Victoria felt that anywhere would be safer than her country.

The following account describes how Victoria’s family was separated for one year before they finally reunified in Canada.

Victoria: Because we studied in P (another central American country) my husband applied for a scholarship and got it. The plan was that he and my son would go to P first, as my son was the one who was in danger, and I would stay with my daughters to wait for a formal invitation from his university. It was very sad to see my husband and son leave - especially my son because I had never been apart from him. I was supposed to go by land to meet them after I finalized things in my work and give away our stuff. It was very hard to leave, as the government was very repressive. For example, if you were traveling the government counted how many things you had and you could not take more than 1000 dollars. We had to hide our money in our shoes and belts as if we were stealing...but it was our own money. So, my husband learned about immigrating to Canada when he was in P and he applied. It was not until one year after when we got together here in Canada.

It is clear that leaving her country was not easy for Victoria and her family, as the government was very oppressive. Berry (2001) mentions how people tend to immigrate to a place that is similar to the place they are emigrating from. Thus, like Paz, Victoria and her husband first immigrated to a neighbouring country, probably because they had lived there before, were familiar with the country, and because it was a Spanish speaking country. Even though that country was not unsafe, as in Paz's case, Victoria's husband decided to immigrate to Canada perhaps because Canada offered more opportunities than P in his view.

Safety and danger: Canada as a place of opportunities

Not all the participants who came to Canada because of the political situation in their countries made their decision to immigrate without reflecting on the pros and cons of immigrating to different countries. Gloria's account reveals that they applied to different countries.

Gloria: So, around this time the situation was becoming very hard in O (Central American country). We could see indications that a civil war was about to start.

There was the right wing and the left wing and we were in the middle. We were not from here or from there but my husband worked in a governmental institution (details omitted for participant's will). When things got ugly and they started to kill people, we said we have to leave and we left. Unfortunately, my children witnessed horrible things, and then the civil war started and we applied to Australia, Europe and Canada. But we thought more and more and we decided that Manitoba was more convenient because it was closer. We saw that our children could learn French and English, and that it was a place full of natural resources where my husband could find a job because his studies are related to natural resources. So, we thought that was going to be very good and for that reason we decided to come here.

Gloria's situation is very different than Paz's and Victoria's situation in the sense that the government did not directly persecute her or declare her as an enemy of the state. However, she noticed that her family was in danger (details omitted). They had the time to research not only about Canada but also its different provinces, and finally decided that Manitoba was the province that offered them the most advantages. Gloria and her husband made a thorough decision based on the pros and cons that would facilitate their settlement and development of each family member. As the literature suggests, people that decide to immigrate to another country tend to go to places that are similar to the place they are emigrating from and where they could have the same social status (Berry, 1999, 2001). Thus, Gloria and her family thought that her husband was going to be able to find a job in his field and maintain the same social status they had in O.

Another woman who came to Canada because of the lack of safety in her country was Celia. To understand the following narrative, it is important to mention that Celia and her family lived in The United States for almost three years while pursuing her Master's degree. After she finished, they sold almost all their belongings and moved back to their original country with the intention of living off their savings. But after

they arrived they did not feel safe in their country anymore. Thus, she decided that it was best to immigrate to Canada.

Celia: I did not feel safe in the house we were living in. It was very big and beautiful and it had private security. It was a condominium but I do not know why I did not feel safe there (...) So we lived for a very short time in our condo after we came back from the States. In the meantime I was in contact by email with a fellow from my master's program who was living in Toronto and he told me that Canada was great. I was so bored in my job that I started my research... also the level of insecurity in my country was getting worse and worse, and the inflation was awful. My husband could not get a job after we came back from the States, you know! A person in his forties is not employable anymore. My son got robbed and assaulted. We got our car stolen and everything happened within just a matter of a couple of months after we returned to our country. My children had to travel by bus to the university and the buses were getting robbed on the route. So I thought this is not a life.

In Celia's case the government was not the direct cause of fear and danger as in Victoria's, Paz's or Gloria's cases. However, she did feel that the government was neglectful and partly responsible for her feelings of insecurity.

Celia: So I sent an email to the Provincial Nominee Program in Manitoba and sent my resume and after a few months they (people from the Nominee Program) sent me an email telling me that I was eligible for the program. So, then they told me that I had to do all the papers. I told my husband what I was doing and he agreed, my eldest child did not want to come but he agreed to be part of the application as he did not want to make the application more difficult. My daughter agreed and the youngest was a minor so we told him that we were coming.

Additionally, Celia's talk elucidated that there were more factors that made her think of emigrating such as dissatisfaction with her job, inflation, the recommendation from a friend, and the fact that she was eligible to immigrate to Manitoba through its Provincial Nominee Program. According to Boneva and Hanson Frieze (2001) some individuals who move to another country may follow a personality pattern that includes

motives, values, psychological and environmental factors and opportunities. Hence, the combination of all of these factors produces a migratory behaviour.

Love: a reason to leave

Not all the participants had to leave their countries due to the political situation or because of the insecurity and crime. In Isabel's case, for instance, she did not want to stay in her country because she was stressed as a result of a very difficult divorce.

Isabel: I got married but it did not go well. My marriage lasted for two and a half years. And after five years I immigrated to Canada because my divorce was very ugly and I wanted to leave that situation and the stress I experienced. I applied to come to Australia and Canada with a friend from work and she got her visa to Australia and I got my visa to come to Canada (...)

In her narratives Isabel describes how she left her country as a coping mechanism to deal with her divorce. Even though she was never apart from her family and emigrating usually generates acculturation stress (Berry, 2001), she did not see migration as a stressful situation rather as a way towards personal growth (illustrated in the following fragment).

Isabel: (...) So my family also said remember that you are going by yourself. For me it was a big improvement because I had never been apart from my family because when I got married I left my mom's house just for some days. When the problems started with my husband I came back to my mom's house so I felt that I never left home. So everybody was terrified that, here I was, going somewhere I did not know and where I did not know anybody.

Bauer and Thompson (2004) claim that some women's migration is a way to escape not just a marital structure but also a patriarchal family, seeking personal freedom. Although

her decision to emigrate was not taken under life threatening circumstances, as in Victoria's case, Isabel did not care where she was going.

Interviewer: So, when you got the papers from Canada how did you feel? Did you know something about Canada?

Isabel: Well, I did not have any idea. The only thing I knew was that I did not want to be there anymore. So if they would have sent me to the Siberia I might have gone there too (LAUGHTER). I remember they told me "we are going to send you to Winnipeg". But I had never heard of it before. All I knew was Vancouver, Toronto...right. So, I looked on the map to see where Winnipeg was located. They also ask you if you have family in The United States so I said "yes my sister is in San Francisco." So when I looked on the map that there was a longitudinal line...it looked close but in reality with the flight connections it is not that close.

According to Isabel, "if they would have sent me to the Siberia I might have gone there too". By mentioning Siberia, Isabel elicits a folkloric place that is very rough, showing that even it would have been a good alternative to her desperate situation.

In her narrative she also mentioned that the visa officer decided where she would immigrate, which is a very unusual policy since she was not applying as a refugee nor to the Provincial Nominee Program. Even in those cases Citizenship and Immigration Canada does not have the legal authority to dictate where newcomers can arrive or stay in a particular place. However, it is likely that she does not remember the details of the program under which she applied.

In this narrative, she also mentioned that the cities she was familiar with were, as usual, large Canadian cities. Yet, as she did not like big cities, Winnipeg was a good option. Also having a family member in another North American city seemed to be a relief as she immediately looked on a map to imagine the distance between these places. She was looking to continue to engage actively in family life across nations and develop

a sense of transnational place and belonging. Similarly Chamberlain and Leydesdorff (2004) mention how transnational immigrants seek to maintain family connexions across nations.

Finally, unlike all the other participants who could not stay in their countries due to negatives experiences, Dora did not want to stay in her country because she had fallen in love with a European-Canadian man. Thus, she immigrated to Canada because her husband lived in Canada. The following narrative describes Dora's reason for immigration.

Dora: Well, I met my husband in a metaphysical talk, and I felt very comfortable with him even though he only spoke a little bit of Spanish. He was learning Spanish because he was working on a project with his company in N (South American country). He visited me every six months or three months because he was working all around South America. But, he was sent to Europe so it was going to be more difficult to come to see me so we decided to get married. So, he said you can come here (to a south American country) or wait for me for a couple of months and we can get married in your country. I thought – oh my god what is my mom going to say - you know how our parents are, right? So, I quit my job and then we got married and we came here.

In Dora's account she does not give many details about her relationship with her husband and what her family finally said about her marriage and emigration. Yet, it elucidates the fundamental reason for migrating as otherwise they would have to end the relationship. Again, we notice that place has a tremendous impact in people's lives. In Dora's case, the distance between Dora and her partner was too far to provide a possibility for continuing their relationship. We have to consider that back at that time, early eighties, access to Internet was almost non-existent, and aside from the telephone, other types of real-time communication were not available. Al-Ali and Koser, (2002) acknowledge the importance of new technologies in communication and transportation

which make transnational relationships possible. Thus, the option of becoming a transnational couple was not possible.

The women's narratives described in this section show how the experience of migration is very different for everybody, and as Berry (2001) argues those factors set up a platform for their experience in their host country. In the following section, I will explore their emotional reactions and first assessment of their host country, Canada.

4.2.3 Post Migration

We are in a new place

The following account reflects how relieved Victoria felt when she and her family finally reunified in Canada.

Interviewer: So how did you feel when you arrived in Canada?

Victoria: I felt relieved. I felt that I was free, completely free. I felt that I could breathe and the fact that I was able to be with my son after one year was such a relief, seeing my husband learn how to cook and look after our son by himself. I also felt sad because my daughters left their lives, their friends. I also was sad because I left my entire life, my friends and family but also happy because my children were going to be free and not persecuted.

She was feeling emotionally ambivalent: happy because she was going to be free but sad because they were leaving their entire lives behind. As the literature suggests, this is not an atypical emotion, as the experience of migration makes people reflect deeply on their lives, the past and also brings uncertainty of the future (Deciu, 2002). Victoria also mentioned that she had to support her family economically as she did not receive money from her husband and her husband had to learn new skills and take on domestic household responsibilities. Dion and colleague (2001) observed in their study of gender

and cultural adaptation in immigrants that when the husband was away for lengthy periods, among some couples, both partners acquired responsibilities traditionally assumed by the other spouse (p. 515).

In the following account Victoria describes the physical landscape of the place they spent the first few weeks and how irrelevant the material conditions were for her and her family.

Victoria: I was so happy even though the government sent us to the Balmoral hotel. I do not know if you heard but it has a very bad reputation. It was not until later that I realized that, because for me it was the best hotel in the world. I was happy because they fed us, so I did not have to cook. To me it was the best place in Canada because I was with my husband and my children. The government moved us to another house, and again, people now tell me that that area was terrible. But I was so happy, I did not have to pay for it. The government also gave us beds, sheets, towels, and silverware. I could not believe how the government was facilitating all that, because after living in a country where people were persecuted and actually where the government took away things from us because we were not part of their political party. I could not believe it. That is why honestly, I am so grateful to Canada. I am very grateful to this country, honestly I love it. It is not perfect but I lived many things that I was not able to live in my country for political reasons.

Victoria's talk highlights how the prettiness of the physical place where she and her family were dwelling was not important. The most important matter was that it provided a physical space in which they could finally be together and enjoy their freedom without worrying about persecution, household chores or debt. In that sense, as some of the participants in Taylor's (2010) study indicated, Victoria valued positively the place of residence based on the opportunities it offered. Thus, a very sketchy hotel and later on neighbourhood enabled her to do things that in her former country she was prevented from doing. Unlike Victoria, Paz's first impression upon her arrival is based on the landscape and the weather.

Interviewer: So, you arrived and what did you think? How did you feel?

Paz: Well, my first impression was enormous because first of all there were no mountains. We arrived in Winnipeg and everything was flat and it was the beginning of winter and the government sent us to X (an smaller city in Manitoba). I am the kind of person that, for example, if you ask me where I prefer to go, I would say to a beach in the Caribbean or to a big city. I prefer the big city with the traffic and everything, going out to see plays and musicals. So, arriving to X was very traumatic because...have you been there?

Interviewer: Yes, I have.

Paz: The city has just one main avenue, and at that time there was nobody who spoke Spanish.

As mentioned before, Paz's first impression was based on the landscape, as she noticed that this place was missing mountains. It is important to indicate that she was coming from a country where the mountains are always part of the landscape. So, it is not surprising that mountains were the first thing she was looking for. She also mentioned the buildings and layout of the small city they were sent to. Again, it was shocking for her to see a small city with just one main street as she was used to living right downtown in one of the biggest cities in South America. In her talk, she highlighted the fact that she enjoys "cultural" amenities that are mostly found in big cities. Therefore, her arrival to Z (Manitoban town) was traumatic. In that regard, we can argue that Paz, similar to Victoria and Taylor (2010) evaluated the place based on the possibilities it provided even if they were very limited.

In Isabel's case, she also focused her attention on the landscape and characteristics of the city she arrived at.

Isabel: When I arrived it was the middle of October. I had never seen Native Americans right, just in movies or comic books. So, the person who was driving us around the city pointed out a group of indigenous people with long hair and all that. At the same time I noticed that the trees did not have leaves. It was October right! It hadn't snowed yet but there was no vegetation, so I thought oh my god! In downtown everything was grey and the buildings were dark, so I

thought oh my god this is a dead city. It is so ugly because I had in my mind all the colourful buildings from my country. I think in our countries the paint must be very cheap, but in the end my sight got used to that kind of structure and colour. It takes time.

In Isabel's account, she pointed out the fact that she came with an idea of how a city should look like based on her own country, making a logical explanation of why this city does not paint its buildings. She also links the idea of colour with life and vegetation. Appleyard's words cited by Feldman (1999) read, "As we grow up, we develop a generalizable system of environmental categories, concepts, and relationships which form our coding system for the city- our personal urban model. When we encounter a new city, we match each new experience against our general expectations; events are "placed", never-before-seen buildings are identified as belonging to a particular class of building, functional and social patterns are inferred (110)" (p.190). It is not strange that she noticed the absence of vegetation and leaves as she is the woman that described her self as a nature lover. In this narrative she also presents briefly how she was introduced to some Aboriginal people, reaffirming the stereotypes constructed by the media: "with long hair and all that..."

Celia also had a reaction of shock after they arrived in Winnipeg and discovered that the biggest mall in the city was closed after 5 in the afternoon.

Celia: We arrived in August and it was beautiful but we did not know anybody. My friend from the States made a reservation at the hotel close to the airport. Now whenever we drive by that hotel we remember. We arrived at midnight, but our bags did not arrive. So, the next day we walked to the Polo Park mall and it was almost five in the afternoon and the stores were closing. I said "what the heck is happening? Why are they closing the stores already?" I do not remember if we bought something or not but the thing I remember is that it was very shocking.

In this account we notice that Celia's reaction is not regarding the place per se but to the activities that are held in this place. That is, seeing a mall closing on a Saturday afternoon provided her with information about the size, the activities, and the people of the city that she was about to settle in. In other words, the nature of commercial activities showed her the city's identity, an identity that would possibly shape her own identity. As Taylor (2010) emphasizes, a place carries a strong association of things people are unable to do or prevented from doing, and with that, there is also an association of shopping and 'consumer culture', which are seen by people as channels that facilitate their self-expression and even their individual identity. Thus, in this sense, Celia's reaction towards the closing hours of the mall is not surprising. She was matching her past knowledge and experience of commercial activities and functional and social patterns against her new experience, which Feldman (1999) suggests a newcomer often does while encountering a new place.

The following account elucidates how Gloria's idea about Winnipeg was confirmed in almost all aspects. Although she knew that she was coming to a very cold place, the actual roughness of the weather was difficult to accept.

Gloria: Well, when we arrived things were not as we thought they were going to be. We knew that it was a very cold place but we never imagined how cold it would actually be. So, that was the thing that affected us the most because everything else was wonderful: the natural resources and how calm it was. We never liked big cities or crowded cities so we said this is perfect. I remember that the first thing we did was go camping to a lake. So, my husband confirmed his preconception of Canada with many natural resources, forest and lakes. It was incredible. One lake here is bigger than my country (LAUGHTER). Imagine that! It was wonderful seeing this peaceful place especially after living in an area with military conflict. I think that was the thing I liked the most.

Gloria's impression of the coldness was so strong that even though everything else but the weather was as expected, she began by saying that things "were not as they thought". However, the following sentences described how wonderful it was to be in Winnipeg, especially because it was a place that provided peace and an opportunity for her husband's professional growth. She also emphasized the fact that Canada is a big country by saying that some of its geographical features are bigger than her entire country, perhaps as a way to communicate the vastness of natural resources that could be an advantage for her husband given his profession. Again, as Berry (2001) highlights, the adaptation of newcomers depends partly on the opportunities the host country offers an immigrant to regain the same social status they held in the sending country.

New place: new identity or no identity?

After describing their first impressions of the new place where they were about to settle, these women narrated the impacts that the experience of migration had on their identity. In the following section, I will present some of their narratives that describe how they felt about their changing identity which in some cases made them feel that they did not have any identity whatsoever.

Although not all the participants explicitly expressed a feeling of lost identity, all of them acknowledged a change in their personas shortly after arriving in Canada, as they had to change language, careers, friends, and places they were familiar with. The following section presents the narratives of the two participants who explicitly

mentioned the word “I lost my identity” in their narratives, explaining that after their arrival in Canada they felt alienated.

Victoria’s account reveals not just how she felt alienated in her work but also how the dress code facilitated that process.

Victoria: I started to work in a nursing home as a nurse aid. Even though they (the employers) saw that I was a social worker they focused on the fact that I had vast experience working in hospitals. So, they assumed that because I used to work in hospitals I was a caring person. Now, I laugh because I was not a nurse and here I was helping nurses. I was doing things that I never did before. I was carrying old people, helping them to go to the restroom, feeding them, bathing them. It was a very painful experience but fulfilling at the same time because I had an income but it was the first time in my life that I had to use a uniform and I remember that the second or third day of work I had a long beautiful hair and I used to wear it down. So my supervisor came and held my hair and said “Tie it up. You can’t have it down.” So I felt that I was being depersonalized. I felt that I could not be my self anymore because I could not use my hair as I wanted. I had to have a pony tail. Later on I understood the reason - because I was not told at that moment - but I realized that some residents could grab my hair because some of them had some mental problems. I actually had some experiences where people tried to hit me or said bad words to me. But I always tried to be compassionate because I always thought today they need my help but tomorrow it could be me who needs somebody’s help.

Victoria’s story portrays that she was working in the same environment she used to work in her country, a hospital, but occupying a completely different role, as her credentials as a social worker were not recognized by mainstream society. Li (2001) found in his study on the worth of immigrants’ credentials in the Canadian labour market that employers and regulatory agencies tend to be reluctant to grant full recognition to immigrants’ credentials as equivalent to those of native-born Canadians (p. 23). In that sense, in the eyes of Victoria’s employers her qualification as a social worker was not equivalent to a social worker here. Therefore, she was offered a job as a nurse aid, a position that does not demand the same qualifications.

She also highlighted the fact that she could not express her identity through her clothing or hair since she needed to wear a uniform and a pony tail, making her feel depersonalized. In that sense, it can be inferred that the uniform and pony tail were a representation of her subjection and lack of freedom. Although Tarlo's (1996) study was based on dress and identity in Indian traditional clothing and not in the use of uniforms, her argument explains Victoria's sense of depersonalization as she points out that a person's clothing reveals the ways in which people seek to manage and express their own identities (p. 1), and Victoria could not do so at work. Using Taylor's (2010) argument of the possibilities and potentialities a place offers to its residents, Victoria's workplace neither facilitated her self-expression or her individual identity.

The following account explores Victoria's feeling regarding her job and how she felt that she was losing her knowledge.

Interviewer: So after being the director of a hospital and other organizations in your country, how did you feel working as a nursing aid?

Victoria: Honestly, I thought it was unfair, very unfair that after studying so hard for so long "*despues de haberme quemado las pestañas*" (translation of the expression: burning my eyelashes studying) and working in my field since I was a second-year-student. Then I came here and was recognized by the university here but when I applied to jobs here they (potential employers) told me "So sorry but we need somebody with more experience" or "you do not have what we need." I was feeling that my self-esteem was lowering, and now that you ask me I did not reflect on this in a long time but I felt that my knowledge was disappearing like some kind of cloudiness in my head, like I did not know anything and everything I knew was getting lost. I felt that I was in a limbo. I knew that I had knowledge and experience but the letters I received from these jobs were telling the opposite.

In this fragment Victoria portrays that losing her identity as a successful social worker and as the director of many other institutions was having some negative repercussions on her self-esteem. The lack of recognition by mainstream society made her believe that

she was not capable of being a social worker anymore. In this regard, Victoria's sense of not belonging to the social workers' group and its emotional connotation reframed her sense of being. As Tajfel (1981) mentions a person's social identity needs to be recognized by that individual but more importantly by others in order to develop a positive social identity.

However, Victoria was not the only one who felt a loss of her identity when she arrived in Canada. Another participant that also expressed a loss in her identity was Paz. In the following account, Paz provides an example that shows herself as a woman that was different of the rest from the women of her generation in the sense that she was very independent. She also explains how the people that surrounded her in her new place of residency could not perceive her independence, and how the way others perceived her made her feel a loss in her identity.

Paz: Because when I arrived I had my role, even in Canada it was very patriarchal. My husband worked. I was a housewife. I am talking about thirty years ago...so I stayed at home by myself, and I realized that when I went out for a walk people were very receptive but they saw me as a different person... I lost my role as Paz, the woman that was different from other women in my generation.

In her talk, Paz acknowledged that after her arrival in Canada her role as a woman continued to be influenced by a very patriarchal system perhaps because her role as a wife in her country of origin was the same and she just continued performing it. This might also be the case because the system in Canada compelled her to do so, as all the support she received was through her husband. She mentioned that she thinks that nowadays the situation for women is a little different from the one she experienced through her clients. It is important to remember that Paz used to be a social worker here

in Canada. So, she had clients that were in the same situation that she was in about thirty years ago.

The following account presents a story that could be divided in two. In the first part of her story she relates how she could not read books or help her son with his homework which made her feel like she lost her identity as a mother. And, in the second part, she describes how the lack of social recognition made her feel like “nobody”. Both parts of the story are related to her lack of English and the impossibility of communicating with others.

Paz: I always considered that I was very different than the women in my country. I was very independent and that was my role and when I arrived here my role disappeared. I did not have a history and nobody cared about my history but me. And, my son started to have different role models. He had a babysitter and she was Canadian and that person was literate in English, a language that I did not quite speak yet. So, she was the one who could read to him and teach him how to pronounce the words. So my role as his mother disappeared. My son used to suffer from high fevers. So, if he was sick I did not have somebody that could translate things for me at the doctor’s office. So I often felt that outside my house I was nobody. My next-door-neighbour was very receptive towards me but she did not know what I was feeling. I could not tell her and it was not her business either.

Paz’s narrative started by stating the fact that she was a rare case in her country, as she was a very independent woman, perhaps because she wanted to highlight to the audience the opposite role she acquire soon after her arrival in Canada.

In her talk, she described how the lack of knowledge of the English language made her feel like she was losing her identity as a mother, as she could not self-support her needs or her child’s needs. She started to realize that other people, i.e. The babysitter, were fulfilling her more basic roles. In this fragment, she also mentioned that her house provided an invisible line for her identity, as Depress (1999) describes in her

study of home. For some people the house provides a physical space where they can escape the outside pressure (Depress, 1999). Paz's narrative also portrays how effective communication with others generates social recognition. Thus, this confirms that the identity of a person materializes when others recognize its existence (Tajfel, 1981, Hogg and Abrams, 1999). That is, we are who we are as long as somebody can reaffirm it. Paz could not share who she was because she did not have the language to do so. Therefore, she felt that she was nobody outside her house and that she did not have an identity.

The last two extracts recently presented elucidate how the identity of a person can become very fragile while interacting with others that do not recognize it, making an individual feel alienated even to her/himself.

Trying to be me again: redefining my identity

The following accounts explore how the women of this study tried to regain their identities back. As mentioned before not all of the participants explicitly talked about a sense of losing their identity in their narratives. However, all of them felt somehow a little alienated in their new environment and new roles. All of them went back to school as a first step to regain their professional identity. However, it was not a decision they felt excited about, as they believed that they already had all the qualifications and credentials needed for being successful in the labour market.

In the following account Victoria explains how she realized that language was a barrier for going back to school, but not the only one since she also had an inner barrier: "her own desire".

Victoria: The university here recognized my credentials because I brought all my papers from my country: my diploma, the curricula, syllabus, and grades. So, I got accepted in the Faculty of Social Work to do my master's but when I applied the first time I did not have English. I just arrived. I was 38 years old and since I was studying English I thought I wouldn't go back to school. I did not want to because I already studied enough in my country. I felt a rejection to go back to school.

In Victoria's account she mentioned how the University of Manitoba recognized her credentials to continue her education. However, as with many newcomers, the lack of knowledge of English was a barrier to start her Master's program. In this extract, she also mentioned her age, perhaps to communicate that she thought that she had already passed the time in which she was supposed to go to school. Although there is not a policy that explicitly states the appropriate age of university students, as Covey (1980) mentions, it is assumed by mainstream society that the system of higher education is oriented towards youth. Therefore, Victoria did not feel attracted to the idea of becoming a student again.

In the following account Victoria explains how her job as a nurse aid was affecting her life and health, compelling her to go back to school in spite of her own initial rejection of that option.

Victoria: So my job was affecting me. I was dreaming with the people that passed away. So, I said "I need to go back to school." I was 45 now, and my husband was always telling me "Apply!" So I went to the university and I applied. I filled out all the requirements and I prayed. But in my mind I did not want to go back to school because I thought that it was not fair. Second, I thought "I am too old. What am I supposed to do in school?" Because in my country there is a certain age that you are supposed to be at school and I was passed that age. Then, my English. So in my mind I pictured myself in the classroom as an immigrant with little English. So I did not know if I was going to be able to do it or not. And, not just that, it also was the loan I was getting because I did not have the money to pay for my master's. So I did not know if I was going to get a job and pay my loan back. So I kneeled and prayed and told

God “God, you know that I do not want to go back to school. I am fine in my job and I am so grateful that I have a job. But you are the one that has a plan for me in this country. You are the one who knows if I am going to be able to pay back my loan and get a job in my field. So I am sending this on your behalf. So if they say ‘no’, I did all I could and my husband and my children won’t be able to say I did not try. So my lord it is going in your name. I will be grateful no matter what the outcome. If they say ‘no’, it will be a relief. But if they say ‘yes’, help me to finish it and to get a job and pay my loan. So, I got a ‘yes’. I got accepted, and I was happy, but at the same time afraid because it was a big challenge. So I started in the university.

In this section Victoria is still struggling with her desire of going back to school as she felt her age and language were the main barriers she would face. Perhaps, her age also made her feel that she would not been able to succeed in the program since her perceived ability to learn, or her ‘self-efficacy for learning’, was not the greatest (Maurer, 2001). Although Maurer’s (2001) study of self-efficacy in older people is based on the work environment, his argument can be adopted to explain Victoria’s perception of self-efficacy for learning.

Maurer (2001) explains that low participation of older workers in training and further education is due, among other reasons, to a negative perception of their self-efficacy for learning. However, Victoria’s main concern was the fact that she was getting a loan to pay for her studies, and she was not sure if she would be able to pay it back. Callender and Jackson (2005) found in their study based on a survey of prospective students in England that debts are a great concern, and thus, one of the principal reasons stopping them from pursuing higher education. In the end of this extract, she mentioned that she was happy and afraid of being accepted in the program, as she was about to face all her fears. However, as she felt that it was God’s will and she received strength from her faith.

In the following account Victoria describes how the words of her professor made her feel herself again.

Victoria: I remember the first day I went to school. I think we were 15 students in total and I was the only immigrant. But I remember something that gave me so much strength and happiness because I started to feel my self again like I was born again in that moment. I felt like I started to embrace what I was before. I felt alive again. I felt so much motivation. I am talking about the welcoming word of one of my professors because as she introduced me to the class she said, "please introduce your self," and I said "Well I am Victoria and I am hoping to finish my master's." But she added "I want to add that she is from N, and she has her bachelor's degree from there and that her diploma was recognized by the university." And she added that "she was very happy to have me in her class and that she wished me the best." And that was so good, I thought "Oh my god!"

Victoria started this extract by describing herself as an immigrant, a new social identity. As mentioned by Umana-Taylor (2011) the ethnicity of an individual is one of the most salient identities an individual possesses. So, it is not strange that she describes herself as different from the rest, as she looked ethnically different. She also mentioned one of her first memories of the social recognition of her status as a capable professional and student. Victoria describes how the recognition from a person that she considered in good regards, such as her professor, validated her identity, and how that appreciation made her feel herself again. Again, as social identity theory explains, social appreciation in a salient category is important for developing a positive identity (Hogg et al., 1999).

Victoria was not the only woman that realized that going to school was necessary to regain their social status and identity. Dora also realized that she needed to go back to school to be able to work in her field.

Dora: I was helping a doctor as a research assistant doing some lab work, so I did not need English. But she was going to retire soon. So I thought what am I going to do? So a doctor told me "why don't you do a master's?" The doctor that I was doing some research assistance work for told me, "Yes you should start a

master's". So I started my masters in clinical epidemiology. My English was much better by then because it was like five years after I arrived. So it was very difficult because I was an adult and the language was difficult, right! It is not the same as if I was young. I was almost 40, right, but I did not have children so that was an advantage and my husband was very good. He supported me financially and emotionally.

Dora's case is very particular, as she was able to find a research assistant position with only some knowledge of English. She was able to work in her general field while gaining more language skills. Although Dora does not provide any particular event or story about her journey of going back to school like Victoria, she mentioned that her age was a barrier not so much for going back to school but for learning the language. In this case, Dora's perception also reflects 'low self-efficacy' for learning (Maurer, 2001). Furthermore, she mentioned the fact that she did not have children was to her advantage, since she did not have anybody to support. Although she was not held back by children and the expected roles as a mother and wife, she spoke to the situation of many women who cannot develop their professional carriers because of their families (Miller, 2011).

In Paz's case, she was not getting any support from the government for learning English since she was told that her English was good enough (narrative omitted). Consequently, she taught herself English watching TV, listening to the radio and talking to a neighbour. Later on, she was able to be formally trained in English and started her master's in social work.

Paz: Maybe because I was always independent, or maybe because I had a high level of education from my country. I said to myself "so when will this dependency on others stop?" So, I studied and studied by myself so hard. For example, when I watched soap operas I was always thinking what are they talking about. So I would go to my neighbour and try to repeat things, but it did not sound the same so my neighbour was always saying "what are you saying?"

But she helped me so much. When finally I took some English classes before I went back to the university I already knew all those idioms because I had been learning for nine years.

Again, Paz explains her intention of learning and improving her English skills as a way to regain her independency and explains the two main reasons for her motivation. The first one being, again, the fact that she used to be very independent, and the second one, that she has had a high level of education.

In all three cases illustrated in this section language was a big barrier for the women not just to integrate into society but also for being themselves again. Thus, after studying the language and pursuing a higher education they felt that they regained their identities. Yet, they would recognize that they are not the same person that had arrived in Canada many years ago.

This is who I am now

The following section portrays how these women described themselves now, and how in all cases these women felt that their experience of living in Canada reframed their identities and in some cases made them stronger and have gave them “a voice”.

Gloria: I am so proud to say that my background is Central American because I consider myself Central American. My mom is from X (country in central America) and I was born in N1 (another Central American country) and I was raised in N2 (another Central American country). So, I feel very proud of my background and being Latina, and not just Latina but indigenous with the Mayas as my ancestors. I am so proud of my non-Spanish culture. I do not think the Spanish or the Europeans are superior. I am so happy to know that I have a mixture of different cultures in my blood. But I do not care about regions of origin because in my experience when you say I am from this country or that country it brings some ideas of superiority. So when you put people in boxes, you say “this box is better than this one.” So I do not care about that. But I can say to anybody “Yes I am Latina and I speak Spanish and I am proud of that.”

In Gloria's account we notice that she described herself with terms such as Central American, indigenous, and Mayan. However, in the end she chose a self-identifying term that does not have a physical boundary: "Latina". As she explained, describing oneself as belonging to a particular country, which she referred to as putting an individual in a "box", brings conflict among different nationalities. As Hogg and colleague (1999) argue, the recognition of one's membership to a group, in this case a nationality, brings up an automatic comparison between the person's group and another's group, creating an implicit hierarchy. It is important to notice that she did not reject her Spanish background while emphasizing her indigenous heritage.

Dora also used broad categories to describe her identity.

Interviewer: Do you think that you are the same person as the person that left your country?

Dora: No, she is different.

Interviewer: What do you think is different?

Dora: I changed in many aspects. I do not think like a Latina anymore. I still have some Latino things, but now I am the mixture of the cultures I have been immersed in. I have a lot of German, but not strictly German. German mixed with some Canadian aspects, and of course I still have tons of Latino. So, I am a mixed person (LAUGHTER). For example, I am not that close to my family. I was always a little bit independent so that is something not Latino. I would not be able to live with my family (my parents) because I would have to be worrying about their opinions, like what I am doing or not doing. I love them, do not take me wrong, but I have so much fusion of cultures. It actually worries me a little because when I feel that people get too close to me I ... but yeah more importantly my independence. Latinos are too close and for me it is too much. From the Canadian, I took that aspect as well, my independence. I am not that close to people like Canadians. I have my freedom. I love my sisters and brother but up to a certain point. Latinos for example will tell you if you have gained some weight, but Canadians won't. Or if you are wearing something of a colour that does not fit you Latinos will tell you "that does not look good on you." Now I say "I did not ask you" (LAUGHTER).

In this account Dora describes how she recognized the changes she has been through, explaining that they are due to an interaction or fusion of cultures and the fact that she married a Euro-Canadian and lived in Canada for so long. She described that she was always different from the mainstream Latino meaning that she was more independent than the norm. She also provides an example that explained her position regarding the typical Latino family relationship and the reason why she would not be able to live close to her family since Latino families are too close and opinionated about other family members. However, now that she has acquired more independence and freedom she feels a sense of ambivalence towards her family and other people. In this sense Dora's beliefs and attitudes towards her hybrid "cultural identity" (Berry, 2001) come to the forefront when she is in contact with people with partially different cultural identities, in this case even among her own family.

The following account portrays how Paz also described herself in broad terms.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you have changed since you arrived?

Paz: Yes, I think that everything I am now...the strength to make my culture prevalent. I define my self as a X (country where she is from) but also I have a broader definition. I am Latina. I think if I would have stayed in my country it would not have the same meaning. To be Latina is something that I want to leave in my grandchildren; the fact that I am very passionate, I am very close to my family. And family is not just mom and dad, but it is grandma, cousins. I am very solidarious. I am not individualist. That is what I think we have in common with the Aborigines here: the solidarity because you rely on your family so much, your brother, your aunts, and cousins. Somebody that could look after your children and that does not exist here because here you have welfare and that makes you economically independent. In my country if you do not have family you are screwed because the government does not support you.

Similar to Gloria, Paz's identity is defined by the language she speaks and the characteristics that come with it, such as the passion and collectivism. She also mentions

that the fact that she left her country of origin made her have a different definition of herself. In other words, in Canada she comes into contact with a larger variety of cultures so being a Latina provides a broader sense of self for Paz. In this sense, as the literature suggests, it makes sense when Paz says she probably would not describe herself as a Latina if she would have stayed in her country since a person's cultural group membership becomes more salient as that person comes in contact with other cultures, rather than when they live entirely within a single culture (Berry, 2001). Thus, it would not make sense to say that she is a Latina in a place where everybody else is also Latino.

Furthermore, like Dora, Paz emphasizes the closeness within Latino families but in a positive matter providing strength. She also mentioned a similarity between Aboriginals in Canada and the Latino culture as in both cases they are disadvantaged within the political system and social structure which helps them reinforce their family ties. In short, Latinos depend a great deal on family members and not on the government.

In the following account Victoria also recognizes a new feature in her identity as she recognizes that having contact with Canadian society has made her more assertive and confrontational given her knowledge of the Canadian welfare system.

Victoria: I tell my husband if I go to our country I will get killed (LAUGHTER). If they did not kill me before now they will kill me for sure because now "*estoy mas brava*" (I am braver). I now know another system where there is some unfairness and poverty and limitations, but where there are also options, such as shelters, bank foods, thrift stores, soup kitchens, where the poor have something to eat, and shelters for abused women.

In this narrative Victoria, half jokingly and half seriously, realizes that if they decide to go back to the country they emigrated from, the changes to her identity would put her in a more vulnerable position. Specifically, she has become a more outspoken person (“*estoy mas brava*”) who knows a greater social support system for people in need. She knows that she was persecuted partly because of her involvement in the church and her activism as a social worker (interview extract presented previously). So, she acknowledges that knowing a “better” system, not just as a social worker but also as a person who received help from the government as a newcomer (previous extract), has confirmed the shortcomings of the system she opposed many decades ago.

My two worlds: trying to maintain a balance

The following accounts portray how two of the study participants described their experience of redefining their identity as a journey between two worlds in their attempt to embrace a balance between Canadian and Latino cultures. However, these narratives also show how these women are trying to pass these Latino roots on to their grandchildren with the hope that their grandchildren will share that identity with them.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you belong here?

Victoria: I promised myself something when I came here. When I made the decision to not go back to N2, I promised myself that I would try to live my life the best way possible. I am not talking about material things but the best way emotionally. So I promised myself to live in what I call my two worlds, that is a balance between my two worlds, to live in the Canadian world and the Latino world. For that reason I go to mass in English in a community that is multicultural but where the organization and the culture is Canadian. So I am involved in Canadian activities: suppers, art galleries exhibitions. I volunteer washing dishes and I practice my English and meet people and I love it. I am also very involved in the Latino church and I am very involved in the activities. That is where I feel that I have my roots, my Latina American roots. I enjoy listening to mass in Spanish, going to the pray group, singing

in Spanish and living my Latin culture. It is like we have two personalities, I mean, I am the same person everywhere but I adapt to the culture that I am living at that moment. For example, in Canadian culture I know that I can't touch people. Sometimes I do and fortunately it is with people that know me. So when I hug them and kiss them it is ok or I talk quietly but in the Latin culture we hug each other we kiss each other we sing very loud. So I live my two worlds and it is very interesting because thinking of what is home...maybe this happens to all immigrants but sometimes when I want to explain something I say back home we used to do this or in my culture in my country we do that. It is very interesting. It is a world where we navigate in different rivers in general.

In Victoria's account, she mentions that after she acknowledged the fact that they were in Canada to stay, she took the decision to embrace the new culture while keeping her own. In that sense, her account portrays one of Berry's (2001) intercultural strategies, which states that depending on the desire of keeping one's heritage, culture and identity, an immigrant might integrate, assimilate, marginalize or separate from their receiving culture. In Victoria's case she decided to integrate into her receiving country without placing one culture over the other. However, she recognized that her Latino ethnicity is her roots. Her example about her participation in two different churches is the perfect illustration of integration. The fact that she mentioned that she has learned how to behave in similar social situations but among different crowds and how her friends "know her" confirms the mutual acculturation. As Berry (2001) mentions a *mutual accommodation* is required for integration to be attained, which involves the acceptance by both dominant and non-dominant groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples within the same society (p.14).

It is also important to mention that she did not provide a straight answer to my question regarding the place where she belongs. Yet, it is implied that she feels that she belongs in Canada. Nonetheless, at the end of this quote Victoria mentions that

whenever she wants to describe something that is different from the mainstream practices in Canada, she continues to name her country of origin as home, a clear illustration of the worlds she is talking about.

In the following account Paz also mentions her desire to reach a balance between her Latino heritage and Canadian culture in her life, and her wish to pass that on to her grandchildren.

Paz: I want a balance for my grandchildren. I want them to be able to see things from their two worlds, the world in which they were born and the world where their grandparents are from. I want them to enjoy both things because that is very important for me. My husband also is helping me on that, although we are very different because he never felt that longing for our country or the mountains, like me. I suffered so much trying to take him back to our country to visit, but he supports me 100 per cent in what I call the “brain-washing of our grandchildren”, teaching them the language. It is so important that they know it and that they can speak it because I think that is very important. I had a supervisor at school, an extraordinary woman. I think she reached that balance as an aboriginal woman with all the problems and everything, but you could see it even in the way she walked, slow without any complications. So, that is my goal that one day I will have more of that balance and I will pass that on my grandchildren because they have to know the other half of themselves.

Again, Paz’s narrative illustrated Berry’s (2001) ‘integrative intercultural’ strategy.

However, the difference between Victoria and Paz is that Paz does not feel that she has reached that balance yet, as Victoria does. Furthermore, in this narrative Paz highlights the importance of transmitting the language, and through it, their Latino “world” and culture, to her grandchildren as a way to know who they truly are. This implies that the Latino culture is already part of them and it is their job to find it within themselves. In a study of Latino immigrants struggling to preserve their language in the Canadian school system, Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard and Freire (2001) found that for many of the Latino immigrants raising bilingual children was an important task and saw Spanish as a

way to foster family unity, to maintain Latino identity, and to keep links with their native culture.

In the following account Victoria also highlights the importance of teaching Spanish to her grandchildren as a way to preserve her identity and roots.

Victoria: To see how my grandchildren make an effort to speak Spanish...they call me *Abuelita* (Grandma). The language is the link with home. She (granddaughter) calls me "*Abuelita, como estas Abuelita?* (how are you doing grandma?). *Te quiero mucho abuelita* (I love you so much grandma)" in Spanish and that makes me happy because it is something that connects us. One thing that is very shocking is that one of my son-in-laws is from N3 (Central American country), and my daughter is from N2 (country that they emigrated from) and both speak Spanish, but they talk to their son just in English. I tell them that they should talk to him in Spanish and I tell my little grandson "*a tu abuelita en español* (speak to your grandma in Spanish)". My other granddaughter speaks Spanish with me so she speaks more Spanish. My little grandson is the only one of all my grandchildren who calls me Grandma and not "*Abuelita*" because they (my daughter and son-in-law) tell him "go give a kiss to Grandma." I would like to be called "*abuelita*" and not grandma because there is an important difference between Canadian grandparents and Hispanic grandparents. My grandchildren call their Canadian grandparents, Grandpa and Grandma, but to us they call us "*Abuelito*" and "*Abuelita*". For me that is a way to preserve my roots my identity.

In this account Victoria also highlights the importance of teaching Spanish to her grandchildren as a way to maintain a connection with them. She recognized that having her grandchildren speak Spanish is not easy and it implies an effort since they spend more of their time speaking English. Victoria also mentions how disappointed she is by one of her daughters and son-in-law, as they are not teaching Spanish to their child. It is interesting to mention that it is very important for Victoria to be called "*Abuelita*" in Spanish and not Grandma because the languages provide a different meaning. Although both words have the exact same meaning (i.e., the mother of one's mother), it is not the same to her. According to Tatum (2000) an immigrant often has to make identity

compromises in an attempt to cope and adapt to a new culture. In this sense, Victoria could have already negotiated different features of her identity with different people in her attempt to acculturate. However, she is not willing to negotiate her identity among her family members. So she is not the Grandma; she is “*la Abuelita*”.

This section has primarily been about the journey of developing one’s identity and the experience of immigration of six Latino immigrant women in Canada. Yet, their experiences as immigrants continue to influence all aspects of their lives, compelling them to renegotiate their identities constantly.

4.3 Home

The following section explores the participants’ meaning of home based on the pictures taken by them. Not all of their pictures have been included as in some cases the photos showed the participant faces, the quality was very poor, and/or one picture portrayed the content of more than one participant’s narrative. Thus, some of the accounts presented in this section do not use the picture that elicited the narrative.

Family

Although all the participants have taken different pictures of different people, objects, and settings that represent what home is for them, almost all of them share the same meaning, which is that home is family. In Bowlby, Gregory and Mckie’s (1997) words, “home can symbolise notions of “the family” and the expected life course trajectories of its members” (p. 344). And, in these women’s cases family includes their

partners, children, and grandchildren and sometimes pets and close friends. However, family also refers to their memories of people from the past which are symbolized by objects, places and landscapes.

One of the participants, Celia, decided to talk about old pictures that depict her family as a way to describe what is home for her. In the narrative elicited by these pictures, she describes not just that home is where her family is, but it also that the physical structure of a house and the material objects in her house do not represent home for her. Although the picture portrays the participant's face and other family members, which was previously described as a reason for not including a photograph in this thesis, I decided to make an exception and include this picture (Picture 1) given the insistence of this participant expressed that the picture be included. As she pointed out, the main reason for her participation in this study was to share her story, and she was not concerned with being recognized because she feels very proud of her life and her story.



Figure 1

Celia: I think that here (Canada), in B (country of origin) and in the United States as long as my children and my husband are there, I think that is my home. And it is not the house because I think that neither my husband or I are attached to material things. For us material things can be taken with you and if you can't well you do not buy them. But as long as the family is together it is the important thing...we can fight and be mad and we had our good and bad times but I think I am very grateful to God because I think my children are good.

In her narrative Celia mentioned the three countries where she and her family lived, possibly as a way to communicate to the audience that through her life she has experienced multiple migrations and those experiences are a tangible example of her detachment towards physical places and objects.

Lewin (2005) described that home is not just the residence where people live which is usually called "house"; home typically means the nonphysical features such as mental capacities, emotional relationships and social ties. In that sense, Celia lists her children and husband as what home means for her and disregards the physical structure of the house which emphasizes the importance of those nonphysical aspects. Although she did not narrate any particular event in which her family had good or bad experiences, it is interesting to highlight that it appears that pictures of her family members had also prompted memories of some particular events. In the end, the combination of those "good and bad times" have had resulted in her "good children".

Another participant that decided to share some pictures with the image of her family members is Victoria, as she wanted to portray that home is family. In her case, family revolves around the mother, which is attached to the physical location of the kitchen. The following picture (Figure 2) was taken in Victoria's kitchen and it portrays the hands of one of her daughters helping her cook some traditional dish for the

celebration of her grandchild's graduation. The original picture has been cropped as it portrayed Victoria and her daughter's face.



Figure 2

Victoria: In this picture, I wanted to show that family centres around the kitchen, around food, and around moms who think ‘what am I going to cook for the children? I am going to give them something yummy, something that they might not prepare themselves’ Cooking food, the daughters helping and I believe that now because of my age they tell me mom I am going to do it for you...or I am going to bring this. This time was a very happy moment because I was about to cook something that my children and my grandchildren do not eat that often: “*empanadas*”. I am not from (central American country) but I also cook *pupusas* and tacos. I am cooking food that everybody enjoys.

In the narrative elicited by Victoria's picture, she communicated that women are important pillars in the family who nurture and look after the children. In her reflection of power and patriarchy, household tasks, caring, space and place in the meaning of home, Bowlby and colleagues (1997) described that for some people home is a place that is “female”, and caring is “female work”, prescribing and endorsing gendered

behaviours. Furthermore, they also argue that each of the family members have a “household’s family identity”, which contributes to the formation of a “group’s concept of home”. In that sense, when Victoria mentioned her daughters and not her son, husband or sons-in-law as helpers in domestic chores she revealed the expected role of women in the family as main caregivers as well as the males’ roles of being the care-receivers described by Bowlby and colleagues. Furthermore, Vikko’s study of elderly immigrant women in Finland (1996 cited by Lewin 2001) also shows that home is closely connected to family life and the role of women as the main caregivers who nurture the children.

This narrative also reveals how as people grow older some of the roles pass to the next generation, providing special occasions for the older women to nurture the entire family. Although it is not mentioned in this particular fragment, that picture was taken in a family gathering held to celebrate one of her grandchildren’s graduation from high school and also the arrival of her other grandchildren who live in another Canadian province. Thus, Victoria as the elder was going to make a special and laborious traditional dish for everybody.

As Victoria was describing the different pictures she took, she realized that all her pictures were representing her family. In the following account Victoria is trying to synthesize the content of all her pictures as all of them are portraying members of her family in different situations.

Victoria: I think, I wanted to represent that home for me is family and in this country I have always appreciated a lot the family. But I think in my personal experience of exile I learned to appreciate my family, my children, my

grandchildren...pictures on the walls...for me the pictures on the wall are very important because they represent each of my children and their lives.

In Victoria's narrative she specifically indicates that home is family, and her children and grandchildren constitute her family. She also highlighted that she has a much greater appreciation towards family since being exiled which gave her a deeper meaning of what family is. Perhaps, she is trying to communicate that the experience of separation from her relatives but more importantly the temporally separation from her son and husband (extract described previously) made her value her nuclear family even more. In the end, she mentioned that pictures on the wall are very important, as they are objects that represent family members and their lives. Sherman and Dacher's (2005) study on the meaning and roles of cherished objects in late life found that photographs are the most frequently mentioned objects by women. I will expand more on this idea in the next section that is dedicated to objects.

Similar to Victoria, as Dora described her pictures she realized that they portrayed different situations in which her family friends and pets were represented. Thus, the following account synthesized the content of all of them.

Dora: Home is the place where I feel comfortable and where I have my family and where I can bring people I like. I love to have people over and my husband also loved that. We used to have a lot of parties and gatherings. For example when we had a swimming pool we used to have pool-parties, playing and talking and things like that. We were always busy at home doing things. I do not know what but we were always busy. So, that is home for me, perhaps if I would have children that would have been home as well and of course my pets.

Dora mentioned that home is the place where she feels comfortable and that comfort is mainly reached by the freedom of inviting people, and having gatherings and parties.

Depres and Lord (2005) in their study of the meaning and experiences of home of

suburban elders in Quebec city, found that, same as Dora, one of the dimensions of the meaning of home for several of their respondents was also the “locus of socialization”, which is basically the opportunities people have to socialize and host gatherings in their homes with their children, grandchildren, relatives and friends. In that sense, Dora’s “locus of socialization” is the most important feature in her meaning of home.

As it was mentioned before, home is family and family does not just include human beings. Family for some of the participants of this study also included their pets. Yet, the only picture (Figure 3) and narrative presented in this section is Gloria’s as it’s content contains elements also described by Dora.



Figure 3

Gloria: This is my pretty dog; this is the backyard of my house. Here I wanted to show the love we feel for my dog as she is one more member of our house ... She gives us all her love when we arrive. She shakes her tail it is something alive and when we are working she stays here watching the house. She is the one in charge.

Gloria decided to take a picture of her dog, since she is an important member of the family and family means home for her. In her narrative, Gloria described the love she receives from her dog as well as her dog’s role as a guardian of the house. Cohen (2002)

found in her study of pets as members of the family that pets seem to be described inside the family circle as they occupy an overlapping but different space from humans in the family. As Gloria, Cohen's respondents also described that their pets are family as they fulfill a function within the household and provide comfort and companionship (Cohen, 2002).

Memories of my past: Objects? Subjects!

Home is not just related to family, friends and pets from the present. People from the past, who are represented by pictures and objects, are also included in the family. The following picture (Figure 4) portrays two jewellery boxes painted by Paz's mom and nephew that contain different objects that represent some members of her family. The boxes are located on a bookshelf in her house.



Figure 4

Paz: These are things...the house is full of these things. These are three boxes, two made by my mom. They sell those boxes in N1 (country of origin) with out any paint on it, and my mom painted them. And inside the boxes there is a watch that my dad gave to my mom when they got married. This other little box was painted by my nephew when he was 15 and it is full of memories...so I have many things in these boxes. I have a letter that my mom sent me, and little tea

bags that I have not used and I do not want to use because the paint will fall off. And there is a card that my granddaughter gave me when my mom passed away that said I miss you “Yaya” because they called my mom “Yaya”...so that is a little corner that is very special.

The account elicited by Paz’s picture focused its attention on three jewellery boxes and their contents. It seemed that the boxes are very special not just because of the artwork done by her mother and nephew but also because of their contents. Although she did not take a picture of the things inside the boxes, she concentrated her narratives on the description of them. The first object described was a watch given to her mother by her father on their wedding, perhaps as that object represents their marriage and the love and hope of the future. It is not a surprise that Paz mentioned a piece of jewellery as they tend to play a number of key roles in late life such as sense of continuity, comfort, security, and a memory of family events (Sherman and Dacher, 2005). In their study of the meaning and roles of cherished objects and home in late life, Sherman and colleague (2005) found that jewellery given by or associated with a significant other or with significant events, which they labelled as “symbolic jewellery”, was one of the seven objects most mentioned by their participants (Sherman et al., 2005).

Paz also kept a letter sent to her written by her mom. As back in the eighties and early nineties the communication with people over seas was conducted by regular mail or telephone, we can infer that this letter was not the only letter her mother sent. Yet, there must be something special about the letter that made her keep it in the jewellery box. Another object described are some teabags decorated by her mom that she said will never be used, as she does not want to dispose them. Thus, those teabags are not just teabags anymore; they are probably the most valuable teabags in the world for her,

especially now, that her mother won't be able to make more artwork as she passed away. Finally, the last object described by Paz was a card written by her granddaughter when Paz's mother passed away.

In their study on home, self and identity of people in late life, Rubinstein and colleague (2005) found that certain objects are used as mediators to express themselves. Hence, regular objects acquire different meanings as they personify or represent special people, places or events. In other words, an object and a subject "merge", giving that object a new and enhanced meaning (Rubinstein et al., 2005). All the objects described in this narrative are linked in different ways to the memories of Paz's mother. Furthermore, the picture also portrayed some books and videos that were not mentioned in Paz's account as part of her description of what home means for her. However, pictures could bring more information that people try to communicate through them, as these objects could also be full of information that elucidates Paz's identity. Yet, the intention of this study is not to talk about all the content of the pictures but the things the participants want to talk about and the narratives elicited by the particular image they photographed.

Paz is not the only participant that portrayed objects that represent memories of her family in the past as part of what home means for her. Gloria also took pictures of some pictures hanging on her basement wall. Because the quality of the picture that elicited the following account was very poor, it has not been included in this study. Yet, the narrative elicited by the photo has been included.

Gloria: I have my memories of my dear ones that are not with us, that passed away. I do not like to have them here (main floor) but they have their space downstairs. You might think that I am crazy, but they are all downstairs.

Gloria has also a special place for the photographs that portray her mother and people from her past who are not alive anymore. Yet, they are located in her basement perhaps as a symbolic placement in her life as a memory that provides a base for her present live. Bachelor's (1994) book "the poetics of space" mentioned by Cresswell (2005) states that the interior arrangement of the house and the rooms are directly associated with different memories, thoughts and dreams, suggesting that the basement is the place of the unconscious.

Pictures that portray their dead family members are not the only ones that represent what home is for some of the participants. Recent photographs of family in their country of origin are also important. The first picture (Figure 5) portrays members of Paz's family that are displayed in her family room.



Figure 5

Paz: Pictures of our family in N (country of origin) are very important. I have two albums...like six hundred pictures from our last trip there....and that is very

important for me because the kids (grandchildren) can say “There is my uncle riding on a horse!” or ‘There are our cousins!’... you know!

Paz’s account reveals that home for her means keeping a meaningful connection with relatives abroad, and that happens when they create memories together. Al-Ali and Koser, (2005), in their transnational approach to immigration and meaning of home, state that as electronic communication has grown immigrants have been able to maintain ties with their family overseas. In fact, as immigrants keep connections with relatives and friends abroad their meaning of home has changed and evolved, developing “globally oriented identities” and “trans-local” understandings of home (Al-Ali and Koser, 2005). In that sense, the pictures that portray Paz’s relatives in her last trip to her country of origin could be considered a graphic representation of that “trans-local” space that unifies elements from “here” and “there”. Rouse’s (1991) study of Mexican migrants in the United States also found a “trans-local”, or as he labelled it, a “pluri-local” understanding of home. He argues that the meaning of home for them has become “pluri-local”, creating a new space in which elements from “here” and “there” intertwist (Rouse, 1991). In that sense, as Lewin (2005) suggests, Paz’s notion of home has been expanded to include transnational elements in order to function effectively in the new environments. In Al-Ali and Koser’s (2005) words “the family and kinship ties have moved from a largely local to a global scale” (p.3).

Some participants, including Paz, have also portrayed other kinds of objects that have acquired a more profound meaning, not because they are linked to departed-family or family over seas but because they represent traditions and continuity. The following picture (Figure 6) portrays how a sense of home is also attached to objects

that represent certain kinds of comfort and cosiness as these objects represent family and traditions.



Figure 6

Paz: Blankets. It is very traditional in my family. My husband and I did it when we lived in our country. We used to live in the desert so it was very cold at night. So we always had puffy blankets, soft. So we laid on the bed or couch to watch TV eating fruit. So that was adopted by my daughter-in-law and my son and they are raising the kids the same. So here in our house, my husband has the bad habit to have the basement very cold. So we have some blankets so everything that means cosiness is home for me where we can protect ourselves from the cold.

In this account elicited by Paz's pictures she mentioned that having blankets are a family tradition that was brought from her country of origin. As it was mentioned before, certain objects obtain new meaning as they are attached to certain memories, people and traditions. Thus, these blankets have acquired a new meaning that is not just the practical use of them, which is to protect people from the cold, but they also mean moments of entertainment, comfort, cosiness, and cuddling with family members.

Other kind of objects that were described by some participants are objects that not only bring memories of their past but transport them to a place of more peaceful feelings and sense of self. The following picture (Figure 7) portrays Gloria's piano that

through its music revives her memories and transports her to a place of peace and meditation.



Figure 7

Gloria: This is my piano. I had one in N (country of origin). I always played the piano and it is like my other type of meditation because I love music. It calms me down and my husband loves hearing me playing the piano. We got this piano not long ago and it was a present from my friends. When we arrived we only had an keyboard...so, my music...I love my music. Sometimes I sit over there (pointing out to a space in her house) and when I am very nostalgic I play the piano and that transports me and sometimes I feel things that when I was over there ...through the music I feel in peace ... I feel very happy.

In the narrative elicited by Gloria's picture she mentioned that she always played the piano, describing it as an activity that brings peace and calmness to her and other members of her family. Yet, she mentioned that she tends to play the piano when she is "nostalgic". So, the music transports her to her past, retrieving feeling and memories from her childhood. Although nostalgia is usually linked to feelings of sadness and sorrow (Deciu, 2002), to her it is attached to happiness and peace, highlighting the other, less explored side of nostalgia which states that nostalgia can also lead to a kind of self-discovery replenishing one's sense of identity by consolidating the ties with the past (Deciu, 2002).

Memories of place

Pictures that represent people are not the only ones that bring memories from the past. Isabel took a picture of a painting that represents a couple of roosters since this image elicited a particular landscape and memories of what home means to her. The following picture (Figure 8) captured the image of two paintings that hang on the wall at the entrance of Isabel's house. The paintings represent two roosters.



Figure 8

Isabel: These are some roosters that I have in my entrance wall so I remember the countryside. So when I see this painting I imagine that I am going to hear the rooster but you do not hear anything here. You need to go to the countryside here but over there (country of origin) even in the capital city people have roosters. That is why I put my little roosters here.

In this account elicited by Isabel's picture, she described her memories and nostalgia for the singing of the roosters at every sunrise, perhaps because it transports her to her childhood and early adulthood. Furthermore, she finalized her narrative by saying that she hung those roosters on her wall to see them and imagine that she will hear them singing since she is not allowed to have real roosters in her house. Even though Isabel lacks the sound of roosters crowing, the illusion of hearing the roosters is part of what

home is for her. Kong (1999) describes that certain immigrants try to represent and reproduce their homeland culture by recapturing and recreating the familiar past in a new context (Lewin, 2005). Thus, it can be inferred that Isabel is trying to recreate in her new home a part of her past and maintain a feeling of nostalgia.

Another scholar who has explored this kind of phenomena is Wiles (2008) who argues, using Young's (1997) terminology, that the spaces created by immigrants with the desire of reproducing tradition and culture that are associated with the meaning of home are "transnational social spaces". Although her study has focused more on public spaces such as pubs rather than private homes, her argument can be applied to Isabel's narrative as these paintings are in a public space within her house, and her intention is clearly to reproduce and share traditions and culture.

But people or objects are not the only items that can retrieve memories of places; they can also be represented by the sounds or smells associated to them. The following pictures (Figure 9 and 10) were captured almost three years ago on Paz's last trip to her country of origin. They portray a ten block-indoor farmers market that she used to frequent with her mother.



Figure 9



Figure 10

Paz: This is the part of the longing, the nostalgia, the farmers markets where you find “*mote*” (special bean from south America). I used to go there with my mom. That is X (street name). It is a 10-block indoors market...the smells...the cumin that is what it is so strong in me...the kitchen. The kitchen is very representative for my husband and I because we show our love to the family and friends cooking, and we eat in abundance. ‘Have you been to saint Norbert market? (question directed at the interviewer)

Interviewer: Yes

Paz: That market is not the same because it is like a movie. Although the products are organic, it is not the same. They are too perfect and you do not have that relationship with the “*casero*” (the vendors) because they are the ones that make the market alive. When they tell you “*caserita*” and they know you and they bargain. And the smells that I remember with my mom and the cumin and the parmesan cheese with the flies...now that I think...I do not know how hygienic that market was (LAUGHTER). But all those things are delightful because they connect me with something that I no longer have.

In the account elicited by this picture, Paz acknowledged that this market and some particular smells such as the cumin and cheese bring memories of her childhood, especially moments spent with her mother. The first thing she mentioned is “*mote*”, a product that cannot be found in Winnipeg, the city where she currently lives. The fact that Paz mentioned that cooking is very important for her, as it is a way to express her love to her family and friends, highlights how some particular dishes could represent an individual’s identity. So, the impossibility of cooking a particular dish that brings memories of part of her life might make her feel that she is missing part of her identity.

Although Gabaccia's (1998) study focuses on a historical review of how immigrants and their ethnic food influence eating habits of Americans and how processed foods have influenced immigrants' eating habits, her study elucidates how important it was for immigrants to be able to find ethnic products as "[n]ew immigrants faced many changes over which they had relatively little control- where they would live, what kind of work they would do, which language they would be required to learn to speak. At least they could exercise control over their meals" (Gabaccia, 1998, p. 48). For instance, Gabaccia (1998) described that for Italian immigrants in the early 1900s, being able to have an abundance of food symbolized satisfaction with American life. Thus, we could infer that being able to find and cook traditional food helps immigrants' adjustment and therefore increases the possibility of feeling at home.

In her narrative, Paz also mentioned a well-known farmers market in Winnipeg that it is the closest in appearance to the markets in her country of origin. Yet, she finds it artificially set up since the products are too perfect. Paz also mentioned that the Winnipeg market is missing the relationship between the customers and the vendors since, in her words, "they are the ones that make the market alive. When they tell you "caserita" and they know you, and they bargain". She finished by saying that the memories of the market and the smells of it connect her to something she not longer physically has.

However, certain places that represent what home is for an individual do not necessarily bring vivid memories as Paz described it in the last narrative about the market and her memories of her mom. Some landscapes can represent what home is

without any apparent reason. The following pictures (Figures 11 and 12) that portray the mountains are old photographs that Paz took in her country of origin a few years ago.



Figure 11



Figure 12

Paz: The mountains, it is an illness. It is something that it does not have a cure. It is something I can't explain. I miss them so much. These are the mountains in N (country of origin) and the vegetation that I miss so much...but the mountains...I have three pictures of mountains. When we went to Banff to visit my son because he was doing his fieldwork there, and he stayed there for four months and we visited the mountains, we stayed there for two weeks and I remember that I cried when we said good-bye. And my husband was laughing at me because as we were leaving that town, I was in the car looking towards the mountains until I could not see them any more...and it is something I can't explain.

In her narrative Paz described that the mountains represent what home is for her. She explained her relationship and the nostalgia towards that landscape as a type of illness without a cure. It is interesting that she described her feeling in negative terms: "illness without a cure" as it could be interpreted that she is not happy with the emotions that mountains generate in her. Yet, the tone (hard to portray in words) in her narrative expressed some sense of happiness and comfort. She probably chose these words to emphasize the intensity of her connection and therefore nostalgia with this particular

kind of scenery. Paz was unable to explain the reasons for which she thinks that the mountains mean home. Yet, she shared three old pictures of them, which show how strong that concept is for her.

Deciu (2002), in her analysis of nostalgia, found that for some immigrants the host culture could trigger some kind of nostalgia that “raises important questions about the role of the past and the present, about what it means to belong someplace, about continuity and gaps in one’s personal history” (p. 39). Thus, the mountains seem to make Paz reflect on her own sense of belonging that is connected to a place that she no longer has. Unlike her narratives that described that the market in the city where she currently lives is not quite the same as the market in her country of origin, the fact that she cried while leaving the Rocky Mountains and looked at them until she could not see them anymore showed that these natural landscapes are somehow equivalent. This difference in her interpretation between these two places – Canadian markets and Canadian mountains – might be due to what Paz points out: what makes the market special is the relationship with the vendors, which is a cultural matter and more difficult to replicate; but the relationship she feels towards the mountains is very physical and mountains are mountains everywhere.

Memories of place could also be elicited by different species such as plants or animals that are native from a particular region that through adaptation could survive in other areas. The following pictures (Figures 13 and 14) are two of Isabel’s photos taken in her back yard. It portrays some flowers that are from her country of origin, a

hammock and a chair. She has also taken pictures of other plants such as corn and quinoa that she planted in her garden and other areas of her house.



Figure 13



Figure 14

Isabel: This is the backyard and this is so traditional in (country of origin): the hammock. So this is under a pine and my husband lays on the hammock. I usually sit on the chair and the birds come because we have a feeder. So we have tons of birds that come and that brings me so many memories because in the house in (country of origin) we have a lot of trees, limes, guayabas, avocado, and more. And before I had my orquids collection in a little space but it looked like a jungle. That is why I always liked to be surround by plants, things that remind me of nature so I can feel part of my country. And the quietness of this country because in my country we are very loud and here maybe because of the weather, the houses are insulated so well that you can't hear anything. So in that part of my house I can at least hear something. These are my yellow flowers...I do not know if you have them...but I can give you some if you have space where to plant them. So one day I thought the thing that unified us is nature because in different environments some plants have developed strength to adapt to a cold weather. So this flower is from my country and it grows close to the volcanoes and I found them here. We thought that it was a weed but one day a dog came and started digging and I saw the roots and they looked familiar so I let them grow and I had a good surprise went I saw them flowering. So then I transplanted them around the house and they are great and I love them because they are the last ones to flower almost around the fall that is the reason why I took a picture of them.

In Isabel's narratives, she explained that she decided to take this picture of her backyard as that corner has a hammock which is a very traditional thing in her country, but most

importantly because the hammock is under some trees that are visited by birds which bring memories of her country of origin. She explained that her old house (in her country of origin) looked like a “jungle” as it had vast vegetation and animals, especially birds. Thus, her backyard and the elements of her garden make her feel part of her country. Morgan, Rocha and Poynting (2005) have studied the importance of gardening for immigrants and found that gardens and their components could help immigrants to express their own culture and to experience a sense of being at home in a new place.

In this narrative Isabel also offered me some flowers, which shows how important these flowers are for her. She is amazed at the adaptability of different species to different environments. It is important to mention that throughout the interview she always highlighted her love for nature, especially plants. She has also expressed her dedication to her garden and planters in her house (narrative not presented in this analyses). Li, Hodgetts and Ho (2010) have found that for immigrants gardening could function as a way to create continuity in their identities and their lives across countries, facilitating the process of making a new life in a new environment while keeping ties with their own culture (Li, Hodgetts and Ho, 2010). Thus, plants, especially the ones that are from Isabel’s country of origin, are an expression of her identity. However, these plants are also a metaphor of her own adaptation as she compares the human adaptability with the adaptability of other species (narrative omitted).

Place for my children, my grandchildren and me

Home also includes different places in addition to the structure of their own house. Home is also the participants' children's houses. The following picture portrays an area of Paz's son's house. This picture (Figure 15) also elicited a narrative of her own house and how she had to modify and change some areas in order to adapt to the members of the family.



Figure 15

Paz: Here is about our parties...Latino style where the kids are part of it...my daughter-in-law has implemented that as well. This is my son's house and they have a table where the kids can play and colour...so they are involved in the party. That is very important. Another thing that means home for me is the way the house has to change. For example, in our home we had to change almost two years ago the dinning-room table because the table had angles and with our grandchildren we needed it something curve, something that we did not need to be worrying about, so I got my dinning-room-set in Vancouver and it has an special varnish so you could clean it with a wet cloth. So we do not have to use harmful sprays so that is home for me.

Paz's picture portrayed an area of her son's house, elucidating that the meaning of home goes beyond the physical limits of the place they dwell. It is interesting to mention that

this picture elicited a narrative about Latino parties in which the kids are a very important part. Parties, reunions, and activities that reproduce traditions are an essential part that makes people feel at home (Wiles, 2008). This picture also elicited a talk about her own dining table perhaps as the image reminded her of the importance of integrating the children into the adults' activities and therefore the adjustments of the physical structure that have to be made. Rubinstein and colleague (2005) point out that personal objects and possessions, the physical arrangement of rooms and furniture, routines, and other features of the home become ways in which people mediate and interpret their experiences through private meaning systems grounded within a particular social context and through "entexturing" or fine-tuning objects within the home to accommodate the textural needs of the body. Hence, Paz as a grandmother needed to accommodate and "fine-tune" certain features (dining table) of her home in order to fulfill the needs of her grandchildren.

God and religion

For some of the participants of this study home was God and religiosity. The following picture (Figure 16) of Gloria portrays the image of a very important scene for the Catholic Church – "Christ's last supper" that she has hanging on the wall of her dining room.



Figure 16

Gloria: This picture means a lot to me because it was a present from my daughter. It represents Jesus' last supper and now that the number of people that dine everyday in my house is smaller ...to feel my lord with us while we eat makes me think and feel that everybody is here. And the spiritual part is also very important and I feel that having him above my dinning table, I am showing my daughter how grateful I am for getting this special present. And I also think and remember that my daughters are not with me but that he is here with me. My lord is always present in the middle of us.

Gloria's narratives described how this particular piece of art is important for what home means for her as it carries many different meanings. First, it represents the gratefulness and love she feels towards one of her daughters who gave it to her as a present. As was mentioned before, certain objects acquire different meanings, as they become a representation of special people or events. Secondly, it represents one of the most important scenes of her religion. Thus, it might make her feel closer to God. And, third, as Becker (2003) highlights, for some elders religion and faith give them comfort and happiness as well as help them to adjust to new personal situations. In Isabel's case she described that God makes her feel accompanied, as her children are no longer living there. Thus, God helps her adjust to what we could call the "empty nest" (Deykin, Jacobson, Klerman and Solomom, 1966). Even though in the Catholic belief system

there is no veneration and idolatry of physical objects, since it is consider the primal sin connected with sexual immorality and avarice (Marcus, 2006), believers tend to have special places for paintings, status, and other kinds of art that represent God, Christ and saints as a way to have them present and remember that they are always in their lives.

The following is Isabel's picture (Figure 17) that portrays the interior of the Saint Mary Church in downtown Winnipeg.



Figure 17

Isabel: This is the Cathedral Church of Saint Mary in the downtown. And for me I feel that God unifies us. Wherever we are it is a common factor and the structure of the churches are always similar because we have those architectural influences, right! A church could be baroque style and baroque style was the same here and there. It is the same everywhere.

In Isabel's narrative elicited by this picture, she described that God is a common factor that unifies human kind. Yet, she does not expand onto this idea as Gloria did. Instead she focused her narrative describing the architectural structure of the Baroque-style church as it is something that she is familiar with and a pattern in most Christian churches. Isabel, through her past experiences, has developed a certain "coding system of environmental categories" and "urban models" (Feldman, 1999) that are references of

comparison for the encounters with new places. Yet, as different as her experiences with other kinds of building in the city are, the Catholic Church has fulfilled her general expectations of what a church should look like, as the architectural structure matches up with her personal coding system. In that sense, God and the church are elements that remain stable and the same everywhere. Thus, they provide continuity to her identity and home.

My home is my refuge

The following account synthesizes how these women's identities shape their definition of home and how their concept of home is part of who they are.

Paz: I think that it has to do with the fact that I have left my country that I value the traditions more. There are new traditions that we have adopted as well. My home is that, it is me, my husband, my grandchildren, my son, my daughter-in-law, my friends and the things outside this door is X (neighbourhood). So, this is my refuge. It is the place I give love and where I am the woman who arrived more than thirty years ago who in the beginning did not exist on her own, and did not know who she was. I remember the first years I got some t-shirts with logos from my country and my city of origin so I felt that I had an identity. Nowadays I do not need that. So, home is good food, it is welcoming, it is where people feel comfortable, it is love, it is to have the freedom to talk about everything, where we talk about our problems and look for solutions, it is the refuge for all of us.

In her narrative Paz pointed out that the meaning of home has been influenced by her experience of migration since that experience made her value even more than before old traditions and family. She also acknowledged that they have embraced new traditions acquired here, in Canada. Once again Paz, as other participants, listed her family and friends as what home is for her. Yet, in this occasion she also mentioned her house's door and the neighbourhood, highlighting the fact that there is always the need of a

physical structure located in a place that acts as a physical boundary that facilitates the construction of the meaning of home, and separates it from the outside world. Thus, the house provides the physical walls for her refuge. Paz has mentioned eight of the ten different categories described by Depres' study (1991). Thus, Paz's notion of home is the place where she feels secure and has control, it is the mirror of her personal views and values, it is the place where she has some influence and control over change, it is the place that offers continuity and permanency, it is the centre for family relationships and friendship, it is a centre of different activities, it is the place that provides a space to escape the outside pressures, and it is a concrete structure.

In Paz's case, her home is the place that provides a safe environment where she can loose and find her identity, where her family is, where she loves and is loved, where she is free. In other words home is an expression of her identity and her identity is an expression of her home.

CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion and Reflections

As illustrated throughout this study, each of these six elderly Latino immigrant women came to Canada with different life histories, different identities and different notions of home. They were mothers, daughters, wives, and professionals. However, they were also individuals with names, personalities and different dreams. Some of them came to Canada as a desperate measure to be safe. Others came because they did not see a bright future in their countries of origin, and others came following their hearts. Despite how different all those factors are between them, these six elderly Latino immigrant women have something in common. That is, the combination of all these factors shaped their experience of immigration, their identities and subsequently their notion of home.

As an immigrant to Canada, I have had the opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and countries. Through my interaction with them, I have met many types of immigrants. The ones that dreamed of leaving their countries since they were children, the ones that immigrated to provide a better future to their children, the ones that came with their parents when they were little, the ones that came to visit or study and fell in love with this country, the ones who followed a Canadian they had fallen in love with, and also the ones that came here escaping persecution.

Through these women's narratives, I realized that none of them thought of immigrating to another country before the political or personal circumstances compelled them to do so. In fact, all of them assumed that they were going to grow old in their countries of origin surrounded by their family and friends. Still, no matter what the

reasons were and the previous desires held that motivated emigration, the decision to leave one's place of origin is never easy. To leave everything that is known - their careers, home, family, and friends - implies thoughtful consideration most of the time. Unfortunately, as these women's narratives have illustrated, not everybody has the luxury of being free to make a thoughtful decision to migrate. Through these women's narratives I have learned that leaving their homes and close relatives became a secondary priority when their identities and the safety of their children were in jeopardy. Yet, not all of these women came to Canada without thinking of the implications of migrating. Some of them had the opportunity to reflect on the 'pros and cons' that Canadian society offered. Consequently, leaving one's life behind was not taken as a loss but was deemed an opportunity to be born again, a chance for a new start.

Despite the reasons for immigrating to Canada, all of these women arrived as newcomers in Canada. Upon arrival most immigrants have a new and imposed identity based on his or her ethnicity. The immigrant women who participated in this research were not the exception. Umana-Taylor (2011) explains that the ethnicity of a person is one of the most salient identities he or she possesses, and it becomes more salient in the interaction with other cultures (Berry, 2001). Thus, these women's ethnicity became a marker to describe "who they are" and they became recognized as Latino immigrants.

Where an individual comes from, what he or she likes and dislikes, what makes her or him happy, laugh or cry, what he or she eats and misses, how he or she dresses, and what language he or she speaks are some of the most basic features of someone's identities. Yet, identity is not produced in isolation. In fact, as Taylor (2010) explains,

people's identities are socially produced. Consequently, a person's identity provides information about one's self to others, but it is also reaffirmed and fashioned by others through their acknowledgment and recognition. In other words, throughout that social recognition people reaffirm who they are, their identity. Hence, the identity of a person has to be recognized not just by the individual, but also by others (Tajfel, 1981).

Since interaction mainly occurs through language, at first, almost all of these women could not communicate in English; they could not engage in any meaningful social interactions outside the boundaries of their houses. Thus, they started feeling in some cases alienated, depersonalized, and even without an identity. However, it is not that they did not have an identity. It is just that they could not be recognized by others, and that gave them the illusion of being nobody. Yet, they knew that this was just a stage in their lives, and they had to proactively renegotiate their identities in order to be recognized by others.

Through their narratives, it is clear that their process of integration into their host society was slow and involved concessions. According to Tatum (2000) an immigrant often has to make identity compromises in an attempt to cope and adapt to a new culture. Yet, those 'identity compromises' do not necessarily apply when in the company of their family members. For instance, at home they speak Spanish, eat their own food, and they are "*la Abuelita*" rather than the "Grandmother".

Although the integration and adaption of immigrants implies a renegotiation and identity compromises, these changes should not be expected unilaterally. In fact, to ensure a smooth and quick adaptation of immigrants, the receiving society also needs to

make some concessions and adapt to the need of its new residents (Berry, 2001). For instance, the policies of the receiving country need to facilitate the environment in which the newcomers could ensure their insertion into different aspects of society such as the labour market, schools, housing, health, and language. Through their narratives they have illustrated that they received help from the government in term of housing, health, and food. In some cases, however, they were entitled to receive the government assistance just through their spouses.

Regardless of gender, one of the most difficult aspects an immigrant faces is their professional recognition, as some of their foreign credentials are not valued or even recognized. Although, in general, the programs provided by the government were not gendered, some of the programs were taken just by one of the partners, as the other spouse needed to work and provide for the family while the other one was taking English classes, for instance. Thus, some spouses' language skills did not improve and their professional recognition and insertion in their careers never happened.

One of the programs provided by the Government during the late-eighties and early-nineties, mentioned by some of the participants, was the program that provided free tuition at the graduate and undergraduate levels in Education and Social Work. This program did not just facilitate their insertion into their field of expertise, but also indirectly facilitated the reconstruction of a positive identity and self-esteem. As these women explained, one of the reasons they felt without an identity was the fact that they lost their professional careers.

Unfortunately these kinds of programs, that go further than improving just language proficiency, are no longer available. Through their narratives it was clear that the women that went back to school and obtained further training regained a positive identity and improved their self-esteem. Yet, abstract constructs such as identity and self-esteem are more difficult to demonstrate than more tangible things such as the amount of money expended and money generated in a program. Thus, I think it would be very interesting to make a cost-benefit analysis of this program. We might be surprised to realize that even though tuition is expensive, the benefits over a long-term period could be greater than having them living under the poverty line, with social assistance, or in depression.

Even though all of these women recognized that emigrating was going to change their lives dramatically, they hoped that those changes were going to be for the best. Nevertheless, they could not anticipate the degree of change and directions that their personal lives, as well as their husbands and children's lives, were about to take.

Starting from the beginning for an immigrant family is not easy, especially when there are small children involved. As these women tried to renegotiate and regain their identities as mothers, professionals, and wives, and keep a balance of their "two world" as they call them, the other members of the family also renegotiated their identities. Although it was not mentioned in detail in this thesis, these women described in their narratives some of the process of adaptation and identity renegotiation of their spouses and children. For instance, before immigration, in some cases their husbands were the economic providers while they worked outside the house, in their careers, as well as

being in charge of the household chores. In other cases, these women were the main economic providers as they were single or divorce. Just one of the women interviewed, who was in a relationship, was the main economic provider and her husband was a stay-at-home father. Yet, immigration and the opportunities and circumstances they faced required that some of these roles shift, as in some cases, these women were the only ones in the couple who obtained proficiency in the English language and their professional credentials recognized. Consequently, they became the main economic providers at home after immigrating to Canada.

Through these women's narratives, especially the episodes that talk about their experiences post immigration, I started to realize how important their partners were to their process of adaptation and renegotiation of their identities, as they were not just an economic support but also an emotional support by sacrificing their own identities. Unfortunately, it was very difficult for me to portray their partners' contribution without feeling that I was leaving their real stories out. Therefore, I decided not to include an analysis of the husbands' roles, as their stories were incomplete, and instead I recommend a further study on that matter. Their children also had a process of adaptation and renegotiation of identities that were briefly mentioned in their narratives, but again, I felt that I would not give justice to their stories.

Nowadays, these women's identities are still being renegotiated based on the different interactions and circumstances they have every day. Although it sounds paradoxical, they describe their identities as women who have changed so much but who have also kept being the same person they were when they arrived many years ago.

They recognize that they were born in a specific country, which makes them want to embrace a particular national identity. Nonetheless, being in Canada has made them embrace other identities based on their ethnicity, differences and similarities with others, and immigration status. That is, they are from a particular country, Latinas, Canadian citizens, but they will always be immigrants. These are identities they might not have embraced if they would have stayed in their countries of origin.

In their narratives, especially the episodes where they described who they are now and how they try to keep a balance between their (i.e. “my two worlds”) these participants described their identities based on their roles in their families, which in some cases have changed dramatically such as from married to widow or from divorced to married, while in others, they acquired new roles and consequently identities such as grandmothers and mother-in-laws. Age played an important role in these women’s identities, and they acknowledged that they are still in the process of aging. Yet, none of them mentioned this as a disadvantage. To the contrary, the women who are retired are enjoying their spare time and mentioned that they are finally able to perform their hobbies. Yet, some of the women who are still working had expressed their concerns regarding their retirement as they started contributing taxes and pension payments after they were forty. Thus, they presume that their pension plans are not going to be very substantial; as a consequence, they might need to work a little longer or turn to their savings. This point is very interesting as it brings up a social problem that could become unsustainable in the future as more immigrants will be of a retirement age but will not receive enough money to make a living. That is, one participant who had an early

retirement due to health problems is living off her husband's pension plan. She has expressed that she cannot wait to turn 65 when she will be entitled to receive more money from the government.

Throughout the literature presented in this study, I have realized that identities can be examined not just through behaviour and dialogue, but also how it is manifested through places and objects (Hauge, 2007). In that sense, the physical and symbolic places in which a person inhabits, and the actual things and the meaning of those things, provides a deep description of a person's identity, which is extremely evident from the participants' photographs of home. In other words, the home becomes synonymous with one's identity, as it is the place in which people develop, reaffirm and change who they are.

Hence, through these women's pictures and narratives of the notion of home it is clear that for them home is family, and family includes their partners, children, and grandchildren and sometimes pets and close friends. However, family also refers to their memories of people from the past which are symbolized by objects, photos, places and landscapes. Thus, these women's homes reflect and communicate who they are as women, mothers, wives, daughters, "abuelas", and immigrants. In other words, their homes are an expression of their identities.

This study has shown that these women's identities and notion of home have being shaped by many factors but especially by their family. In that sense, the major findings of this study could also be used as a platform to approach current political issues such as the possible consequences of the Canadian Government's recent policies,

which are now encouraging and supporting temporal migration more than permanent immigration (Derrick Thomas, 2008). Although this issue didn't directly concern the participants of this study, their narratives brought to our attention the importance of some policies that facilitated their process of renegotiating their identity and notion of home, and those processes are directly linked to the possibility of being with their family.

Figures obtained in the census of 2006 show that the number of individuals admitted annually on a temporary basis has been growing faster than the number of permanent residents (Derrick Thomas, 2008). That means that new migrants, who are not considered permanent residents of Canada, do not have access to immigration programs that facilitate newcomers' adaptation and insertion into society. For instance, migrants do not have access to universal health care or subsidized English language classes. Furthermore, they do not have the right to apply for permanent residency, but most importantly they cannot sponsor their family. This final opportunity was extremely important to the women of this study in terms of successful adaptation and positive renegotiation of their identities and notion of home. I think that it would be very interesting to explore where Canada's new migration policies are headed, and understand the implications of these policies and programs in terms of settlement and adaptation in this new group of temporary migrants.

Their narratives did not just provide facts, events and anecdotes. They also gave these women an opportunity to reflect on their own emotions and feeling regarding their lives. After all these years – for some women 11 years and for others more than 30 –

these women had experienced many changes in their lives, and they were aware of them. Yet, as they mentioned they did not have the time to sit, tell, and hear their stories out loud. In the process of telling their stories, they retrieved memories that were in their minds but that in many cases were not brought to the surface for years. They laughed and cried. They felt scared and full of compassion. They were grateful and relieved, and they were happy to realize how far they had walked.

I have to say that these women had a great impact on my own life. I also reflected on my own experiences as a recently Latino immigrant women through their narratives and reflections on their experience of immigration. They made me realize how lucky I am to have the personal and institutional support of immigrant women and association as they prepared the ground for a new generation of immigrants to come. For instance, all of them claimed that they wanted to be involved in this study as they loved the topic, but most importantly because I am an immigrant who is pursuing a higher education, and they know how difficult it could be.

Through their narratives, I was able to reflect on the circumstances that brought me to this country, my own journey in the process of renegotiating my own identity and notion of home. Hence, I can say, in the same way as these women illustrate, that I am an immigrant with a mixture of my Latino roots and Canadian influence. I am a hybrid individual that feels at home in Canada as I have my husband and son and my memories of family and friends. I am also creating new memories with new friends while I continue to hold a piece of home in my country of origin as my parents and siblings remain there.

Thus, through this study, I learned that for some immigrants the places and people that surround us while growing up are instrumental in shaping our identities, but also the circumstances that compelled us to emigrate, the places we arrived and live now, the people in Winnipeg and abroad, and the roles we lost and embrace in Canada contribute to the renegotiation of our current identities and notion of home.

Consequently, home can be anywhere as long as we have our family, or even our memories of our family, since what we define as family gives us our deepest refuge in a world of immigration.

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APPENDIX A

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home



Faculty of Human Ecology
Family Social Sciences

Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-6354

Letter to Introduce Study to immigrant/Latino associations and organizations

The Master's student Alexandra Lozada Gobeia (Family Social Sciences, University of Manitoba) with the supervision of Dr. K. Roger (Family Social Sciences, University of Manitoba) is studying the social identity and meaning of "home" among elderly Latino-immigrant women in Winnipeg.

Any questions and concerns may be directed to Alexandra Lozada Gobeia umlozad2@cc.umanitoba.ca or Dr. K. Roger (474-6354).

We are currently seeking up to 8 elderly Latino-immigrant women from your organization that includes associated members or clients. If your organization participates, we would be asking you to assist us in recruiting participants in one, several or all of the following ways: by posting a flyer, allowing the researcher to go to your allocation and present and invite your clients to participate in the study, and/or sending the information to your clients or associates by e-mail or publications. In the study we will be asking the participants to take pictures to answer the question "what is home for you?" Then, the participants will be interviewed to provide details about the pictures they took. The questions will be related to how they have experienced a change in their meaning of home and identity since moving to Canada. These questions will be asked in one (in some cases two) individual interviews.

If you are interested, please send an e-mail to Alexandra Lozada Gobeia at umlozad2@cc.umanitoba.ca who will contact you or visit you to provide further detail regarding this study.

Please state here the way you are willing to collaborate (i.e. Posting flyers, allowing the researcher to come to invite our clients of our programs)

Thank you for your time.

Alexandra Lozada Gobeia
Master's Candidate
Family Social Sciences
University of Manitoba

APPENDIX B

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home



UNIVERSITY
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Faculty of Human Ecology
Family Social Sciences

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada R3T 2N2

Phone: (204) 474-6354

Fax: (204) 474-7592

RECRUITMENT FORM

If you are interested in participating in this study on the meaning of "home" and social identity among elderly Latino-immigrant women, please print your name below and leave a phone number for the researcher for an interview.

Name

Contact #

APPENDIX C

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TAKING PICTURES

The following instructions will help you to:

1. Learn how to use the camera
 2. Understand the question you should try to answer with your photos
 3. Know how your photos will be use in this study
-
- You do not have to pay for the camera or development of the pictures.
 - This is a disposable camera that has the film incorporated in it.
 - Take the camera from the original package.
 - Follow the instructions that are written in the package.
 - You will have a month to complete this task.
 - You can only take 12 pictures with this camera. So, think wisely about each of your pictures.
 - With your photos you should try to answer the following question:
What is “home” for you?
 - You may take pictures of different objects, places, or people.
 - If you are planning on taking pictures of people, you have to ask them for their permission first, explaining that you are taking these pictures as part of a research study. After their verbal consent you may take the picture.
 - The researcher will contact you in a month to ask you for the camera.
 - The researcher will go to retrieve the camera from you (at a place of your convenience)
 - The researcher will take the camera to a photo developing store.
 - After the photos have been developed the researcher will contact you to set up a day for an interview.
 - During the interview, the researcher will ask you about the pictures you took, and ask you why you chose to take those pictures and what does that image mean for you.
 - After this point, only the researcher and her three advisors will see your photos.
 - After the interview, the researcher will ask you for a written consent to publish some of your pictures in her thesis and pamphlet. You can decline the request.

- If you agree to the publication of your photos, your photos may appear in the researcher's thesis and/or in the pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, associations and organizations that were part of the research.
- If the photos include other people, the researcher will ask you to get a written consent from them. The researcher will give you the form to take and ask the individuals appearing in your photo to sign it.
- If the person portrayed in the photo is a minor, you will have to ask for the written consent from the child's parents or guardian.
- At the end of the study you are entitled to get your photos and the negatives back.
- In case you do not want them back, the photos will be kept for three years after that period the photos will be shredded.
- Your pictures will not be used in further studies.

APPENDIX D

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Tell me about your self before you came to Canada?
- How would you describe yourself? And how or what make you be the person that you have just described?
- If somebody comes right now and asks you to think about the most important events in your life, what would those be? What and why made then so special?
- Given your past and current circumstances and experiences, how would you define home? What does that definition mean to you?
- Can you describe this picture for me? What or who is in this picture? Why did you take it? What does this picture represent to you? How does this picture represent home to you? Why?

APPENDIX E

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home



Faculty of Human Ecology
Family Social Sciences

Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-6354

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

PROJECT: Elderly Latino-Immigrant Women's Identity and Meaning of Home

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER: A. Lozada Gobeia (Family Social Sciences, University of Manitoba)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. K. Roger (Family Social Sciences, University of Manitoba)

Any questions and concerns may be directed to Alexandra Lozada Gobeia
umlozad2@cc.umanitoba.ca or Dr. K. Roger (474-6354).

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This study is being undertaken by Alexandra Lozada Gobeia with the supervision of Dr. K. Roger to better understand the identity and meaning of "home" among elderly first generation Latino-immigrant women, an area that has not been researched well.

There are two (or three if you wish) steps to this study that you may participate in: 1) to take 12 pictures with a disposable camera; 2) one individual interview (1-2 hours); and 3) follow-up interview (30 min to 1 hour). Participation for each process is voluntary. You might be asked permission for a second interview in case the researcher has new questions that were not covered in the first interview. The camera will be given to you today if you agree to participate. Furthermore, your participation in the first step (taking pictures) does not compel you to participate in the second part (first interview) nor in the third part (second interview). If you decide to withdraw from this research at any time, your pictures and accounts will not be use in the study. I will conduct the interview at a location of your choosing and a time that works for you. You are also free to choose the language in which you feel most comfortable speaking (Spanish or English). The interview will be audio recorded if you provide your consent (further below you can check on the box that reflects your consent). The majority of the questions in the interview will be asked based on the pictures you have taken.

While taking the photos, you might take pictures of objects, places or people. If you do take photos of people, you should ask for individual's verbal consent before taking the photo and explain that you are taking the pictures for a study. In case the person you want to take a picture of is a child, you will have to ask for verbal permission from the child and the parent or guardian. If they do not consent to their picture being taken, you must stop. You should choose another image that reflects what you intend to communicate with the image you could not take.

At the end of the first interview, I will ask you for permission to publish some of your pictures. If you agree, I will give you a written consent to sign which will indicate the photo(s) you give permission to publish. If any of the photos that you have agreed to publish involve other people, I will also require their written consent. For that, I will give you a consent form (image release) at the end of the first interview, and you will have to ask them for their permission. In case the picture involves children, you will have to ask the child's parents or guardians for their written permission. I will contact you after one month for the written image release. In case you have not had the opportunity to obtain their permission, I will contact you a second time another month latter to ask you for the written consent of the people that are included in your pictures. If I do not receive their written consent within these two months, the content of the picture will remain in the research analysis but the image will not be use in any public document.

During the interview, you may experience distress unknown to yourself or the interviewer. If distress occurs during the interview, you may choose to discontinue or re-schedule the interview at no risk to yourself or your involvement in any organization.

Also a list of professional services will be made available to you immediately if you so request. Disclosure of child abuse to the research will be reported to authorities as required by law.

At the end of the study, you may ask to receive your pictures and negatives back. You can also ask for a copy of a small pamphlet which will be produced for the research participants and the organizations and associations that have collaborated in this study as a way of honoring your participation in the study. The pamphlet will include the study's main findings and some of the pictures that have been authorized by the participants. If you do not request the return of your pictures, I will keep the pictures for a period of three years after the research is finished in a locked cabinet. After that period the pictures will be shredded.

Your participation will be anonymous, and the things you discuss will remain fully confidential. Your name will not be used at any point in the research materials. Only the researcher, research supervisor, and two more research advisors will see your pictures or interview transcript. Interviews will be set up at a location of your choice and will be audio recorded with your prior consent.

You may choose to withdraw from, or decline participation, in the study at any time at no risk to your current involvement in any organization. Your data would then be removed from the study. You may also ask for the removal of specific topics or sections of interviews or conversations with the researcher even at a later time. The final transcribed interviews will be numbered and then a pseudonym will be selected for you. Your photographs and consent form will be kept in a locked location, and the interview recording and transcripts will be kept on the researcher's password protected computer. The data will be destroyed within three years of completing the study.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project, and that you agree to participate as a research participant. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, refrain from answering any questions, or chose to have specific sections removed at a later date without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

If you agree to participate in this study, please place your name and signature in the appropriate spaces below.

ELDERLY LATINO IMMIGRANT WOMEN: IDENTITY AND HOME

I _____ (print name) understand what the study is about and what participation involves and the signature below means that I agree to participate.

(signature) (date)

(signature of interviewer) (date)

I consent to be audio recorded during the interview.

I do not consent to be audio recorded during the interview.

It may take up to one year for a final report to be completed and available to the public.
If you would like a pamphlet, please check the box below and provide an address where it can be sent:

I would like to receive a pamphlet describing the results of this research.

Address: _____

APPENDIX F

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home



**Faculty of Human Ecology
Family Social Sciences**

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada R3T 2N2

Phone: (204) 474-6354

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I _____, hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. *I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.*

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX G-1

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home



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IMAGE RELEASE FORM FOR ADULTS

I _____, hereby give hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to use my image (likeness) for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. *I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.*

Name (printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX G-2

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home



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Family Social Sciences

Winnipeg, Manitoba
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Phone: (204) 474-6354

IMAGE RELEASE FORM FOR MINOR

For valuable consideration, I _____ (parent/guardian's name) hereby confer on the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right and permission with respect to the photographs (likeness) that _____ (participant's name) has taken of my minor child in which he/she may be included with others for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver.

I have read the foregoing and fully understand the contents hereof. As the parent/guardian of the child named above, I hereby consent to the foregoing on his/her behalf.

Dated: _____

Minor's Name: _____

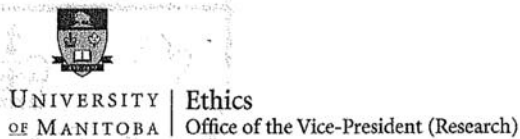
Parent or Guardian's Name: _____

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____

Witness: _____

APPENDIX H

Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home



CTC Building
208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Fax (204) 269-7173
www.umanitoba.ca/research

January 27, 2011

TO: Alexandra Lozada Gobeia
Principal Investigator

FROM: Brian Barth, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: Protocol #J2010:175
"Elderly Latino-immigrant Women's Identity and Meaning of Home"

Your above-noted protocol was reviewed by members of the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. A few concerns were noted and are listed below:

1. Please print the introduction letter to associations/organizations on U of M letterhead.
2. Include information in the consent form about the reporting of any evidence of child abuse.
3. Specify on the consent form whether or not the interview will be audio-recorded. Provide space for participants (a check box for example) to consent/refuse the audio-recording.
4. Regarding the release form for people appearing in images:
 - a. Explain further how this procedure will be conducted. Further, explain how children appearing in the pictures will be asked to consent--or will their parents/guardians be asked?
 - b. Explain further how the release form works. Is it like a "model release" for persons appearing in the picture? Or is it like a release of intellectual (image) property of the participant who took the picture? Or both?

Approval is pending your response to the above items. **Your written response, including a cover letter which addresses each of the above items, and includes any revised forms (with revisions highlighted, if possible)** should be sent to Margaret (Maggie) Bowman, Human Ethics Coordinator, Room 208 - 194 Dafoe Road (CTC Building), or by e-mail to Margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca. (Please note that there is no need to re-submit the entire submission, just those pertinent sections.) If you have any questions at all please don't hesitate to contact the Chair directly at 474-7423.

Bringing Research to Life



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I, [REDACTED], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.

Name (printed): [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: Oct 17, 2012



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COPYRIGHT PHOTO RELEASE FORM

Hands cutting potatoes (Figure 2)

I [redacted], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. *I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.*

Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: Dec. 10/12



Faculty of Human Ecology
Family Social Sciences

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(dog)

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Name (printed): [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: Oct 11, 2012



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Jewellery box in bookshelf (Figure 4)

I [redacted], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. *I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.*

Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: December 10, 2012



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COPYRIGHT PHOTO RELEASE FORM

Pictures on table (Figures)

I [redacted], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Goba and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. *I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.*

Name (printed):

Signature:

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print):

Parent/Guardian's Signature:

Date:

December 10, 2012



UNIVERSITY
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COPYRIGHT PHOTO RELEASE FORM

blankets (figure 6)

I [redacted], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release

Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: December 10, 2012



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Family Social Sciences

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(Piano)

I [REDACTED], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. *I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.*

Name (printed): [REDACTED]

Signature: [REDACTED]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: Oct 11/12



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chicken pictures

I [redacted], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. *I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.*

Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: Oct 18 / 2012




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Market 1 (Figure 9)

I , hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.

Name (printed): 

Signature: 

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: December 10, 2012



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Family Social Sciences

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Canada R3T 2N2
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Market 2 (Figure 10)

I [redacted], hereby grant permission to the researcher Alexandra Lozada Gobeia and her supervisor Dr. K Roger the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, and distribute the photographs of the undersigned person solely for use in this research on Elderly Latino-immigrant women's identity and meaning of home that includes thesis, possible academic journal articles, and a short pamphlet that will be distributed among the participants, organizations and associations that collaborated with the study activities. No compensation will be given in exchange for these photos. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver. I hereby acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older and have read and understand the terms of this release.

Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: December 10, 2012



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Mountains 1 (Figure 11)

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Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: December 10, 2012




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Mountains 2 (Figure 12)

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Name (printed):  *9*

Signature: 

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: *December 10, 2012*



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Flowers
and
Hammock

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Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: Oct. 18/2012



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Children's chairs (Figure 15)

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Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: December 10, 2012



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(Last supper)

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Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: Oct-11/12



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church

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Name (printed):

Signature:

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print):

Parent/Guardian's Signature:

Date: Oct 18 / 2012



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Name (printed):

Signature:

Date: Oct 14, 2012



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Name (printed): [redacted]

Signature: [redacted]

Date: Oct 12, 2012



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Name (printed):

Signature:

Date:

Oct 14, 2012