Outbraving Forced Displacements in Colombia and Central America: Trajectories of Asylum and Resettlement in Canada

by

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ABSTRACT

In my thesis, I analyze how people who experienced forced displacement in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Colombia account the emigration conditions in their home countries and their immigration process in Canada. Throughout a narrative and an experiential approach, I examine the migration journeys of at least two family members of three different familial groups (sixteen participants in total). In the first chapter, I portray my participants' experiences of forced displacement in relation to the social, historical, and political conditions that forged their emigration processes and their asylum claim outside of Canada. I emphasize how the constantly changing events in Colombia and Central America pushed this group of people to move to different temporary institutionalized and non-institutionalized asylum locations. In the second chapter, I sketch how my participants' resettlement stories portray processes of reconfiguration of identities that are shaped by the time, place and age of arrival; 'culture shock'; language proficiency; family roles and structure of their family unit, as well as their premigration experiences. I aim to trace how multiple background variables affect this group of immigrants' processes of adaptation and integration in the Canadian environment where they eventually live.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original work by Maria Fernanda Mosquera Garcia. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from:

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DEDICATION

To my Father, my Mother and Daniela.

To my family: Mosquera, García, Norato and Monsalve.

To my participants,

who inspire me with their sense of hope.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to all of my participants for allowing me to listen to their stories. Thanks for your trust and for making time to talk. I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Sandra Bucerius for her invaluable support throughout this process, for her feedback, for being attentive to my constant inquiries, and for helping me to improve my writing skills. Likewise, Dr. Sara Dorow for her encouragement, insightful comments and suggestions. I appreciate Dr. Harvey Krahn's questions to reflect on my further research interests, and for providing additional copy-edits in the final draft. I want to thank the professors of the Sociology department who have shared their knowledge and experience in their areas of research, especially to Dr. Holly Campeau, Dr. Kevin Haggerty, Dr. Gillian Stevens, and Dr. Marta Urbanik. I thank the different organizations and communities that opened their doors to hear about the research proposal, and to those who embraced me and invited me to be part of them. I want to express deep gratitude to all my family, widely, to my mother Martha García Norato, for teaching me persistence and supporting me with all that she has; and to my sister Daniela Mosquera, for her unconditional love and support. I thank Vivien Bosley for her kindness during this time of pandemic. I also want to thank the company and solidarity of my friends Silvia Capenakas and Roksana Shiran.

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INTRODUCTION

The day I met Rudy, she openly shared with me that she arrived in Canada as a refugee sponsored by the Canadian government a few years ago. Reflecting on my personal knowledge about the social, historical and political circumstances that have affected the Colombian context over the years, I wondered how she and her large family coped with the bureaucracies that dictate the pathway for an asylum claimant from Colombia, being a country well-known for its high rates of internally forced displaced population[1] ? I wondered how the conditions of emigration affected her and her family, while adjusting into a completely different social environment (Vigh 2009) where Spanish is not the official language? After conducting a course research project on refugee youths' school experiences, and constantly following the news about the 7,000 migrant caravans that fled their countries aiming to reach the U.S./Mexican border to claim protection in 2018 (Adone, Patrick and Gallón 2018; Olivo 2018), I became interested in better understanding how Latinos who went through a "refugee experience" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Khanlou and Moussa 2008: 1; Lamba and Krahn 2003: 336) navigate life changes during their emigration journeys, and sorted out forms to adjust in a new living environment once their asylum claimant was approved in Canada.

Like Rudy, Sonia didn't know *"it was going to be so hard"* resettling in a new city; in a new country. After escaping the civil war in Guatemala and remaining *"illegally"* in Mexico for several years, Sonia and her parents didn't *"imagine"* encountering such abrupt changes and challenges during their relocation process in Edmonton[2]. Similarly, Mercedes and Berenice fled from El Salvador into Mexico in the 1980's and immigrated to Canada in the 1990's. Manuel and Rosita were also acknowledged as refugees outside of Canada in the 2000's. They left Colombia seeking protection and opportunities to rebuild their lives

1 According to the United Nations (UN), the country has the highest rate of internally displaced people in the world (Anselma 2018; Crisp et. al 2012 cited in Darling 2017: 180)

2 Sonia: "y algo que… tal vez mis papás no sabían que iba a ser tan difícil, pero nunca me hablaron de eso. Yo recuerdo que mi papá cuando nos dijo que nos íbamos a venir para acá él se enfocó tanto en las cosas buenas, y nunca nos habló de las cosas que iban a ser difíciles. Pero creo que en parte fue porque él tampoco se imaginaba lo, lo difícil que iba a ser… […] entonces él… si tú no te imaginas algo, no se lo vas a, a decir a alguien más. Entonces el, el shock, la… el simplemente el estar en algo que tú no te esperabas, pues…puede ser bien difícil para…superar."

with their families. Adjusting to a new environment posed several challenges for all of them. Seeking to gain a broader understanding of my participants' trajectories, the overarching research inquiry that orients my qualitative research project asked: how do people who experienced forced displacement in El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia make sense of the emigration conditions in their home country, and their immigration process in Canada? In this study I portray how their trajectories are marked by the emigration events that pushed them to leave their home countries, and the contingencies that forged their processes of adaptation in Canada. This group of Latinos has different perceptions on how their migration journeys have affected them in relation to their 'selves' (Deaux and Perkins 2001; Conrandson and Mckay 2007; Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008; Bräuchler and Ménard 2017) and the environment where they eventually interact with others (Vigh 2009).

Scholarship on immigrants and refugees tends to center on questions of integration and refugee outcomes. Often data on newcomers' adaptation address levels and quality of integration in the host society by assessing the amount of different forms of capital, usually throughout the Bourdieusian lenses (Bourdieu 1986), as indicators of a "successful" process of integration (Adamuti-Trache, Anisef and Sweet 2018; Adamuti- Trache 2013; Agger and Strang 2008; Lamba and Krahn 2003; Massey and Sánchez 2010; Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008; Rossitier, Hatami, Ripley and Rossitier 2015). Nevertheless, authors like Agger and Strang (2008) argue that "integration" is a contested term, and assert that "there is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration" (Castels et. al 2001 cited in Agger and Strang 2008: 167). In this work I do not seek to provide an enclosed definition with respect to the concept of integration, and my goal is not to undermine its relevance. On the contrary, I follow Darling (2017) in asserting that "categories of statuses in respect to forced migration matter because this is a language that still dictates much policy and academic discussions" (179). In a similar manner, Agger and Strang (2008) argue that "integration remains significant both as a steady policy goal and as a targeted outcome for projects working with refugees" (167).

However, Darling (2017) advocates for the "need to balance the closures of such policy categories with the demand to speak in a language that is of relevance to a diversity

of audiences" (179). I think that portraying people's own understanding of their journeys of displacement, asylum and resettlement broadens the scope for a nuanced perspective of how pathways of integration dictated by policy affect people in their everyday life. In this sense, I seek to expand the discussion around integration, while first acknowledging the perspective of newcomers who experienced diverse ways of forced displacement firsthand. Throughout this study I aim to outline how my participants perceive their processes of adaptation in relation to their personal backgrounds, highlighting how the settlement conditions facilitated and/or restrained their adaptation. According to my findings I pose discussions for further research that hopefully in the future contribute to benefit refugee policy and integration.

Authors like Sayad (2004), Bucerius (2013) and Karimi and Bucerius (2018) invite me to consider emigration and immigration as mutually influenced processes. On one side, Sayad (2004) pays attention to the social conditions that shape different forms of migration, and frames the understanding of emigration and immigration within the power relationships of the states that bound policies (1). The author argues that immigration has usually been approached solely in the political domain, which has tended to ignore different "social-preconditions" that shape forms of immigration (Sayad 2004: 2). Consequently, he analyses emigration and immigration as "twin components", comprising the social conditions embedded within processes of migration, whilst tracing the relationship between emigrants' and immigrants' societies, and the social history between them (2). On the other side, Karimi and Bucerius (2018) developed a study to examine the emigration and integration practices among Iranian students in Europe, arguing that their integration in the European context began long before their emigration process (1). The authors contest the idea that "adaptation practices begin on the day immigrants arrive in their destinations countries" (Bloch 2008 cited in Karimi and Bucerius 2018: 2), posing how the specificities of the historico-political background influence immigrants' "potential differences in post-migration and adaptation strategies" (2). Considering that social, historical and political processes have an influence on "immigrants' pre-migration attitudes" (Karimi and Bucerius 2018: 2), I wondered how the particularities of the Latin American context influenced my participants' emigration experiences while being forced displaced?

In relation to the Latin American region, Simmons' (1993) study explains the upward trend of Latin Americans moving to Canada since 1966 as "part of an hemispheric migration system" conformed by the socioeconomic and political conditions of the sending and host countries; as well as the immigration and refugee policies that bound forms of immigration in Canada (282-284).The author specifically identifies how waves of migration from Latin America respond to social and political crisis caused by right-wing and military dictatorship, violence, and problems of security in some of the sending countries, like Chile and El Salvador (Simmons 1993: 282- 283). In the case of Rubiela, Sonia, Berenice and Mercedes, their decisions to flee Central America were influenced by the right wing and military dictatorship ruling and shaping the political upheaval in the 1980's (Krujit 2008; Sanford 2000; Bourgois 2001; 2004; 2009). In the case of Rosita, Manuel, Rudy and her family, the violent Colombian context (Le Grand, van Isschot and Riaño 2017; Uribe 2018; Oslender 2004; Pécaut 1999) pushed them to seek protection out of the country.

Bearing in mind how social, historical and political factors influence individuals' decisions to emigrate, I also inquired how these events influenced their "adaptation attitudes" in Canada (Karimi and Bucerius 2018: 2), whilst pushing them to "negotiate and/or reconfigure" their identities and make sense of their own journeys (Katsiaficas, Futch, Fine and Sirin 2011; Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 391). Hajdukowski-Ahmed (2008) poses that "every new location or new situation challenges [refugees] sense of self, which is constantly renegotiated as they rebuild their lives" (30). Although the author narrows her analysis to the experiences of refugee women, her lens is useful to understand my participants' stories in relation to the reshaping of their identities during their journeys. Likewise, authors like Conrandson and Mckay (2007) and Bräuchler and Ménard (2017) emphasize that processes of "im/mobility" impact on "how identity narratives and relationships to 'the others' are (re)shaped" (379). From Bräuchler and Ménard's (2017) perspective, "identity rests on power relations between groups and the existence of mechanisms of inclusion or exclusion that inform people's stay in (or departure from) a certain locality and their sense of belonging" (380). Similarly, Hajdukowski-Ahmed (2008) views "identity as a continuous and relational process rather than a fixed construct" (29). The author frames the notion of identity within a Feminist Dialogism to identify

"connections between the history and story, the self and the context[s]" in relation to "tensions and movement" of people who have experienced trauma, upheaval, and resettlement (29).

These authors invite me to rethink that "processes do not progress in a linear fashion toward desired outcomes […] [or] a specific teleology" (29), rather, that the events and conditions in social environments are "contingent upon our knowledge of the past, our experience of the here and now as well as the emergent or potential possibilities and difficulties within it" (Vigh 2009: 429). Following Vigh (2009) "the map is never a static set of coordinates but a dense and multi-dimensional imaginary, which is constantly in the process of coming into being" (29). Aligned with Vigh's (2009) perspective, Darling's (2017) study illustrate how processes of forced migration are entwined within multiple dimensions that transcend "border practices [that] are increasingly detached from the territorial framing of the nation-state and reterritorialized in exterior spaces" (Collyer and King 2015 cited in Darling 2017: 179). Darling (2017) advocates for a broader perspective to encompass forced migration in light of geographical processes at distinct levels (180). These studies serve me as lenses to reflect broadly on the multiple processes, conditions, actors and power relations that shaped my participants' migration journeys, in light of their own narratives (Chase 2008; Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Eastmond 2007; Katsiaficas et. al 2011; Reczek 2014). Furthermore, Hajdukowski-Ahmed (2008) argues that "any comprehensive understanding of [refugee] and their identity must both recognize the agency of the subject and integrate culture and history into that understanding" (30). This approach entails thinking about peoples' identities in relation to factors "such as gender, socioeconomic status, location, culture, sexuality, ability, race, and ethnicity that are at play within power relationships" (31).

In this study I approach the understanding of the notion of refugee as a "legal category for a particular situation in which people find themselves" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Khanlow and Moussa 2008: 1). In this sense, I acknowledge that the refugee experience is just one facet of my participants' trajectories and not a "fixed construct" that bounds their identities as a whole (Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008: 29). When I asked some of my participants what it meant for them holding a refugee status, most of them perceive it as a

temporary stage to receive support and access opportunities to rebuild their lives. Rubiela asserted that once they arrived in Canada the *"refugee status"* was transformed into a *"landed immigrant status[3]"*. Likewise, I take into account that within processes of mobility and migration the notion of space is not a "fixed geographical container for social processes" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 380). I follow Henrik Vigh's (2009) analytical framework to layout my participants narratives to convey how within contexts of warfare and social turmoil, circumstances are "shifting and fluid", constantly affecting individuals' "movement and possibilities" to shift toward other positions (426).

Aiming to portray how "uprooted categories of people, have had multilayered and multifaceted identities even before the conditions that created their [refugee] status" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Khanlow and Moussa 2008:1), in the first chapter of this thesis I portray my participants' stories of displacement within the social, historical and political settings that forced them to flee their home countries. In light of Vigh's (2009) debates about the concept of social navigation, I reframe the understanding of my participants' social trajectories from Bourdieu's (1986) notion of field, to Vigh's (2009; 2008) notion of social environment. This analytical stand allows me to emphasize how in contexts where "crisis is endemic" (Vigh 2008: 5), and people are "forcibly removed", they "reclaim their identity" even facing adverse circumstances (Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008: 30; Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). Consequently, I draw on a socio-historical approach to outline the different conditions and processes that shaped my participants' experiences encompassed in their narratives (Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Chase 2008; Katsiaficas et. al 2011; Bräuchler and Ménard 2017; Reczeck 2014).In this work I demonstrate how people sorted out alternatives to navigate adversities, seeking to move and continue with their lives, in spite of the social constraints that forcibly removed them from their hometowns in Guatemala, Colombia and El Salvador.

In the second chapter of this work, I focus on my participants' perceptions of their process of adaptation in Canada. Instead of following a social or human capital approach to determine if my participants have "successfully" or not integrated in the new environment

3 Rubiela: "y nuestra situación era legal, al entrar como 'landed immigrant' teníamos derecho a todo lo que los canadienses tenían.".

(Adamuti-Trache, Anisef and Sweet 2018; Adamuti- Trache 2013; Agger and Strang 2008; Lamba and Krahn 2003; Massey and Sánchez 2010; Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008; Rossitier, Hatami, Ripley and Rossitier 2015),I instead focus on their trajectories and decisions in their settlement process. In light of Bräuchler and Ménard (2017) and Sakti (2017) study, I reflect on how processes of "reterritorialization of identity" are embedded within my participants narratives. I trace how a multiplicity of experiences are at play within processes of reconfiguration of identity (Deaux and Perkins 2001; Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008; Katsiaficas et. al 2011; Sakti 2017). Likewise, I address the understanding of their trajectories extending Vigh's (2009) social navigation approach according to the discussion posed in the first chapter. In this sense, I reflect on elements raised by immigration and refugee scholars to stress how dimensions of integration (linguistic, familial, education) affect their adaptation process, while also acknowledging that their trajectories are forged in between "an array of knowledges, skills, abilities and networks" to navigate their resettlement process in Canada (Yosso and Burciaga 2016:1).

RESEARCH AND POSITIONALITY

"La vida no es como uno la vivió,
sino la que uno recuerda
y cómo la recuerda para contarla[4]*"*
Gabriel García Márquez

In light of the analytical debates I outlined previously, I developed this research throughout a qualitative narrative analysis (Chase 2008; Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Eastmond 2007). Following Denzin and Lincoln 2008, and Chase 2008, I address the narrative inquiry as a "subtype" of the qualitative ground (58). In light of Chase's (2008) lens, I understand my participants' narratives as "both enabled and constrained by a range of social resources and circumstances" (65). From this perspective, the "possibilities for self and reality construction are intelligible within the narrator's community, local setting, organizational and social memberships, and cultural and historical location" (Chase 2008: 65). In this way, I treat my participants' narratives as "socially situated", sketching patterns between their "storied selves, subjectivities, and realities" that are embedded within particular times in Colombia, Central America and Canada (Chase 2008: 65). In this manner, I identify how my participants' positioned themselves in relation to their social environments (Vigh 2009), by tracing what Chase (2008) calls "narrative linkages" between individuals' biographical particulars and the social contexts where their stories are interwoven (73).

In a similar vein, Eastmond's (2007: 248) work also guides my narrative interpretative approach to depict how my participants' personal accounts convey ways in which they make sense of violence and processes of social change in different social environments (Vigh 2009). Eastmond (2007) follows the "phenomenological assumption that meaning is ascribed to phenomena through being experienced", arguing that people's experiences can only be known throughout diverse means of expression, such as narratives (249). Eastmond (2007) uses Bruner's (1986 cited in Eastmond 2007) work to emphasize that narratives are woven at three interrelated levels of the human experience: first, in

[4] Translation by Eidth Grossman (cited in Gurria-Quintana 2003): "Life is not what one lived, but what one remembers and how one remembers it in order to recount it".

relation to the "flow of events that touch on a person's life"; second, narratives are also structured by how individuals "perceive and ascribe meaning" to events "drawing on previous experience and cultural repertoires" (Eastmond 2007: 249). For last, the author outlines that narratives "frame and articulate" people's experiences according to the contexts in which their stories are told and depending on the targeted audience (Eastmond 2007: 249). Consequently, I approach my participants' narrative personal accounts of their emigration, asylum and resettlement processes in Canada as "creative constructions or interpretations of the past, generated in specific contexts of the present" (Eastmond 2007: 250). Similarly, I follow Sakti (2017) and Bräuchler and Ménard (2017), who emphasize how narratives convey processes of identity construction in relation to forms of im/mobility, asserting how narratives transmit "group identities and webs of social relationships" that are meaningful for individuals' sense of belonging (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385; Sakti 2017: 473).

I conducted open ended interviews with nine individuals and one with multiple family members (Reczek 2014), with two immigrants from Guatemala (Rubiela and Sonia), two from El Salvador (Berenice and Mercedes) and five from Colombia (Rudy, Simón, Roncancio, Rosita and Manuel) who arrived in Canada once their asylum claimant was approved outside of the country in different periods of time. For the case of Rudy I conducted an additional open ended interview, and later, a group family interview with her, Simón, Roncancio and other members of their family unit. For the cases of Manuel and Rosita I solely conducted two separate individual interviews. Reczek's (2014) approach was useful to think about my participants' lives as "linked […], [as] intertwined throughout the life course" (318). Following a "linked lives" approach helped me to identify different perspectives, of at least two members of the same family, with the exception of Rosita's and Manuel's cases. However, I also approach their trajectories as "linked lives" by tracing the commonalities that connect their emigration and immigration journeys between them, and among all of my participants (Reczek 2014: 318). Encompassing a multiple family member perspective (Reczek 2014: 318) allowed me to gain different views on resembling events and conditions of displacement, asylum and resettlement, while considering how their experiences vary according to their family roles, time and locations.

Table 1: Participants' Pseudonym, Familial Grouping, Country of Birth, Age Range, Gender, Time, and City of Arrival in Canada

Familial Grouping	Participant	Name	Relation	Country of Birth	Age Range	Gender	Time of Arrival in Canada	City of Arrival
a.	1.	Rubiela	Mother	Guatemala	55 to 60	Female	1990's	Edmonton
	2.	Sonia	Daughter		35 to 40	Female		
b.	3.	Berenice	Cousins	El Salvador	70 to 75	Female	1990's	Edmonton
	4.	Mercedes			65 to 70	Female		
c.	5.	Rosita	None	Colombia	25 to 30	Female	2000's	L'Original
d.	6.	Manuel	None	Colombia	25 to 30	Male	2000's	
e.	7.	Rudy	Siblings and Cousins	Colombia	35 to 40	Female	2015's	Edmonton
	8.	Roncancio			25 to 30	Male		
	9.	Simón			20 to 25	Male		
	10.	Lina			30 to 35	Female		
	11.	Delia	Mother		30 to 35	Female		
	12.	Gloria			60 to 65	Female		
	13.	Jorge	Children		10 to 15	Male		
	14.	Érika			10 to 15	Female		
	15.	Betti			10 to 15	Female		
	16.	Francy			5 to 10	Female		

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My analytical perspective is grounded in a *critical social constructionist* approach to emphasize that "meaning is created and recreated through interaction and interpretation" (Reczek 2014: 319). I lean on Hacking's (2000; 2004) discussion on how the social construction of people occurs within a "matrix of ideas" that configure certain social settings (10). The author poses the example of how the notion of "woman refugee" is forged within the interrelation of different forms of classifications, shaped by how institutions determine features to bound the definition (s) for the notion of "refugee". In this manner, "matrixes" that configure forms of classifications of people "changes how [people] feel about themselves, [and] their experiences" (Hacking 2000: 11). However, while "classifying changes people, […] the changed people cause classifications themselves to be redrawn" (Hacking 2004: 279). In this manner, Hacking (2004) argues that the process of

[5] The precise date of arrival and age have been modified to protect my participants' anonymity.

"making up people" is woven between the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' dimension of discursive events (278).

Aligned with Hacking's perspective, Deaux and Perkins (2001) pose two significant aspects to reflect on my participants' forms of self-representation throughout their narratives: first, "the multiplicity of self-aspects", and second, "the dynamic, ever-changing nature of the self-definition" (299). Deaux and Perkins (2001) contest the idea of understanding the self in relation to "stable structural features"; alternatively, they view the self "experienced differently, depending on the time and position of viewing" (299). The authors use the "kaleidoscopic metaphor" to distinguish between the individual, relational and collective selves, whilst emphasizing how they are tied together. The first notion refers to "individuals' personal traits", the second encompasses the "role relationships", and the collective self is tied to forms of "group membership" (301). Within contexts of "geographical mobility" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385; Conradson and Mckay 2007), some scholars address the self as a "relational achievement", emerged from "diverse forms of subjectivity" shaped at the interplay of different locations, and social ties at distinct levels. Consequently, I also seek to portray how my participants' narratives speak of themselves in these tripartite dimensions (Deaux and Perkins 2001), whilst outlining structural dynamics of inequalities that affect them in different ways (Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). I am committed to protect the identity of my participants, for that purpose, in this text I use pseudonyms for their names; I changed references to the places or locations my participants mentioned, and replaced any other possible identity identifiers. All of my interviews were conducted in person, on average one hour to an hour and a half long. I translated from Spanish into English every excerpt included in this thesis. I digitally recorded each interview and transcribed them verbatim after. I used a generalized prompt guide for my interviews but allowed my participants to guide the direction of the conversation, putting an emphasis on their narratives and experiences. When analysing my data, I looked for commonalities and differences between my participants' stories with respect to their emigration and immigration experiences and their resettlement process in Canada. I used NVivo 12 to code my interviews.

While I sought to understand my participants' trajectories in relation to multiple processes, actors and institutional stances (Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008; Vigh 2009; Darling 2017) through a narrative analysis (Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Chase 2008; Estmond 2007; Bräuchler and Ménard 2017; Sakti 2017), paving the way to conduct this study also required a reflective stand to understand myself in relation to my research. I conclude from this experience that my status in the field varied according to the place, community and/or organization. Scholars like Kerstetter (2012) have previously posed the idea of "moving beyond a strict outsider/insider dichotomy", seeking to emphasize "the relative nature of researchers' identities, depending on the context of a specific research project" (3). While delving into analytical discussions echoing that identity is forged and reshaped as "as a continuous and relational process rather than a fixed construct" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008: 29), I think that the same analytical lens serve to better understand how in certain circumstances an insider/outsider status overlapped, or fall into what Kerstetter (2012) calls as the "space between" (4). According to the author the researcher's identity is shaped by the "multidimensional space where […], cultural backgrounds, and relationships to research participants influence how they are positioned within that space" (Kerstetter 2012: 4).

In my case, an insider/outsider status was forged in between the forms of access to the field in two levels: first, when establishing contact with communities/organizations and gatekeepers, and second, while building rapport with my participants during the interview. Considering the approach of "linked lives" (Reckzeck 2014), I argue that my insider status was salient when my participants and I found commonalities on our experiences of adjustment in the Canadian social environment (Vigh 2009), regardless that I didn't come to Canada by an asylum claim. On the other hand, my outsider status was prominent when I reached out some communities/organizations and their respective gatekeepers. Likewise, when one of my participants specifically pointed out differences between our educational backgrounds, life experiences and emigration conditions, I perceived that an outsider status prevailed at some point of our interaction. Roncancio asked me why did I want to remain in Canada:

> *" If you already have […] lots of education. With what you have, in Colombia, and you also speak English, I mean, you would have a great job… you wouldn't have*

the need to emigrate in search for a better place, like [seeking] for more opportunities. You already would have them in Colombia… so, my question would be: what, I mean, what motivates you… to remain here?[6]".

Roncancio believes that most people emigrate in search for better living conditions, in search of *"social equality"*; others leave because of *"violence […] because their lives are at risk in their countries"*; for last, he believes that *"wealthy people usually send their children abroad to study in good universities"*. Roncancio thought I was part of the latter group. However, I explained to him that nobody sent me to Canada to study, that I decided to emigrate in search of opportunities to achieve my personal and professional goals. Likewise, I emphasized that I am not from a wealthy family.

When I first visited one of the communities/organizations[7] to invite potential participants, someone, who I will refer here as a "gatekeeper" (Bucerius 2021 fothcoming), asked me: *"are you a refugee? Why do you want to work with refugees? You have chosen to work with people who are most reluctant to talk"*. The gatekeeper wished me luck and still allowed me to join the community gatherings to chat and invite people to talk. I also visited two places where I established connections before starting the research where some "gatekeepers" knew me already. However, when I shared the summary of the project with the ethics approval committee, I was just allowed to leave flyers to inform about the study,

[6] Roncancio: "R: no, eh sí… ¿por qué te gustaría quedarte viviendo aquí en Canadá? Si, si tu ya tienes un doctora… digo, una maestría, un posgrado, ya tienes muchos estudios. Con lo que tienes en Colombia, y además hablas inglés, o sea, tendrías un súper buen trabajo… eh… o sea, no, no tendrías la necesidad de emigrar a buscar un lugar mejor, como para… con más oportunidades de vida. Ya, ya las tendrías en, en Colombia… entonces, mi pregunta es: ¿qué…? O sea, ¿qué te motiva… como…que quieres estar aquí? O sea, ¿qué te gusta de aquí o…? ¿Por qué crees que aquí debería ser tu… tu lugar?
M: antes de responderte, ¿tú crees que siempre el que migra, emigra con el propósito de buscar una mejor… como más oportunidades, como mencionabas antes?
R: sí, la verdad… pues ese es el patrón que yo he visto en… en casi, en casi… en, en Latinoamérica. Regularmente, siempre las personas emigran es buscando como una mejor calidad de vida, como más oportunidades… como igualdad social. Sí, regularmente por eso es que…regularmente emigran las personas. También la otra es por la violencia, no… si, si en su país su vida corre riesgo, pues toca irse para otro lugar.
M: ujúm. ¿Y entonces, tú crees que yo… yo debería quedarme en Colombia… hahaha?
R: no, no, no creo que te deberías quedar (sonrisa) sino que… o sea, se me hace, se me hace curioso que quieras, o sea, quedarte acá; porque pensé que simplemente habías venido a estudiar, a prepararte. Porque regularmente eso es algo que hace mucha gente en Colombia, especialmente las personas como más adineradas, qué obviamente mandan a sus hijos al exterior a estudiar en buenas universidades, ya sea en Francia o en Canadá, o en otros lugares. Y ya después regresan, y regresan a Colombia: "y sí, yo…", y alardean, no: "yo estudié…en, en Canadá, en tal universidad, y yo sé inglés".

7 I will refer to communities/organizations to protect communities' and organizations' names.

and I was not permitted to engage with any volunteering activities to specifically meet potential participants. Before starting the research, I considered it ideal volunteering in places to allow potential participants to get to know me and build rapport with them. Similarly, on purpose to gain a better sense of the dynamics of these interactional contexts frequented by newcomers. When explaining the research to one of these gatekeepers, they emphasized not being sure that people would feel compelled to share their stories with me. Although they referred another contact to inquire about volunteering opportunities, this person never got back to me. At the beginning, these types of interactions were quite disheartening. The restricted access to invite potential participants made me feel like an outsider (Bucerius 2013), regardless that my previous participation in these places made me believe that I already had gained a bit of an insider status.

After some of the "gatekeepers" seemed reluctant to agree that people would be willing to participate, I wondered what the reasons were for them to see it this way. I felt a little discouraged, and I tried my best to overemphasize to them and to potential participants my commitment to protect their identities. To the extent that later with Roncancio, he mentioned that while I was stressing too much the regulations related to anonymity and confidentiality, he thought that I portrayed the interview as *"too serious*[8]*"*. He associated my invitation to participate with a setting where people give legal claims. Roncancio expressed that while I was overemphasizing the regulations related to anonymity and confidentiality, he thought I was going to delve into uncomfortable questions during the interview.

During the recruitment process, I understood that "gatekeepers can make initial research access difficult" and pose barriers for research based on their "valid and serious concerns and might have a genuine interest in keeping the researcher or the population they are working with safe" (Bucerius 2021:8 forthcoming). However, I wondered why in some places I felt too restrained to access, even if at times I thought of myself as part of that population that some gatekeepers could work with to provide support for being an

8 Roncancio: "…algo como muy serio… pues… M: ¿en serio? R: como si fuera una… M: hahahaha…R: así como cuando… sí, o sea, como si alguien que hubiera matado a 50 en ir a dar su testimonio pero todo tiene que ser como muy secreto… de qué su identidad no sé, no se revele porque pues puede ir a la cárcel o algo así".

immigrant, and having previous connections in places where I was known as a graduate student. At some point, I wondered if the restrained access in some places was related to my lack of a Canadian Citizenship status and posing a risk of disclosing peoples' identities if I ever were to leave Canada. I came to this conclusion when one of my participants, who I decided not to include in this study because her immigration journey was too distant from those I portray in this work, mentioned having heard of cases in which victims and perpetrators have bumped into one another. Then I thought that probably gatekeepers believe that having access to any of the "opposite sides" could pose a risk to disclose peoples' identity and sense of security.

However, I considered why Bucerius (2021 forthcoming) outlines that "gatekeepers can also be anxious about losing their monopoly of knowledge on a population that is "of interest" or somewhat "hidden" (Bucerius 2021: 8 forthcoming). In this sense I also foresaw that other researchers were conducting government founded studies targeting the same population, that were probably prioritized by gatekeepers. Nevertheless, I could keep speculating about the "real" reasons for some peoples' reluctance about this research, but what I conclude is that contacting places where I previously had connections didn't grant me an insider status, even if I felt like so when partaking in different activities with them before starting the study. I think that in my case, holding a researcher status in some moments overlapped my Latina-student-immigrant status making me be seen at times as a full outsider (Bucerius 2013), like in the case with the two gatekeepers mentioned above. Other times I was seen as an insider (Contreras 2013), when my status was more associated with an immigrant student who is finding out *"ways to get ahead*[9]*"*. I perceived myself as an insider when my potential participants and I, at some point, found commonalities in our immigration experiences in terms of finding ways of "lifting [each other] as we climb", while developing the ability to navigate the environment where we are in (Yosso 2005: 79; Vigh 2009).

I also talked to two other gatekeepers, one from a community/organization where I also had contacts before starting the project. Both gatekeepers of these

9 Mercedes: "así es, así es de que a mí me da mucho gusto de que tú haigas tomado tu tiempo de estar conmigo también porque… yo te veo a ti tus luchas, y como estás saliendo adelante.".

communities/organizations were excited about the study and found it interesting. One of them shared information about me with their communities. The other one invited me to speak in a public gathering, and at that moment my shy personality hindered me to do so. However, in both places I handed out flyers to potential participants for them to freely contact me if they felt interested in partaking in the study. Eventually, I was contacted by several people, including immigrants who didn't come through an asylum claimant to Canada. For this reason, I requested an ethics amendment to interview immigrants holding different immigration statuses to include their experiences in further research. When most people who reached out to me were immigrants who are in Canada holding different immigration statuses, I realized that one of the gatekeepers could be right by saying that people who have had a "refugee experience" (Eastmond 2007; Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008; Lamba and Krahn 2003) could be the most reluctant to share their stories. However, I never considered that lack of a "refugee experience" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008; Eastmond 2007) as a barrier to conduct the study.

I met Rudy before starting this study, and invited her to partake. She enthusiastically agreed. Once I interviewed Manuel, Rosita, Sonia and Rudy, I asked them if they would agree to extend the invite to their parents seeking to gain a different perspective from another member of their family units (Reczeck 2014). Although Rosita, Manuel and Sonia asked their parents, they expressed no interest in talking about the past experiences in their home countries. In a different vein, Rudy's mother and her extended family decided to participate, however, Rudy emphasized that her relatives didn't want to talk about their past events in Colombia and preferred to focus the conversation on their resettlement process. Although reaching out to my target population was not easy, some of my participants found it helpful to talk about their past experiences and resettlement conditions. For example, I asked Berenice how she felt throughout our conversation. Despite that she highlighted how sad it was to recall her emigration circumstances in El Salvador, she felt *"happy for sharing all that much*[10]*"*, what she hasn't shared before, sometimes with friends but not in an open ended interview. Likewise, even though Manuel

10 Berenice: "M: ok, ok, bueno. Gracias por compartir eso. ¿Sumercé cómo se sintió en esta conversación? B: ¡Pues contenta! Estar compartiendo lo que tanto no había compartido… a veces con amigos… va uno y cuenta cómo uno sufrió en el país, pero me he sentido contenta".

felt distressed sharing his story, and I asked him if he preferred to end our conversation, he insisted in continuing, exclaiming: *"I want to continue, I want to see where I do have those… those memories*[11]*"*.Delia found the family interview as helpful, *"excellent"*, while Simón found it jolly to gather *"as Colombians to chat*[12]*"*.

11 Manuel: "M: si quieres, si quieres… ¿quieres un break? E: no, yo quiero seguir, quiero ver dónde tengo esas… esos recuerdos. M: está bien. Podemos tomar un descanso… ¿sí? Está bien… sí, no… no hay problema… podemos… E: ya, no… sí, sí, sí… M: en el… eh, si en algún momento tú quieres que paremos la entrevista, está bien. E: no, no, está bien, no, de verdad está bien. M: y yo… estoy dis… si quieres conversar, yo estoy dispuesta a escuchar".

12 Family Interview: "M: bueno, ¿y yo no sé si de pronto hay algo que quieran como agregar? ¿Cómo se sintieron de pronto como con esta conversación? ¿Hay algo que… no sé, qué les parece? ¿Les parece que vale la pena de pronto comentar acerca de esto, si tal vez no? S: ¿cómo se siente, madre, usted? D: ¿acerca de la entrevista? M: sí. D: ah, no, a mí me pareció muy bien, excelente. S: nosotros los colombianos tirar a charlar… hahahaha…".

CHAPTER ONE. NAVIGATING DISPLACEMENT(S): 'LEAVING ALL BEHIND' IN GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR AND COLOMBIA

"No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark […]
you only leave home when home won't let you stay […]
I want to go home, but home is the mouth of a shark
home is the barrel of the gun
and no one would leave home
unless home told you to quicken your legs
leave your clothes behind […],
your survival is more important"
Warsan Shire

I first heard of Warsan Shire while reading Brad Evan's interview in The New York Times with sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, speaking about the refugee crisis. Shire's poem: 'Home', portrays experiences that people who have been forced to be displaced could relate to in a certain way. When reading the poem, I recalled the story of Berenice. She is now a seventy year-old woman, who fled El Salvador when she was in her thirties with her four children, after her husband was killed during the war time in the 1980's. Berenice's memories of leaving everything behind in her hometown is captured in the following excerpt:

> *"We lived in a town, a beautiful town, where everyone knew each other. Aw, everyone knew each other! […] In that town I had my house in front of the park. I sat in front of the house in a chair, watching after my children playing in the park; that was beautiful! But suddenly, things started… started to hear about things of… of war, and it passed like… what? Like three years to… let me see, since the 79, 80, 81, that the shootings here; that people were taken out of their houses and it was a horrible fear…really frightening! So, yes, we left everything behind there in my hometown. We had a 'tiendita[13]', we had… my husband loved to work the land, and we made beans; we grew beans, corn… um… things of grains, we lived well… well,*

13 While there is no direct translation to this cultural event, the reader may get an image of the 'tiendita' by following this link - please start from second 0:35: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSB5nU8Vs3g

well, well! But the war… we left home, we left everything, everything! We left on, a day, a day… I don't remember what was, but what I remember is that we left in the afternoon. And my husband tells me: "let's go", "why?", "let's go, this is the hour that [in which] we have to leave the town. And there was a 'pickup' there, we put everything we could. I remember a dining table we put in; neither beds, nothing… what we could. And then we left for another city.[14]"

In this chapter I will focus on people's experiences of forced migration. I aim to describe the emigration conditions in Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia that pushed my participants to seek asylum in other countries, including Canada. As this study draws on interviews with people who came to Canada from three countries of Latin America, I display points of connection between their *trajectories* (Bourdieu 1986; Bourdieu cited in García 2001; Bourdieu cited in Barret 2015; Vigh 2009; 2007), seeking to trace patterns and similarities between the events that pushed them to seek asylum regardless of the different time periods and conditions of their place of origin. However, I also frame their trajectories in the social, political and historical contexts that shaped their circumstances of emigration. I display my analysis leaning on scholars that stress how particular forms of 'social being' are embedded in a continuous process of social transformation that don't place people in 'static positions' (Vigh 2009: 429; 2008) or 'fixed statuses' and 'stable social classifications' (Eastmond, 2007; Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Khanlow and Moussa 2008; Gonzales, Sigona, Franco and Papoutsi 2019; Hacking 2000; 2004).

14 Berenice: "eh… nosotros vivíamos en un pueblo, en un pueblo bien bonito, donde todo mundo se conoce. Ay, ¡todo mundo se conoce! En la mañana uno se levanta… y vivíamos felices allá en ese pueblo. Yo tenía mi casa en frente del parque. Me sentaba en, en las… afuera de mi casa con una silla, ahí veía a mis hijos jugar en el parque; era ¡tan bonito!, pero de repente pues empezaron las cosas de la…empezaban a oír cosas de… de guerra, y pasaron ¿qué? Como 3 años para que la… voy a ver, desde el 79, 80, 81, qué ya se fue haciendo ya que los tiroteos aquí; qué sacaban aquí, qué sacaban a la gente de la casa y era un miedo espantoso…¡bien espantoso! Entonces sí, nosotros dejamos todo allá en mi pueblo. Teníamos una tiendita, teníamos un… a mi esposo le encantaba trabajar en la tierra; y hacíamos frijol, cultivábamos frijol, maíz… um… cosas de granos, vivíamos bien. ¡Bien, bien, bien! Pero la guerra… dejamos casa, ¡dejamos todo, todo! Nosotros salimos un, un día, un día no me acuerdo qué era, pero lo que me acuerdo es que salimos en la tarde. Y me dice mi esposo: "nos vamos", "¿por qué?" "vamos, esta es la hora que tenemos que salir de aquí del pueblo". Y había un 'pickup' ahí, metimos lo que pudimos. Me acuerdo que una mesita de comedor, qué metimos; ni camas, ni nada… lo que pudimos. Y nos fuimos…".

Trajectories Forged by Continuous Processes of Uprootedness

Reflecting on my participants' stories I wondered what theoretical lens could be useful to encompass the experiences that forged their emigration journeys in relation to each other, and the social settings that weave their stories together, while at the same time taking into consideration the singularity of experiences that marked my participants' trajectories. I recalled Bourdieu's notion of *social trajectory*. Bourdieu defines it as the "series of positions successively occupied by the agent (or group) in the social fields[15]" (Bourdieu as in García 2001: 16; Barret 2015: 4). Barrett (2015) asserts that Bourdieu proposes "social trajectories as an alternative to life history" to analyze people's stories "relationally" (Wacquant and Bourdieu 1989 cited in Barret 2015), not in "isolation but rather necessary to understand it as inherently situated within […] the field it has been formed" (Barret 2015: 4). According to Bourdieu (1986: 241), the social world is constituted by the different fields - political, religious, legal, etc. (Bourdieu 2001: 107). Power (1999) synthesizes some of Bourdieu's theoretical concepts highlighting that "fields are structured spaces organized around particular types of capital, consisting of dominant and subordinate positions. […] Fields cannot exist without capitals" (4).

Thinking of trajectories from this perspective seemed compelling as it can trace how my participants' social positions were 'successively' configured in relation to their emigration journeys. However, Bourdieu establishes that "social positions are what define agents in the social fields" according to how they "embody" capitals – economic, social, cultural and symbolic – (Bourdieu 1986: 241; Bourdieu cited in García 2001: 16). Most of my participants fled home amidst turmoil circumstances, neither having amassed economic capital nor educational credentials; with just a few networks of support to rebuild their lives. The living conditions in their home countries can not be approached as part of a "solid or stable" social setting (Vigh 2009: 425) where one could easily identify peoples' position by determining the amount of capital accumulated by them (Bourdieu 1986). Then, how does one frame people's trajectories when they lack what Bourdieu refers to as

15 This text is originally published in Spanish. Andrés García Ainda (2001) gathers Bourdiue's works, translating them into Spanish (.9). Poder, Derecho y Clases Socialeis not published in English, and the translation of the quote is mine.

capitals, being an indicator to locate the individual's position within the social world, and when their stories are affected by multiple events of violence and structural inequalities?

Vigh (2008) poses how the notion of 'crisis' has usually been understood as a "temporary disorder, a momentary malformation in the flow of things" (5). Nonetheless, for certain areas in the world, like Bissau in West Africa, "crisis is endemic" instead of sporadic; crisis is not a temporary transition of "chaos or a period of decisive change" (Vigh 2008: 5). According to Vigh (2008; 2009), in places of the world where crisis is "chronic", people tend to experience daily the long-lasting effects of poverty, marginalization and structural violence. Although Vigh (2008: 7) frames his "analytical apparatus" within the Bissauian society, his reflections are useful to approach contexts like Central America and Colombia. My participants' narratives portray how the social environments where their stories are woven were affected by multiple forms of violence, mostly structural and political (Farmer 2004; Bourgois 2004; 2009; Fassin 2011). In these settings, my participants' capacity to move and to continue with their lives was influenced by the unstable socio-political conditions that prevailed in their home counties.

In contexts marked by "continuous conflict and decline", peoples' agency is given by the possibilities to move on within a certain "social environment", rather than in their capacity to act (Vigh 2008: 8). Vigh (2009) provides compelling reflections on how practice, agency, social forces and change intersect "in a range of power configurations" (433), providing a broader perspective to encompass nuances of 'social formations' that do not necessarily fit into Bourdieu's notion of field, and a dichotomous perspective to read society in terms of opposites -dominant, subordinate, or the forms of capitals' embodiment (Vigh 2009: 432-433). The author uses the notion of *social navigation* stressing that "we move in social environments of actors and actants, individuals and institutions, that engage and move us as we move along" (420). Accordingly, Vigh (2009) explains that we are constantly moving within continuous social change at different rhythms and gradations in the settings where we are embedded in. Thus, we move within a "fluid and shifting" *social environment* instead of "stable fields or landscapes" (430).

From Vigh's (2009) perspective, the notion of the field developed by Bourdieu appears constrained to shed light on how people cope with uncertain circumstances to

"disentangle themselves from confining structures" and move toward other positions (419). Vigh (2009) points out that Bourdieu's paradigm is grounded in the premise that "people are constituted and positioned" in "relatively stable class-structured states" (427). The anthropologist explains how this view is limited to sketch how people's lives are forged and reshaped in parallel with the motion of the 'social formations' that we move in over time (420). Vigh (2009) asserts that individuals' social positions are not just determined by the amassed capital, but by a "dialogue between the immediate [circumstances] and the imagined [possibilities]; what [individuals] envisioned as coming after" certain events (432). However, people's capacity to engage within their social environments, and move "toward positions […] [perceived] as being better than their current location" are limited by "the power […] to define and control our social worlds" (432). Consequently, Vigh (2009) highlights that "we are never completely free to move as we want", rather people "navigate" influenced by the "push and pulls" of social forces (432).

In light of these discussions, I outline how my participants' trajectories are comprised in a dialogue of what Vigh (2009) refers to as "motional and positional"; forged between fluctuating and shifting environments that are shaped throughout multiple configurations of social formations (429). In this sense, I still approach my participants trajectories "relationally" (Wacquant and Bourdieu 1989 cited in Barrett 2015: 4), and as "linked lives" (Reckzeck 2014: 318), but I do not frame them within Bourdieu's notion of field. My participant's trajectories have not emerged in between "solid or stable" settings, but within "shifting and fluid" environments (Vigh 2009: 425). The concept of *social environment*[16] is useful to trace how my participants moved towards other positions within uncertain and steadily shifting conditions in Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia. Vigh's (2009) concept is useful to "square" the "dynamism" between my participants' trajectories and social transformations that shaped their emigration journey before arriving in Canada (432). I portray how my participants fled Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia seeking to "escape confining structures" (Vigh 2009: 419, 433) and violence in uncertain conditions, in which their "power of movement [was] situationally defined" by the civil wars in Central America during the 1980's; and the Colombian armed conflict in the 2000's. I also

16 Vigh (2009) uses environment instead of field or landscape.

highlight how constantly changing events pushed them to move out to different temporary institutionalized and non-institutionalized asylum locations, seeking possibilities to reposition themselves "toward better positions" aiming to survive and rebuild their lives (Vigh 2009: 432). I also reflect on how the "push and pull of social forces" (Vigh 2009: 432) affected my participants at different locations of their pathway.

The stories of displacement portrayed in this chapter took place in different national contexts and periods of time. However, the "forms and conditions of movement" (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003:1) are comparable and marked by what I perceive as a *continuous process of uprootedness*. Similar to Rubiela's trajectory, all of my participants had to *"run away many times to many places"*, as she and her family did in Guatemala and outside of it. I unfold this idea drawing on cultural and anthropological discussions of home, migration and violence developed by Henrik Vigh (2009; 2008), Victoria Sandford (2000), Philippe Bourgois (2001; 2009), Daniel Pécaut (1997;1999), Ulrich Oslender (2004; 2007a; 2007b), Le Grand et. al (2017) Maria Victoria Uribe (2018), Ahmed et. al (2003) and Gonzales et. al (2019).

The authors invite me to specifically rethink how social fragmentation and long-lasting instability are experienced (Vigh 2008), embodied and imagined in relation to socio-economic inequalities and forms of violence in my participants' homeland, that marked their displacements, pushing them to seek asylum. I think that Vigh's notion of social navigation can be coupled with Ahmend's et. al. (2003) approach to understand 'home' and 'migration' in terms of "a plurality of experiences, histories and constituencies, and of the workings of institutional structures" (2). Ahmed et. al's (2003: 3) perspective is useful to think about my participants' experiences of forced displacement in relation to "transnational circuits of exchange and power", connecting their stories to "broader social processes" tied up to continuous social change (Vigh 2009; Gonzales et. al 2019). Ahmed et. al (2003) outline that multiple "geographies, practices, forms of experience and relations of power" forge processes of uprootings/regroundings at a micro and macro levels of the social realm. By using the terms uprootings and regroundings, the authors seek to convey how these processes entail forms of "reconfiguration of space", ways of "redrawing of boundaries", producing other forms of uprootings and regroundings (5). This perspective is

useful to understand how uprootings and regroundings were enacted through the emigration journey of my participants and their families. This approach orients me to think: how were their lives before displacements? How did uprootings take form through their journeys? And, how did their different emigration pathways allow them to make experiences of regroundings at different levels and gradations?

In the next section of this chapter, I unfold my participants' stories before and during the process of fleeing their homeland. I describe in which ways their trajectories are marked by disruptions triggering the continuous uprootedness, and how they remember their journeys before coming to Canada in temporary asylum locations. Likewise, I contextualize my participant's stories in relation to research findings shedding light on the social, historical and political conditions of the social environment where my participant's trajectories were forged. I seek to highlight how processes of uprootedness didn't happen in a vacuum, outlining the outstanding traits of the contexts where their trajectories were embedded in according to their narratives and historical accounts.

Fleeing Guatemala and El Salvador During the 80's Civil Wars Contexts

Rubiela, Sonia's mother, recalls part of her life in Guatemala as *"certainly very cheerful"*. She grew up in a rural area of Guatemala with her large family. She says:

> *"Forty, almost fifty years ago our country was so beautiful. There was not much problem. It possibly had political issues, but we never intrude in anything. […] We were never a poor family, but we weren't a rich family. I think we were a middle family. We had enough to live. To study. […] My childhood and adolescence were very cheerful. We lived in a big house where we had [enough] room. Our country was beautiful and there wasn't much problem [before the war]. [17]"*.

17 Rubiela: "Y mi papá y mi mamá éramos una familia de [muchos]. Muy unidos. No… nunca fuimos una familia pobre pero tampoco fuimos una familia rica. Creo que fuimos una familia media. Teníamos suficiente para vivir. Para poder estudiar… todos mis hermanos estudiaron hasta la universidad. Dos o tres no estudiamos porque nos casamos muy jóvenes. Pero… fue una… mi, mi niñez… mi adolescencia muy alegre. Vivíamos en una enorme casa donde teníamos espacio… hace… 40 años, casi 50 era tan bonito nuestro país. No había tanto problema. Posiblemente había problemas políticos pero nosotros nunca nos inmiscuimos en nada".

Rubiela got married at an early age to her husband Luis Carlos. She learned alongside him about the political conflict in Guatemala in the 1980's. She once told him that apparently, she and her family lived like in a *"bubble, happily"*.

> *"We never messed with anyone and no one messed with us […]. Once I got married and started hearing from my husband about other things that were happening; about people and a lot of poverty. [Since that] I asked myself: 'where have I been living because I have never heard of this? And that started to change, everything, everything, everything started to change. I couldn't say that my disgrace started when I got married, hahaha… but part of it because we had to run away to many places many times […]. He [her husband] has been a very politico man. In Guatemala, there was an internal war for [about] 35 years. A lot of university's students [movement] were involved in the war, as well as the guerrilla and the Guatemalan military forces. So, the guerrilla had a way of thinking, I don't know if socialist, I see it more as communist […]. Then, the Guatemalan government persecuted the movement of students because they supported the guerrillas in those regions that were mostly affected by poverty. […] The government persecuted students to kill them and destroy the guerrillas […]. So, since then, our life became different because we had to leave from one place to another, running away from the military […] and those are the reasons why our lives changed a lot.* [18]*".*

18 Rubiela: "yo pongo que mi familia vivíamos como una burbuja. Felices. Nadie se metía con nosotros, nosotros no nos metíamos con nadie. […] Hasta que me casé y empecé a oír de mi esposo otras cosas que estaban pasando. De la gente, de mucha pobreza. De gobiernos corruptos. Y con él empecé a oír esas cosas. Y decía: '¿pero en dónde he vivido yo porque yo nunca he oído de eso… hahahah'? Y eso empezó a cambiar pero realmente todo, todo, todo empezó a cambiar. Yo no podía decir que toda mi desgracia empezó cuando me casé, pero sí parte de ella… hahahaha… porque tuvimos que salir huyendo para muchos lados, por muchas veces. Porque él es un hombre muy político […]. Él era político. Él participó en un… ellos… en Guatemala hubo una guerra interna de 35 años. Y dentro de esa guerra interna se vieron involucrados todos los estudiantes universitarios y el ejército de Guatemala. Entonces, la guerrilla tenía una manera de pensar… no sé si socialista, yo más lo veo comunista. […] Por los mismos problemas políticos. Como el gobierno guatemalteco empezó a perseguir mucho a los estudiantes universitarios porque todos estaban apoyando las… las guerrillas que se habían formado en… en las regiones de más pobreza. Entonces, en ese tiempo mi esposo era estudiante. Y entonces él se metió, se integró y ahí empezaron nuestros problemas porque entonces el ejército empezaba…el gobierno empezaba a perseguir a los estudiantes para matarlos. Y querer destruir las guerrillas. […] Entonces, desde ahí empezó realmente a… a ser nuestra vida diferente. Porque teníamos que salir de un lugar a otro porque siempre llegaban: 'y ya viene el ejército y los viene buscando…', 'y vámonos pa' otro lugar'. Y yo me tenía que ir con él. Yo no estaba metida en nada. Pero obviamente él era mi esposo y andábamos juntos. Y esas fue… esas fueron las razones por las que nuestra vida cambió bastante".

Sonia was about two years old when her parents left Guatemala with her. But she described the political landscape during that time from what she learned with Luis Carlos and Rubiela. She outlined how:

> *"[…] everything started since the 1940's. From that moment was when everything became worse. But in the 40's, there was a president that was democratically elected. He was a president that, until now, people talk about him as he was a hero of the country. He made many reforms (agrarian), he wanted to redistribute [land] to people so, obviously, that raised the rich people in Guatemala. And the CIA and the US became involved, what is usual. So, since then, since the 1950's, the 1960's and 1970's there were a cycle of military governments; one fallen, another one raised, [then] fallen. But in the 80's there was a military coup, from the army, what made things terribly worse. Then, a military government got to power, and the struggles were over land and power; this government had a terrible idea against the indigenous people. And in Guatemala about the 60% of the population is indigenous. So, they started pointing out the indigenous communities as the source of the problems in Guatemala. And I remember that he is very well known for his speeches claiming that 'if Guatemala wouldn't have indigenous people, there were no problems in this country' […]. Thus, the guerrilla started to arise, the government and paramilitary groups. Then, the conflict started, and the indigenous people were the most affected. You can hear about massive killings in villages completely eliminated by the government. But the worst of governments was the one in the 1980's. […] So, my father was a student when all this happened. […] So, at that moment, not in the rural areas but in the cities, the unions began to rise, groups of students [as well]. […] But always the goal was to overthrow the government[19]".*

19 Sonia: "lo que pasó en Guatemala, fue que en… eh, todo empieza desde los 40's, ahí fue donde la cosa se empezó a poner peor, pero en los 40's hubo un presidente que fue electo democráticamente, fue un presidente que hasta el día de hoy la gente habla como un héroe del, del país, empezó a hacer muchas reformas de… la tierra, empezó a querer repatriar y repartir a la gente, entonces, eso obviamente levantó a la gente rica de Guatemala, y se involucró la CIA, se involucró los Estados Unidos, lo típico. Entonces, desde entonces, desde… los 50's, los 60's los 70's, había una… un ciclo de… gobiernos militares, se levantaba uno se bajaba, se levantaba uno, se bajaba, pero en el 80, hubo un golpe de estado de parte del, del ejército, que fue lo que empeoró las cosas terriblemente. Entonces llega al, al gobierno un, un militar, y había al… aparte de las cuestiones de… se peleaban por la tierra, se querían pelear por el poder, este militar tenía una idea bien terrible en contra de la gente indígena, y Guatemala es 60% de la población es, es indígena. Entonces,

Sonia's father disappeared for a while, her mother presumed him dead. Rubiela went back to live with her parents until Luis Carlos returned looking for them to flee Guatemala in 1982. Sonia and Rubiela mentioned that it was a few years later when Luis Carlos told them that, during the year he left, he was being hidden after escaping from dead on different occasions. Sonia explained how during that time Guatemala was under the regime of the General Efraín Ríos Montt. She stressed that he gained support from a sector of the population in Guatemala by promising to get rid of *"criminals[and] assaults"*. She outlined that the latter indeed happened but in parallel with it *"were massive killings[20]"*.

How Sonia and Rubiela portray the Guatemalan conflict is similar to what Victoria Sanford (2000), Dirk Kruijt (2008) and Philippe Bourgois (2001;2009) describe in their works. Sanford (2000) frames the regimes of General Lucas García (1978-1982) and General Ríos Montt (1982-1983) as part of the period of *La Violencia*: a "historical marker of extreme state production of terror and violence" in Guatemala; a time known by the absence of means to contest regimes' oppression and lack of political participation (134-135). The period of *La Violencia* is known as the time when the 'scorched earth' campaign was enacted by selective state terror in rural and urban areas of Guatemala (Sanford 2000: 134-135). The anthropologist Victoria Sanford (2000) outlines that during the regimes of Ríos and García "massacres remained a key tool of military policy" (139). As Sanford points out, massacres where institutionally enacted in indigenous villages constituting a genocide of the Mayan communities. However, she also highlights that this context was marked by acts of extreme violence from the guerrilla movements against peasants and indigenous populations. She specifically approaches Guatemala's transitioning from authoritarian regimes to a democratic society, by analyzing how the rural Mayan

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empezaron a querer usar a los pueblos indígenas como la, la fuente de los problemas de Guatemala, y recuerdo; él es muy conocido porque hasta hacía discursos en los que decía: 'si, si Guatemala no tuviera gente indígena, no hubiera problemas en este país…' 60% de la población. Entonces, se empieza a levantar la guerrilla, se empieza a levantar el gobierno, se empiezan a levar grupos para… paramilitares. […] Entonces empieza un, un… empieza el conflicto y la gente más afectada siempre era la gente indígena. Porque el nivel de analfabetismo en Guatemala es sumamente alto, mucha gente ni siquiera habla español, entonces, todo eso se empeoró, y la gente indígena fue la que más sufrió. Tú puedes oír en Guatemala de masacres en las que aldeas completas eran aniquiladas por el gobierno. Pero el peor de todos los gobiernos fue el que estuvo en 1980. […] Pero siempre su meta era organizarse para poder bajar a este gobierno".

20 Sonia: "Hay gente que lo ama, María Fernanda. Hay gente que dice que bajo su gobierno porque era tan fuerte que él decía que bajo su gobierno no iban a haber criminales, no iban a haber asaltos; y es cierto, no había, pero habían grandes masacres…".

communities were affected by the structures of terror during the war time (p 128). In relation to Sanford's study, Kruijt (2008) provides a detailed description of the three parallel wars in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua that took place during the 1960's to the 1990's (15). His explanation echoes Vigh's point that "wars do not start with the first shot", but evolve throughout a "slow processes of deterioration, erosion and negative changes" (Vigh 2008: 9).

While Krujit (2008) sketches a comparative analysis of the guerrilla[21] movements in these three countries of Central America, in like manner he traces in parallel the social, historical and political conditions that shaped the 'social environment' (Vigh 2009) in Central America during the civil wars in the mid and late 1980's. The author outlines how the conformation of the guerrilla movements emerged as a form of resistance to the consequences of long lasting "social history of poverty and exclusion" (Krujit 2008: 14). The guerrilla groups in this region aimed to fight the "oppressive dictatorships and implementation of state terror" of the military governments that ruled in different periods during the twentieth century in the region (7). Kruijt (2008) highlights how since the colonial Spanish administration, the Central American region indigenous people, particularly in Guatemala, "were incorporated into the lower strata of their respective colonial societies" (12). The author explains how during the twentieth century, the region's "social fissures" were caused by "large-scale social exclusion, mass poverty, ethnic cleavages and repression" (Krujit 2008: 14).

Therefore, Krujit (2008) argues how these three countries of Central America were constituted as fragmented societies where exclusion was sustained by long periods of military rule. The author points out how the guerrilla movements of the 1960's and 1970's "emerged as armed actors […] against military-controlled regimes" (14). In that time, the military regimes targeted anyone sympathizing with 'communist' or 'guerrillas' ideals, comprising "organizations, politicians, intellectuals, priests, popular organizations and student and union leaders" (14). The latter also included persecution towards peasants and

21 In this text I follow Krujit (2008) understanding of guerrilla: "In Latin America [these movements] generally indicates the existences of so-called 'politico-military organizations' with an ideology characterized by the following features: intense nationalism, anti-imperialism or anti-colonialism; the prospect of a socialist utopia; and overt preparation for social revolution by means of armed struggle" (4).

ethnic populations supporting the guerillas' political side. Krujit references one of the Guatemalan Truth Commission reports to stress how while the authoritarian war against the guerrillas was going on, these movements were forced to retreat while "physically destroying 440 indigenous villages, murdering 75,000 campesinos -peasants-, and displacing 100,00 to 500,00 people" (15).

As Sonia mentioned during the interview, the governments of Arévalo and Arbenz during 1944 and 1954's aimed to establish a democratic government, with "progressive social policies and of a land reform" (Krujit 2008: 16). However, these shifts entailed land dispossession of the US properties and the economic elites' extensive rural terrains (17). The latter led to a CIA-organized coup against Árbenz's government (Kurjit 2008:16 -17; Sanford 2000: 142). Sanford also outlines that it was in the late 1940's when the School of the Americas were established throughout the Guatemalan military forces on purpose to counteract any form of subversion (Stoll 1999 cited in Sanford 2000: 142). As Sanford points out, US military intervention legitimized paramilitary squads' organizations in Central America; the Mano in Guatemala and Mano Blanco in El Salvador (142).

While Sanford (2000) emphasizes the effects of the 'scorched earth' campaign in Guatemala, Philippe Bourgouis (2004; 2009) draws on its consequences in El Salvador. He frames the emergence of the socialist guerrilla organization: Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front within the context of the late Cold War (Bourgois 2004: 426). He argues how the establishment of new modes of production created patterns of disparities of the land tenure in El Salvador. In this social environment, the small landowners were "absorbed" by agro-export workforce not being able to make a living (Bourgois 2009: 8). Similar to the Guatemalan context, the emergence of the guerrilla organizations occurred within land struggles and mass poverty. Krujit (2008) also highlights that the rural poverty in El Salvador materialised in the fact that about forty percent of rural families were landless in 1975 (78).

Berenice and Mercedes recalled how in the rural areas people were forced to join political sides. Berenice framed this time as *"an ugly thing because you couldn't get along with anyone anymore. Either you took a side there or here. You couldn't be in the middle.*

So, it was a very difficult thing[22]". She explained to me how the dynamics of 'taking sides' in her hometown increased after the emergence of 'big riots', 'bomb killings' and the establishment of National Guard posts in the municipality of Victoria, next to the border with Honduras. In that time, Berenice and her husband Miguel were frequently visited by members of the armed forces and activists of the guerrilla's organizations in the small 'tienda' they ran in their house. The latter and the increased manifestations of violence subsequently became the cause why they left Victoria and moved out to the municipality of El Porvenir, in the department of Santa Ana in El Salvador. Miguel and Berenice fled their hometown when

> *"We had our house next to an armed forces' post. So, since we had our 'tienda', those from the armed forces came to buy drinks, 'licuados'; [or] any little thing. We were afraid that the guerrillas would see them coming into our business. And suddenly, well they threatened us [the guerillas]. That's tough! It's hard! As one talked to the armed forces, they talked to you, you had to talk, and with the guerrilla you had to talk [too]. [During that] time they put bombs in buses that were full of people. And that was what we experienced there, in the town. Terrible! It was no longer life and that's why we left. Imagine: after living in peace, with tranquility, and everything ... one is scared of even sending the children to school, it is scary. And that's how we went to El Porvenir[23]".*

Berenice's uncle hosted them in El Porvenir. He provided support by giving them the management of another 'tienda' while he took care of his small crops and the cattle he

22 Berenice: "Y era una cosa fea porque ya uno no podía llevarse con nadie… con nadie. O bien te hacías de aquí o te hacías de allá. No podías quedar en medio. Entonces… y era una cosa bien difícil".
23 Berenice: "Daba miedo… y a mí me dio tanto miedo cuando llegó la fuerza armada porque la fuerza armada está… nosotros teníamos nuestra casa y la siguiente era la casa de la fuerza armada. Entonces, como nosotros teníamos nuestra tienda, los de la fuerza armada venían a comprar que refrescos, qué el licuado, qué cualquier cosita… entonces… y a nosotros nos daba miedo que la guerrilla viera a la fuerza armada dentrando en nuestro negocio. […] y de repente, pues… nos dijeron que estábamos amenazados. Amenazados… y… ay sí… ¡Eso es duro! ¡Es duro! […] Pero a mi esposo le dio mucho, mucho miedo. Mucho miedo… entonces… y como uno pues se pone a platicar con la fuerza… le platican a uno, uno tiene que platicar o con… es que con un guerrillero uno tiene que platicar. Y era una cosa fea porque ya uno no podía llevarse con nadie… con nadie. O bien te hacías de aquí o te hacías de allá. No podías quedar en medio. Entonces… y era una cosa bien difícil y por eso es que mi esposo… por eso nos salimos de allá. Porque ya ponían… a veces los buses que iban llenos de gente y les ponían bombas en las calles y ahí quedaba el bus con todos; gente muerta. Y eso lo vivimos allá en ese pueblo. ¡Terrible! Ya no era vida, vivir allí y por eso nosotros salimos. 'Nos vamos, vámonos de aquí'. Imagínate después de vivir en paz, con tranquilidad, y todo… a uno le da miedo hasta mandar los niños a la escuela, da miedo. Y así fue como nos fuimos para…".

owned in a closer rural area. Berenice and Miguel saw this possibility as an opportunity to re-establish themselves with their four children. She recalled that *"the business succeeded, [and] we had a good time"* until her husband was killed *"there, in that business"*. Berenice cried while sharing these memories with me, she expressed how hard it was to bring back these events. Her life shifted again after she was *"left alone with [her] children"*. Fearing for their lives, Berenice headed out to Mexico with her children in 1982[24].

Berenice and Mercedes are cousins and have been close to each other. However, Mercedes always lived in El Porvenir with her husband José, and Berenice moved there later on. In Mercedes' case, the event that impressed on her the dynamics of 'taking sides' during political upheaval occurred when the guerrillas kidnapped her father-in-law. Mercedes explained to me how this happened:

> *"because in El Salvador a civil war unfolded. The civil war was because the proletariat, the poorest people, thought that the government and the landowners were stealing what belonged to them. So, they [proletariat] started the civil war against the government. And the people who did not enter their side, were kidnapped by them; to the civilian side because the government always recruits its people and it has the government people. But when civilians rose, then it was very difficult because you couldn't belong on one side because the government was coming down on you [as well]. And you couldn't belong to the civilian, neither to those of the government because the civilians came and attacked you. And for those reasons my father in law was kidnapped[25]".*

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24 Berenice: "Ahí en […] vivía un hermano mío y él tenía un negocio. Entonces, y nos dijo a nosotros; como la familia de nosotros ha sido bien unida […]. Y él le dice a mi esposo: 'mire compadre, yo le voy a dar el negocio para que uste…', para que él… pa' qué nosotros lo, lo administráramos. Y entonces él nos dio su negocito para que nosotros lo administráramos porque él tenía otro negocio como de… como de vacas, cuidando. Entonces él se dirigió a cuidar sus animales y nos dejó a nosotros ahí en el negocito. Ah, se levantó el negocio, la pasábamos bien…ahí murió mi esposo; a él lo mataron".

25 Mercedes: "porque en El Salvador se levantó una guerra civil. La guerra civil era porque los proletariados… la gente más pobre, pensaba que los del gobierno y los más… los terratenientes que decían ellos, les estaban robando lo que ellos les pertenecía. Entonces, se levantaron, este… esta guerra civil en contra del gobierno. Y a las personas que no entraban a su… a su bando, este… los iban secuestrando. […] pues el gobierno siempre recluta a su gente y tiene la gente del gobierno, verda, y ellos, ellos pues gobiernan el país. Pero cuando se levantó la gente civil, entonces ahí era bien difícil porque no podías pertenecer a un lado, porque el gobierno se te venía encima. Y no podías pertenecer al, al civil, a los del gobierno porque los civiles venían y te atacaban. Y por esas razones de que a mi […] lo secuestraron […]".

Mercedes pointed out that the guerrilla's militants suspected that her father-in-law *"was protecting the things the government were doing."*. The insurgent groups kidnapped him with his nephew, but he was released after *"the mere chief of the civilians"*, who was his relative, saw him captured. As Mercedes exclaimed, *"him [her father-in-law's godchild] being there, was the only thing that saved him. Otherwise, they would have killed him. And my father in law says that when he arrived, their leader asked him: 'but godfather, what are you doing here?!'"*. Mercedes added that once the guerrilla agent learned that his godfather was captured, he protected him from being seen by the army, otherwise he would have become a military target for 'interacting' with the guerrillas. He and his nephew were held by the guerrillas for eight days[26].

Mercedes and her husband José fled to Mexico when the living conditions in their hometown became unbearable: *"we saw terrible things, terrible! It was a moment when those of the government arrived to kill people; they arrived to kill a lot of people there. And… hearing the moaning of people…and I telling my children to hide under the beds, and don't make noise…Oh… that was terrible![27]"*. Mercedes wept remembering how a friend of hers died during that military raid. She assured that if they *"would have stayed in El Salvador, they would no longer exist"*. Many of her acquaintance's families are no longer there, "*they no longer exist[28]"*. The events described by Mercedes resemble Bourgois' (2004; 2009) account of his fieldwork experiences in 1982 in El Salvador. The

26 Mercedes: "Y por esas razones de que a mi […] lo secuestraron diciendo que estaba con los del gobierno, estaba protegiendo a las cosas que el gobierno hacía. Y, y a él lo rescataron porque tenía el mero jefe de los del civil… era ahijado de él… él, fue lo único que lo salvó. De lo contrario, ellos lo hubieran matado. Y dice mi suegro que cuando llegó, este, el jefe de ellos, dice que le dijo: 'pero padrino, ¿qué está haciendo usted aquí?', y ahí fue donde él vio la diferencia, dice. Y de allí dice, qué ellos mismos le tuvieron que decir que lo iban a custodiar, a cuidar, y 'qué no se vayan a dar cuenta que nosotros lo hemos tenido aquí, porque o sino, también los del ejército, lo pueden matar' .

27 Mercedes: "¡Uhhh! Terrible… ajá, vimos, vimos cosas nosotros terribles… yo tenía, me acuerdo que tenía una de mis hijas […], ella tenía un mes cuando llegaron a matar los del gobierno, llegaron a matar mucha gente ahí. Y… oír los lamentos, los gritos de las personas… y yo decirle a mis hijos que se escondieran debajo de la cama, qué no hicieran bulla… y a la bebecita tenerla dando de mamar y todo eso, ¡oh… era bien terrible! Pero esa vez que mataron a una amiga mía, ella su bebé ya tenía como 8 meses, y la mataron los del gobierno, y al… y al bebé lo dejaron vivo y ella muerta, y estaba mamando el bebé… hubieron casos terribles, muy terribles, sí. Así es de que… (llanto…)".

28 Mercedes: "Yo pienso que si nos hubiéramos quedado en El Salvador, ya no existiríamos. Porque…muchas familias de las cuales, yo conocí, ya no existen. Ya no están, así es".

author documents that about "two hundred and fifty peasants died during the [enforcement of] the 'scorched earth' campaign" in the department of Cabañas (8-9).

Colombia: Fragmentation and the Long-Lasting Armed Conflict

The Colombian social environment, in which five of my participants' trajectories were forged, is also a setting that has been portrayed by scholars as a context where conflict has endured as a "chronic crisis" (Vigh 2008: 8). However, Colombia's historical, social, and political conditions have changed at its own "speeds and acceleration" in contrast to the Central American war context (Vigh 2009: 426). Colombia is well-known for witnessing a prolonged armed conflict. According to the United Nations (UN), the country has the highest rate of internally displaced people in the world (Anselma 2018). LeGrand, van Isschot and Riaño (2017) document how over fifty years of war have displaced about 7 million people, while 60,000 disappeared and over 260,000 died (259). By drawing on key discussions of the peace accord between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Colombian government in 2016, LeGrand et. al (2017) highlight core aspects that historically have caused "societal fissures" (Krujit 2008) in Colombia, forging it as a fragmented society (Oslender 2004; 2007a; 2007 b: 38; Restrepo 2004).

According to LeGrand et. al (2017: 260), the strands of the Colombian armed conflict are threaded in between structural disparities at different levels of the social realm, such as the inequality in land distribution, illegal economies as well as social and political repression. The authors stress how even after the peace agreements, structures of inequality, "dispossession, impunity, the stigmatization of social mobilization […], the expansion of illegal economies […], and new forms of paramilitary violence" persist within the Colombian social fabric until now (LeGrand et. al 2017: 260). The anthropologist María Victoria Uribe (2018) pictures the Colombian armed conflict as a phenomenon distinguished by reiterative massacres; "events that repeat and return" through history (21).

In light of Vigh's (2008) approach of "crisis as context", research points out why the Colombian social environment can not be analyzed in terms of a "singular event" to denote a pre and post traumatic time frame to understand the fissures of this fragmented society (8-9). In this regard, the sociologist Daniel Pécaut (1999: 27) explains why the

Colombian armed conflict have "escape[d] from a starting point", challenging the "existence of a matrix of intelligibility[29]" to accurately sketch the multiple layers that are at play forging "complex and unstable configurations of violence[30]" (Pécaut 1997: 4). Undoubtedly, the "complexity of the armed conflict hinders the analysis of all facets[31]" that over time have shaped the Colombian social fabric (Oslender 2004: 37).However, scholars have traced core events, dynamics, and the emergence and reconfigurations of armed groups that have triggered significant transformations in the history of Colombia (LeGrand et. al 2017:.264; Pécaut 1997; 1999; Leal 2004; Restrepo 2004; Oslender 2004; Uribe 2018).

Different from the Central American context, the contours of terror in Colombia during the 2000's wasn't deployed by military regimes as it occurred in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980's (Krujit 2008; Sanford 2000; Bourgois 2004; 2009). Academics who have researched the Colombian armed conflict explain how the logics of terror in Colombia have been shaped by the tensions among multiple armed actors, including the "security forces of the state, which [have] operated at the margins of the law" (Restrepo 2004: 171; Pécaut 1999; Oslender 2004; Uribe 2018). Insightfully, Daniel Pécaut (1999) uses the term "kaleidoscopic temporality[32]" suggesting how violence works within a continuous process of metamorphosis that results in multiple configurations and manifestations of it (27). Pécaut's (1997;1999) approach resonates Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of "assemblage" to enquire how different phenomenon "function in connection" with various dimensions of social life " transmit[ing] intensities, in which other multiplicities it's own are inserted and metamorphosed" (4). These authors' lens

29 Translated from: "Es evidente que la violencia actual escapa aún más a una historia constituida. La falta de distancia no es la única causa. El hecho de que ningún punto de partida preciso sea asignado también cuenta, y no es casual que tantas personas intenten en realidad remontarse a los orígenes de la Violencia. *La ausencia de un punto de partida compromete la existencia de una matriz de inteligibilidad* (emphasis added by me). La complejidad real del fenómeno hace el resto: ratifica, más claramente que nunca, una temporalidad fundada en la única sucesión de los hechos" (Pécaut 1999: 27).
30 Translated from: "Pues la violencia más bien aparece como una sucesión de configuraciones complejas e inestables" (Pécaut 1997: 4).
31 Translated from: "La complejidad del conflicto colombiano no me permite analizar todas las facetas que han contribuido a esta situación que desangra al país cada día más" (Oslender 2004: 37).
32 Translated from: "Es lo que he llamado en otra parte una aprehensión caleidoscpópica de las configuraciones de la violencia. […] La temporalidad caleidoscópica vale tambi'en para las lecturas populares y académicass de la violencia" (Pécaut 1999: 27). "Se puede hablar de una percepción caleidoscópica que traduce la dificultad para aprehender los fenómenos de la violencia en sus relaciones recíprocas" (Pécaut 1997: 4).

invite us to transcend a dichotomous perspective to analyze phenomenon, by outlining how "things" are configured throughout "multiplicities, lines, strata, segmentaries, lines of flight or deterritorialization and destratification" that at any point "can be connected to anything other" (3-5). According to Deluze and Guttari (1987), an assemblage "is precisely [the] increase in the dimensions of multiplicity", and "multiplicities are defined by the line of deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities" (6). In this framework, an assemblage, is what the authors akin to a rhizome, it "contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 7).

In relation to Deluze and Guattari's (1987) work, Pécaut's (1999;1997) study is useful for my analysis in a two-folded way. First, the author approaches the constant transformation of the Colombian social environment by paying attention to the emergence and reconfiguration of actors that are at play within the armed conflict, and to "modalities of domination[33]" shifting over time in rural and urban areas of the country (14). Particularly, after the 1980's, the ends of the 1990's and the beginning of the 2000's, timeframes in which the narratives of my participants are inscribed. In this manner, Pécaut's (1999;1997) study allows me to emphasize how my participant's 'social navigation' is "tied up in a range of power configurations", and "situationally defined" (Vigh 2009; p 433) by the logics of power enforced by armed actors in the territories where they were displaced from in Colombia. Second, my participant's narratives are embedded within dynamics of what Pécaut (1999) also refers as "territorialisation and deterritorialization[34]" in regions like el Magdalena, Caquetá and Chocó (14-22). In relation to this last aspect, I complement the analysis of my participants' experiences following Oslender (2004: 43) reflections on 'geographies of terror', particularly to frame Simón's, Rudy's and Roncancio's stories in relation to previous research conducted in the Choco region. This author's work insightfully couples with Pécaut's research. Bearing this in

33 Translated from: "A No obstante, esta problemática debe ser matizada en función de los actores, de los momentos y de las modalidades de dominio" (Pécaut 1999: 14).
34 Translated from: "Dejando de lado lo habitual, me interrogaré, pues, sobre los fenómenos de desterritorialización, destemporalización, desubjetivación. Es una forma de reflexionar, desde otro ángulo, sobre las lógicas del terror" (Pécaut 1999: 11).

mind, I unfold my participants' trajectories framing them within the intersection of social, historical and political factors that stand out between the 1990's and the midst of the 2000's in the Departments of Magdalena, Caquetá and Chocó, Colombia. I trace the dynamics of this time frame considering Rosita's, Manuel's, Simón's, Roncancio's and Rudy's narratives of how they fled their hometowns in between the mid 2000's and 2015.

Rosita and Manuel: Resisting to 'Taking Sides' in the Polarized Colombian Armed Conflict in the Late 90's and Early 00's

Rosita was born and raised in the north region of Colombia. Her mother was a schoolteacher in a village of the Department of Magdalena. At an early age Rosita learned how tensions and "modalities of domain" among armed actors (Pécaut 1999: 5) affected her community, pushing her and her parents to leave the region. While recalling her memories in Colombia, Rosita pointed out not *"knowing where to start"* as she and her family experienced *"so many things[35]"*. She spoke about the reasons that forced them to leave, and specifically mentioned:

> *"It was because my mother was a teacher in Colombia in 1999, 2000's. There were many problems and conflicts with the guerrillas, paramilitaries…. So, my mom worked in 'veredas' [villages]. So, of course, those villages are where there is not much control [of the state], security and all that. So, those groups took advantage to enter the schools and ask teachers to tell youths [and] kids to take a side to join the cause. So, my mom was one of those teachers reached by them, telling her what she was supposed to teach the kids; or asking her to stop class for them [armed groups] to talk to them[36]."*

35 Rosita: "ah ok, bueno. Bueno…no sé por dónde comenzar, tantas cosas…".
36 Rosita: "como los recuerdos que yo tengo, como los motivos por cual vinimos aquí, y cómo las cosas pasaron, es porque mi mamá era profesora… era profesora allá en Colombia y en esos tiempos, el año 2000… 2002 y todo eso, había muchos problemas y conflictos con los guerrilleros, paramilitares… entonces, mi mamá trabajaba en veredas, entonces, claro que las veredas como están en… vamos a decir ah… en lugares donde no hay mucha vigilancia, mucha seguridad y todo eso, pues esos grupos aprovechaban bastante para entrar a los colegios y a decirle a los profesores que tenían que decirle a los jovencitos, a los niños que agarraran un lado, y se unieran a la causa… no, entonces hacían mucho…M: ¿bien sea de alguno de los 2 grupos? R: exactamente. Entonces… ah… entonces mi mamá pues fue una ah… era una de las profesoras y siempre venían a decirle eso: 'lo que tienes que decir…enseñarle a los niños. O para la clase y déjanos a nosotros hablarle…'".

Similar to the experiences of Mercedes and Berenice, Rosita's mother was asked to 'take sides' among the armed actors disputing territorial power in el Magdalena (Pécaut 1997: 16; Oslender 2004: 36). However, in comparison with El Salvador and Guatemala, different authors explain that the "antagonisms" in Colombia have involved multiple actors contending over land and resources (Pécaut 1997; 1999; Oslender, 2004; LeGrand et. al 2017; Grajales 2017; Uribe 2018). Whereas the emergence of the guerilla Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberarción Nacional (FMLN) in El Salvador and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) in Guatemala were formally constituted in the 1980's , the genesis of the insurgent movements in Colombia goes back to the 1960's with the: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) (LeGrand et. al 2017: 266; Leal 2004; Restrepo 2004; Pécaut 1999). The FARC were considered the oldest guerilla group in Latin America. Although research points out that the insurgent group was consolidated in 1964, other guerrilla groups as the Ejército para la Liberación Nacional (ELN), Ejército para la Liberación Popular (ELP), and the nationalist Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19), simultaneously emerged in between the decade of 1964 and 1974 (Leal 2004; Pécaut 1997).

Different authors explain how the formation of these armed groups occurred during the timeframe of *La Violencia* – 1948 to 1958 (Uribe 2018; Pécaut 1999; Pécaut 1997; Sánchez, Meertens and Hobsbawm 1983). *La Violencia* in Colombia, different from Guatemala's, was characterized by the hostile relationship among Liberal and Conservative political parties since the 1930's (Uribe 2018). However, research asserts how the exacerbation of violence took place during the mid 1940s until the mid 1950s (Uribe 2018: 29; LeGrand et. al 2017: 264; Sánchez et. al 1983). Uribe (2018) recounts how the struggles between the Conservative and Liberal political forces revolved around the appropriation over the national territory and political control. As the author suggests, the struggles over land tenure dated since the conformation of the Colombian national state (29). Uribe (2018) draws on how the configuration of the Colombian state emerged by the "centralist interest of the bipartidism elites", who disregarded the cultural diversity within the national territory (29).

Uribe argues that the fragility of the Colombian "state and institutional apparatus" is based on its "unequal consolidation", exerting control mostly in the central region and part of the Caribbean. Under such circumstances, rural areas were conformed as "peripheral territories" abided by populations "excluded from the national project" in other regions of Colombia (Uribe 2018: 29). Researchers explain how "peripheral regions" have been politically, socially and economically excluded for decades; in these poor rural areas, Afrocolombians, Indigenous and peasants' communities have been stigmatized and historically abandoned by the state (LeGrand et. al 2017: 263; Restrepo and Rojas 2004: 28). In this framework, Uribe (2018) argues that since the political confrontations between Conservatives and Liberals toward the 1930's, "alternative social and military models" emerged as consequence of the abandonment of the state in peripheral regions; such as social movements and different kind of guerrillas organizations (7). In this setting, scholars argue that the guerrillas emerged resisting the "bipartisan coalition", which didn't allow other kinds of political manifestation (Leal 2004: 87). Pécaut (1997) also emphasizes the expansion of the guerrillas as response to the "National Front regime, unable to provide alternatives to the social demands[37]" of the excluded sectors of society (4).

Daniel Pécaut (1997) highlights the decade of the 1980's as a time when the "dimensions of violence[38]" were reconfigured by the insertion of other armed actors, such as narco-traffickers, paramilitaries, and urban militias (28). In this framework, Pécaut (1997) outlines violence as a "modality to function in society", as an "endurable situation[39]" (4) in a context where the expansion of illegal economies grew in parallel with the establishment of paramilitary groups (Oslender 2004: 37). The paramilitary groups emerge aiming to counteract the guerrilla's subversion and settle down in the territories previously dominated by insurgent movements (Pécaut 1999). Moreover, Pécaut (1997) outlines that the "coexistence[40]" of guerrillas and paramilitaries triggered the accentuation

37 Translated from: "La expansión de las guerrillas es su aspecto más visible y parece responder al desgaste de un régimen, aquel del Frente Nacional, instalado desde 1958 e incapaz de hacer frente a las nuevas demandas sociales" (Pécaut 1997: 4).
38 Translated from: "…la violencia generalizada, con sus múltiples dimensiones" (Pécaut 1997: 28).
39 Translated from: "…nos proponemos mostrar que la violencia se ha convertido en un modo de funcionamiento de la sociedad, […]. Todo sugiere que ha creado una realidad durable" (Pécaut 1997: 4).
40 Translated from: "Sin dura es la coexistencia de unos y otros en los mismos municipios lo que engendra a menudo situaciones de gran violencia" (Pécaut 1997: 8)

of violence in different regions of Colombia (8). Pécaut (1997) correlates the expansion of armed groups to "economic transformations" in sectors considered as "main sectors of production" of drugs and mining (10). The author points out the lack of institutional state presence and "unequal income distribution" as outstanding traits, altogether with the "intensified violence" (Pécaut 1997: 11). In such circumstances, scholars argue that previous "antagonisms" between the armed actors in the "National Front regime" – Liberals and Conservatives (Uribe 2018: 29), were reshaped and extended throughout the "polarization among the guerrillas and paramilitary groups[41]", by which the "division friend/enemy[42]" permeated different dimensions of the social realm (Pécaut 1999: 34). Similarly, Uribe (2018) stresses that the systematized infliction of violence in the 1950's was akin to the mechanisms later enforced by paramilitary groups since the 1980's (42).

In the context of reshaped forms of "polarization" among different armed actors and the hostility of guerrillas and paramilitaries, Rosita outlined that

> *"logically as a teacher, those things [asking kids 'taking sides'] aren't coupled with your values because you know that is not good… so, those teachers refusing to that, of course the [armed actors] reached them… to kill and torture them, they threatened them. So, my mother asked for support to be resettled in another place. So, after six months of receiving threatens, threatens, we were displaced and went to another city[43]".*

Manuel's experiences resemble Rosita's unto some extent. He grew up in a village of el Caquetá. He was raised by his mother, his eldest brother and lived with his large family who owned crops and cattle. The experience of 'taking sides' imprinted in him and his family when Ramón, his oldest brother was kidnapped by one of the armed groups contending for domain in the region. Manuel's brother was a leader in his community. He

41 Translated from: Todo parece indicar que las guerrillas y los paramilitares buscan, en lo sucesivo, provocar una polarización general en el país" (Pécaut 1999: 12).
42 Translated from: "la polarización supone que la población se convenza de la existencia de una división amigo-enemigo que sobre determine todos los aspectos de la vida social" (Pécaut 1999: 34).
43 Rosita: "entonces esas son cosas que lógicamente como profesor, pues no… o no están con tus valores, porque sabes que no, no está bien… entonces, a los profesores que se resistían a eso, pues claro que los, los buscaban, no… para matarlos, torturarlos… los amenazaban, entonces mi mamá de ahí comenzó a hacer papeles de desplazamiento. Entonces, después como que de un año de estar en eso y recibir amenazas, amenazas, pues nos dieron uh… el…desplazo para una, otra ciu, la ciudad".

endured about six months in captivity by the guerrillas after he found out a way to escape from them. Ramón returned to a municipality seeking help. After that event, Ramón, Manuel and his family left the region of el Caquetá and hid in different cities for about six months, awaiting the asylum request approval out of Colombia. Manuel shared how Ramón escaped from the guerrillas

> *"[the] day we learned that he escaped, I mean, that he was in the police, army post in a big city of el Caquetá, they came to tell us to our house…. […] we all picked up our clothes; my mom had money for emergencies; we rented a car… an aunt of mine lived with us… and we all left together to another place [because] we fear they [the guerrillas] knew where we were because they knew where one lives… they know who Ramón Reyes is, and they know everything because everything is known [by them]. So, yes, avoiding them to reach our house to catch us […], we went to the police, there with the army […]. And we hid for about six months in Colombia in different cities, awaiting for the asylum process out of the country[44]".*

Once they left el Caquetá, Manuel was advised by his mother and brother to remain silent about their plans to leave Colombia: *"don't say anything to anybody, don't say anything[45]"*, especially when they realized that one relative tried to extort them. Manuel's experiences and his family's were enrooted in what Pécaut (1999) also refers to as logics of 'territorialisation' and 'deterritorialization' in regions affected by the increased polarization among guerrillas and paramilitaries (12-19). Pécaut (1999) identifies the trends and situations that characterized terror in Colombia before the emergence of paramilitaries, and outlines what he calls the "classical logics of territorialisation" among armed groups since

44 Manuel: "Y sí, y se escaparon un día y cuando nosotros nos… escuchamos de que… de que se hubiera escapado… o sea, de que ya estaba en la, en la estación de… sí, policía del ejército de un muni… como de la capital del departamento, entonces… nosotros como que… um… eh… eh… sí, nos vinieron a avisar… en la casa… […] y recogimos una ropa, y una ropa; y mi mamá tenía un dinero como para emergencias, y o sea, y rentamos una… una van… y…y… una tía mía que también vivía ahí, y… y, o sea, y nos fuimos todos como para […], pues el miedo de que pues como sabían dónde estábamos nosotros, porque ellos sabían a dónde vive… ellos co… ellos conocen quién es Ramón Reyes , y saben todo, porque todo se sabe. Y… sí, sí, o sea como para evitar como que fueran a llegar a la casa a… a como a atraparnos para que esta persona volviera o para hacer un daño, nos vinimos todos para la policía, allá en el ejército […] y estuvimos un tiempo escondiéndonos, como por 6 meses, en Colombia, entre varias ciudades, esperando el proceso y buscando un país de refugiados…".

45 Manuel: "y uno como: '¿uy, emocionado y que se va?'… uno, a uno le salía de la emoción. Y a veces le contaba uno a una amiga, y mi mamá: 'como que no cuentes eso'".

the conformation of the guerrillas (18). First, he outlines the phenomenon of territorialisation as the armed group's strategy to exert domain over "defined spaces". Second, the "interactions and strategic calculations[46]" of the armed actors were framed within certain temporalities. Lastly, interconnectedness among the armed groups was founded in particular forms of identification (Pécaut 1999: 13).

However, following these interconnected angles to understand the dynamics of domination of the armed groups, Pécaut (1999) aims to address the process of reconfiguration of the armed actors by tracing the emergence of new logics of spatial power and domain (18). Likewise, Oslender (2004) traces how the "geographies of interchanging power" are conformed in the Colombian Pacific (38). Regarding the logics of territorialisation, Pécaut (1999) explains that "not all armed aimed to prioritize territorialisation" to exert dominance in regions (15). For instance, he points out how the army temporarily stayed in areas; and narco-traffickers at their starting weren't "interested to permanently defend a territory" (13). Differently, diverse guerrillas' organizations (FARC, ELN, EPL) and paramilitaries aimed for territorialisation of regions since it's origins (Pécaut 1999: 15). However, Pécaut (1999) stresses how armed group's "modalities of control and domain" shifted within its expansion, along with their goals and interests over land, resources and population (16). In this framework, Pécaut (1999) traces how previous logics of territorialisation are reconfigured by the struggles of power and control over "the same spaces" (17). The author insightfully describes how this process of 'deterritorialization' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 7) occurred within the process of reconfiguration of armed groups (17). By this term, Pécaut (1999: 18) points out how "conquered regions" by the guerrillas were later dominated by paramilitaries, and on occasions, went back to guerrillas' control. For this reason, the author highlights how the transformation of the logics of control over territories blurred borders, making them "imprecise and fluctuating" and creating a 'non-place' (Auge 1992 cited in Pécaut 1999: 18).

46 Translated from: "Hasta el presente, los análisis se ha detenido, con más frecuencia, en tres aspectos. Primero, la territorialización: la violencia iría a la par con los dominios sobre espacios muy definidos. Segundo, la temporalidad estratégica: el tiempo estratégico: el tiempo de la violencia resultaría de las interacciones entre las medidas gubernamentales […]. Por último, la construcción de nuevas referencias subjetivas […]" (Pécaut 1999: 13).

Pécaut (1999) borrows Auge's notion of 'non-place' to convey how struggles over power transformed previous modes of territorialisation, reshaping it as a "weakened" and "porous" structures (19). In this setting, armed actors joining the guerrillas could easily become part of a paramilitary group, for instance. In this framework, the author stresses how an ambience of "general distrust" permeated populations; an environment where everyone could become "suspicious to the other" (19). Pécaut (1999) specifically mentions how in that context people tended to be "skeptic towards the state" and its institutions (21); moreover, it was risky to "trust organizations, neighbours, even family members as at any point they could become informants [of the armed groups] or even have children on opposite side" (20). Pécaut's (1999:18) study portrays how the structure of armed groups "metamorphosed" their structure, showing how "movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization [were] caught up in one another" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 9)

Manuel explained to me how even after fleeing el Caquetá they still received threats from the guerrillas even after moving cities

> *"[From] another city, and then to another one. At that moment in Colombia we heard of the guerrilla there… I mean, threatens as: 'they are finding us, they are infil[traiting us]… they are searching for us' […] so, the army advised us: 'move out to another city… move out to another city'. During that, we arrived in another city, there were relatives and there… and I think that in some manner they had links with a guerrilla agent… and they also started [with] 'black mail' … ah… scaring us, terrifying us. That is what was told to my brother; that's how I learned of it. […] So, because of that we had to move out to another city[47]".*

Once they moved to another place, again, the advice was: *"do not trust anyone[48]"*.

47 Manuel: "¡Pum! Porque para una ciudad nueva, y de ahí vamos para otra. No, y en ese entonces en Colombia, eh… esto, o sea, escuchamos a la guerrilla por aquí… o sea… amenazas: 'qué nos están encontrando, qué nos están infil… qué nos están buscando; qué hay movimientos todavía de… como… a través de usted', entonces, como que el ejército nos decía: 'cámbiense de ciudad otra vez… cámbiense de ciudad'. Y en eso también llegamos a una ciudad, estaban unos familiares ahí que creo que tenían vínculos alguna manera con algún guerrillero, conocido… y comenzaron también a… a… so… 'black mail' o… ah… asustarnos, a aterrorizarnos, a… qué oh, a mi hermano le decían eso porque pues a mí eso me lo contaron así…".

48 Manuel: "en ese entonces ellos como que: 'no confíen en los demás, qué… como que, o sea…'. Porque pues ya como que en ese entonces ya sabíamos que íbamos para Canadá".

When they arrived in the city, they learned their asylum request was approved. Manuel recalled he made a friend in the place where they were staying. He was about eleven years old and he became excited knowing that they were coming to Canada. He made a comment about leaving Colombia in front of his friend and his mom reinforced: *"do not say anything"*. Manuel stressed how he internalized staying silent*, "not telling what was happening to me*[49]*"*. Understanding that they *"were being persecuted"* entailed *" not talking much to people because you know the guerrilla army is that big, I mean, an acquaintance knows the other, and [say]: 'hey, there is x, x' […]; they communicate among them, so one is like: 'don't tell anyone, don't tell anyone'*[50]*"*.

Manuel's narrative echoes Pécaut's (1999) point to denote a trait of the 'non-place': "the uncertainty of evaluation criteria of one's' position within the webs of control" of the armed groups (19). As the author points out, the emergence of the non-place also entails the weakening of old "solidarities" (20). Pécaut explains how in certain regions, generally characterized by the absence of the state, armed groups provided protection to the population. Throughout the process of deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Pécaut 1999), armed groups could turn against populations previously protected by them. Pécaut (1999) adds, the configuration of the 'non-place' emerged by the "dislocation of institutional referents" unable to provide resources to counteract the exacerbation of violence (21).

Manuel explained to me how these events fractured them as a family in different ways. He mentioned he felt responsible for his family after his brother was kidnapped, although he was only about ten years old. The relative who gave him the news that his brother was in captivity claimed: *"it is yours [the responsibility] now because your brother is not coming back. You have to take care of your family and everything…*[51]*"*. Manuel wept sharing these memories with me. He allowed me to understand how struck he felt by

49 Manuel: "Y a veces le contaba uno a una amiga, y mi mamá: 'como que no cuentes eso'. Entonces, uno no contaba lo que le estaba pasando a uno."
50 Manuel: "pero nosotros sabíamos que estábamos perseguidos, de que nos vamos para… del país y que no hay que hablarle mucho a la gente porque uno conoce la guerrilla. Pues es que ahí, como es tan grande el… el… pues el ejército guerrillero. O sea, y un conocido conoce al otro, y 'mira, allá está tal, tal…', […] se, se comunican, entonces uno como que: 'no le cuentes a nadie, que no le cuentes a nadie'".
51 Manuel: "Pues ya ahí si fueron… 6 meses, no… y pues no, o sea, le dicen a uno que: 'de que tu papá no va a volver', y lo ponen así: 'ya te toca', y entonces como que te pasa… o sea… o sea… '¿qué te vas a ocupar de tu familia?', y yo: 'sí…', 'porque tu hermano no va a volver… no va a volver, ya de pronto no vuelve', entonces, uno dice: 'sí, o sea… uno coge esa responsabilidad'…"

feeling accountable for his family when he was only about ten years old and was already growing up with an absent father. He grew up in a region where men are considered the chief of the family. This aspect made him feel that he had to deal with many difficult things at the same time. Manuel thinks that his brother was kidnapped out as a manner of revenge from the guerrillas:

> *"one thinks: 'if they are vengeful and also have their issue with the government, well they also had it with us'. I mean, at that time they asked for money to be rescued […], but they were always there, so at that time one didn't know when they were going to be released. If they were going to be released because there were kidnapped people for fifteen, sixteen years*[52]*".*

In this way, Manuel explained why moving cities wasn't a guarantee of losing sight of the armed groups or not hearing anymore from them. Something similar was outlined by Rosita as well, when she recounted their experience fleeing el Magdalena and establishing in another city. Rosita is an only child, she was about twelve years old when she moved out with her parents to the north-central region of Colombia. In 2001 they arrived in another city where they later found out *"there was a lot of violence too. […] So, I also saw a lot of things that marked me, you know […] like after 6:00 pm you were not allowed to go out because it was dangerous… I remember a time when people woke up screaming and weeping*[53]*"*. Rosita recalls it was common to hear shootings, and the cause of people's concern that morning happened in response to the killing of security guards close to where they were staying. She believes *"we were in a very dangerous zone, so that also affects… yes, a lot… so, people were killed. So, when my [parents] realized, we couldn't continue*

52 Manuel: "pues… venganza, la venganza. Uno piensa: pues sí, ellos son vengativos y… y aparte de que tengan su cosa con el gobierno, pues ya también la tenían contra nosotros […]. qué estaban allá, entonces un familiar va a tomar venganza. Pues ya eran como las condiciones del ejército. […] y o sea, sí, en ese entonces ellos también pedían dinero para que el rescate pero no es con dinero… sí, o sea, siempre estaban ahí, y uno en ese entonces no sabía cuándo iban a salir. Si iban a salir, porque había gente en ese entonces que tenían 15, 16 años de estar secuestrado."

53 Rosita: "y no, al lugar donde vivíamos también muy ah… mucha violencia… […], también vi ah…vi muchas cosas como que… que ah… qué me marcaron, sabes… como de los celadores, en las noches… había mucho… ¿cómo se dice eso? ¿tiroteos? […] Entonces, siempre después de las 6 no podía salir… porque, bueno… pues… era peligroso… y ah… me recuerdo que un día… un día todo… todo el mundo amaneció como gritando y llorando y yo salí, y fuimos como a un cerro y ahí estaban todos los celadores colgados…eh, todos los habían matado… así…".

that way anymore; and the threats from those groups continued[54]". After these events, Rosita and her parents decided to apply for asylum out of Colombia. The application process entailed traveling to another city, like Manuel and his family did. A friend of her parents told them about this possibility, and they thought: *"why not?! […] Give it a try!"*.

Simón, Rudy and Roncancio: Resisting Armed Group's Threats, Lack of Opportunities and the Effects of Structural Violence in the Everyday Life

Rudy is a thirty-seven year old woman. When I asked her about her life in Colombia and her childhood she exclaimed: "*that is the part I love the most, truly. I had the best childhood, the best of all[55]*". Rudy depicts Bahía Solano in Chocó when she was young as "*a peaceful place, at that time it was tranquil, a very safe place in a beach[56]*". She brought back her memories thinking of her upbringing as a time when she "*explored going to the beach, climbing trees, grabbing fruits [from trees], running, swimming, fighting with [her] siblings, hahaha[57]*". She repeatedly stressed how grateful she feels for having had a "*beautiful childhood*". Rudy thinks that nowadays some kids are unfortunate for lacking the possibility to experience what she referred to as *"those little things that sometimes [others] think are small, but those are the biggest and most beautiful things that could exist*". By 'things' she meant *"simply running under the rain, like those things that are priceless… just going outside, […] walking barefoot on the beach, picking up shells. Eh… climbing a tree, falling and climbing it again. Those are the things I say: 'I don't exchange them for anything, I truly feel grateful for that[58]*". Rudy's house was fifteen minutes walk from the

54 Rosita: "ya…entonces, creo que estábamos en una zona que era bastante… peligrosa, entonces, creo que eso pues también te afecta, no. Y… y en sí, pues sí bastante como que… a personas que mataron, así… entonces… ya creo que mi papá cuando se dio cuenta como de eso, qué no… qué ya no podemos seguir así, y siguieron esas amenazas de esos grupos. […]… ok, me tengo que ir, sino porque un… porque dijo: "why not?", you know what I mean? Give it a try…".
55 Rudy: "esa es la parte que más amo, la verdad. Mi niñez creo que fue la mejor. La mejor de todas. Creo que en el tiempo que estamos ahorita, muy poquita gente, creo que nadie tendría una niñez así tan bonita.".
56 Rudy: "Porque yo me crié en un lugar, en ese tiempo, era muy tranquilo, era muy seguro, en una playa.".
57 Rudy: "Entonces, yo me crie explorando. Me crie yendo a la playa, golpeándome, subiéndome a los árboles. Cogiendo frutas, corriendo… nadando… peleando con mis hermanos, hahaha. Porque todos estábamos juntos.".
58 Rudy: "Ahorita que yo, la vida ahora como está, no, qué los niños o sea, no disfrutan de esas pequeñas cosas que a veces piensan que son pequeñas pero son las más grandes y las más bellas que pueden existir. Qué es usted simplemente correr en la lluvia, como eso, qué no cuesta nada… solamente salir, correr, disfrutar de eso, caminar descalzo en la playa, recoger conchitas. Eh… nadar, o sea, uno subirse a un árbol, caerse y volver a subirse. Esas cosas, o sea, yo digo… no las cambio por nada […]".

beach. During the weekends, she and her friends frequented the natural pools close to her hometown. She also recalled how "*fun it was to try surfing laying on a board; going on canoe trips to the mangroves and try fishing […]. That was our life, I mean, spectacular*[59]".

Rudy mentioned how the conditions of an 'spectacular life' changed when "*things happened with the guerrilla, 'everything ended up there*[60]*"*". They were forced to leave Bahía Solano after her uncle was killed by the armed groups disputing the domain in the region. During the time they lived in Chocó, her uncle and her mother had a small business. They were asked by the armed groups to pay 'vacunas' (a vaccine):

> *"Unfortunately, well, in Colombia are those armed groups. Well, the guerrilla, the FARC, all that. So, they started asking for "la vacuna". That is [part of your income], what you earn [to] pay them… something like 'taxes'. You have to pay the government a part of what you work; but the part [paid to de armed groups] was illegal, and you had to pay it. So, they started asking for that, so my uncle was like: 'no, I mean, why should I give them my money? This is what I have worked for'. So, he refused to [pay]. So, the threats started, but I imagine they [her uncle and mother] didn't take it too seriously: 'this should be just a threat to give them money'. But the threats became real. He was killed*[61]*".*

After these events, Rudy, her mother and her two brothers left El Chocó and moved out to Chinauta.

Considering Rudy's, Simón's and Roncancio's stories, and reflecting on what previous studies have shown about the Colombian realm, I think that the conditions that forge "crisis as a context" in Colombia could vary according to the region, and in relation

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59 Rudy: "Tabla de surfear pero nunca aprendí a surfear parada, sino acostaba y me bajaba en la tabla. Y esa era la vida de nosotros. Las canoas, las canoas de madera que hacen. Entonces, nosotros nos íbamos a los manglares y nos íbamos disque a pescar, pero no, eso no pescábamos nada, era la recocha. Esa fue mi niñez. O sea, espectacular.".

60 Rudy: "Hasta que bueno, pasó todo esto de la guerrilla y todo, bueno, hasta ahí llegó todo, no".

61 Rudy: "Y desafortunadamente, bueno, en Colombia están estos grupos armados. Bueno, lo que es la guerrilla, las FARC, todo eso. Entonces empezaron a pedir la vacuna, que es que usted trabaja, y usted tiene que de lo que usted hace, darle a ellos… es como los 'taxes' digamos. Usted al gobierno tiene que darle una parte de lo que usted trabaja, pero esta parte era ilegal y se tenía que dar a este grupo armado. Entonces ellos empezaron a pedir todo eso, no… entonces, mi tío era como que: 'no… o sea, ¿yo por qué tengo que darle mi plata? O sea, esto yo fui que lo hice'. Entonces, él se empezó como a rehusarse, no…con todo esto. Entonces, empezaron las amenazas…pero no, yo me imagino que ellos no lo tomaron muy serio: 'esto debe ser solo amenazas para que yo dé la plata'. Pero las amenazas se volvieron una realidad. A él lo mataron…".

to how settings are embedded in their own logics of social, historical and political transformations (Vigh 2008: 16). In accordance to Vigh's (2008: 15) approach, processes of "configuration, deconfiguration and reconfiguration" constantly drawn the contours and events that placed Simón, Rudy and Roncancio to experience 'crisis as context', differently from how Rosita and Manuel lived in el Magdalena and el Caquetá. In Pécaut's view (1997: 27), the image "plotted" by a "kaleidoscopic temporariness[62]" , would throw a different configuration of el Chocó's 'social environment', than other regions, because it has been forged by its own "cycles" of shifts and changes (Vigh 2008: 15). Subsequently, in this section I also focus on my participant's perspectives, and how their narratives highlight social, economic and political traits that have been previously researched by other scholars in similar regions where their stories are forged. Unlike the regions like el Magdalena and el Caquetá, the Pacific Colombian coast was once thought of as a 'peaceful' place, as Rudy mentioned (Restrepo and Rojas 2004: 19; Oslender 2004: 36). Restrepo et. al (2004) outline that this region was not steadily "militarily disputed" as other zones of Colombia, however, it has been represented as a "peripheral zone", where the presence of the state has been weak and historically indifferent to populations' needs (Restrepo and Rojas 2004: 19; Uribe 2018).

Simón described how life was in Chocó before being forced to leave his hometown with his family. Although they fled Chocó after his uncle was killed for not paying money to the armed groups disputing control in the region, Simón and Roncancio emphasized how structural inequalities affected their everyday life and limited access to "opportunities[63]" in the social environment where they grew up. Simón stressed how income capacity and social status were determinant factors to access "*opportunities; to be heard, to have a voice*" in society. He particularly referred to his experiences with the police and institutional stances in Colombia, emphasizing that

62 Translated from: "La temporalidad caleidoscópica vale también para las lectura populares y académicas de la violencia" (Pécaut 1999: 27) // "Se puede hablar de una percepción caleidoscópica que traduce la dificultad para aprehender los fenómenos de la violencia en sus relaciones recíprocas" (Pécaut 1997: 5).
63 Roncancio: "como el no poder estudiar, sí. Sí, porque yo creo que si el gobierno me hubiera apoyado en, en… Colombia"; Simón: "…el gobierno como que abandona a las personas y no le deja muchas oportunidades y después se convierte algo, y no le buscan la solución…".

"if you have [or make] the laws, you are willing to respect them first, and as you comply with them, then other people will comply with the laws. I mean, there [in Colombia] is like… they give you the laws, but they don't comply with them, like… I mean, if we are going to work as a community and 'llave' [like buddies], so we will mutually help each other. But that is much like unequal, [there is] no balance because if you have [or posses] to 'contribute', with what to 'help', if you have the level; depends on your [social] level, it depends on the social strata level that you have, so in that same way you have like the power, more opportunities. More opportunities and they could hear you more because if you go to a police station and file a lawsuit, but that lawsuit is against another person who owns more money than you do, then things could get complicated. Right, because… that one person that has more money is more likely to be heard. I mean, they are called to answer questions [to give their claim] […]. So, the person changes their opinion, having things always in their favor. Right, because they have more money […] and so they do not give much support to families, to single mothers. I mean, if you go and lack [means], if a single mother goes to place a lawsuit of what is going on, they don't listen to her. And as they do not listen to her, then she doesn't get support from the police and then people start abusing. Because you have non much vote […]. So, in that way it is like they do not respect the law[64]".

I didn't inquire much about what specific situation Simón was referring to in the latter excerpt. I dare to believe his experience could be related to what he witnessed with

64 Simón: "porque eso como que mucho like… no es equality, eh… balance, no… porque pues si tienes con qué aportar, con qué ayudar, si tienes el nivel, depende el nivel de estratos que tengas, así también tienes como, como… que el poder, más oportunidades, no. Más oportunidades y te pueden escuchar más, tienen más voz, ¿cierto? Porque si vas a un, a una estación de policías, entonces pones una demanda, pero esa demanda es contra otra persona porque tiene… puede tener más plata que tú, pues ahí ya se puede complicar la cosa […]. Sí, porque pues… no le… le escuchan más a la persona que tiene plata, o sea, los llaman y le hacen las preguntas, ¿qué pasó? Pues la persona pues cambia la opinión, siempre tienes… las cosas a su favor, no. Lo que ha pasado. […] Sí, porque tiene dinero y tiene más… y también como que eso no, no apoyan bastante a las familias las madres solteras también. O sea, si vas… no tienen, o sea, si va una madre soltera así a poner una demanda de que pasa, no la escuchan muy bien también, no. Y como no la escuchan, no tienen mucho soporte de la policía, pues ahí ya la gente también empieza como a abusar, qué pasa. Porque como no tiene mucho voto, no… […]. Ya, ya porque como que voy a poner una demanda, lo que está pasando, lo que me están haciendo, pero no tiene mucho voto, la policía mantiene en otras casas viendo, y como que nunca va: '¿y qué pasa? ¿qué está pasando? Como que si la gente también va perdiendo como que… no, nunca nadie la escucha, a esa señora, sí, ¿y qué podemos hacer? Lo que… lo que queramos prácticamente porque…sí, en esa forma es como que, como que no cumplen mucho las leyes."

his mother after his uncle was killed. I realized that he didn't feel comfortable specifying how events directly impressed on his family members and himself. In relation to Simón's story, authors like Bourgois (2004) and Fassin (2011) have broadened the understanding of "structural violence[65]" by researching how structural inequalities affect different dimensions of the everyday life. The notion of structural violence is useful to address "chronic, historically entrenched political-economic oppression and social inequality, ranging from exploitative international terms of trade to abusive local working conditions […]" (Bourgois 2004: 26). In this framework, Fassin (2011) adds how the effects of experiencing precarious living conditions caused by structural violence in the everyday life in Tunisia, also impacts individuals' subjectivity, mostly seen in"through a vision of the world constituted of resentment about the past and suspicion about the present" (293) .

In the case of Simón, Roncancio and Rudy, violence and the presence of armed groups in Chocó were not the only factors that pushed Simón and his family to seek possibilities to move toward "better positions" (Vigh 2009: 419). Once Rudy's mother exclaimed saying: *"really, I am truly tired of this, of all this violence, that there is no peace. I don't see a future here, honestly, unfortunately for my children…[66]"*. I think that the sense of not 'foreseeing a future' is associated with the "limitation of agency, a truncation of horizons and opacity of future possibilities" (Vigh 2008: 13). Simón and Roncancio referred to these confinements as 'lack of opportunities' to access the health system, employment and education. Simón stressed that *"big opportunities"* are found in *"capital cities"*, but not in the region where Bahía Solano is located. Considering that *"nobody cares"* in those regions that are *"far away from capitals"*, Simón believes that the lack of institutional support for people in this region facilitates the conditions for *"the illegal groups to take control over… because of the same issue, there is no opportunity, no employment, there's nothing. So, they [people] start doing things that are not [or shouldn't be][67]"*.

65 Both authors borrow Farmer's and Galtung's (1975 cited in Bourgois 2004) concept of structural violence to broaden the scope of the term.
66 Rudy: "Entonces mi mamá decía: 'ay no, la verdad que yo ya estoy cansada esto, no… de esta violencia, de que no haya paz, ¿sí? Yo no veo un futuro aquí, la verdad, desafortunadamente para mis hijos…'".
67 Simón: "pues siempre si no se preocupan por la educación, por empleo, esas… esas partes lejos de las, de las capitales… eso no se preocupan, y pues… ahí llegan bastantes grupos ilegales, pues ya controlan todo

Simón outlined how inequalities affected him and his family. I consider that their experiences are related, to some extent, to what scholars have pointed out as the structural factors that forged the Colombian Pacific as a "peripheral area", historically excluded from the "Colombian national Project" (LeGrand et. al 2017: 268; Escobar 2004: 66; Uribe 2018: 29). Simón told me how the government institutions exert *"abuse of power […]; if you have nothing, you have no vote. People [politicians] only talk to you when they need a political vote; and the peoples are abandoned every day more*[68]*"*. Simón stressed how in some regions, *"there is no state over there"*, and where there is some presence of it, it ignores peoples' needs and denies support when people face life threatening circumstances:

> *"The abandonment of the state, do you understand? So, […] their only way to 'help' is bringing over a lot of soldiers, do you understand? Weapons, weapons, but they never give an opportunity to people who are there. There is never one… a road, a good hospital because even where we lived [there], a man was bitten by a snake, so there is a zone that is practically privatized. They only have their hospital if you are a military man, […], so if you are a military man and if anything happens to you, then they have the super technology to help only the people there. But a man who was bitten by a snake, you have to wait an hour, hour and a half for a barch to arrive; and the barch takes about an hour and a half, two hours; it depends on the boat, depends on the sea [tide], and then fifteen, twenty minutes to get to the hospital, and when you arrive to the hospital, the poison, I mean… it has already killed the man. And he died*[69]*"*

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también, no… por lo mismo, porque no hay oportunidad, no hay empleo, no hay nada, o sea que…empiezan a hacer muchas cosas que no son".

68 Simón: "La gente va solamente… habla contigo pues… cuando necesitan un voto los políticos, y los pueblos lo abandonan cada día más".

69 Simón: "el abandono del estado, ¿me entiendes? Entonces después empiezan a justificar e… qué están haciendo las personas allá, y solamente la forma de ayudar de ellos es… llevan un poco de soldados, ¿me entiendes? De armas, armas, pero nunca le brindan una oportunidad a las personas que están allá, ¿no? Nunca la hay… una carretera, un… buenos hospitales, porque inclusivamente en donde vivíamos, a un señor le picó una culebra, entonces hay una parte que se llama […], entonces es una zona privatizada prácticamente. Solamente tiene hospitales si tú eres militar, entonces si tú eres militar, entonces si tú eres militar pues si te pasa algo pues tienen bastante súper tecnología para ayudar solamente a las personas de allá. Pero al señor le pica la culebra. […] Le pica la culebra, toca esperar una hora, hora y media a que llegue la lancha, la lancha se toma hora y media, dos horas, depende de la embarcación, depende del mar cómo está al llegar a 'un sitio', después de ahí se debe tomar unos ¿qué? 15, 20 minutos llegar al hospital, y cuando llegó al hospital, el veneno, o sea… ya ha matado al señor".

Roncancio added that part of his motivation to leave Colombia was based on the lack of opportunities to *"live well"*. He mentioned:

> *"In Colombia there is a lot of corruption…and Colombia is not a poor country, Colombia is a wealthy country, with lots of natural resources, and good weather and a lot of land to sow. So, it should be [world] power, no? I mean, even not being a [world] power, but people's quality of life should be better because, I mean, the country is not a poor country, the country has lots of natural resources for people to live well. It is just the wealth is wrongly distributed[70]"*.

Simón's and Roncancio's narratives echoes what Oslender (2007: 118) has previously stressed by pointing out how "massive corruption of all layers of society" intensified conflict in the Colombian social environment, in parallel with the illegal drug trade. However, the author also highlights that the dynamics of conflict tend to affect countryside's communities in specific ways (Oslender 2007: 119). In this framework, Simón explained to me that undoubtedly there are regions that are more abandoned by the state that others. He has heard *"rumors[71]"* of people living in areas where there is not even electricity supply, where access to job opportunities are minimum, and where narco traffickers tend to provide for people's needs and gain peoples' affection:

> *"As I told you, well people fish… I mean, there is nothing to do, and people cut wood, fish, sow… those are the opportunities [in those other regions]; that is what is there to be done. […] I mean, there is nothing […], there are no hospitals in many towns… the government… there's no electricity supply from the government. So, as I told you, that people [narco traffickers] arrive, they give [out to people]; there is electricity supply, I mean, that people [narcos] buy power plants and give it*

70 Roncancio: "creo que acá esa corrupción no se ve, ¿cierto? Sí, yo creo que es una gran diferencia acá en [Canadá]…sí, sí, esa es la gran diferencia, sí. En Colombia hay mucha corrup[ción]… y Colombia no es un país pobre, Colombia es un país muy rico, con muchos recursos naturales… y también con mucha… eh, tiene un buen clima, y tiene mucha tierra por sembrar, entonces… eh… (silencio…) Debería ser una potencia, ¿no? O sea, o así no fuera una potencia pero la calidad de vida de las personas debería ser mejor. Porque… porque, o sea, el país no es un país pobre, el país tiene recursos naturales para que las personas vivan bien. Solamente que está muy mal distribuida la riqueza".

71 Simón: "lo que te cuentan y, y, y los rumores que llegan, cierto… todos los rumores que llegan también, como te dije, este es el límite [con esta otra región]…".

out to the community. […] Yes, I mean, like the state [is absent], so, they [narcos] earn peoples' appreciation, so, practically people start working for them. […] I mean, because they have nothing, and a person gives you everything, I mean, like… that persons starts earning people's' affection[72]".

Simón explained to me how *"people try to survive"* in those regions that are most abandoned by the state. Although people in some areas subsist with their crops, sowing and fishing, there are others no longer having the physical strength to watch after their own crops or fish. In those cases, Simón stressed that the government is not willing to help people in communities that are most in need. Although there are military

"bases, [and] you go there for help, they won't help you; maybe in interviews they show something to be recorded in camera… but that is not reality, what happens. They won't help you, They won't help you, they won't help you. They are supposed to be there to fight against drugs… the only thing they care about is drugs[73]".

Based on other's experiences, Simón perceives the state's unwillingness to address communities' needs on how the government invests in military bases and privileges the economic interests of multinational companies. He described to me how structural inequalities are shaped when:

"They built a base […] they arrived with all the government's artefacts, so money, and they established like a city but [with] militaries, so they have an aircraft, everything, boats… so, hospital; and a lot arrive from US to be trained, there are lots of 'gringos' there. So, […] multinationals from the US arrived, the multinationals are established, supposedly legally, they take away all people's

72 Simón: "Como te dije, pues la gente, la gente, la gente de la pesca, o sea, la gen… o sea, no hay nada qué hacer, y, la gente corta madera, la pesca, corta madera, siembra… esas son oportunidades, eso es lo que hay para hacer, eso es lo que hay para hacer. […] o sea, no hay nada, no hay nada, no hay hospitales, en varios pueblos… el gobierno… no, no hay eletricidad, no hay eletricidad, el gobierno no hay eletricidad para el gobierno. Entonces, como te dije, esa gente llega, eh… le brinda; hay 'pueblos' (min 55:44) por allá no tienen eletricidad, o sea, esa gente se compra una planta para la comunidad y se la regalan. Es gente que o sea… […] o sea, narcos, narcotraficantes… toda esa gente […] entonces, pues se ganan el cariño, entonces la gente ya empieza prácticamente a trabajar para ellos, no".

73 Simón: "ellos no te van a… el gobierno, vas allá y no te ayudan… o sea, tienen bases, y tú te vas allá por una ayuda, ellos no te van a ayudar, de pronto si lo entrevistas dicen… sacan algo y como, para grabarlo en una cámara, llévese esto pero… es not la realidad que pasa… no te van a ayudar, no te van a ayudar, no te van ayudar. Tienen ahí para combatir, supuestamente, Drogas…".

natural resources. […] If people that normally [went to get things to] survive, so they are [now] illegal, they are not allowed to [do that], but if a multinational from the US arrives to exploit your territory, your place, so they are permitted… [they are] sent by the government and that is how the government pays, Colombia pays to US[74]".

I asked Simón what he thought about people's living conditions in the countryside he was describing. He exclaimed saying that these events make him feel

"frustrated, fills me with rage […], the government abandons people and does not provide much opportunities and then it turns into not looking for a solution, they seek to destroy you, then give you, practically bullet. […] They [the government] never gave you a solution […]; you made something wrong, you're totally a criminal… What awaits for a criminal? Prison, death… I mean, if we focus on giving the opportunity to those people, to the youth, then it could be a future, no… because the future is in the youth, in those growing up. So, if they maintain like 'this' is the side of the educated, and this is the side of those that we take money away… if they don't care about education, employment, those places far away from the capital [cities], if you don't care, well there is where many illegal groups arrive, and take control over everything… because of the same thing, there is no opportunity, not employment, there's nothing, I mean,… [people] start doing many things […], people do [things] because they are in need; you need to survive, and you need to do something to feed your family, there is no other option. There would

74 Simón: "Como eso ellos montaron una base, pues eso no era nada, no. Llegaron con todos los artefactos del gobierno, pues la plata, y pusieron como una ciudad, tienen una ciudad pero militares, entonces tienen avioneta, de todo, barco… entonces eso, hospitales; ahí llegan bastante muchos eh… para capacitaciones de Estados Unidos, hay bastantes gringos ahí… […] les ayudan así… o sea como el gobierno pues tiene muchas, muchos convenios con ellos, no. Entonces pues, Estados Unidos le da, le da, le da armamento, pues de ahí llegan ya las multinacionales de Estados Unidos, montan las multinacionales, llegando, supuestamente legal, se llevan todos los recursos naturales de la gente, si vas normalmente a sacar algo, pues… gente que… oro, qué normalmente iba con una batea, entonces, a buscar oro pa' sobrevivir, entonces, ellos son ilegales, ellos no son permitidos, pero una, una multinacional de Estados Unidos llega a explotar tu territorio, tu sitio, entonces ellos sí son permitidos… mandados por el gobierno y así es como le paga, le paga Colombia a Estados Unidos".

be a solution if the government truly pays attention […] if it truly starts investing in health, […] I mean, in those distant towns there is not much[75]".

By doing 'things for need', Simón meant circumstances and possibilities that people consider as alternatives to make a living, for instance, participating in activities considered illegal, such as engaging within the drug trade economies. How Simón depicts the social environment in this region clearly points out how structural violence (Bourgois 2004; Fassin 2011) affect people's living conditions and their everyday life. I think that Simón's and Roncancio's narratives also echo Oslender's point when explaining how massive displacements in the Pacific are part of the consequences of neoliberal policies, that have pushed for the "reconfiguration of land distribution", expelling peasants, indigenous and Afrocolombian communities from their ancestral territories (37). The author frames the armed conflict in the region within a "geo-economic war" in which struggles over land and resources are at stake (35). In relation to this, Grajales (2017) likewise argued that "it is largely the unequal access to land that helps explain the emergence of armed actors and the state's hold in the countryside" (ii). Oslender (2004) also uses the term "de-territorialization", to indicate processes of violent displacements in the Pacific region, as consequence of a "changing power geography" (38). Oslender (2007) highlights how this region "has been characterized by its physical and economic marginalization in relation to Colombia's interior" (144). In this setting, the author explains how struggles over land tenure include Afro-Colombian communities' advocacy to own collective land titles of terrains that, previous to 1991, were considered "bare land" by the state (144). The author explains that it was after the constitutional reform in 1991 and the law 70 of 1993 when

75 Simon: "¡No! Me frustra bastante, me llena de rabia, sí, como que no me gusta mucho tocar porque como que ah… sí, el gobierno como que abandona a las personas y no le deja muchas oportunidades y después se convierte algo, y no le buscan la solución, te van y lo que buscan es destruirte, te dan es com…prácticamente bala. No, ya te volviste… no te dieron nunca solución, [nunca te dieron la oportunidad] (no es claro min 45:50), hiciste algo malo, totalmente eres un delincuente… ¿qué le espera a un delincuente? La cárcel, la muerte… o sea… si nos enfocamos en pues… brindarles la oportunidad, la verdad a esos pueblos, a esa juventud que llega, entonces… puede haber futuro, no…porque el futuro está en los jóvenes, en las personas, toda esas personas que van creciendo, no…entonces pues… ellos como que mantienen el, el nivel, no… como que este es el lado, este es el lado de los educados, pues este es el lado pues de lo que le sacamos la plata..., no… (emite sonido para expresar ironía)… entoces…[…]. Pues siempre si no se preocupan por la educación, por empleo, esas… esas partes lejos de las, de las capitales… eso no se preocupan, y pues… ahí llegan bastantes grupos ilegales, pues ya controlan todo también, no… […] por lo mismo, porque no hay oportunidad, no hay empleo, no hay nada, o sea que…empiezan a hacer muchas cosas que no son".

black communities were granted with “collective territories” (Oslender 2004: 36). However, Oslender (2007) explains that peoples’ in the Pacific have been dispossessed from their “ancestral lands through threats, massacres, and the spreading of terror among local populations, paramilitaries and guerrillas dispute territorial control” (115). The author also points out how the extension of illegal economies in the region has grown in parallel with the establishment of armed groups, subjugating communities “among armed actors and the abandonment of a weak state lacking will and capacity to protect them” (Oslender 2004: 37).

Restrepo and Rojas (2004), Escobar (2004),Oslender (2004) and Almario (2004) developed a study in the Colombian Pacific drawing on how communities and different ethnicities have coped with structures of inequality for decades, affected by dynamics of “deterritorialization” (62, 71) , along with the emergence of armed actors in that region. Escobar (2004) explains the structural inequalities of this Colombian region throughout the lenses of modernity and colonization. The author argues how these two historical processes are entangled in parallel with the “production of space” and demarcation of cultural differences since the colonial times (66). As Escobar points out, mechanisms of displacements dated since the “colonization of the New World” (65), however, he identifies four interrelated traits as main sources of displacement in this region in the early 1990’s and the 2000’s. Besides the establishment of “developmental mega-projects” such as the African palm crops and the construction of an interoceanic channel ; the dynamics of the armed conflict; the struggles over massive natural resources; as well as the extension of illegal economies in certain areas, have forced people to leave their “ancestral lands” (60).

Temporary Asylum Locations and Regrounding Experiences

Throughout this chapter I have displayed some of the key factors that shaped my participants’ forced displacements, according to the social environment where their trajectories were placed, and highlighted their perspective about their own experiences in their hometowns. All of them emigrated from their place of origin to other cities and countries aiming to escape violent contexts and seeking to rebuild their lives. However, fleeing their hometowns didn’t entail they were seeking asylum ‘officially’; undoubtedly,

they were seeking refuge and survival, but some of them didn't even know they had the possibility to seek asylum outside of their home countries.

For instance, Rubiela and her family, Berenice and Mercedes left to Mexico not knowing they could request asylum in Canada just right after they left Guatemala and El Salvador. It was after a few years of living in Mexico, when facing precarious living conditions, and coping with the effects of *"non-being legally existent*[76]*"*, that they heard of and searched for the possibility to request asylum in Canada. In the case of Rosita, Simón, Rudy and Roncancio, they and their families moved to other cities lacking knowledge of asylum as a possibility. They heard in those cities about the option to leave Colombia after a while of living there. Rather, Manuel and his family were advised by the Colombian authorities to consider this option when his brother was found after being kidnapped. According to their capacity to move and navigate the immediate events of their contexts (Vigh 2009: 425), as well as accessing information, my participants' asylum requests were tied up to diverse institutional regulations and policies of immigration (Ahmed et. al 2003; Bräuchler and Ménard 2017), as well as the different kinds of support they found throughout their emigration journey. Accordingly, their emigration pathways also allowed them to make experiences of regroundings (Ahmed et. al 2003) at different levels and gradations in the temporary asylum locations before arriving in Canada, whilst the "forms and conditions of movement" (Ahmed et. al 2003: 1) at the same time entailed another process of uprootedness when finally emigrating to Canada.

Mexico: The Experience of 'Illegality', 'Non-Existing' and Lack of Status

Scholars like Gonzales, Sigona, Franco and Paputsi (2019) address relevant debates to shed light on how different "structures, processes, and actors" are simultaneously at play within "migration projects across multiple state boundaries" (5). By analyzing cases in the US, the EU and the UK, the authors trace how at "multiple scales of governance", immigrants' trajectories are marked by experiences of "illegality" forged amongst national and supranational contexts (4). The authors approach the understanding of undocumented

76 Rubiela: "ni por el gobierno mexicano ni por el gobierno de ACNUR. Nosotros… hahaha… no existíamos… hahaha… estábamos ahí pero no existíamos. Y así pasamos mucho tiempo.". Sonia: " […] pero en México estábamos nosotros de ilegales, nosotros no, no teníamos ningún (Min 43:23) estatus ahí, y nos teníamos que hacer pasar por mexicanos.".

migration and the experience of illegality through Deluze's and Guataris' notion of "assemblages" (1988 cited in Gonzales et. al 2019: 28). Gonzales et. al (2019) borrow the term to address the "multitude of heterogeneous items and different temporal and spatial arrangements" that are at play within the multiple "configurations of illegality" experiences in different settings and at different levels and scales (4). In light of Gonzales et. al (2019) discussions, the experience of 'being illegal', 'non-existing', and 'lacking status' is tied up to "legal classifications" that legitimize certain forms of human mobility" (17). In the cases of Rubiela, Sonia, Berenice and Mercedes, not being granted protection by the Mexican government when they sought asylum in Mexico, limited their access to "formal citizenship rights", such as employment and education for their children. Lacking a legal status in Mexico exposed them to experience precarity in diverse ways (47).

Rubiela recalls their life in Mexico as harsh due to the economic constraints they faced, and the fact that they lacked citizenship or refugee status; they felt persecuted by the police for staying illegally in Mexico. She expressed how they felt like *"[…] non-existing, being there but not existing…*[77]*"* and remained *"illegal for many years*[78]*"*. Sonia, Rubielas' daughter also recalled having to *"impersonate by Mexicans, […] we said that we were from a city very closely to Guatemala because the accents aren't too different"*, they were *"illegal, we didn't have a status there*[79]*"*. Rubiela's family remained in Mexico for more than five years. She recalls their experiences in Mexico as a *"very, very difficult"* time. She emphasized that

> *"Mexicans […], as my Mexicans brothers are excellent people. But those who work for the government, are really bad people […]. The cops were very bad. They always persecuted those that…because we were illegal for many years because we could not be legalized. In Mexico it was a lot more difficult. […] But in Mexico they*

77 Rubiela: "no, no, no. Nunca nos reconocieron. […] Ni por el gobierno mexicano […]. Nosotros… hahaha… no existíamos… hahaha… estábamos ahí pero no existíamos".
78 Rubiela: "Porque nosotros estábamos de ilegales por muchos años porque no podíamos legalizarnos. En México era mucho más difícil".
79 Sonia: "nos vamos a… a México, pero en México estábamos nosotros de ilegales, nosotros no, no teníamos ningún (Min 43:23) estatus ahí, y nos teníamos que hacer pasar por mexicanos. […] Cuando llegamos ahí, a los vecinos: "no, nosotros somos de… somos mexicanos", y decíamos que éramos de una ciudad bien cerquita a Guatemala; porque como ahí los acentos, no son muy diferentes, para que la gente no dijera: 'oh, ¿por qué tienen acento diferente?'. Pero en México nosotros, hacíamos como que éramos mexicanos, nunca estuvimos ahí legales".

really never helped us, never, never, never, never! The government had programs for refugees, but it didn't really help as it should. Lamentably, Mexicans, the Mexican governments have been much more corrupt than other countries. There, one steals, another one steals to the one that stole, and another one steals to the one that is stealing. So, at the end, those that are going to receive the benefit, they don't get it. Everything has been left out on the road. So, we never had any kind of help. It was very difficult, we had to work hardly to survive with Sonia and my husband80".

Rubiela explained to me how challenging life was in Mexico while they never were acknowledged as refugees by the Mexican government, neither non-profit organizations that were providing support to refugees in Mexico when they immediately arrived. She outlined that for those years a lot of people seeking refuge *"suffered a lot, and there were a lot[81]".* Although Luis Carlos acquired a bachelor's degree in Guatemala, lack of status in Mexico hindered him to find a formal job and be paid accordingly. However, he met a woman who ran a business in Luis Carlos' professional area. She hired him seeing it as an opportunity because Luis Carlos had the skills to work in her business and she didn't have to pay him what she would have had to someone Mexican holding an equivalent degree as Luis Carlos. Considering their living situation, accepting that job offer seemed convenient for both parties, as it also was an option for Rubiela's family to make ends meet and *"at least have food"*. Rubiela mentioned that those years they lived in an *"old house, without water [supply], without nothing. But we always sorted it out. In that manner we survived in Mexico, with that job that he had[82]"*. After living in Mexico for several years, Rubiela and

80 Rubiela: "¡Agh! ¡Muy, muy, muy difícil! Porque los mexicanos… los mexicanos como mis hermanos mexicanos, excelentes personas. Pero la gente que trabaja con el gobierno, muy malas personas. […] Los policías muy malos. Siempre perseguían a los que estaban. Porque nosotros estábamos de ilegales por muchos años porque no podíamos legalizarnos. En México era mucho más difícil. […] Pero en México realmente nunca nos ayudaron, ¡nunca, nunca, nunca, nunca! El gobierno, el gobierno que, que tenía programas para refugiados, pero no ayudaba como realmente era. Los mexicanos lamentablemente, los gobiernos mexicanos han sido mucho, mucho más corruptos que cualquier otros países. Y allá uno roba, el otro le roba al que robó, el otro le roba al que robó, y el otro le roba. Entonces al final los que van a… los que van a recibir un beneficio nunca lo reciben. Todo ya se ha quedado en el camino. Entonces nunca tuvimos ningún tipo de ayuda. Fue muy difícil, tuvimos que trabajar duramente para, para poder sobrevivir con Sonia […]".
81 Rubiela: "Sí… pero el refugiado en México sí sufrió mucho, y habían muchos".
82 Rubiela: "Este… la dueña de la compañía él sí le comentó que él había estudiado en Guatemala y que se había graduado en una universidad que está frontera con México y Guatemala. Ella nunca le preguntó: ¿eres mexicano y te fuiste a estudiar allá o no? No, a ella sólo se interesó en que él había estudiado eso. Y vio la oportunidad de que él sabía el trabajo y no le iba a pagar lo que iba a ganar una persona que había ido a la universidad en México. Entonces… a ella le convino callarse y tenerlo como trabajador. A nosotros nos

Luis Carlos met Alirio, who worked in a non-profit organization that was supporting refugees in Mexico. They got along with him well and he suggested trying to request asylum in Canada. *"When [Alirio] knew our story, he thought that [going] to Canada was going to be easy for us, and it was"*. Luis Carlos went to the Canadian embassy to tell their story in Guatemala and why they *"wanted to leave Mexico"*. After Luis Carlos claimed asylum in the Canadian embassy, they received notice their application was approved, and in a short timeframe they left Mexico and arrived in Canada[83].

Sonia told me how she and her parents *"left behind everything [they] had in Mexico"*. She thinks of Mexico as a place that felt like *'home'* to her:

> *"Mexico was the only place that was our home, so, I arrived very young […]. And I remember that my mom didn't want to come to Canada because she always felt that going from Mexico to Guatemala was very easy; she could go back to Guatemala to see her family every two or three times a year. But she knew that coming to Canada it was going to be very hard going back to visit, and the distance with her family was going to be broader. So, she didn't have any desire [to come], but there was no other option, simply here [in Canada] or… going back to Guatemala and face a very, very uncertain future[84]".*

Differently from Rubiela's and Sonia's memories in Mexico, Berenice expressed that *"Mexicans were very good"* to them, *"they welcomed them very well[85]"*. Berenice met

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convino porque le pagaba más o menos bien y nosotros pues… teníamos comida por lo menos. Casa, porque nos dieron una casita ahí toda viejita, sin agua, sin nada. Pero siempre nos las ingeniábamos. Entonces… este… fue cuando, cuando llegamos… de esa manera nosotros sobrevivimos en México. Con ese trabajo que él tenía".

83 Rubiela: "Pero en México conocimos a gente que trabajaba en una organización […]. Y por medio de ellos conocimos a una persona que empezó a llevarse bien con nosotros y él nos aconsejó que nos viniéramos para acá. Entonces, eh… cuando supo nuestra historia, él pensó que Canadá iba a ser fácil para nosotros entrar y efectivamente fue así. Entonces, mi esposo buscó la embajada y les fue a contar por qué vivíamos en México y las razones por las que queríamos salir de México. […].".

84 Sonia: "Entonces, dejamos todo lo que teníamos en México, México había sido el único lugar que era nuestro hogar pues, porque … yo había llegado ahí tan pequeña […]. Entonces, recuerdo que mi mamá no tenía ningún deseo de venirse para Canadá. […] Porque ella siempre sentía… ir de México a Guatemala era bien fácil, ella podía regresar a Guatemala a ver a su familia, cada 2 veces, 3 veces al año. Pero ella sabía que, al venir a Canadá, si iba a ser muy difícil regresar a visitar e iba a ser más el, el… la distancia con, con su familia de allá. Entonces ella no tenía ningún deseo, pero no había otra opción, simplemente era aquí o…o regresar a Guatemala a un futuro muy, muy incierto".

85 Berenice: "ya, cuando llegamos a México, allí este… gracias a Dios nos acogieron bien. La gente mexicana muy Buena".

a friend in Mexico who helped her find a job. She worked for a while as a caregiver and later she learned how to make clothes to sell. She and her family received support from a non-profit organization that was supporting immigrants in Mexico who fled countries of Central America due to the civil wars in the region. She told me how the different kinds of support they received in the state of Campeche allowed them to settle down for about eight years. Moreover, working together with some of her family members who latter arrived there fleeing El Salvador, enabled them to make end meet and improved their living conditions in Mexico[86]. She mentioned how *"everything was very beautiful"*, but *"things"* became *"very difficult"* when the fact of *"non-being Mexicans"* affected her daughter to access educational benefits. The fact of not holding a Mexican citizenship triggered in her the desire to move towards a place where the living conditions would benefit her *"children's wellbeing[87]"*. Berenice recounted this event saying:

> *"In the school where my daughter was, she was one of the good students and they gave her a scholarship […] and she got home so happy: 'mami, I got a scholarship', she said. The school was going to send her to another city and they were happy. But they took away the scholarship from her because she was not from Mexico. And the teacher thought it was not going to be an issue, but they made a huge problem. And we both cried88".*

Berenice had a relative who claimed asylum in Canada previously than she did, Martina encouraged her to leave Mexico. Although Berenice tried to formalize her status in Mexico, she explained to me that they were asked to *"[provide] a lot of documents and they [government institutions] made it a big deal. For me it was very hard because I could*

86 Berenice: "Y así nos ayudábamos, todos juntos, nos ayudábamos y aprendimos a hacer ese oficio. Y de eso vivíamos. Vivíamos… bueno, yo sentía que vivíamos bien. Pero el problema era que no éramos mexicanos. Ya…".
87 Berenice: "Íbamos a que nos hicieran otro pedido y de eso vivíamos. No, todo estaba bien bonito. Pero la cosa fue el estudio de mis niños. Fue bien difícil allá. Fue muy difícil. […] más por eso fue que yo hice el ánimo de venirme para… de aplicar para Canadá por el bienestar de ellos, de mis niños".
88 Berenice: "Y en su escuela de ella por ser una niña de las más… ¿cómo se llama? Más aplicadas y buenas para el estudio, le dieron una beca. sí, le dieron una beca y ella llegó a mi casa… ay llegó, pero tan feliz. "¡Mami me dieron una beca!", me dice. En la escuela, y me van a mandar a otra ciudad a estudiar y están tan felices. Pero esa beca se la quitaron porque no era de México. Y el maestro no pensaba que iba a ser ese un problema. Pero le hicieron un gran problema y lloramos las dos".

not commute due to my job. To me it was very difficult[89]*".* Consequently, instead of perceiving this situation as a limitation or as *"something dark on the way"*, Berenice encouraged her daughter to perceive this incident as a *"light by God"* to redirect their lives towards better opportunities[90]. Berenice remembers that she travelled by bus for fourteen hours to Mexico to claim asylum in the Canadian embassy. She feels grateful that she had to make just one trip from the town she was living in, to Mexico City; she was also concerned about the expenses to start their claim. However, their application was quickly approved, she went once more to take *"the exams"* and was told the date to leave Mexico. She recalls these events as *"something very beautiful because I did want to come here*[91]*"*.

Similarly to Berenice's experience, Mercedes lived in Mexico for about ten years. She and her family received support from another organization that was offering courses to immigrants to develop skills in different crafts. This enabled them to be self-employed and make end meets for her family. However, hearing that her relatives left Mexico and claimed asylum in Canada, she contacted them to receive orientation to start her own asylum claimant process. Mercedes thought of coming to Canada as an opportunity to *"have a better future for her family"*. Mercedes and her husband José wanted their children to *"flourish and help them to do so*[92]*"*.

The experience of being undocumented migrants in Mexico portray how "state structures and practices" framed Rubiela's, Sonia's, Berenice and Mercede's trajectories "outside the bonds of formal membership" for not being Mexican citizens (Gonzales et. al 2019: 40). However, their experiences also show that even though they were not granted a formal legal status to remain in Mexico, they received support from organizations and communities that provided them with opportunities to "claim membership" by "informal

89 Berenice: "ajá, y ya… y qué teníamos que sacar un montón de papeles y que nos pusieron un montón de problemas. Para mí era tan difícil porque no me podía mover por mi trabajo también. Para mí era bien difícil".
90 Berenice: "Le dije yo. 'Yo pienso que esto es una luz que Dios nos está poniendo', le digo, no es algo oscuro que tenemos, es una luz que ha llegado por medio de eso. Y eso me animó porque imagínate".
91 Berenice: "[A Ciudad de] México son 14 horas en bus. […] Magínate. Y para mí era tan difícil. Ir a México para poner las aplicaciones. […] Un viaje y ya después me mandaron el aviso que fuera a allá a la embajada que ya me habían aceptado mi aplicación y que llevara mis niños para que nos… como lo examinan a uno para que nos hicieran los exámenes, y todo. Y ya de ahí me dijeron ya la fecha cuando "inaudible" [min. 21:23]. Ay fue tan bonito… ay no, fue algo muy lindo, muy lindo. Porque sí, yo quería venir acá".
92 Mercedes: "cuando decidimos venirnos para acá. Entonces sí, pues nuestra meta era poderles dar un mejor futuro a nuestra familia. Ver que ellos salieran adelante y poder ayudarlos en eso. Y entonces, eh… nos dimos cuenta que Canadá había abierto las puertas para que pudieran venir aquí emigrantes".

modes of belonging" in their immediate contexts of interaction (Gonzales et. al 2019: 45). The social networks that provided access to information, training and informal ways of employment allowed them to make experiences of regroundings (Ahmed et. al 2003), to the extent that Sonia thinks of Mexico as a place where at a time in her trajectory felt like 'home'; and Berenice recalls her experiences as a *"very beautiful time"* regardless of the *"difficulties"* and challenges that they faced. Even Rubiela had some sense of attachment in Mexico thinking it of a place that made her feel close to her home country, regardless of feeling excluded for nonbeing legally existing.

Colombia: Seeking Protection, Moving Cities and the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA)

Rudy, her mother and her two brothers left Chocó to the small village in the department of Cundinamarca, in Chinauta. They lived there for about ten years. Considering that Rudy and their family left all behind in Bahía Solano after her uncle's death, they sought support in an organization in Chinauta. In this place they declared the events that pushed them to forcedly leave their hometown. They received information about programs they could apply to find different kinds of support. One of those programs was what Rudy called the *"Third Country*[93]*"*. Rudy told me they applied *"to not let it pass"*, her mother thought *"it was better to do something than not trying*[94]*"*. They *"continued with [their] life*[95]*"*, meanwhile Rudy and her brothers finished school in this small town. The three of them had the desire to take postsecondary studies, but the economic constraints were a limitation to continue studying. They left their studies on hold and found jobs to help their mother to earn a living. Roncancio associates his memories in Chinauta to a *"good experience because people were very friendly*[96]*"*, but the *"lack of government's*

93 Rudy: "R: sí… o sea, allá hay… bueno, sí, esa parte donde uno hace las declaraciones, como ella fue y estuvo en el proceso de que mataron a mi tío, entonces ella ya empezó a informarse ahí en toda esa área, no…de todo eso que habían ahí varios proyectos, que ella podía aplicar, y uno de esos era pues el 3 país, que así le llaman: El Tercer País".
94 Rudy: "la metió [la aplicación] como por bueno… 'bueno, voy a meterla como por no dejar, ¿cierto?'. Es mejor… ella es de las que piensa: 'es mejor hacer algo a no hacer nada'".
95 Rudy: "Bueno, seguimos nuestra vida y todo, y un día llegó la notificación, pero que teníamos que irnos a Lima".
96 Roncancio: "fue una buena experiencia porque la gente de Chinauta es como muy amiguera.".

support[97]*"* in different manners motivated them to continue with the claimant process throughout the Safe Third Country Agreement[98] (CCR). However, about ten years passed for them to be notified that their application was approved and were required to travel to Perú and continue with the second phase of the process in Lima.

The four of them *"headed out to Perú, to Lima, to a country that we didn't know. I mean, to start again from scratch*[99]*"*. Rudy, her mother and her two brothers lived in Lima for about one year. Rudy stressed that this process took time as they were asked to provide evidence of their claims: *" you have to prove that it was a reality because there are people that goes there lying thinking that it is a travel agency:' I go there and they take me out of the country'* [100]*"*. During that time, they received financial support from the organization that was assisting them throughout their application process to cover part of their stay in Lima. However, what they received was not enough to cover all their expenses, so they had to *"work hardly to survive*[101]*"*.

Rudy remembers how *"hard"* it was to work in Lima at that time, although they were allowed to, she outlined that migrants from Venezuela were also trying to engage within informal employment, *"so it was very hard […], I mean, we had to survive and get ahead*[102]*"*. Whilst they awaited to receive a final approval for their asylum claimant, they worked informally selling 'arepas' close by the place they were located. Simón remembers that *"he made more money than he did in Colombia, much more… like it was not that hard… like, wow! You made more money and an idea came: 'if you go to another country,*

97 Roncancio: "como el no poder estudiar, sí. Sí, porque yo creo que si el gobierno me hubiera apoyado en, en… Colombia, ir a la universidad, yo, yo creo que no hubiera salido de Colombia, porque, pues ¿pa' qué? Si igual hubiera hecho una carrera allí y hubiera conseguido un trabajo, y hubiera seguido mi vida en Colombia, sí. Porque fue eso lo que no me… falta de apoyo. […] falta de apoyo, sí. Fue lo que me motivó a migrar".
98 The Canadian Council for Refugees outline that the difference between a refugee resettlement and a refugee claim processes is based on the pathway that refugees take to come to Canada. According to the CCR, there are two ways for refugees to claim asylum. First, through resettlement. Second, by making a refugee claim in Canada. Refugees who are resettled "are determined to be refugees by the Canadian government while they are still outside Canada in a third country". The latter was the claimant pathway that Rudy and her family, Rubiela, Sonia, Mercedes and Berenice took to immigrate in Canada. Link available in: https://ccrweb.ca/en/refugees-entering-us-and-safe-third-country-faq
99 Rudy: "Nos fuimos para Perú, para Lima, un país que no conocíamos, la verdad. O sea, empezar también de cero otra vez".
100 Rudy: "Usted tiene que probar que eso sea una realidad porque hay gente que va con mentiras, piensan que eso es una agencia de viajes: "yo voy allí y me sacan ya del país".
101 Rudy: "[…] porque tampoco lo que nos daban no era mucho, entonces no alcanzaba para todo. […] En serio, trabara arduamente para poder sobrevivir".
102 Rudy: "entonces fue muy difícil… […] sí, o sea, había que sobrevivir, mija, y salir adelante".

maybe you can make more money' [103]". Rudy refers to that time as *"a good experience. […] People were super…, people in Lima are super kind! The truth is that they welcomed us very well, I have a beautiful experience there[104]"*. She added saying that engaging in informal work by selling arepas also made her *"to appreciate people more. […] Because one sees [informal workers] down, but when I was there, I truly said: 'wow, they are really brave people to be doing this. […] So, it was a beautiful experience[105]"*.

In contrast with the experiences of Sonia, Berenice, Mercedes and Rubiela, Rudy and her family didn't refer to their stay in Perú as illegal, or as a situation that made them feel "non existing". However, they depicted that year as a period of transitioning, as a time when they made experiences of 'temporarily regroundings' to *"survive"* and *"get ahead"* while their asylum claimant was finally approved. This Colombian family made doubled processes of regroundings (Ahmed et. al 2003). Firstly, when they left Bahía Solano and established themselves in Chinauta for about ten years. Secondly, moving out to Perú entailed a new experience of uprooting when having to start over *"again from scratch"*, as they did when they settled down in Chinauta.

The emigration journey of Rosita and Manuel are different in relation to the conditions and events that shaped uprooting and regrounding (Ahmed et. al 2003) experiences of the other participants in this study. Neither Manuel or Rosita had to travel to another country to claim asylum outside of Colombia. In the case of Manuel, he and his family received support from the Colombian authorities to start their asylum claim in Canada. However, as I described previously, they were forced to continuously move cities escaping from the armed groups' threats while awaiting for final approval of their request. I consider that in Manuel's case, the conditions that forged his and his family's process of forced displacement, didn't allow them to make experiences or regrounding (Ahmed et. al 2003) in the cities where they moved within a period of six months. Rather, in the case of

103 Simón: "Hice más dinero que en Colombia, y más… sí, como que no era tan duro […] entonces pues… o sea, ¡wow! Se hace bastante dinero, y ahí como que la… se me vino la idea: 'no, si uno se va a otro país, de pronto empieza a trabajar, puede hacer más dinero aún'".
104 Rudy: "La gente súper… no, ¡la gente en Lima es súper amable! La verdad nos acogieron muy bien, tengo una bonita experiencia de allá".
105 Rudy: "y creo que eso fue una bonita experiencia como de apreciar más a la gente. Como de no verlos, porque uno a esa gente la ve como que menos, pero cuando yo ya estuve ahí, la verdad que yo dije 'wow, la verdad es que es gente que es muy valiente, la verdad. Para estar haciendo esto […] Entonces fue una experiencia la verdad muy bonita'.".

Rosita, her parents didn't consider claiming asylum out of Colombia when they left el Magdalena. They fled to a city in the north region of Antioquia and lived there for about a year. Compared to Rudy's and her family's experiences, Rosita and her family didn't make many regrounding (Ahmed et. al 2003) experiences in Antioquia. The continued threats from the armed groups in that region and the violent events that were affecting Antioquia, triggered in them a strong desire to leave the city where they were in this department of Colombia.

In Rosita's and Manuel's cases, the process of uprootedness (Ahmed et. al 2003) also entailed a continuity as it did in the cases of my other participants. In the sense that their experiences of forced displacement pushed them to continuously move from places, while internalizing that Colombia was no longer a safe place to remain. In their cases, constantly experiencing fear of persecution, violence and the short timeframe they spent in other cities didn't allow them and their families to make long lasting experiences of regrounding (Ahmed et. al 2003). Differently, the conditions in Chinauta allowed Rudy and her family to resettle there for more than ten years, until they were notified that their asylum claim was approved. In all the cases, leaving out my participants' home country was perceived as a possibility to "move toward" better living conditions, search for "better opportunities" to improve their wellbeing and rebuild their lives (Vigh 2009: 419).

CHAPTER TWO. OVERCOMING UNFORESEEN CHANGES AND RESETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES IN CANADA

In this chapter I draw on Vigh (2009) to extend the social navigation approach used in the first chapter. I describe how my participants have experienced and navigated (Vigh 2009) resettlement conditions in Canada, how their life stories, age of arrival, 'culture shock', weather, educational and occupational background, and the reshaping of family structure are at play throughout their process of adaptation. In light of the analytical perspective that I have developed throughout the study, I aim to address my participants' resettlement process as another facet of their trajectories taking a narrative and experiential approach (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017; Chase 2008; Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Deux and Perkins 2001; Katsiaficas et. al 2011; Reczek 2014), rather than assessing level and quality of assimilation via what kind of capital they lack or possess (Bourdieu 1986).

Scholarship on immigrants and refugees often addresses integration as the outcome of individuals' 'successful' incorporation in realms of social life in the receiving contexts. Authors like Portes and Fernández-Kelly (2008) argue that newcomers' modes of incorporation are forged between the interconnectedness of government, society and community's domain, but also depend on immigrants' human capital, family structure and host society's welcoming or hostile environment (13). The scholars trace paths of social mobility across immigrants' generation to identify "patterns of upward and downward mobility" in the US (16). From this perspective, immigrants' educational and occupational skills, along with their family structure constitute background determinants to attain "desirable positions in the American hierarchies of status and wealth" (13). Similarly, Lamba and Krahn (2003) argue how social capital works as an indispensable facilitator for refugees' adjustment process in a new society (337). These authors analyze the structure, strength and function of newcomers' social bonds to portray how refugees integrate socially and economically in Canada. The study concludes that a "successful resettlement" depends on how refugees reconstruct and maintain social capital in the receiving context (Lamba and Krahn 2003: 366). In a different vein, scholars like Adamuti-Trache (2013), and Adamuti-Trache, Ansif and Sweet (2018) have focused on language as a "key element" to determine a "successful integration of new immigrants" in Canada (103). Also drawing on

Bourdieu's capitals theory, Adamuti-Trache (2013) uses the notion of "language capital" to identify how differences of pre-migration language skills facilitate or restrains newcomers' access to learning opportunities.

Other studies, like Agger and Strang's (2008: 170), focus on refugees' integration as a process that takes place within distinct "domains of experience" of social life. Although they emphasize there is not an homogeneous understanding of integration, and it's notion varies accordingly to contexts, the authors trace similarities between approaches that display different views of what "constitutes a successful integration" in refugees' settlement areas in the UK (Agger and Strang 2008: 167). Based on their findings, the authors pose a matrix to understand refugees' integration in relation to four interconnected dimensions that pave newcomers' pathways for incorporation. The authors outline "markers and means" encompassing factors like employment, housing, education and health. The domain of "social connection" refers to refugees' social bridges, social bonds and social links. Within this scheme, Agger and Strang approach language and cultural knowledge, along with safety and stability, as "facilitators"; likewise, rights and citizenship place the "foundation" for refugees' integration (Agger and Strang 2008: 170).

Considering that integration is a contested term, "used with widely differing meanings" (Agger and Strang 2008: 166), in this chapter I do not seek to develop a debate around the terminology, neither do I seek to determine if my participants' have "successfully" assimilated (Portes and Fernández-Kelly 2008) into the Canadian context or not. Instead, I use some of these scholars' reflections paying attention to themes stemming from my interviews and my participants' own references and understanding of adaptation. In the first chapter I used the notion of "social navigation" (Vigh 2008;2009) to frame the phase of my participants' trajectories within contexts of political violence, social exclusion, constant and abrupt social change in their home countries. I also stressed how events of forced displacement marked their stories along their emigration journeys. In relation to the latter, for my participants, arriving in Canada entailed another process of regrounding (Ahmed et. al 2003), learning how to overcome challenges and face what Sonia, Rosita and Simón referred to *"unexpected"* changes in a new environment.

Vigh (2009) emphasizes that "social navigation" is a modality of movement, shaped by our "social position and experience of control over social forces rather than only societal characteristics" (430). In this sense, he argues that multiple "background variables influence us as we navigate", this is why Vigh asserts that social positions "are not singular and objective (rich or poor, peaceful or war struck)" (Vigh 2009: 430).Following this perspective, I do not intend to reduce the understanding of my participants' adaptation process by breaking down their narratives and split their experiences searching for Bourdieu's "capitals" (Bourdieu 1986), to 'mark a check list' of indicators to determine if they are integrated or not in Canada, and/or determine their social position according to Bourdeusian paradigm. As I displayed in the first chapter, most of my participants lacked economic capital, social capital, cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) since they arrived. I think that trying to 'read' their trajectories just through 'capital lenses' could lead to disregarding a whole set of experiences that have marked their journeys, which are meaningful for them, and affect how they think of themselves (Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). I consider that my participant's experiences simultaneously convey how "an array of knowledges, skills, abilities and networks" have served them as tools to navigate their resettlement process in Canada (Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 1); which are not restrained to Bourdieu's notion of capitals.

Authors like Tara Yosso (2005) and Yosso and Burciaga (2016) have contested "the assumption that people of color lack the social and cultural capital required for social mobility" (70). Drawing on the Critical Race Theory (CRT) lenses, Yosso (2005) specifically challenges "traditional interpretations of Bourdieusian cultural capital theory", advocating for other perspectives and epistemologies to address discussions over knowledge and social inequalities (70).The author questions "who's culture has capital?", asserting that while Bourdieu's theory aims to explain class inequalities, social and differentiated academic outcomes, at the same time his approach reinforces a "'how-to' model, wherein students of color need to acquire the appropriate cultural capital or social capital to achieve academically" (Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 2). From Yosso and Burciaga's (2016) perspective, this approach conveys the idea of a "deficit thinking", highlighted by other scholars as "foundational to the project of racism and colonialism" (Valencia and Solórzano 1997 cited in Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 1). Yosso and Burciaga

(2016) aim to broaden the scope and better understand how people of color value their own forms of knowledge and experiences that don't suit Bourdieu's framework understanding of social life.

Yosso (2005: 82) and Yosso and Burciaga (2016) pose the notion of *community cultural wealth* aiming to move away from a "deficit view of Communities of Color as places full of cultural poverty disadvantages". The scholars pay attention to how skills, abilities, social bonds among communities are forms of capital "nurtured by cultural wealth" (Yosso 2005: 69). Within this framework, Yosso's and Burciaga (2016: 2) highlight six "dynamic and overlapping forms of capital" that "often go unrecognized" among communities and the educational realm (Yosso 2005: 69). First, *aspirational capital* refers to people's "ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers" (Yosso 2005: 77; Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 2). *Linguistic capital*, pertains to the "intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style" .This form of capital also encompasses "storytelling traditions to recount oral histories, parables, stories and proverbs" (Yosso 2005: 78; Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 2).

Third, the *familial capital* pertaining to the cultural knowledges that "carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition among family" (Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 2). This form of capital also refers to the family unit's "model lessons of caring, coping and providing educación, which inform our emotional, moral, educational and occupational consciousness" (Yosso 2005: 79). Fourth, the notion of *social capital* refers to "networks of people and community resources" (Yosso 2005: 79). However, also taking into account how social networks provide "both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society's institutions" (79). This perspective pays attention to how the "tradition of 'lifting as we climb'" shape bonds among communities (80). Fifth, the notion of *navigational capital*, encompasses people's skills of "maneuvering through social institutions"; focusing on people's strategies and ability to "navigate through racial-hostile" environments (Yosso 2005: 80). In this sense, Yosso (2005) acknowledges forms in which individuals are affected by institutional constraints that could be overcome by social networks and community support (80). Lastly, *resistant capital* pertains to people's

"knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality" (81). Yosso and Burciaga (2016) argue how the approach of "community cultural wealth" works to address the "interplay of cultural assets and resources", possessed by communities to resist forms of oppression and racism (1).

In the case of my participants, I think that all of them possess all of these capitals to some degree. This group of newcomers sought to immigrate to Canada, not just seeking survival and protection, but in search of opportunities to achieve goals that were perceived by them as only remotely achievable in their home countries. Regardless that most of them lacked educational and occupational skills before arriving in Canada, they were able to navigate the bureaucracies that determine the pathways to commence an asylum claim. However, the feelings of connection to their family units, extended family and social networks have been significant for their establishment in the host environment (Lamba and Krahn 2003). In a similar vein, this group of Latinos have been able to navigate and resist hostile environments marked by racism and discrimination in different ways. Solely emphasizing capitals (Bourdieu 1986) as determinants of adaptation could lead to banishing the "multilayered and multifaceted identities" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed, Khanlow and Moussa 2008: 1; Yosso and Burciaga 2016; Katsiaficas et. al 2011) that are at stake within processes of mobility, movement and "reterritorialization of identities" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 381; Satki 2017: 380).

As Vigh (2009: 430) argues, the concept of social navigation is "not restricted to West Africa or areas of political turmoil and volatility", such as Central America or Colombia. The author stresses that "we all navigate" within our social worlds, but movement occurs at different levels, speeds and depending on how social forces are ingrained within the specificities' of social settings (420). According to Vigh (2009: 430), individuals' "ability to control oncoming movement" is shaped by the speed of social transformation in a certain social environment. From this perspective, I also address the Canadian setting as a context influencing my participants' resettlement conditions (430). Although social change in the Canadian environment might not occur at the same pace of my participants' homeland contexts, for all of them, adjusting to the new environment entailed coping with drastic transitions. In this sense, the perception of "accelerated

movement" (Vigh 2009: 428) rests primarily within my participant's experiences rather than within a collective perception of social transformations caused by wars and sustained events of violence, as it has occurred in Central America and Colombia (Bourgois 2004; Krujit 2008; Sanford 2000 and LeGrand, vanIsscho and Riaño-Alcalá 2017).

Accordingly, I do not seek to contrast the Canadian social environment against the Central American and Colombian settings to determine the speeds of social change among these different societies throughout an historical account. Rather, I focus on individuals' narratives to sketch their own perceptions of their resettlement process in Canada, drawing on how their new living conditions placed them in a constant process to "negotiate" and/or "reconfigure" their identities, while making sense of their personal journeys (Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008; Katsiaficas, Futch, Fine and Sirin 2011: 122; Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 381). To illustrate, Rubiela believes she has changed since she arrived in Edmonton *"even if [she] didn't want to, [she] had to"*. I take into account that "movement between settings [has] a significant influence upon subjectivity" (Conrandson and Mckay 2007: 168). Braüchler and Ménard (2017) add that "movement [also] leads to the emergence of new or the reconstruction of established collective [and individuals'] identities and mode[s] of belonging" (391).

Therefore, I display my participants' stories of resettlement, tracing "narrative linkages" by paying attention to their personal recount of their experiences within the new setting (Chase 2008; Chase 2005 cited in Katsiaficas et al. 2011: 722), whilst also drawing points of connection between my participants' trajectories and processes of adaptation in Canada (Reczek 2014). In this manner, I pay attention to the singularities of their stories while identifying "resources and constraints in [their] environment for self and reality construction" (Chase 2005 cited in Katsiaficas et al. 2011: 722). Despite that Katsiaficas et. al (2011) research focus on youth immigrants' narratives to understand how the "psychological imprint of oppression […] often speak through multiplicity", the concept of *hyphenated selves* helps me to reflect on "the multifaceted development of [immigrants'] lives", whilst paying attention to how they "engage at the *membrane* between contentious political and cultural contexts and their own meaning making" (120). In this sense, the authors address *pluralistic narratives* aiming to "capture identity movement across time

and space" (120). The authors document how immigrant youth navigate precarity in different contexts while "negot[iating] their identities over time" (122).

Katsiaficas et. al (2011) pursue "narrative linkages" (Chase 2005 cited in Katsiaficas et. al 2011: 122) by identifying points of connection between immigrants' "biographical particulars" and their experiences around academic life, however, in this chapter I extended the analysis of "narrative linkages" from the "membrane" that solely connects individuals' biographical particulars and educational experiences, to multiple layers of interaction (family, community ties, government and settlement organizations) that are at play in the "reshaping [of] intergroup relations and structuring local processes of conflict and cooperation" along my participants' process of adaptation in Canada (Bráuchler and Ménard 2017: 380). Accordingly, I portray their narratives in a two-fold way. Firstly, I approach their stories considering "the self [has] as a relational achievement" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385). Authors like Bräuchler and Ménard (2017) refer to the 'self' as entwined between "diverse forms of subjectivity [that] emerge from geographical mobility, different locations and social connections at a local level" (385). The authors also stress that "the construction of identity and belonging in mobile contexts is highly ambiguous, as it involves an emotional side" (385).

My participants' recounting of their stories clearly conveys how their establishment in Canada impressed on them differently triggering diverse feelings and ways to think about themselves, "depending on the time and position of viewing" (Deaux and Perkins 2001: 301). Deux and Perkins' (2001) approach of the "multiplicity of self-aspects": *individual*, *role relationship*, and *collective* (301), allow me to emphasize that my participants' narratives convey how in different circumstances one or the tripartite dimensions of the self overlap in a "kaleidoscopic" fashion (Deaux and Perkins 2001).

My participants' narratives also transmit how they felt and perceived themselves through their adjustment process in Canada, in relation to the influence of "socio-political factors, such as national policies of immigration and political discourses about migration" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385). Following Svasek (2010), Bräuchler and Ménard (2017) assert how those latter factors undoubtedly "shape the interactions between [im]migrants and local authorities and populations" (385). Each vignette of this chapter

portrays how each of my participants' interacted with settlement organizations since their arrival, how they felt within their immediate sphere of interaction, and how they became familiar with norms, rights and opportunities once they entered Canada as landed immigrants. Consequently, I identify "narrative linkages" (Chase 2005 cited in Katsiaficas et. al 2011) between my participants, by tracing "movement" (Vigh 2009) between the perceptions of themselves at different stages of their adaptation, age, family roles, and the living conditions demarcated by the "settlement pathway" embedded in Canadian policies of immigration described by them. The cases of Manuel, Rosita, Sonia, Rubiela, Berenice, Mercedes, Rudy and her family in different gradations convey how "certain empathy [or lack of thereof] […], affective distancing, policies [or actions] of discrimination and exclusion" have shaped their feelings, perceptions of themselves and of their living environment (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385; Vigh 2009: 419), while simultaneously demarking possible alternatives for them to "move towards better positions" in Canada (Vigh 2009: 419).

Moreover, I take into account that my participants' modes of adaptation are embedded within processes of "emotional negotiations with the host society and the family back home, [having] different consequences in terms of identity construction and belonging" (Aranda 2003 cited in Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385). To illustrate, Rubiela's vignette points out how she experienced *"culture shock"* when she struggled to *"maintain her culture"* because she is *"proud of being Guatemalan"*. She emphasized that even if she was given different citizenships in other places, she will continue to say that she is *"Guatemalan"*. Likewise, Simón perceives that adapting to the new environment entails adjusting himself on *"how [to] speak, the way you hug"* considering *"people in Canada are very quiet"* , whereas he comes from a place where people are *"normally very loud"*. Simón and his family vignette also highlights how their interactions with settlement organizations lead them to question what is more or less "normal" or acceptable in the new environment. These narratives point out how "in contexts of mobility, the reterritorialization of identities plays a predominant role in reshaping intergroup relations and structuring local processes of conflict and cooperation" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 380).

Bräuchler and Ménard (2017: 380) frame the idea of "reterritorialization of identities" within the mobility paradigm. The authors explain that debates on mobility advocate for compelling approaches to address discussions on space, contesting a dual understanding of "the local and global" as impermeable entities (Sheller and Urry 2006 cited in Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 381). From this perspective, the concept of space is approached as "fluid" and not as a "spatially fixed geographical container of social processes" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 380). By the notion of "reterritorialization of identities" scholarship on mobility poses how "identities [transcend] geographical and political boundaries" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 381). Moreover, from this approach, mobility is understood in relationship with "diverse geographical locations and historical contexts" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 381). Following these analytical discussions, I ask how my participants perceive the living conditions in the host environment? And, how do they describe the process of adjustment, challenges and limitations while adapting to the Canadian context? Aiming to understand how my participant's background and pre-migration experiences influence their adjustment process in the hosting environment, I follow the discussions posed to reflect on how mobility's experiences have impacted on my participants' "identity narratives" and the way they "build, reconstitute or (re) shape" themselves throughout "mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that inform [their] stay [in the Canadian environment] and their sense of belonging" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 360).

My participants arrived in Canada at different ages, with different educational and occupational backgrounds, in three different periods of time, and having a different role in their family units. Rosita and Manuel first arrived in the province of Ontario in the mid 2000's and lived in the francophone village of L'Original. They lived in this town for about five years before moving to Edmonton with their parents. Rosita and Manuel have remained in Canada for more than fifteen years. Sonia, Rubiela, Mercedes and Berenice, on the other hand, have lived in Edmonton for about thirty years. Simón, Rudy, Roncancio and their extended family have stayed in Canada for more than two years. All of my participants indicated having been government-sponsored and received government's support for up to one year. My participants' experiences vary according to their age and time of arrival, role in the family unit, lack of second language skills, and educational background. For some of them, the governments' financial support has also been dependent

on their progress and achievements of their English or French language proficiency. Thus, considering that all of them have lived in Canada for different timeframes, I describe how my participants recount their experiences becoming familiar with the host environment, acquiring language skills, facing what some of them referred as the 'culture shock' , and how their family units were reshaped within the new context.

Rubiela and Sonia

Sonia and Rubiela recall their arrival in Canada as a time of unexpected changes, marked by both *"extreme joy and sadness*[106]*"*. Sonia was a teenager when she came to Edmonton and explained to me how at that time the government hosted newcomers in *"several apartments"*. She recalls that:

> *"they went to the airport, picked you up, took you to those apartments, and they assigned you like a social worker who was teaching you how to go to the supermarket, how to register your children at school; simple things like how to cross the street, that you have to press a button because they brought people from places where there wasn't anything of that. […] So, they taught you how to do all those things. And they tried to have people that obviously spoke your language because most people come not speaking [a word]. So, all those things for us were beautiful. They accommodated us in an apartment that, compared to what we had in Mexico, was all really beautiful… and people very kind; the woman that was assigned for us very, very kind, very friendly*[107]*".*

Sonia and her parents lived there for about a month, and later were relocated into another place where they have been living for more than two years. She thinks that all the social

106 Sonia: "sí, extremadamente. Yo me recuerdo mucho porque ya tenía 11 años; […]. Pero fue algo… los extremos de al… de cosas bonitas, y los extremos de cosas tristes".
107 Sonia: "entonces ellos tenían varios apartamentos donde venía toda la gente inmigrante; entonces ellos iban al aeropuerto, te recogían, te llevaban a esos apartamentos, y te asignaban, algo como una trabajadora social, qué te iba a ayudar a enseñar cómo ir al supermercado, cómo registrar a los niños en la escuela, cosas tan simples como: cómo cruzar la calle, qué tienes que pochar un botón porque, ellos traían gente de todas partes donde no había nada de eso. […] Entonces te enseñaban cómo hacer todas esas cosas. Y trataban de tener a gente que obviamente hablara tu idioma, porque la mayoría de la gente viene sin… sin hablar nada. Entonces, todo eso para nosotros fue muy bonito. Nos pusieron en un apartamento que, comparado a lo que nosotros teníamos en México, era todo así bien bonito y cosa… y la gente muy amable; la señora que nos tocó para ayudarnos muy, muy buena gente, muy amigable".

and financial support they received from the government was *"the beautiful part"* during their adjustment process. She especially brought to mind that: *"they [social workers] took us all together to the mall and my parents went to choose furniture, 'trastos' (plates and pots), bed sheets; everything, everything, everything was paid by the government, absolutely everything[108]"*.

Rubiela compared their new living conditions in Canada against the economic constraints they faced in Mexico, and lack of government's support at that time. She shared her memories of those first days of adjustment mentioning how:

> *"at that time one could really see the difference of our Latinos' countries struggling to survive everyday, and arrive in a country where abundance was awaiting for you. […] because everything came from the government. All, all, all, the checks […], for all, for food, for rent… even to buy Winter clothes, Summer clothes, everything, everything. And as we had a child, and our situation was legal, entering as 'landed immigrant', we had the right to have all what Canadians had; so, we also received checks for 'child support' 109".*

In the case of Sonia and Rubiela, the *"culture shock"*, the lack of English language proficiency, and the *"shock of isolation"* were difficult aspects for them to navigate along with their resettlement process. Sonia explained to me how *"shocking"* it was *"being surrounded by people who don't speak your language. When we arrived, there were not too many Latina people[110]"*. It was just after a few months of living in Edmonton that they

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108 Sonia: "duramos como un mes. Sí, y después el gobierno nos buscó un apartamento, y nos llevaron al apartamento donde vivimos como unos 2 años, y nuevamente, esa parte, era la parte bonita. Porque recuerdo que llevaron a mis papás, nos llevaron, nos llevaron porque íbamos todos juntos al centro comercial. Y mis papás fueron a escoger muebles, trastos, ropa de cama, todo, todo, todo el gobierno lo pagó, absolutamente todo […]".

109 Rubiela: "En aquel tiempo era… era realmente se podía ver la diferencia de nuestros países latinos luchando para sobrevivir cada día, y llegar a un país donde la abundancia lo estaba esperando. […] porque todo venía del gobi… de parte del gobierno. Todo, todo, todo, los cheques… […] De ahí llegaban todos los cheques, qué es el edificio federal que está en el centro. Entonces ellos nos mandaban los cheques. Mandaban cheques para todo, para comida, para renta… para… hasta para comprar ropa de invierno, ropa de verano, todo, todo. Y como traíamos hija, también… y nuestra situación era legal, al entrar como 'landed immigrant' teníamos derecho a todo lo que los canadienses tenían. Entonces también llegaban cheques para los niños, el "child support."

110 Sonia: "fue, fue un shock enorme, y el idioma. El idioma es algo que nuevamente tú no te imaginas el, el estar rodeada de personas que no hablan tu idioma. Y en ese, cuando nosotros vinimos en el 92, había muy poca gente latina…".

"bumped into" someone speaking Spanish in the street. Sonia says how on that occasion she *"felt like having encountered your grandpa, your uncle"*; she was astonished about meeting someone speaking her mother language. Sonia remembers how *"immediately [they] connected with that person because there were a very, very few Hispanic people"*. Sonia added that lack of language skills and *"not being able to communicate"* was particularly difficult when they went to the store and when her parents registered her at school. She emphasized how they felt isolated for *"not knowing many people; the lack of the Hispanic culture, [in which] you know your neighbour, you know the person at the front [of your house], and here it is completely different; so, the 'shock of isolation' that you could experience is something really hard to deal with and to accustomed to […]*[111]*"*.

After a few months, Sonia entered school. She brought back to mind why the first year of school was *"very difficult"* for her. Mostly, for not speaking English, she *"didn't know any English"*. Sonia recalls she had to be in class even if she didn't understand a word of what was being taught. Additionally to the school routine, she attended English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction two hours daily. After a year, she *"understood more"* the language. Sonia's adjustment in her school environment was harsh, not just for lack of English skills, but also because at that moment she was a teenager. She perceives that as *"an adolescent you already had your friends, I had an environment where I felt comfortable [in Mexico]. But arriving here was a big shock… a very big [one], for the language, for the culture; teenagers here are very much different from teenagers in Latinamerica"*.

Sonia explained to me she perceived that most students at her school were *"white, children of European descent, that were born here… maybe their parents and grandparents were born here, but they feel Canadians, because they say they are Canadians"*. What she

111 Sonia: "…muy, muy poca. Como a los 3 meses de que llegamos, íbamos caminando en la calle y nos topamos con alguien que hablaba español, y tú sentías que habías encontrado a, a tu abuelito, aún tu tío, era algo, pero así de en shock de encontrar a alguien que hablara español, e inmediatamente hacías conexión con esa persona, porque habían tan, tan poca gente hispana. Pero ese era, ese fue un shock bastante fuerte también; el idioma, el no poder comunicarse, el tener que ir a la tienda, el tener que registrarme a mí, y a mis hermanos en la escuela; todo eso fue difícil para… para mis padres. Y aparte de eso, el, la soledad que se experien… que se experimenta en este lugar. El venir, no conocer a mucha gente, estar alejado. Esa falta de… la cultura hispana es tan… tú conoces al vecino, tú conoces a la persona de frente, y aquí es completamente diferente, entonces ese shock de la soledad que se puede experimentar aquí es algo que es bastante difícil de, de acostumbrarse y de liderar cuando tienes las otras cosas encima, y estás en un lugar tan…".

perceived as *"shocking"* was being seen as a *"kid that obviously is not what you describe as Canadian, that doesn't speak your language, so, there is always that…"*. The experience of being different from *"Canadians"*, in the case of Sonia made her feel *"they did not pay you attention, not included you… maybe what happens in every group of teenagers, but it is something that you feel much more exaggerated"* for lacking the language. Sonia emphasized that *"even if they would want to include you, if you cannot communicate, it is very difficult"*. Moreover, Sonia perceives that her introverted personality aggravated her experience of feeling isolated[112].

Nowadays, Sonia feels she belongs in Canada:

> *"I feel I belong here, this is my home, this is my community, this is my city… um… I love Guatemala, I love going there!! I like to go visit. But circumstances there have not changed… [well], they have, in [the sense] that there is no longer an armed conflict, but instead of [it], an increase of crime at a level that I really don't know how people can live there. That makes me never think: 'that is my home'"*.

Sonia feels *"appreciation"* for Canada regardless of difficulties she encountered here, like the weather, *"which hasn't changed much"*; and the *"strong racism in this country! Regardless of what the Canadian wants to say; but I am part of this city"*. Sonia thinks that

112 Sonia: "S: yo empecé a ir a la escuela, como en, como al mes y medio de que llegamos, me inscribieron en la escuela, yo empecé [High School]. Y sí fue un año bien difícil para mí. Muy, muy difícil. Más que todo por el idioma. S: porque no, yo no sabía nada, nada de este inglés. Me pusieron en… 2 horas al día me pusieron en clases de ESL en la escuela, pero el resto del tiempo ellos me metieron a la sala de con todos los niños y… y yo tenía que estar ahí…S: tenía que aprender, sí. Pero sí recuerdo… como al año de estar aquí, yo ya fui, yo ya entendía bastante. […] pero ese primer año sí fue bien, bien difícil para mí. Porque de esa edad… creo que esa edad es bien difícil… […] entonces, como adolescente tú tenías, yo tenía mis amigos, yo tenía mi ambiente donde yo me sentía cómoda. Pero al llegar aquí sí fue un shock bien…bien grande, por el idioma, por la cultura, los… los adolescentes aquí son bien diferentes a los adolescentes en Latinoamérica. M: ¿por qué crees que son diferentes? S: hay… en primer lugar, por ejemplo, en la escuela donde yo estaba, casi todos eran blancos. Y sí, siempre hay una… una diferencia cuando llega… porque en ese entonces no había tanta gente acá.
M: cuando dices blancos, ¿a qué te refieres? S: me refiero a mucha… a niños de descendencia europea, que han nacido aquí… […] S: probablemente sus papás y sus abuelos han nacido aquí, pero que se sienten canadienses, pues, ellos dicen que son canadienses. S: entonces, todavía era un shock cuando llegaba un niño que obviamente no es lo que tú describes como canadiense, que no habla el idioma, entonces siempre hay ese…no te hacen caso, no te incluyen… tal vez lo que pasa en cualquier grupo de adolescentes, pero se, se… es algo que se siente más exagerado por el idioma. S: porque, aunque te quisieran incl…involucrar, si no te puedes comunicar con alguien, es muy difícil. S: entonces esa etapa fue bien difícil para mí. Y… tal vez por mi carácter, o no, no sé, pero me hizo una persona más introvertida, y un poquito más aislada porque fue un shock bastante, bastante grande.".

racism in Canada is manifested in *"subtle things"*, like when she has felt followed in shops for *"looking differently"*, because she *"looks of a different color"*, she doesn't *"look like a typical Canadian"*. Likewise, she has heard from acquaintances how curriculum vitaes of *"people [with] uncommon names"* are excluded by Human Resources staff when selecting candidates for job positions; seeing a foreign name is enough to claim: *"no, that name is too strange"*. Sonia perceives that these kind of *"things are not very direct, and you cannot prove it, but you say: 'I have all the qualifications, I have all this, why [didn't I] even get a job interview?', things like that*[113]*"*.

Sonia mentioned that her father has experienced *"a lot of racism"*. She thinks it is mainly because he has interacted in different places than she had. Since they arrived, Luis Carlos has always worked in the trades sector, Sonia perceives that in this *"environment"* most people *"don't have high levels of education"*. Sonia believes that educated people are *"more open to people who are different, to people of different cultures, but the less educated you are"*, people are more resistant to accept differences. Sonia referred to how in the trades sector

> *"there are a lot of people who don't have much education […]; Canadian people, people born here, so a lot of white people […]. So, when an immigrant arrives… [they] call them racist names, mock you because you have an accent; because you don't know certain words, you cannot express yourself openly. My dad has directly experienced those things a lot. So, it has to do with the environment in which you develop"*.

113 Sonia: "sí, sí… yo ya no me miro jovencita, entonces yo entro, yo entré a la tienda y estaba tratando de hacerle tiempo a alguien que estaba esperando, y empecé a ver, y de repente vi que la muchacha que estaba del otro lado de la tienda, estaba tras de mí. Yo yo dije: "oh, ok", y seguí caminando, me siguió como por 10 minutos, Maria Fernanda. M: wow. S: y dije yo: no es porque sea yo jovencita. Sino que es porque me veo así de otro color. Cosas así, cosas que son sutiles, pero que tú dices: "¿qué otra razón tienen para hacerlas más que: 'me veo diferente'?", no me veo como una típica canadiense. Entonces, cosas de ese sentido, sí me han afectado. Cuestiones como, la gente habla mucho, no te puedo decir: "eso me pasó exactamente" porque no, no tengo evidencia directa, pero cosas como… cuando tú mandas un resumé, a un lugar, al ver un nombre que no es común, tal vez te pasan hasta… el más bajo de fila. Ese tipo de cosas, que no son tan directas, y no puedes tú probarlo, pero dices: "júm, tengo las cualificaciones, tengo todo esto, ¿por qué ni siquiera una entrevista en un trabajo?", cosas como esas. M: ¿y te ha pasado eso alguna vez? S: sí. Lo he oído de personas que trabajan en H and R, he oído comentarios como: "no, ese nombre se oye muy raro".

Sonia believes that being part of a *"group of Latinos at university"* is one of the reasons why she didn't experience racism as her father has had. When Sonia was at university, *"English was no longer a barrier"* for her. However, she tended to be *surrounded by people who had things in common"* with her. Sonia's closest friends at university where *"just Latinos… one or other Canadian, […] but my friends were Latinos and if you are in your environment, you are not going to experience that much [racism][114]"*.

Sonia thinks racism hinders a closer connection with Canadians. Sonia believes *"the Canadian has that certain level of politeness that even if there is racism, because there is a lot, that level of politeness separates it, but it doesn't mean it [racism] is not there. It is simply because of the high level of politeness that it is separated [or covered]"*. Sonia presumed for about *"fifteen years that the Canadian was not racist because of their extreme kindness. And the Canadian felt proud of saying: 'the Canadian is not racist"*. However, Sonia has become more aware of these dynamics of racist discrimination throughout social media, *"where everybody can tell their opinion"* because in this sphere of interaction, being "*behind a phone or a laptop[115]"*, *"politeness is not too necessary […]*. She mentioned having read comments that are *"completely anti-immigrant"*, against

114 Sonia: "S: y, alguien que ha experimentado mucho, mucho racismo, es mi papá. Creo que para él eso fue uno de los shocks más grandes, porque él empezó a trabajar [en trades]. S: ¿sí sabes qué es un trade? M: sí. S: entonces él ha trabajado siempre en ese ambiente, y en ese ambiente, mucha de las personas que trabajan son personas que no tienen altos niveles de educación, entonces, mientras más, en mi opinión, mientras más alto tu nivel de educación, eres más abierto a gente que es diferente a ti, a gente de diferentes culturas. Pero mientras menos educación tienes, hay más un nivel de: "si tú eres diferente, yo, yo no te acepto". Entonces, cuando tú trabajas en lugares como trades, hay mucha gente que no tiene mucha educación, es por eso que están en trades, pues… gente canadiense, gente que ha nacido aquí. Entonces, mucha gente blanca, mucha gente con no mucha educación. Entonces, cuando llega un inmigrante, son cuestiones así, bien fuertes con trabas. Apodos racistas, burlas, porque tienes acento, porque no sabes ciertas palabras, no te puedes expresar abiertamente. Ese tipo de cosas mi papá las ha experimentado bastante, así mucho más directas. Entonces, tiene que ver el ambiente en el que te…
M: desenvuelves. S: desenvuelves, sí. Creo que una de las razones por las que tal vez no, yo no experimenté tanto eso es porque cuando para me gradué, por ejemplo, cuando fui a la universidad, mi grupo de amigos eran todos latinos. M: ¿en serio? S: sí. A pesar de que el inglés ya no era una barrera, pero te digo, es algo bien increíble que uno tiende a… a querer estar alrededor de gente que es común. Pero, mi grupo de amigos, mi núcleo, eran puros, puros latinos… uno que otro canadiense, con amistades así, pero… mis amigos eran latinos, cuando salíamos era evento de latinos, cuando íbamos a una fiesta era latinos y… entonces, si estás en tu ambiente, no, no vas a experimentar tanto eso. Pero sí cuestiones como… te digo lo que me pasó en la tienda esta semana, ¡me ha pasado muchas, muchas, muchas veces!".

115 Sonia: "la comunidad canadiense, como el politenes no es tan necesario en social media, como lo es en persona, ahí tú puedes ver el nivel de racismo que existe en esta cultura. Porque como que esa barrera de politenes se baja porque estás atrás de un teléfono, de una computadora, entonces, cuando tú lees ciertos comen… a mí me encanta estar leyendo artículos de las noticias, pues. Y tú a veces… trato de no pero a veces empiezo a leer comentarios y yo digo: "tú puedes ver el nivel de racismo que hay en muchas personas.".

refugees, stressing that *"if you come to live here [in Canada] and you don't speak English, we don't want to know anything from you"*. Sonia has felt *"shocked"* reading these type of comments, concluding that *"there is a lot of racism here"*, even *"a lot of Canadian people who think that leaders like Trump are they type of leaders that we should have[116]"*.

Rubiela referred to her experience of *"culture shock"* portraying how she is still belonging and connected to Guatemala, regardless of transcending geographical and political boundaries (Bräuchelar and Ménard 2017: 381) to be in Canada:

> *"The cultural shock started bothering because… we have always tried to maintain our culture because we have always been proud of being Guatemalan. And specially that we come from one of the oldest [ancestresses] in history, the Mayas, so we cannot leave that [behind]. I could be given citizenship in many countries, but I will continue to say: 'I am Guatemalan'. This is why the 'cultural shock' was big and the language, and I believe that our major struggle was that[117]".*

Rubiela thinks the *"major challenge"* for her was *"arriving in a place where the language is completely unknown".* She didn't speak English. She believes that the *"challenge of the*

116 Sonia: "S: definitivamente, definitivamente. Hay de… y el canadiense es bien, es bien diferente, por ejemplo, cuando tú viajas en Estados Unidos, hay, hay un nivel de… jum… ¿cómo se dice, politenes? en el canadiense, que aunque haya racismo, porque hay muchas… ese nivel de politenes, se, se, se separa pero no quiere decir que no esté ahí. Simplemente porque el nivel de politenes es tan alto que se, se separa (min 51:50). Entonces, tal vez por unos 15 años, yo podía creer que el ra, el canadiense no era racista, porque era altamente…M: muy amable.S: muy amable, sí. Y el canadiense se, se… se, sentía orgulloso de decir: "el canadiense no es racista", ¿pero sabes cómo se ha visto el racismo en el canadiense en los últimos 15 años? Por cuestiones de social media, y donde cualquiera puede poner su opinión. Cuando tú lees ciertas cosas de la… la comunidad canadiense, como el politenes no es tan necesario en social media, como lo es en persona, ahí tú puedes ver el nivel de racismo que existe en esta cultura. Porque como que esa barrera de politenes se baja porque estás atrás de un teléfono, de una computadora, entonces, cuando tú lees ciertos comen… a mí me encanta estar leyendo artículos de las noticias, pues. Y tú a veces… trato de no, pero a veces empiezo a leer comentarios y yo digo: "tú puedes ver el nivel de racismo que hay en muchas personas". M: ¿Como qué comentarios? S: comentarios completamente antiinmigrantes, altamente anti refugiados, altamente anti… si vienes a vivir aquí y no hablas inglés, no queremos saber nada de ti. Todo ese tipo de cosas, lo… los estereotipos, casi. Pero a mí me ha causado un shock, porque te digo, para esos primeros 15 años, yo creía eso, que no había racismo en el canadiense. Pero estos últimos 15 años en los que la gente ha salido más a decir sus cosas atrás; cubiertos por una pantalla, tú dices: "no, hay bastante racismo aquí, bastante…", cosas como el… Trump y gente que hay mucha gente canadiense que piensa, que piensa que ese es el tipo de líder que deberíamos de tener."

117 Rubiela: "Realmente el… el choque cultural fue lo que… más nos empezó a molestar porque… nosotros siempre hemos tratado de mantener nuestra cultura porque siempre hemos sentido mucho orgullo de ser guatemaltecos. Y especialmente que nosotros venimos de una de las descendencias más viejas de la historia, se podría hablar que son los Mayas, entonces nosotros no podemos dejar eso. A mí me podrían dar ciudadanía en varios países pero yo continuaría diciendo: "soy guatemalteca". Por eso, ah… este… entonces, em… el choque cultural fue grande y el idioma, y yo creo que nuestra mayor lucha fue eso".

language started since [she] arrived and realized that I didn't understand what people say". Moreover, she outlined that depression *"was not known as it is nowadays"*, and thinks she suffered from depression when: *"I decided not to go out. I decided to stay locked up for almost three months and I went out just to buy things, [and to go out] with a few persons that we met and that showed us places of the city*[118]*"*.

In addition to language and cultural differences, Rubiela outlined how gender relations in her family unit were reshaped along with the experience of the *"cultural shock"*; specifically, with her husband. Rubiela emphasized how the fact of becoming aware that as a woman in Canada, she can have a voice and make her own decisions, was not easily navigable in her household. She highlighted why:

> *"It is good to say that we come, Especially in the time that we came, from very 'machistas' countries, where men have all the right. And arriving here I realized that here it was not that way. So, that was also a huge struggle, really, those were our struggles. The language, culture, and realize that I could speak, that I could decide, that I could say yes and could say no. And I think that was something that my husband and I needed to work out a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot to not get divorced. As we saw in case of a lot of people, or friends that arrived, that soon they divorced for different circumstances. So, in that regard we had to live that way119"*.

Rubiela stressed these changes in her family unit, instead of affecting her negatively, *"helped her to understand"* that she can decide for herself even if her husband disagrees. In this way Rubiela explains how being in Canada allows her to empower herself

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118 Rubiela: yo creo que el mayor reto para mí fue llegar a un lugar donde el idioma era completamente desconocido. No hablaba nada de inglés. Y… y… y quizá al inicio, no sé… antes no hablábamos mucho de depresiones, no, no, se conocía la depresión como ahorita. Pero creo que sufrí una depresión porque decidí no salir. Decidí quedarme encerrada. Y estuve encerrada como casi 3 meses. Y… salía a solo hacer compras con mi esposo y con algunas personas que… que conocimos y nos empezaron a mostrar los lugares de la ciudad. Pero… más creo que… el reto de… el idioma empezó desde el momento que llegué y me di cuenta que no entendía nada de lo que la gente hablaba.

119 Rubiela: "Em… creo que es muy bueno también comentar que venimos de… venimos y especialmente en la época en que vivíamos de países muy machistas, donde el hombre es el que tiene todo el derecho. Y al llegar aquí me di cuenta de que… realmente aquí no era así. Entonces, eso también fue una lucha muy grande. Realmente, esas fueron nuestras luchas. El idioma, la cultura y darme cuenta que yo podía hablar, que yo podía decidir, qué yo podía decir sí y podía decir no. Y, y creo que ese… lo tuvimos que trabajar con mi esposo mucho, mucho, mucho, mucho para no tener una separación. Como vimos en el caso de mucha gente de nuestros amigos que llegaron, qué muy pronto se, se divorciaron por la… por cualquier circunstancia. Entonces, eh… eso… a nosotros nos tocó vivir así […]".

as a woman, however, she believes these changes were not perceived positively by her husband: "*obviously, if you ask [him], he will say: 'that ruined me'. Really because definitely he had to accept many things later*[120]*"*. She remembered how in Guatemala their parents *"raised them telling [her] that women, especially, have to be obedient to their husbands in everything. That all, all, all, we could not say no to anything"*. Considering that she married Luis Carlos when she was *"very young, [she] entered into that circle"* and had to do *"everything he said".* She even emphasized why *"coming to Canada was not even [her] decision. It was his decision"*. Rubiela recalls telling him: *"no, I am not leaving because it is too far. […] I mean… you didn't ask me if I wanted to go"*". Rubiela didn't refuse to leave Mexico because at that time she still *"lived in complete submission [to him]. Everything he said was done*121*".* Although Rubiela came to Canada against her will, being here she *"realized that it was not a bad decision, on the contrary, it was very helpful"*. Nowadays Rubiela thinks that they *"could have come since [they] left Guatemala and wouldn't have suffered so much*[122]*".*

After a few years, Rubiela joined a women's support group, which helped her become more aware of her rights as a woman in Canada. She thinks that the *"traditional"* dynamics of male domination over women in her home context, is evidently restructured among newcomers' families:

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120 Rubiela: "M: o sea, ¿sumercé vino porque él dijo "nos vamos"? R: porque él dijo nos vamos. Eso es así. Pero ya al llegar aquí me di cuenta que no fue una mala decisión. Que al contrario nos estaba ayudando bastante. Mientras vivimos en México como refugiados definitivamente nunca tuvimos ningún apoyo del gobierno de México. Pasamos muchos problemas económicos, muchos, muchos, muchos. Muy tristes problemas. Entonces al llegar aquí y ver la abundancia de todo lo que el gobierno nos ofreció, para nosotros fue wow…nos hubiéramos venido desde que salimos de Guatemala, no hubiéramos padecido tanto. Entonces el… yo creo que a mí, en parte… yo no podría decir que me afectó. Yo podría decir que me ayudó. Obviamente si usted le hace esa pregunta a mi esposo le va a decir: "eso me arruinó". Verdad, porque definitivamente él… tuvo que aceptar muchas cosas después".

121 Rubiela: "*yo creo que… agh… yo creo que más que afectarme, me ayudó a entender lo que yo… lo que verdaderamente era. Porque nosotros en Guatemala fuimos criados por nuestros padres, diciéndonos que… las mujeres, especialmente, teníamos que ser obedientes a los maridos en todo. De que… todo, todo, to*do. Nosotros no podíamos decir no, a nada. Y… y yo como me casé muy joven, entré dentro de ese círculo, así de lo que él decía… e más, venirnos para Canadá, ni siquiera fue mi decisión. Fue su decisión. Él solito fue. Lo hablamos pero no lo dijimos: "hagámoslo", "sino este muchacho nos comentó que aquí podríamos estar mejor que en cualquier lugar". Pero yo todavía me acuerdo que le dije: "no, yo no me voy porque está muy lejos". Y así quedó la plática. De repente él llegó un día y dijo: "aquí están los papeles, ya nos aceptaron", "pero yo no me voy a ir, o sea… vos no me preguntaste si me quería ir". "No, pero yo ya arreglé los papeles y nos vamos". Entonces hasta ahí yo vivía en absoluta sujeción. Todo lo que él decía, eso se hacía".

122 Rubiela: "Entonces al llegar aquí y ver la abundancia de todo lo que el gobierno nos ofreció, para nosotros fue wow…nos hubiéramos venido desde que salimos de Guatemala, no hubiéramos padecido tanto".

> *"it is noticeable when you arrive here and realize how you change because even if you don't want to change, you have to change. You immediately see when women start [saying]: 'I don't like this'. […] And men want to continue imposing […]. So, I can reply: 'remember that here I can go to complain. And here I have support, I have protection and here they will assert my voice[123]'".*

Rubiela conveyed how she was no longer depending economically on her husband, and helped her become more independent. She recalled that one time when she *"wholeheartedly"* spoke to her husband saying: *"I'm sorry but here 'dad government' rules. You give nothing. Here your power is over, here you are nothing, you don't give a cent. Here, the government gives me what I have[124]"*.

Rubiela says regardless of her family struggles, they *"tried to get ahead"*. She and her husband studied English while Sonia was attending school. Rubiela recalls they took first *"basic English"* lessons for about six months, and later started in another college where they studied the language for almost four years. Rubiela wanted to start a university's degree, and besides taking *"advance English course"*, she had to take the High School adult upgrading program to apply for a bachelor's program. Sonia and Rubiela completed High School at the same time. While it took her more than five years completing English courses and upgrading to start a bachelor's program, *"all time they were funded by the government, [for] rent, food, everything, all, all, all…[125]"*, but considering that they

123 Rubiela: "Pero ya no podemos ejercer ninguna tradición… como por… como… por poner por un ejemplo… ¿qué tradición sería más conocida? Ah… la sujeción. La sujeción de mujer con hombre, por ejemplo. Qué se ve enormemente cuando uno llega aquí y se da cuenta y uno cambia porque uno, aunque no quiera, uno tiene que cambiar. Eso se ve inmediatamente. Se nota rapidito cuando la mujer ya empieza: "eso no me gusta", o "no lo quiero ahí". Y los hombres quieren seguir imponiendo su… "pues yo digo que ahí se queda", "pues yo digo y yo digo que no". Y empiezan los problemas. Entonces, yo puedo decir: "acuérdate que aquí yo puedo irme a quejar. Y aquí tengo consuelo, tengo amparo y aquí van a hacer valer mi voz". Ese es uno de los choques bien grandes, qué no sé si ustedes lo han notado".

124 Rubiela: "Una vez hasta… así con todo corazón le dije a mi esposo: "discúlpame, pero aquí papá gobierno manda. Vos no das nada. Aquí se acabó tu poderío, vos aquí no sos nada, pos… vos no das ni un centavo. Aquí el gobierno me da a mí lo que yo tengo".

125 Rubiela: "Entonces todo el tiempo que estuvimos en la escuela, todo el tiempo el gobierno nos… nos financió la… la renta, la comida, todo, todo, todo, todo, todo… y eso a mí en especial me llevó 5 años y medio. Por 5 años y medio.".

were no longer receiving government funding, Luis Carlos and Rubiela decided to work and support Sonia to complete her studies at MacEwan University[126].

Berenice and Mercedes

In the case of Berenice and her three children, the settlement conditions and government support were not too different from what Sonia and Rubiela described. She also mentioned how: *"the government covered everything because… how are you going to pay with? One doesn't bring money or anything. I am telling you they gave everything, all, all, all[127]"*. Berenice and her children also received support from a social worker and were hosted in the accommodations provided by the government for newcomers. Berenice also recalls she was taught where to go shopping, *"where the school [was]… all of that[128]"*. Berenice thinks it was *"beautiful that the government assigned a person to take you out to eat, to buy the things that we needed"*. She also recalls how *"happy"* her children were *"because it was beautiful how they welcomed us, a beautiful thing, nice. And I saw them so happy and thanked God[129]"*.

126 Rubiela: "Ahí nos llevaron a estudiar el inglés. No, primero nos llevaron a estudiar el inglés básico a un colegio que estaba por el Westmount desde… 6 meses. Pasando eso, nos hicieron un test y ya nos mandaron a este colegio. Ahí nos tuvieron 3 años y medio, sólo inglés como segunda lengua. Pero era obligatorio en ese tiempo. […] Entonces me fui al inglés intensivo y hice el TOEFL, pasé el TOEFL… entonces cuando pasé, y yo dije: "bueno, entonces voy a querer ir a la universidad". Entonces me dijeron: "bueno, entonces tienes que estudiar la High School como adulto". Entonces empecé a estudiar del grado 10, 11 y 12. Ahí en ese colegio terminé el… el… la… el…upgrading… ¿cómo le llamaba? Grado 12. Upgrading grado 12 como adulto.
R: Algo así, sí, sí. Entonces este… ahí terminé eso, cuando terminé ahí, entonces era cuando yo iba a regresar a estudiar a la universidad. Pero para todo esto ya habían pasado varios años. Entonces mi hija ya había terminado el grado 12, qué juntas terminamos el grado 12. Ella en su escuela y yo como adulto. Entonces ella tenía que ir a la universidad. Entonces hablamos con mi esposo y dijimos: 'bueno, mejor que vaya ella a la universidad y yo me pongo a trabajar mientras'."

127 Berenice: "pero de parte del gobierno ellos cubrían, ellos cubrían todo eso porque uno de qué va a pagar. Uno no trae ni dinero ni nada. Ya te digo que daban todo, todo a uno, todo, todo, todo".

128 Berenice: "sí, orientación sí nos mandaron una muchacha que nos orientó en todo, qué para ir a comprar… ah… y nos dejó, como te cuento, ella nos dejó en el apartamento. Nos… todo, le dan las camas a uno. Y la orientación qué le dan a uno, le enseñan dónde va a estar la escuela… todo eso".

129 Berenice: "pues fue fácil… fue fácil… fíjate, para mí fue fácil…porque como ya estaba mi hermana aquí. Ya estaba mi hermana aquí… ella ni sabía que yo ya había llegado aquí. Porque como mi viaje fue rápido, entonces ni le… ni tiempo me quedó de decirle: "mira, voy a llegar, pero como yo tenía su dirección de ella, su teléfono". Llegamos aquí… de parte del gobierno a uno le dan… este… cuando uno llega ya le tienen el lugar… entonces, había un hotel donde nos llevaban. Y a nosotros nos llevaron a ese hotel. Y de ahí estuvimos. Mis niños, yo me acuerdo que estaban felices, y ellos se sentían tan felices donde vieron el hotel, vieron… el, ¿cómo se llama? Eh… baño… todo bonito en él… porque lindísimo como nos recibieron. Una cosa bella. Lindo. Y entonces, ellos los miraba yo tan felices. Ay yo le daba gracias a Dios".

Differently from Sonia and Rubiela, in Berenice's case, having family members who resettled in Edmonton before her, and becoming part of the religious community that supported her extended family throughout their resettlement process, eased her adjustment in Edmonton. Berenice didn't experience much of what Sonia referred to as the *"shock of isolation"* during her first years in the city, every weekend, Beliza picked up Berenice and her children to spend time together. She thinks joining a religious community helped her meeting English and Spanish speaking people to be connected to both languages[130]. However, as Sonia pointed out, Berenice also perceives that not knowing her neighbours too closely marks a cultural difference between Canada and El Salvador. She says that nowadays her encounters with her neighbours are still restricted to *"short greetings"*. In part, because her language skills are mostly performed within spheres that require a specific jargon that she already has. She exclaimed *"loving to live in Canada"*, but she *"doesn't feel it for the language"* because her primary context of interaction is with the Latino community that she frequents. Berenice thinks that learning English in her forties undoubtedly represented a challenge. She still doesn't know the names of the neighbours that live in front of the house; although they recognize each other and greet, but long chats still represent a challenge for Berenice:

> *"[…] look, here, this lady, who lives close… imagine, we are neighbours, but the language… sometimes she comes and says: 'hi'. Now, to have a conversation, something like that, those are the challenges for one. I think that for youth not, but for us who arrived of age…there [pointing out a location], and over there my other neighbour, but I don't know their names. And I don't know the name of the lady even though we say 'hi' [to each other]. […] And this is why one longs to go to our countries. Even if it is to visit because there in your country all people know you. In the neighbourhood where you live, well everyone knows you. That is what […] you*

130 Referencias: "yo pienso mira, yo pienso que la iglesia le ayuda a uno. Porque cuando uno empieza a reunirse a la iglesia, pues conoce bastante gente. Entonces si allí, la iglesia tenemos… iglesia hispana y iglesia inglés. Entonces a veces hay reuniones que las hacemos en la iglesia inglés, y ahí uno… puede platicar o… con gente que habla inglés. Yo pienso que eso sí me ha ayudado mucho. Nos ha ayudado a todas las familias".

miss, besides that, I like everything here. Sometimes I say: 'I am going to my country just a month', and I want to come back131".

Berenice also thinks that the Canadian culture is *"completely different, even for food…"* , but she doesn't *"feel the difference"* because she can *"find almost everything that [they] have in [their] countries"* at the stores, what makes her *"happy[132]"*. Besides, she also thinks that weather is a difficult aspect to sort out at the beginning, alongside with learning how to commute around the city:

"well, the cold [weather] is a challenge but you get used to it. When you first arrive, you don't want to get out of your house because you feel the cold. But little by little your body gets used to it. The challenges are also… bussing, and you not knowing [the place], but those are challenges that we have overcome, thank God133".

Mercedes, Berenice's cousin told me in the interview that she was government sponsored, however, her description of her immigration story makes me believe she was privately sponsored by her religious community. Mercedes and José arrived with nine children. When she contacted her sister Nubia in Canada to inquire about the requirements to apply for the asylum process, Nubia was told in the church she frequented that: *"it was a bit difficult because the biggest families that came sponsored had less than four children, not eight because it was a huge responsibility"*. Nubia and her children inquired for options

131 Berenice; "aquí… me gusta, ¡Me encanta Canadá! Pero uno no lo siente… aquí por el idioma. Porque mira, aquí la señora esta, está cerquita… imagínate, somos vecinas, pero el idioma. A veces ella sale y me dice: "hi". […] sí, sale bien contenta: "hi". Y yo le digo: "hi". Pero hasta allí. […] ya, después para mantener una conversación, algo así… eso, eso es los desafíos de… para uno. Yo pienso que para los jóvenes no pero para nosotros que llegamos ya de edad… ahí mi otro vecino, allá tengo el otro vecino. Pero yo no sé cómo se llaman. Y yo no sé cómo se llama la señora aquí también, aunque nos decimos "hi". […] y por eso es que uno añora ir a sus países. Aunque sea de visita. Porque como uno allá en sus países toda la gente lo conoce a uno. […] Donde en el barrio donde uno vive, pues todo… todo el mundo sabe. […] eso es lo que uno, eh… ¿cómo se llama?... extraña, extraña, extraña. Por lo demás, todo a mí me gusta aquí. Hasta a veces digo: "voy a mi país pero no más un mes", y ya me quiero venir".

132 Berenice: "aquí… bueno aquí porque bueno… este… como uno con la gente canadiense es completamente dife… somos bien diferentes. Las culturas de… hasta en las comidas… uno… pero uno se adapta. Se adapta, qué en las comidas… o sea, para mí esa… eso no ha sido este… el problema. Porque aquí pues… uno en el store encuentra casi todo lo que hay en nuestros país que está ahí. Y uno ay cómo se alegra, ay esto lo tiene mi país. Este… yo pienso que no hallo diferencia".

133 Berenice: "eh bueno, el frío. El frío es un desafío pero se acostumbra uno (min 3:56). Cuando uno recién llega pues no quiere ni salir de la casa porque siente frío. Pero el cuerpo se va acomodando poquito a poco. Los desafíos es también andar en el bus. Ah… y tal vez uno sin conocer, pero… son desafíos que los hemos superado, gracias a Dios".

to facilitate their immigration process. Thus, Mercedes' family hosted her during the first months of resettlement. In her case:

> *"when the applications arrived [were approved] and everything, the government gave us the ten plane tickets and said that when my husband and I started working, that we had to pay [them] back, that it was going to be like a loan. […] We came that way, ah… refugees. […] sponsored by the government and my sisters and nephews that opened the doors of their house as well to host us[134]".*

Mercedes was in her late thirties when she arrived in Canada, she recalls that *"arriving here was a very hard challenge"*. She thought she *"would never be able to learn the language"*. For Mercedes, it was hard taking care of her nine children who were very young and finding time to learn English. She started studying when they went to school. [135]". As for Berenice and her children, in Mercedes' case, counting on family members who were previously established in Edmonton helped them feel connected since their arrival and counteract the *"shock of isolation"* that was experienced in the case of Sonia and Rubiela. However, Mercedes outlined that settling in Edmonton with nine children has its limitations. She mentioned how being a big family restricted their access to psychosocial services and orientation. Mercedes recalls that the first time she heard of psychosocial support was when one of her children passed away, she says that: *"until then, I realized that there were persons that you could talk to, that there were social workers, that you could go to talk to about how you feel after losing a loved one. That's when I realized, but when we arrived, we didn't know about that[136]"*.

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134 Mercedes: "N: es algo muy, muy interesante. Pero, este, cuando llegaron aplicaciones y todo, el gobierno nos dio los pasajes de los aviones. 10 pasajes del avión. Y dijo que cuando mi esposo estuviera trabajando, y yo estuviera trabajando, qué lo íbamos a pagar de nuevo, verdad, qué va a ser como un préstamo. […] así, vinimos así, ah… refugiados. […] esponsoreados por el gobierno y… mi hermana y mis sobrinos que abrieron las puertas de su casa también, para recibirnos"

135 Mercedes: "y ya, cuando llegamos aquí, ya tenía… ¿qué? Treinta y… treinta y nueve, 40 años, sí. Y cuando llegamos aquí fue un reto bien duro. ¡Oh! Yo pensaba que nunca iba a poder aprender el idioma y tenía a mis niños, estaban chiquitos todavía. Pero dije: "en cuanto mis niños se vayan a la… a la escuela, yo me pongo a estudiar".

136 Mercedes: "N: no, aquí. Porque mi hija murió aquí. Entonces, este… hasta entonces me di cuenta que habían personas que uno podía platicar con ellas, que eran trabajadoras sociales, qué puede ir uno conversar como se siente después de que ha perdido un ser querido. Y entonces fue que me di cuenta, pero cuando vinimos, no me di cuenta de eso".

Nowadays, Mercedes thinks that psychosocial support would have been a helpful resource for her and her family to learn how to navigate their family struggles. One time, they tried to seek assistance in an organization, but were told they *"were not able to help a big family*[137]*"* like hers. She thinks that this kind of support would have benefit her:

> *"a lot. Not just for her personal life, but for her marriage life, her family life, it would have been very helpful […] because I would have opened my children's mentality, and from a tender age help other people. Me, myself, I could have helped other women with children and sometimes they don't know what to do… or that have husbands abusing them, and I could have helped them in that way*[138]*".*

Differently than the case of Rubiela, the "traditional" male domination referred to by her seemed not to be contested in Mercedes' case. Although Mercedes didn't speak openly about experiencing 'machismo' in her household, she described situations when she was supposed to follow her husband's will. Mercedes explained to me that she knew they *"received family law [or childs' benefit], […] what was for our children. But as that came on behalf of my husband, he was the one organizing everything"*. At that time, Mercedes' husband told her that the money they received was not enough for their life expenses. Thus, they both took their children to work with them to perform the low paid job they found to gain more income. Nowadays, Mercedes acknowledges that forcing their children to work was an abusive treatment against them: *"because my children were studying, my husband got a job and said: 'wow, you, and you and you, are coming with me to work'. And I also went to work with him"*. Mercedes thinks that if she would have had orientation or *"preparation"* she would have known to respond to her husband: *"no, no, you go to work, I stay at home and I can help my children"*. Mercedes remembers that during that time her children came back from work without having done their homework and *"went late to bed*

137 Mercedes: "N: me hubiera ayudado muchísimo, entonces. Porque en… la organización x había unas personas que mi sobrina fue a pedir ayuda ahí. Pero cuando les dijo cómo era mi familia que era muy grande, que le dijo: "no, nosotros no podemos ayudar a una familia tan grande".

138 Mercedes: "N: ya, eso es lo que ellos… pero yo pienso que a mí me hubiera ayudado muchísimo. No solamente en mi propia vida; en mi vida de matrimonio, en mi vida de mi familia, me hubiera ayudado muchísimo. […] porque mis… este… les hubiera abierto la mentalidad a mis hijos, y desde una tierna edad hubieran podido ayudar a otras personas. Yo misma, hubiera podido ayudar a otras este… mujeres que tienen hijos y a veces no hayan ni qué hacer o… qué tienen esposos que las abusan, y podría haberles ayudado de esa manera".

because they had to help [them] working[139]*"*. She says the routine they were accustomed to in her household pushed their children to lose interest in school[140]. She says she was not aware of it before and stressed how at that time: *"needs always came*[141]*"*.

Nowadays, when Mercedes meets women with children, she invites them to chat and share her experience, specially with*: "single mothers who are with their children and their husband are doing the same to them*[142]*"*. The interview with Mercedes was particularly challenging. I perceived our conversation stirred in her memories that affected her deeply. I didn't feel comfortable delving to inquire more about her relationship with her husband, or her experience seeking psychosocial support in organizations. Regardless that Mercedes told me that she and her family didn't receive counselling in organizations since their arrival, she also remembers they received assistance in *"places supporting immigrants*[143]*"* to learn English. It was not clear to me how they received government's financial aid, and what she meant by *"family law"*. I believe she meant the Canadian child benefit.

Compared to Rubiela's case, Berenice and Mercedes studied English for a shorter period of time. Berenice found a cleaning job after one year of studying English, which she still enjoys doing[144]. Mercedes found a caregiver job *"when [she] was able to better understand English"*. However, her boss requested all employees of proof certificate training, otherwise they would be fired. After that event, she took a certificate training to

139 Mercedes: "Los abusé y con mi esposo también, porque mis hijos estaban estudiando, mi esposo agarró un trabajo y dijo mi esposo: "wow, tú y tú y tú, se van conmigo a trabajar". Y yo también me iba con él a trabajar. Si hubiera tenido esa preparación, yo le hubiera dicho: "no, no, tú te vas a trabajar, yo me quedo en casa y puedo ayudar a mis hijos". Pero ellos cuando venían del trabajo no habían hecho sus tareas. Este… iban a la cama tarde, porque tenían que ayudarnos a trabajar".

140 Mercedes: "sí, así es, así es de que… este… yo pienso que en ese tiempo… el tiempo pasa, las necesidades siempre vienen, pero uno tiene que ponerse en el lugar. Y cuando uno se pone en el lugar, todo va a pasar, pero va a pasar diferente. Porque este… yo hubiera podido dedicarles tiempo a mis hijos, de poderlos ayudar, de poderlos mandar temprano a la cama; ellos se levantan con gusto a poder estudiar. Pero cuando uno los abusa de esa manera, pierden hasta el interés de la escuela, sí".

141 Mercedes: "sí, así es, así es de que… este… yo pienso que en ese tiempo… el tiempo pasa, las necesidades siempre vienen, pero uno tiene que ponerse en el lugar".

142 Mercedes: "Y de esa manera… a madres solteras, este a madres que también tienen sus esposos y que los esposos están haciendo lo mismo, ves. Así es de que me gusta mucho compartir con ellos".

143 Mercedes: "todos esos son lugares que Canadá ha puesto para que ayude a inmigrantes, y yo recibí una grande ayuda de parte de ellos.".

144 Berenice: "Y ya después le dan un año de estudio… pero después tienes que trabajar. Hay que trabajar. A mí me encantó trabajar. Cuando me dijeron que iba a trabajar, qué buscara trabajo… y busqué trabajo. Así, de andar limpiando, casas… y… sí, me sentí feliz, ya no dejé de trabajar.".

keep her job. Mercedes' desire was becoming a doctor, but due to war conditions in El Salvador she couldn't study. In Mexico she didn't have other options but to take care of her family[145].

Manuel and Rosita in the Village of L'Original

Rosita and her family arrived in the province of Ontario when she was almost twelve years old. In her case the *"cultural shock"* was also *"pretty big"*. She thinks that they were *"not psychologically prepared for that change".* Although she knew they were leaving Colombia, she *"didn't fully catch"* what immigrating in Canada would entail. Rosita says: *"moving, going to a new country, that we were going to learn a new language, that was like… I was not… not prepared for a change like that, you know…"*. She was astonished when she first experienced the low temperatures of Ontario, and became familiar with winter clothes: *"they were waiting for us with jackets, and you know, those winter pants, and I [asked]: 'what is this?', it was the first time I wore something that big […] I don't know, I felt weird […], and we had to wait for about twenty minutes for the bus to arrive, and what a cold!... I had never experienced that much cold in my life…[146]"*. That day they were hosted in a hotel for a few weeks and later went to live in an apartment.

Rosita and her parents were also sponsored by the Canadian government. She realized that apprehending the dynamics of the new environment entailed a continuous process of learning, for her *"everything was learning"*. Considering that she arrived at an early age *"it was very easy to grasp the language… after one year I could defend myself… I*

145 Mercedes: "Y, y así fue, me puse a estudiar, y comencé a… en cuento entendía un poco el inglés, comencé a trabajar porque mi… mi anhelo era poder llegar a ser enfermera. Y por lo de la guerra no me pude graduar en mi país, y en México ya no tenía opciones, ah. Tenía que cuidar la familia. Y… luego, cuando tuve oportunidad aquí me puse a estudiar, comencé a trabajar y comencé a trabajar en un asilo de ancianos, como nursing aid. Pero pasados dos años de trabajo, dijo el patrón que… qué si no teníamos el certificado de nursing aid, que nos iban a despedir.".

146 Rosita: "Entonces, y después ah… llegamos a Ontario, en el 2004, y ah… no, un shock cultural, ¿me entiendes? El shock fue bastante grande… porque creo que psicológicamente tampoco nosotros estábamos preparados para ese cambio, todo era como que: "vamos donde mi papá… donde mis padres van…", y era como que… no había yo captado que íbamos a cambiarnos, qué íbamos a un nuevo país, qué íbamos a aprender una nueva lengua… era como…no, no estaba preparada para ese cambio así, sabes…y ah…(min 11:29)… y no, llegando allá, ¡el frío!... hahahaha… me acuerdo cuando nos bajamos y ya nos estaban esperando con chaquetas, y tú sabes, los pantalones de invierno, y yo: "¿qué es esto?", primera vez que me ponía así algo como tan grande, tan…(hu, hu…carraspera), tan no sé, me sentía rara, entonces yo le dije que no, qué el pantalón no… y nos tocó esperar como unos 20 minutos para que viniera el bus, ¡y un frío!… yo nunca había sentido tanto frío en mi vida…".

could speak… hahaha… and communicate". Before officially starting regular classes in school, Rosita took *"francisation"* classes. In the case of her parents *"grasping"* the language was very hard; she remembers her mom crying a lot, *"she wanted to return… she didn't want to be here… oh… my dad… it was harder for them because you have to learn another language being an adult, and it is harder to grab it"*. The first months for Rosita's parents were "*too hard […] for the fact of nonbeing able to communicate, being locked up because in Colombia you were accustomed to always be outdoors*[147]*"*. By *"always being outdoors"*, Rosita means that some people in Colombia are used to spending most of their time outside, sometimes just hanging out in front of their houses, due to the high temperatures of the north coast regions.

Besides the language, Rosita mentioned it was hard for her parents learning that their educational credentials didn't *"account, [neither] your education; it is like: 'what am I going to do here, right?'*[148]*"*. Rosita explained to me that newcomers usually receive social support while *"you can… learn the language and then go and find a job and defend yourself"*, like it was in the case of Rubiela and Berenice. However, she thinks that governments' financial aid is not what all families aim for. Rosita believes that government's support for newcomers *"is not a system where you always would like to remain in and say: 'oh, I am going to hang on to social support'"*. Looking forward to having a higher income for their families *"many, many parents get out of it and start working… right, doing other things*[149]*"*. She mentioned that newcomers usually take two

147 Rosita: "R: ya, bueno. Los primeros meses duro por mi mamá, porque lloraba mucho. No lo hacían ante nosotros pero sí siempre se veía eso. Ah… al poco tiempo de estar aquí pues le anunciaron la muerte de mi abuelo… huhu (carraspera), de la pérdida… para mi papá la pérdida de su papá pues también le dio duro. Y ah…entonces, al principio muy duro, duro para mis padres… ah, también el hecho de no poder comunicarse, estar encerrados… cuando en Colombia pues estás tan acostumbrado a estar siempre afuera… ¿entiendes?".
148 Rosita: "R: y no, todo es aprendizaje, no… donde eh… um, nos buscaron colegio… en el colegio pues tuve que tomar "francización", y ah… y como tenía solo 9 años, pues fue bien fácil agarrar la lengua para mí… ah… ya en un año pues ya me podía defender y… podía pues hablar… hahaha… y comunicarme pero ya para mis padres siendo adultos pues le dio bastante duro, mi mamá lloraba mucho… se quería regresar, mi mamá se quería regresar… no quería estar aquí… ah… mi papá eh… a ellos les da más duro porque tiene que aprender otra lengua, ya cuando estás así adulto pues es más duro agarrarlo y… el hecho que aquí no cuentan tu diploma, tu educación, es como que: "¿qué voy a hacer aquí, no?"…
149 Rosita: "porque usualmente cuando llegas pues te meten en ayuda social, mientras tú puedes… pues aprendes la lengua y ya puedes buscar trabajo y defenderte, no… pero creo que no es un sistema que tú siempre te quieres quedar ahí: "oh, voy a quedarme con la ayuda social". Muchos, muchos padres se salen de ahí y comienzan a trabajar… ya haciendo otras cosas para pues tener una… eh, ingresos; mejores ingresos para sus familias".

different pathways throughout their resettlement process because *"if your income is too low, well, the government gives you financial support, but that is just really for what's basic, right: eat; for food, […]. It is not like an income for you to maintain yourself that time; if you want to buy something else, well of course you will have limitations"*. Rosita's parents wanted *"something better, more solid for them*" and his father found a job, but Rosita believes that most people who arrive of advanced age, *"they decide to study*[150]*"*.

In Rosita's case, they received orientation and support from Latino communities and social organizations in L'Original, what helped them alleviate the adjustment process. They had a translator who volunteered to support them since their arrival, she thinks it was *"beautiful"* counting on someone else to help them navigate the changes they were facing. Rosita and her parents firsthand experienced how challenging the settlement process for newcomers is and felt motivated *to "help another family in their arrival"*, after three years of living in Ontario[151]. Rosita believes being part of organizations, participating in dancing groups and Colombian events eased their adaptation. Rosita keeps as *"good memories"* performing cumbia, merengue and la pulla with the dancing groups she joined[152]. The fact of being here, and not having relatives in Canada brought Rosita's family closer together *"doing everything as a family"*. Rosita told me about the time when they didn't have a car and used a wagon to go shopping; regardless of the snow, they *"went together as a family to do groceries and put them in the wagon… hahahaha. It was funny so I always remember that*[153]".

150 Rosita: "M: ¿o cómo lo recuerdas, de pronto…entiendes cómo funciona? R: creo que es un poquito como aquí que si tus ingresos son muy bajos, pues el gobierno te da cierta ah…una… […] un apoyo financiero, pero realmente es para lo básico, no: comer; pues para la comida, para esto…es como que… no es un ingreso "que sea" [min 14:49] bien para mantenerte ese tiempo y si quieres comprar otra cosa pues claro que vas a tener esas limitaciones… pero ya, yo pienso que mi papá pues quería como algo mejor, más sólido para nosotros, y enseguida comenzó a trabajar así… ah pero hay otras personas que aunque llegan a una edad bastante avanzada, pues deciden hacer sus estudios… y…y ah… y continuar sus estudios aquí, no".

151 Rosita: "Ah… la traductora para la familia que recién llegan, entonces… ya… esa parte es bonita, es bonito porque nosotros también lo hicimos; ya que cuando teníamos bastante tiempo, 3, 3 años en Quebec, ya podíamos nosotros ayudar a otra familia que recién llegaba…entonces pues bonito que lo hicieron por nosotros y que después del tiempo, nosotros también lo pudimos hacer con otras familias".

152 Rosita: "bailábamos cumbia, la pulla, merengue; teníamos nuestro grupito. Hacíamos presentaciones, ¿sabes? Para los colombianos, entonces tengo muy bonito recuerdos también, de eso… entonces, creo que el hecho de ser parte de como… de haber participado en esas cosas, como que hacen tu adaptación también te ayude, no."

153 Rosita: "ya… sí, y no teníamos carro; mi papá no sabía conducir… entonces; eso es lo más bonito recuerdo, qué agarrábamos una… ¿cómo se dice? Una "palabra en francés" (min 28:46)[…] hahahaha. Ah, like a cart… that you can… que tiene como que cuatro rueditas…y lo agarrábamos para ir a mercar…

After Rosita was in Middle School, her parents decided to move out to Edmonton. It was hard finding a *"good job for [the summer] season"* in L'Original and their Colombian acquaintances they met in town came earlier to Edmonton in search for more job opportunities. Their friends encouraged them to move cities: *"Don José, you should come here with your family, bring them, there are lots of opportunities… you will find a job with better income, and all that*[154]*"*. Moreover, Rosita's parents were interested in her learning English because she was already fluent in French. For Rosita, heading to Edmonton was difficult because she had already made friends and went *"through that process of adaptation*[155]". Changing cities meant being relocated into *"a totally new world"*. Rosita felt that the town of L'Original already was *"part of her life"*, she foresaw herself:

> *"like having established [in L'Original], that 'I am going to stay here', do you understand? Hahaha… I had my boyfriend and all those things for a young girl are hard, it is like the end of the world, you know… hahahaha. So, I [wondered]: no, again, why?! […] and the same here (in Edmonton) […], and I was already very accustomed to the Canadian culture [there] and arriving here and seeing like a lot of Multiculturalism, that kind of shocked me. It shocked me because I didn't live in Montreal, I mean, I came from a village…*[156]*".*

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hahaha… y allá hay mucha nieve, en Ontario hay mucha nieve, en esa época había bastante nieve. Y nos recuerdo que todos íbamos en familia… todo lo hacíamos en familia, hahahaha… entre todos nos íbamos a buscar el mercado, a echar las compras ahí… y nosotros con el carrito, hahahaha… […] estaba chistoso, entonces siempre me… nos recordamos de eso, y sí, pasamos por eso, sabes… Y ah… y no, pues mi papá dijo: "no, eso no puede seguir con el invierno, nunca aprender", y le vendieron un carro… así entre unos colombianos que vendían cosas… hahaha… y que: "ah, tengo este computador…" y…".

154 Rosita: "Ah, mi papá primero que todo quería para nosotros que tuviéramos el inglés, entonces ya se dio cuenta que nosotros nos defendíamos muy bien en el francés, todos nosotros y… y él quería que aprendiéramos otra lengua, y era muy difícil conseguir un buen trabajo en L'Original también, por esta temporada. Y muchos colombianos, qué ya conocíamos, como te dije, de la comunidad latina allá, um… ya se habían mudado para Edmonton, y les estaba yendo súper bien a esas personas… y mi papá… siempre le decían a mi papá: […] decían: "no, don Francisco, tiene que venirse para acá con su familia…tráigalos, hay muchas oportunidades… el trabajo, se va a hacer mejores ingresos, y todo eso…"

155 Rosita: "ya yo tenía 15 años, hahaha… a los 15 años… ¡Ay pero a mí me dio duro! Porque sabes, ya había pasado por ese proceso como de adaptación; tenía mis amigas…".

156 Rosita: "es… que ya era parte… ya, esta es mi vida; yo… yo veía mi vida, y era muy buena pues también en el colegio, tenía muy buenas notas, qué como tenía establecido que: "yo me voy a quedar aquí", ¿entiendes? Hahaha… tenía mi novio, también y… todo eso, y eso es para una jovencita pues le da duro, es como el fin del mundo… hahahahaha, sabes… entonces yo: "no, otra vez… ¿por qué?" heheheh… ah… y lo mismo aquí, sabes, qué como que otro mundo, totalmente para mí; ¿esto qué es? Hahah… y ya estaba acostumbrada a la cultura bastante canadiense y llegué aquí y ver tanto ¿multiculturalismo? Como que me impactó. Me impactó por lo que yo no viví en Quebec City o Montreal, o sea, yo vine como de un pueblito…".

For Rosita, settling down in Edmonton entailed a:

> *"big switch in the sense that… wow, there was just French [in L'original] and here you [are still] in Canada but with another language and what I knew… well, logically in L'Original we had English classes but it is not for you to be bilingual, it was like: 'hello, how are you?' those were the words I knew to utter… but I didn't speak, I couldn't hold a conversation157".*

Regardless that Rosita felt *"adapted"* in L'Original after three years of living there, she experienced an initial *"culture shock"* when she first arrived *"in a village, a region where everyone is like 'whitie'… do you understand? Hahaha… and you really feel the difference[158]"*. At that time, Rosita *"felt like non-belonging"*, in her schooling environment, she perceived herself as *"different"*. Although there were a few Latino classmates in the *"francisation"* program, what made her feel she was *"not the only one"*, after class she felt exposed to a *"reality"* in which she was being *"stared at as if you were a stranger[159]"*.

Rosita encountered kids that made fun of new immigrant students in school, asking them: *"what are you doing here? Oh, go back to your country"*. On those occasions Rosita perceived they looked at her *"as if they were superior to you"* and made her feel *"bad"*. She explained to me not all students behaved in the same manner, but the ambience she navigated throughout her first year of school was marked by racism and discrimination[160].

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157 Rosita: "y no…y todo en inglés, eso como que para mí fue un gran switch, en el… en el sentido que como que wow, allá era puro francés y aquí estamos en Canadá pero otra lengua, y lo que sabía, pues lógicamente en Quebec nos dan clases de inglés, pero es como una clase que nadie, que realmente no es para… no sales de ahí como bilingual, es como que: "hello, how are you?", esa era las palabras que yo sabía decir. Like: "when, how…", that's it… you know… hahaha… pero no hablaba, no, no podía tener una conversación…".

158 Rosita: "Y ah… lo que yo me recuerdo, o sea… hahah… esa, es un choque cultural donde no hablas la lengua, tú, tú quedas mirando y sobre todo cuando llegas en una… en un pueblito, región, donde todos son como "blanquitos", "monitos" … ¿entiendes? Hahaha… y sientes como bastante la diferencia, sabes…".

159 Rosita: "Y ah… lo que yo me recuerdo, o sea… hahah… esa, es un choque cultural donde no hablas la lengua, tú, tú quedas mirando y sobre todo cuando llegas en una… en un pueblito, región, donde todos son como "blanquitos", "monitos" … ¿entiendes? Hahaha… y sientes como bastante la diferencia, sabes… M: ¿cómo sentiste tú esa diferencia? R: ya…um… bueno, sentía como que no, no pertenecía… no tenía ese sentido que: "oh, yo pertenezco aquí", como que te sientes diferente… aunque tienes ah… en la clase de francización pues tienes latinos, de otras culturas; pues en la clase sí como que te sientes: "oh, no soy la única", sabes… pero ya cuando estás afuera de esa clase y ves como la realidad de pro… o porque te quedan mirando así, como si tú fueras como rara…".

160 Rosita: "ah…en el sentido porque… ¿cómo te digo? (silencio) Habían niños como que se burlaban de los, de los nuevos, sabes…y ah… M: ¿en tú colegio? R: ya…ujú, entonces decían: "oh, regrésate a tu país", o,

Nowadays, Rosita wonders if her experience would have been different if she would have arrived in a big city like Montreal or Edmonton *"where there are people from all cultures"*. She believes that these dynamics of discrimination and social exclusion in L'Original tend to be more prominent because it is a small town where *"there is not too many Latinos and you are the only one"*. She thinks that acts of discrimination are rooted in *"ignorance and fear of the unknown*[161]*"*. When Rosita changed schools, she was also one of the few immigrants in her classroom: *"there were like two or three and I was very shy so, even though I grabbed the language pretty easy, I didn't make friends that easy […]"*. Rosita feels starting Middle School was *"easier"* because she already counted on a few friends. She felt *"like a little [more] part of the group"*. This made her feel empowered to contest students' aggressions towards new immigrants when they were told to *"smell ugly, things like that"*. On those occasions Rosita confronted them asking:

> *"why are you calling them that way if they are also of my culture? and they said: 'no, but you are different'. So, that's when you already are part of the group, like you are different, you are not… do you understand? There was like that mentality… I don't know, racist, like: 'oh, they are coming here to take away what is ours', I don't know if it is patriotism, you know? Because in that region they defend their culture a lot, language is something embedded within them…*162*"*.

"¿oh, qué hacen aquí? Oh, oh miran ellos", y te comienzan como a mirar bastante ahmm…como si ellos fueran superiores a ti… sabes, y te hacen sentir mal… no siendo que todos son así; pero el primer año fue como un poquito así, sabes… y ahm…".

161 Rosita: "R: ya, así… pero no sé si ya…si hubiera sido diferente ya llegando, por ejemplo, a una ciudad como Montreal, o sea, llegas a Montreal y hay personas de todo… las culturas como Edmonton, así o sea, vas a ver de todas las culturas y todo eso. Pero creo que el hecho que era un pueblito, sabes, donde no hay casi, no hay casi latinos… y tú eres la única, digamos, en tu clase que es de color… pues normalmente vas a sentir esas diferencias, no. Y creo que, sea por ignorancia, miedo a lo desconocido…"

162 Rosita: "Después nos cambiaron para otro colegio, de primaria también, y también era una de las únicas… muy poquitos migrantes… poquitos, eran como 2 o 3… y ahm…era muy tímida yo también, entonces, aunque agarré la lengua… bastante rápido, pues que no es que me hacía así amiga súper rá… súper fácil de niños y todo eso, tenía más amistades pues con los latinos, obviamente, porque habían organismos que nos sacaban ah… a hacer actividades, a conocer más… ah… la cultura y todo eso, entonces ahí pues hablaba más con los niñitos, no… pero… ya en secundaria, fue cuando bueno, donde ya tienes… ya tenía bastante… manejaba muy bien el francés, y ya tenía como ya amiguitos que venían de primaria conmigo para secundaria, entonces el proceso de secundaria fue un poquito más fácil para mí, en el sentido que… ¿cómo te diría? Que hice cuatro, quinto y sexto… tres años de primaria, no. Entonces en eso me hice fue poquitos amigos, y todo eso, pero esos poquitos amigos, cuando ya estaba en secundaria y yo ya tenía 12 años… pues ya era como un poquito parte del grupo, digamos, no. Entonces veía como cuando otros inmigrantes venían, le decían la misma cosa: "oh, vete a tu país…", y como: "ellos huelen a feo…", cosas así. Y yo les digo: "¿por qué dices eso si ellos son de mi cultura también?", y ellos decían: "no, pero tú eres diferente". Entonces, ya

In the case of Manuel and his family, their settlement process worked out in a similar manner as it happened for Rosita and her parents, they were hosted in residences for newcomers and received orientation during their first months of adjustment. They casually coincided with a Quebecan family that spoke Spanish and became friends with them, what made them feel connected and welcome in the village of L'Original. Manuel and his family lived in this village of Ontario for about five years. He refers to his memories living there as experiences simultaneously marked by *"good"* and *"bad"* events. On one side, being supported by the government, becoming familiar with an unknown cultural environment, having the opportunity to learn a new language*, "playing in the snow for the first time"*; and getting to know a different landscape was perceived by Manuel as *"chévere"* or *"cool"*:

> *"because we arrived in winter and it was the first time one saw snow. And you also start like listening to another language for the first time […], and seeing people with other habits and behaving differently and then, you differentiate like: 'ah, see, they do this and we don't… they behave this way and we do it this way'… and you adapt, like identifying those behaviours; and we started studying French.163"*

Manuel and his family moved into a *"Canadian-style house"*, he remembers it *"was like a low-income house"* with three rooms. In a certain way, Manuel's perception of government's support as a "parenting" duty, echoes Rubiela's perception *of "dad government"*, as a supplier for basic needs. Nowadays, Manuel thinks of themselves at that time like *"babies"* that needed a *"lot of help"* to arrange a doctor's appointment; housing; schooling: *"at the beginning with clothes, and government's support for all it gave. We*

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cuando tú eres parte del grupo como que ya eres diferente, no eres… no… ¿entiendes? Habían como… esa mentalidad… no sé, de… racista de como que: "oh, vienen aquí a, a quitarnos lo que es nuestro", no sé si es patriotismo, ¿sabes? Porque en Quebec sí defienden mucho la cultura, la lengua, está muy en ellos…".

163 Manuel: "E: oh pues allá… eso fue súper chévere porque llegamos en un invierno, y era la primera vez que uno ve la nieve. Y… y comienza uno pues también a como… a escuchar otro idioma por primera vez, y a ver gente eh… pues sí, como, como que… con otras costumbres y como que se portaban diferente, y ya comenzaba uno a diferenciar: "uy, mira, eso ellos hacen esto y nosotros no…", o "ellos se comportan así y nosotros lo hacemos así…". Y siempre era como que… esa adapta… como identificaban todos los comportamientos, y pues sí, empezamos a, a ir a estudiar francés."

were not working but there was the social support that helped us to maintain everything okay and for that we were happy[164]".

On the other hand, while we chat, Manuel reflected on his settlement process: *"now that I analyze it, I mean, maybe it could had been a not very good experience; but at the same time there were good things that hid the bad part of Ontario, like racism, a lot of racism […]".* Manuel became aware of racism when he was able to better understand French, he *"started to hear the insults. They said [things] like: 'oh, damn Colombians, go back to your country'*[165]*".* As it happened in the case of Rosita, Manuel mostly experienced racism when he was at school, however he mentioned phrases like *"damn Colombians"* and *"go back to your country"* were *"very common everywhere*[166]*"*. Manuel recalls the fights at school between the *"new Colombians"*, often being discriminated by *"white Canadians",* within an scenario in which there: *"was the one looking for [a fight] and the one replying back; sometimes they were with other friends looking for fights and went out to the park"*. Manuel pointed out that some of the new immigrants dared to contest aggressions, however, he thought of himself at that time as *"very shy for those things, like very introverted"*. He usually *"never said anything"* against the insults, not

164 Manuel: "Y éramos… ahora que lo analizo, sí, o sea… sí pudo haber sido una experiencia de pronto como que no muy buena, pero, pero que a la vez también había muchas cosas buenas que ocultaban la parte mala de Ontario. Como el racismo, mucho racismo. Pero habían como que… oh…como que las primeras… como jugar en la nieve por primera vez; primer trabajo, aprender otro idioma y… y sí, como primera casa grande como al estilo canadiense, porque nosotros vivíamos en un pueblito, y era una casa pequeña… tres cuartos, y era así como que muy… pues, como de bajos recursos, diría… aquí uno llega a una casa de esas y el gobierno nos estaba ayudando. Y nos daban de… mucha ayuda. Entonces estábamos como… wow… como… estábamos como unos bebés, pero sí, a la misma vez… a la hora que… y pues había muchas actividades, nos apoyaban mucho a veces en las citas al médico, como con el colegio, y en el comienzo como también con una ropa, y pues está la ayuda social del, del gobierno de Quebec. Que daba por todos, y no estábamos trabajando, pero hay la ayuda social que mantenía todo bien, por eso estábamos todos contentos".

165 Manuel: "sí, no, el racismo como que… esa era la primera vez como que… y pues uno no entendía el idioma, y todo el mundo le decía a uno cosas ahí, y ya comenzaban unos… como… o, o sea… "es que dijeron tal cosa", y yo: "ah, ve, ahora qué se…" como que pues a traducir y a escuchar cuando empezaba a, a, a… teniendo el francés, empezábamos a escuchar los insultos. Empezaban a decir como que: "oh… malditos colombianos… váyanse para su país…".

166 Manuel: "y uno de 13 años, 12, le decían a uno que: "malditos colombianos…", por ejemplo, era el típico por ahí: "váyanse para su país…", esa es la frase muy, muy común; muy común por todo lado. Pero uno como estábamos… como que, o sea, el grupito de colombianos, porque habíamos como 20 en una escuela como de 1200 personas".

even when *"they spat on"* him. Manuel thinks about himself as someone who *"only observes and not as the one that reacts[167]"*.

I asked Manuel if he knew why Colombians in his class were discriminated against, and he explained to me that locals tended to think Latinos *"were going to take away [their] jobs"*. He mentioned it was common to hear people saying these kinds of things. Moreover, Manuel says people in this region want immigrants to speak French because *"they are protecting"* their language; in Rositas' words, *"their culture"*. Manuel also brought back to memory being mocked at school for his outfit when he was feeling *"too cold*, *immediately you were spotted"*. He told me how new students were pointed out for their skin color and shared the story of one of his friends who struggled when other students wanted to *"touch his curly hair, as if they had never seen someone with [it]"*. Manuel mentioned some students refused to work with immigrants, saying they *"smelled ugly[168]"*.

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167 Manuel: "sí, o sea, y era todo… como el resto eran puros eh… blancos, canadienses, canadienses, todo en Francés, y sí, y llegamos como en grupitos de español qué como que estaban recién llegados en ese… en…una semana, o meses, antes nosotros también estábamos todos ahí… y sí, era como eso… a ver… y pues… como el que… el que buscaba, el que respondía eso estaban a veces con otros amigos a buscar peleas, iban a pelear en un, en un parque por allá…M: ¿con los colombianos? E: con los colombianos, creo que unos caleños y… y con los… los de Bogotá también… porque, porque no se la dejaban. Pero yo sí era como muy tímido en eso, era como muy para adentro… y yo por ejemplo estaba, y nunca decía nada… y… y sí, a veces estaban ahí , y resulta que a veces también escupían, lo escupían a uno… ¡nos escupían! Y uno no hacía nada también, pero, por ejemplo, en las escaleras tenían unos… como una manera… como serpientes… así (muestra la lengua), no sé cómo le hacían… pero es como que con la boca así, y sale como veneno… así como… como saliba, no. Iban subiendo, y cuando uno se da cuenta uno iba hablando con los amigos de uno, o ósea, a veces con algún… sí, entre latinos, íbamos ahí… pero el montón de gente subiendo por las escaleras cuando sonaba la campana, y cuando uno sentía como, como que agua… y uno miraba pa' arriba y se estaban riendo los otros allá que le acababan de escupir a uno. Y los otros sí, en seguida estaban ahí que la van a desquitar, para que no se la monten al otro, y se iban a pelear con el otro, y el otro… y sí, pero yo, yo sí era como muy tímido… y yo nunca… y yo siempre como que he sido como que observador nada más, no. Nunca he sido el que reacciona".

168 Manuel: "oh pues porque decían como que… como que… "oh, qué nos vienen a quitar los trabajos… ustedes los latinos", sabes, y eso allá se ve mucho como que eso, de que nos vienen a quitar los trabajos. De qué… pues sí, como de que, que estamos hablando en español y quieren como que uno hable francés, porque están protegiendo su francés… allá mucho, no. Y sí, era como que… eso es lo como que… en esos tres años, como se vio mucho el… como que la burla, por ejemplo, que si uno se viste de una manera… qué si este está o es uno así… y como que si uno tenía mucho frío, y se vestía con una…en seguida lo miraban a uno así (como señalándolo)… sí, entonces… y como que se ríen. Como que uno se siente como que… y sí, y las palabritas y… y como que el color de la piel de uno. Y por ejemplo, habían unos amigos también como nosotros, que sí, como que tenían el cabello como muy enrizado y venían a tocarlo, como que… a tocárselo así, no… como el corte que se hacía… así, como que no conocieran o nunca hubieran visto a nadie, no, a nadie… como que se…M: como que tenían el cabello crespo, ¿de pronto? E: el crespo, como que… o sea, como que así se hacían… eran como unos… súper curlys, o sea… entonces estaban como que con eso. Pero eso, ah, ah… y pues en la clase también, por ejemplo, en la clase como que nadie quiere trabaja… estudiar con uno. "Como que vamos a hacer una tarea en…. En francés, o… vamos a estudiar algo en grupo, así, en

I also asked Manuel how his family relationships were affected by the changes they were facing, and if he ever discussed with his parents his experiences at school. Manuel never told his mother, neither his stepfather nor siblings:

> *"because in [his] family they never share anything. No one ever has shared anything, we are accustomed, also for family issues… that you don't share anything, whatever anyone is experiencing or feeling, you keep it for yourself… since I was a kid, so all things that have been kept (points at his heart) they accumulate and accumulate and like you never let them go… or never heal… I don't know why… because it seems that if they don't heal that affects you mentally[169]".*

Although he allowed me to understand he was closer to his sister and went together to the same school, he doesn't know if she was *"victim of racism because she was 'whiter'"* than he is and *"maybe she didn't feel it that real…"*. To date, he doesn't know how her schooling experiences were, they *"always let things happen: 'oh, leave it that way, leave it that way… next, like humbly, next… like always ignoring things[170]"*.

After a few years of living in L'Original, his family couldn't find a job. His stepfather heard that *"Alberta was the province that provides to Canada"* and left the village in search of job opportunities. They were also looking forward to learning English. When Manuel arrived in Edmonton he felt *"it was different, you didn't see racism, you didn't hear anymore those phrases: 'immigrants, whatever…' because here there are a lot*

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grupos de dos, pongámoslo así", como que siempre era como que… este no, como que uno oliera a feo, como que así, no".

169 Manuel: "eh, nada… sabes que nunca le dije a mi mamá… ni a mi padrastro, ni con mis hermanos, ni con nadie, como que… que nos trataron así. Porque en la, en la familia de nosotros no se comparte nada. Nunca nadie ha… ha como que comparta a veces, o estamos acostumbrados por los también de los problemas de la intrafamiliar… de que nunca se ha compartido nada de la casa, si todo lo que vive alguien o lo que siente alguien, se lo, se lo… como se lo guarda la persona… desde pequeño, entonces, todas las… todas esas cosas se habían quedado como guardadas aquí, o aquí… no sé… y se van acumulando, y se van acumulado y… y, y como que nunca las dejas salir… o nunca sanan… yo no sé porqué… porque parecen que… sí, nunca sanan, entonces te van afectando mentalmente".

170 Manuel: "ajá…bueno, a ver, mentira, sí… sí, como que… con mi hermana sí, porque íbamos al mismo colegio y como que pues… no sé si a ella les pasaba, o como que, o como que si eran víctimas de racismo, porque pues… ellas son más blanquitas que yo… de pronto, no la sintieron como tan real, de pronto, no sé cómo la hayan vivido ellas, porque hoy en día ni siquiera hemos hablado de… de esas cosas. Pero sí, a veces como que, "agh" o sea, como que siempre… como que dejamos pasar las cosas… "oh, ya, déjalo así, déjalo así" … y "next", no, como noble, "next". Siempre, ignorando las cosas. Ajá".

of immigrants; it was very different[171]*"*. Different from Rosita, Manuel felt excited about moving to Edmonton, he thought they were going *to "make their life's here […] and acquire lots of things"*. They arrived *"eagerly because his stepfather was convinced that they would find better opportunities, jobs and learning English*[172]*"*. Manuel arrived in Edmonton when his stepfather previously found a job. In that regard, Manuel's story connects to Mercedes' at some point. However, his experience speaks from his role as a family child; differently from Mercedes' case, Manuel and his family didn't have to look after jobs to work all together during their first years of resettlement, as she conveyed. Manuel and his family were living in Canada for more than five years already and it was just until they moved to Edmonton that his siblings joined his parents to work with them. In this case, the younger brothers stayed at home.

Manuel was about fifteen years old when he started High School in Edmonton. He had to adjust his routine making time to work with his family early in the mornings. They usually headed out to work at 3:00 a.m. until around 7:00 a.m. and *"arrive [back] home to get ready to school and be at 8:00 am that class started*[173] *[…]"*. At the beginning they went together, but over time they *"took turns… once my one of sisters stayed [at home], other days my mom, and I another day"*. Manuel usually went back home to get ready for school

> *"until 4:00 pm that one got back home and then go to sleep sometimes because we wanted to sleep not to study […]. We stayed in the house, I did my homework, played, eat… the video games that we had at that time […] and went early to bed*

171 Manuel: "nos vinimos para acá, para aquí… aquí sí fue muy diferente, aquí no se veía ya nada de racismo, ya no escuchaba ninguna de esas frases de… "qué es inmigrante, no sé qué…", porque pues aquí hay hartos inmigrantes, era muy diferente".

172 Manuel: "E: oh, pues aquí fue como que llegamos como con muchas ganas… porque pues allá… porque mi papá también… como que él me había convencido mucho de que aquí iba a haber las oportunidades, aquí iba a haber trabajo, aquí íbamos a aprender inglés. Y de qué pues también más adelante yo sabía que aquí iba a estudiar en la universidad. Y todo, como que aquí es que vamos a hacer la vida, como que por aquí todavía… entonces sí, el, el… el petróleo, o sea, como que hay muchas cosas aquí en, en… Edmonton, entonces sí, o sea, como que venía uno con mucha emoción… de que "oh, aquí vamos a conseguir muchas cosas" … sí."

173 Manuel: "sí, entonces íbamos a trabajar a las 3 de la mañana, como de 3 de la mañana hasta las 5, a las 5, y, y, o sea… y… y… eh… y… pues a las 5 empezábamos otro, otro contrato, en el, en el centro… otro, un restaurante… y como de 5 a más o menos a 6:30… más o menos… y llegamos a la casa…de limpieza también. Nos hospedamos en la casa… a las 6:30 y ya, empezábamos como el… como el trabajo… y llegábamos a alistarnos para ir pal' colegio a coger el bus y estar en la clase a las 8 que comienza…".

because at 3:00 am we left… so, I don't know if it was at 9:00 pm we went to bed because we had to work the next day[174] *".*

After a while, Manuel and his family were able to buy a house and he stressed how at that time life was about *"studying, working, and there was not more energy for other things, neither time…"* but later he started hanging out[175]".

Manuel specifically mentioned how hard it has been for him to deal with the difficulties that he has faced, especially, keeping to himself for so long the reasons that forced them to leave their hometown in Colombia. He says he is not *"the only one"* who left his country due to violence, he has met other people who went through similar circumstances that he and his family did. Manuel believes that *"there are a lot of Latinos here 'con su guardado' (withholding their stories of pain), and a trauma that they don't know why and they are here like with something inside, and don't find themselves…or, I don't know […][176]"*. He perceived himself that way and decided to chat with a counsellor about the traumatic experiences that marked his life in Colombia. He says that his oldest brother, who was kidnapped, has never talked with anyone about it. Manuel thinks

"he wants to tell things, he wants someone who could listen to him, talk about those things because he has mentioned things of how they were treated […] and he speaks with rage but nothing else, and he lives like: […] being strong, playing strong…

174 Manuel: "sí hace… sí, empezamos así… como a las 3 de la mañana y ah… es… sí, o sea… iban mi papá y mi mamá y ellos se iban así, pero con el tiempo empezamos a turnarnos… qué se quedaba mi hermana o mi otra hermana, mi mamá un día y yo otro día… pero mi papá sí iba siempre y entonces como "ah, un turno de vez en cuando" , pero, pero sí, a las 3 de la mañana… hasta las… casi llegábamos a la casa a las 7:00 am […]. o sea, a las 3 de la mañana a las 7 de la mañana, para alistarnos con… con, para el colegio. Y sí, y llegamos a la clase a estudiar y ahí estudio hasta las 4 de la tarde, qué llega uno a la casa. Y de ahí llegamos a dormir, a veces… porque ya teníamos ganas de dormir y no a estudiar. […] ya estábamos en la casa, allá yo hacía mis tareas. Jugaba, comía… lo que… sí, los videojuegos en ese entonces estábamos jugando… comía y, y… o sea, y en el… sí, como que ah… eh… a dormir temprano, porque pues a las 3 nos íbamos… entonces, no sé si a las 9:00 pm… no sé a qué hora nos acostábamos, y nos íbamos ya a dormir porque teníamos que trabajar ya al día siguiente. ".

175 Manuel: "Entonces, que… como que ahora pues era en otro colegio y ya pues ahí nos mantuvimos y con el tiempo compramos una casa. Nos mudamos de ahí, pero lo que era mí, sí en ese entonces era como que el estudio, el trabajo, y como que no daba energía para otras cosas, ni tiempo… pero ya con el tiempo, cuando empezamos a "inaudible" (min 30:37) empezamos a salir".

176 Manuel: "ella me contó que. Ella sí lo trató en Colombia, y ella como que sí sanó diferente a sus hermanas, y a sus hermanos, qué nunca fueron a psicólogo. Y yo ya me doy cuenta, hay muchos latinos acá como con ese guardado, y un trauma qué no saben de por qué, y entonces están como con… como con algo por dentro, y no, y no se encuentran… o, o no se…".

because one has to be strong, 'you don't cry' and all those things. So, I feel he is still hanging there because of that[177]*".*

Manuel believes that his brother withholds many experiences and considers that talking about them would be helpful. He recently became aware that going to therapy has allowed him to release the feelings and emotions he has withheld as a consequence of his emigration conditions in Colombia. Manuel believes that *"lots of Latinos"* are keeping with them their traumatic experiences and decided to never talk about them. Manuel had a *"panic attack or an explosion… [...] anxiety, for not expressing anything, I think… [for] things kept, emotions because one kept them; like sadness… and joy, like emotions… so you keep them*[178]*"*. Just after that event, he decided to seek support. Nowadays he believes that if there are *"no strong family bonds, spiritual or psychological support and just economic… there is a problem […] All those experiences that are not attended are accumulated and if you don't let them out you could become a monster; you could become very violent*[179]*"*.

Rudy, Simón, Roncancio and Family's Resettlement in Edmonton

Rudy, her two siblings and her extended family have lived in Edmonton for about four years. They were also hosted in residences for newcomers, she brought back to mind those first days in Edmonton when

177 Manuel: "Y pues yo sé que de pronto él quiere contar cosas. Quiere que alguien lo escuche, hablar de las cosas porque pues él sí nos ha comentado así de las cosas cómo los trataban, de las cosas, no. Pero él lo cuenta como con rabia, o como así… como que ya nada más, pero no lo… ah, y vive así como: "ahg… o sea", pues siendo fuerte, haciéndose el fuerte también. Porque eso es… uno tiene que ser fuerte, no vas a llorar, y todas las cosas, no. Entonces, yo siento que él está ahí, así todavía como pues con eso. Pero sí, como…".
178 Manuel: "Hay otros temas como que, no, no he tocado y todavía están como … "entonces, bueno, no hablemos más de eso". Entonces pasamos a otro tema pero sí hay temas que… y o sea, yo me doy cuenta, que muchos latinos… qué yo sé que a veces en esas experiencias también como hace dos años, qué fue como un… como un ataque de pánico, o… sí, era un ataque de pánico o una explosión… o sea, como ya mucha ansiedad de no expresar nada, creo… guardado; emociones, porque uno también no… uno se guarda todas las emociones. Una tristeza uno se la guarda, y alegría, como que… emociones, entonces, uno se la guarda.".
179 Manuel: "Y sí, como que ayudaba, ayudaba y tal pero cuando mira… es que me doy cuenta de todos los problemas que vienen entre las familias. Qué es la base, porque cuando no hay esa unión familiar, espiritual o… psicólogica, con ayuda psicológica o espiritual y como que apenas económica, eh… hay un problema, hay un problema. Y como que sí, como que todas las experiencias sin… como que sin ser tratadas se acumulan, y se acumulan y si no sale de ahí donde está atrapado, uno en el tiempo puede llagar y convertirse en un monstruo, la persona. Puede volverse un violento, volverse a tal lugar…".

> *"[the social workers] were waiting for us [at the airport], they brought us to the [residences]. There was someone that cooked for us, like for a week, later we cooked and everything. They gave us money, as we didn't have a card, nothing, so everything was cash […]. We all stayed in that house, and we looked out for a supermarket to buy… Oh no… that was an experience! The first time we went to buy… […] you know, as a 'good' Colombian, rice can't miss… hahaha… We were tired of eating bread and things like that: 'no, we wanted real food, rice'. So, we went to buy it at a Chinese store. […] We grabbed all things, but when we were going to pay… oh no… they talked to us […], no, we didn't understand anything. We just grabbed money and gave it to the cashier*[180]*".*

Rudy and her siblings didn't know they bought rice for sushi instead of the kind they were used to consume in Colombia. One of the hosts at the residences suggested buying the brand that has a *"chicken, a rooster… that says large, long*[181]*"*, Scented Rice. She laughed recalling the *"terrible"* experience eating *"arroz mazacotudo*[182]*" [mashed rice]*[183]. After a couple of days living in *"the reception house*[184]*"*, they hung out around the residential area willing to *"become more independent"*. When they felt *"bored"*, Rudy and her family went out for walks to found out how to become familiar with money and the currency

180 Rudy: "Entonces llegamos ahí, también nos estaban esperando, nos trajeron a la casa del gobierno. Ahí había una persona que nos cocinaba también, como una semana empezó a cocinarnos. Ya después nosotros cocinábamos y todo. Nos dan dinero. Como no tenemos tarjeta, nada, entonces todo era cash. Nos daban el dinero… […]. no, pues… bueno, fuimos, no, entonces usted sabe que como buen colombiano el arroz no nos falta. (Risas). Nosotros ya estamos cansado de comer pan, cositas así: "no, nosotros queremos una comida de verdad, no, el arrocito". Entonces que nos fuimos a comprar, entonces que nos fuimos a una tienda china que queda por allá. Y… bueno, normal, cogimos todas las cosas, pero cuando íbamos a pagar, ay no… a nosotros nos hablaban: "no, qué, qué esto…", no, nosotros no entendíamos nada. Nosotros no más sacamos un poco de plata y se la dimos a la cajera.. […] No, y usted viera la sorpresa en la casa cuando llegamos contentos para hacer el arroz. Compramos un arroz para hacer esta… ¿cómo se llama ese 'mazacotudo'? […] seh… una cosa así de arroz completa. […] haha… ay fue terrible, ahí disque comiendo ese arroz mazacotudo, ay no, ya estábamos cansados de ese arroz. Entonces, la señora el lunes cuando vino pues no… la señora que cocina nosotros le dijimos: "ay no, mire, ¿el arroz aquí todo es así de malo?". Ella dijo: "no, es que ustedes compraron el arroz que no era.".

181 See: https://www.loblaws.ca/Food/Pantry/Pasta%2C-Rice-%26-Beans/Rice/Scented-Rice/p/20144395_EA

182 By this term, she means the rice was squeezed and sticky, as it usually is for sushi.

183 Rudy: "haha… ay fue terrible, ahí disque comiendo ese arroz mazacotudo, ay no, ya estábamos cansados de ese arroz. Entonces, la señora el lunes cuando vino pues no… la señora que cocina nosotros le dijimos: "ay no, mire, ¿el arroz aquí todo es así de malo?". Ella dijo: "no, es que ustedes compraron el arroz que no era"."

184 Simón: "Como que ¡Wow! Pero ahí estuvimos, ahí llegamos a una casa de receción, y estuvimos como por cuántos días, como por 6, 7? Como 10, 8, no, 7, 8 días, en la casa de receción".

conversion in Canada realizing its equivalent: *"ah fine, this bill is that much, so one can buy certain amount with that, and understand more*[185]*"*.

Simón remembers *"all of [them] were excited"* to be here. He exclaimed that *"everything was very beautiful"* but like it happened to Sonia and Rubiela, it was hard for him being surrounded by people who didn't speak his language. Lack of English made it harder for him to commute around Edmonton: *"So, like I didn't know how to locate myself in Winter, I didn't know what bus to take […], I didn't know how to ask… like wow! What should I do, man? Like I tried not going too far away. Like I tried to hang out as close as possible"*. Simón perceives that people in Edmonton are *"very kind, they try to help you even if you don't speak, […], but you need to find out how to express yourself for them to be able to help*[186]*"*. For Simón, the *"hardest"* part navigating the Edmonton Transit System was trying to make sense of locations without Google Maps, which at times was unreliable. He felt like *"panicking"* not knowing what bus to take when the same bus number stopped in two different bus stations at the same location, but took opposite routes:

> *"if there would be something like to orient you when arriving in an area, and what buses, and the addresses you can go to, what buses could you take, it would be easier […] because if there was something [showing] you how to locate yourself in the area and what bus to take from there to there, and what bus to take to head back because when you arrive somewhere, you know, the buses' [route] changes and you get lost, and like… wow! And if you don't speak the language like with a map taking you to the place… yes, because Google, but it is not clear enough because it changes routes*187*"*.

185 Rudy: "Nosotros caminando, y mirando, y empezamos ya ahí a comprar y empezamos: "ah bueno, y este billete, este es tanto, entonces uno puede comprar tanto con esto, y ya conocer más, no".
186 Simón: "ya, pues cuando llegué si era como, sí, estaba muy bonito pero era como que nadie hablaba mi idioma. Entonces como que no sabía ubicarme un invierno, no sabía qué bus coger, tampoco sabía si cogí un bus, tampoco sabía cómo preguntar, o sea, como que ¡wow! What should I do, man? And that… como que trataba de no irme muy lejos, no. Como que trataba de ahí de andar lo más cerca posible (risas). Y no, y la gente es, pues la gente es muy amable acá, no. Trata de ayudarte, aunque no hablas, pero tratan como de ayudarte pero tienes como que saber expresarte para poderte ayudar…".
187 Simón: "um… lo más difícil, um…las ubicaciones para mí, no. Si hubiera algo como que te orientara cuando llegas a esa área, y qué buses, y las direcciones para dónde te puedes dirigir, y qué buses coger, sería como más fácil, no. Porque cuando llegas, pues tienes que… como que ver qué bus coges y si ese bus va para tal lugar o no. Porque si hubiera algo como que te ubicara en tu área y qué bus podías coger de ahí para allá y qué bus podías coger de vuelta; porque cuando llegas a una parte, si sabes… cambian los buses y te quedas

Likewise, Roncancio's experience becoming familiar with English was

> *"frustrating […] because I didn't understand what people say. Even people stared at me like if I was an idiot and I tried to speak but I could not, so they thought I had a mental disability or something like that, but people do not understand that you don't speak their language […]; in the street, when I tried asking or expressing myself, and I spoke the words wrongly then they thought I was clumsy.188".*

Simón and his siblings attended orientation sessions at different settlement organizations to receive information about the city, to participate in *"talks of how to treat your children in Canada"* and to receive *"psychological guidance"*. In those sessions, Simón learned that newcomers could go through different emotional experiences while they are adjusting because:

> *"every migrant arrives happily here… they have like a chart, I mean, of emotions… so, when you arrive you are here [at the top], a few months [later], here [in the middle], and [then], here at the bottom… super zaaa.. so, if you start speaking the language and get a job, so you go again will feel better. You feel like… you have the strategy, like… they orient you, they talk to you about the city… um… about the laws, oh… that people are very quiet here189".*

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perdido, y como que ¡wow! Y si no hablas el idioma como que…con un mapita que te llevara al lugar y que… sí, porque Google pero no es muy claro porque cambian de rutina."

188 Family Interview, Roncancio: "En el caso mío, al principio sí fue frustrante. Porque como decía mi hermana Rudy, no entendía nada de lo que la gente decía. Incluso la gente lo quedaba mirando a uno como si uno fuera idiota, y uno trataba de hablar pero no podía, entonces pensaban que uno tenía una discapacidad mental o algo así. Pero la gente no entiende que es que tú no hablas su idioma. Entonces…
M: ¿en, en dónde? ¿en la escuela?
O: no, no, afuera. Afuera en la calle, cuando trataba de preguntarle algo a la persona. Y trataba yo de expresarme, y a veces decía las palabras así mal. Y todo eso, entonces pensaban que uno era un torpe. Pero…".

189 Simón: "S: um… era como orientaciones, no…que empiezan a hablarte de la ciudad, de la… de cómo es el proceso de andar acá en la ciudad, qué hacer. Psicoló… te orientan psicológicamente, charlas, cómo tratar a tus hijos… aquí en Canadá. […] ¿quisieras contarme un poquito más de las cosas que les hablan allá?, como en esas orientaciones, como, digamos, tú mencionas que cómo tratar a tus hijos pero también les dan apoyo psicológico, ¿o? S: sí, tienen un… sí, o sea, tienen un… como todo migrante llega aquí pues… pues ah no primero la felicidad… tienen como una tabla, o sea, las emociones… entonces, cuando llegas y uno está acá, después unos mesesitos acá y estás acá en lo bajo… super zaaa… entonces pues si ya, empiezas a hablar el idioma, consigues empleo, entonces pues ya vas de nuevo… M: …sintiéndote feliz… S: de nuevo pues mejor. Sientes como… tienes la estrategia, como que… y sí, te orientan, te hablan de la ciudad… um… las leyes, o… ah, qué la gente es muy callada acá."

Similarly to Rubiela, Simón found himself in situations in which he had to change. Simón perceives that *"many changes"* come along with the resettlement process, not just when newcomers are finding out ways to navigate everyday life and routines, but also on how they are expected to reshape their interactions accordingly to what is *"normal"* in the new setting. Simón framed the understanding of cultural differences pointing out that people in Canada are *"very quiet"* and people from Latinamerica and Africa are *"normally very loud"*. People coming from those global regions tend to *"speak too loud and use the 'dialect of hands' a lot. So, sometimes people think that [when they speak with the hand's] dialect, people are fighting, and much more if they don't understand what they are saying, right, because 'the Canadian' is not likely to talk much with their hands"*. At one orientation session, Simón heard the story of a man who was called on the police for talking loud and waving hands while speaking: *"the man said he was just greeting his friend"*. Simón perceives that *"people are not accustomed to those kinds"* of interactions here. From the place Simón comes from there is such *"confidence that you punch the other a little rough; I could also say that here is a little softer, right? […] I mean, like we are very different [and] you have to adapt yourself on how you speak, the way you hug, right? Because a lot of changes begin[190]"*. Likewise, Simón believes that the way people navigate settlement conditions in the hosting environment depend on

> *"the age you arrive… if you are young, I think you're adapting faster, right? […] Because you chat with people, in your environment, [your] friends… so everything starts changing a bit more, specially when you are very friendly, so, you start*

190 Simón: "sí, que es muy callada aquí, porque lo normal en Latinoamérica, en África, pues hablan muy… muy demasiado, son bulliciosos, como te dijera. O sea, hablan demasiado fuerte y utilizan el dialecto mucho de las manos. Entonces, que hay que… varias veces piensan con ese dialecto que la gente está peleando, y más si no le entiende (risas) qué están diciendo. Sí, porque el canadiense siempre es que no habla mucho de mano… que un día un señor que estaban hablando así y le llamaron la policía, y el señor dijo que solamente estaba era saludando a la otra amiga. (min 16:30). […] sí, nos contaron esta historia en una organización. Qué si la gente ¡Wooo! Que ¿qué había pasado? Porque estaba mucho dialecto entre manos y entonces esa mano va, mano viene… S: Entonces pues la gente no está acostumbrada a esa clase de… entonces pues sí, entonces que no… qué solamente estaba saludando a la amiga… […] S: um… sí, es que cuando vinimos, de donde yo vengo también es como que… la confianza es ya le tiras hasta un puño al otro y sí, es como que un poco brusco, también podría decir… um, acá es como más suave, ¿cierto? Como que… la mano… le metes el abrazo aquí, lo vas a acá… o sea que somos muy diferentes, tienes que también como adatarte a la forma que hablas, a la forma que das abrazos, ¿cierto? Porque son… empiezan bastantes cambios."

*gathering with a lot of people, so, like you start adapting. But if you are older… and everything is information […], I think you are 'catching up' things slower*191*".*

Rudy explained how different organizations are *"connected with the government to support immigrants*[192]*"*; they helped them find a family doctor; oriented them in how to acquire the Alberta Personal Health Card; searched for a house where they eventually live; and guided them in how to open a bank account. For the first months of immigrants' adjustment, organizations *"do everything for [them], well, obviously for who is a refugee from the government because one doesn't know where to go, what to search… one doesn't handle[manejar] the language […]"*. Once they established in the leased house they live in, Rudy and her family *"started life, yourself, that way, with English [skills] or without thereof, you have to start making your life, yes*[193]*"*. By *"starting life"* she means adjusting to the everyday life routines:

"[taking] buses, we got lost many times… but we learned that way, making mistakes. We went to do grocery shopping, all [of us] in the bus, all… each with its own bag and people stared at us… the bus was full of our purchases and every month we went to do grocery shopping that way. And that's how we started our life, that way194".

According to Rudy's experience, settlement organizations' close accompaniment ends once newcomers are established in the leased houses. Although the organization that

191 Simón: "um… yo creo que depende, pues… a la edad que llegas, no… pues si estás joven, creo que te vas adatando más rápido, ¿cierto? Entonces, porque vas conversando con las personas, en tu ambiente, los amigos… entonces todo va cambiando un poco más, no… especial cuando sos bastante amiguero, entonces… cuando te vas reuniendo con tanta gente, entonces como que vas, vas… te vas adaptando. Pero ya si pues estás bastante de edad…y pues todo ese poco de información, vas catando (captando) más adentro todo. Yo creo que vas 'catando' más lento, las cosas."

192 Rudy: "ellos están conectados pues con el gobierno, y para ayudar a los emigrantes. Ella nos ayudaba en todo, ella nos sacó la tarjeta del médico, ella nos buscó el dotor de familia, nos buscó la casa que estamos ahorita para rentarla; qué estamos ahorita. Ya llevamos 2 años en esa casa. Ella, eh, las tarjetas del banco… nos sacó… tiene que ir a un lugar para registrarse para que te lleguen los mails, no. […] el correo, bueno, ella hizo todo. Ella hizo todo, esa persona hizo todo, la verdad. Entonces, ya…"

193 Rudy: "porque ellos cumplen el trabajo de ellos, no. Hacerle todo eso al imigrante, bueno, obvio, al que es refugiado por el gobierno, no. Porque uno no sabe, no, dónde es que va a ir, qué es que va a buscar… uno no maneja el idioma; bueno, de pronto algunas personas lo manejan, no, pero nosotros sí cero. Entonces, esa persona hace todo eso y te deja en la casa. Pero ya de ahí pa' allá, usted tiene que empezar ya su vida, usted así, con inglés o sin inglés, usted tiene que empezar ya a hacer su vida, sí.".

194 Rudy: "ya, y entonces de ahí nos pasamos ya a la casa donde estamos y empezamos ya nuestra vida. A tomar los buses; nos perdimos muchas veces, la verdad tomando… pero aprendimos así, equivocándonos. Nos íbamos a mercar, y todos en el bus, todos… cada uno con su bolsita. Y la gente nos quedaba mirando."

provided support for this family initiated an English placement test, and shared a list of educational institutions where they could register for a LINC program, they were not told how to start the registration process. However, Rudy and her family got contacted by a volunteer to assist them in finding colleges to start the LINC program. Sometimes this person also drove them to do groceries, and accompanied them to the children's school meetings:

> *"I have no idea how he contacted us. One day he arrived at the house, he is from Canada, […] he speaks a little bit of Spanish: 'hi', that he wanted to help us, so we thought: 'ok, perfect, all help is welcome' […]. He wasn't sent by the settlement organization […], he is retired, and he seeks to help the immigrant. So, he contacts you, I don't know how, he contacts the immigrant and he helps them in everything. […] Well, in the organization they help you with the studies but in the sense that you go and make a test, they assess your English skills […],they gave us a list of the colleges available to study, but they don't go with us […] because the organizations they don't help you with that195".*

During the interview, this family shared with me how daily routines are like since they have been living together in the same house. Delia and Lina are single mothers of two children. They are Rudy's cousins. They usually wake up at 6:00 am to prepare breakfast and lunch. Delia and Lina help their four kids to get ready for school, and once they take the *"yellow bus"*, Delia, Rudy, Simón and Roncancio head to college for LINC classes[196]. When I asked them how has been their experience learning English as a family, one of the kids, Jorge, exclaimed: *"easy! […] but sometimes, challenging… because there are really long words[197]"*. Roncancio contested laughing ironically: *"hahaha… 'disque' easy!"*

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195 Rudy: "Conocimos a una persona… bueno, esa persona no sé cómo nos contató, la verdad no tengo ni idea. Un día llegó a la casa, ella es de aquí de Canadá, y un día llegó a la casa... ella habla un poquitico de español, entonces que: "hola", que bueno, qué ella quería ayudarnos, nos dijo. Y nosotros: "ah bueno, perfecto, todas las ayudas bienvenidas, sí". Ella fue la que nos buscó el colegio donde estamos ahorita, tan bella. […] Donde estamos todos aprendiendo. Ella fue la que… ella nos ayudó con esa parte, porque ya en la organización, ya no te ayudan ya en esa parte. O sea, ya, usted ya tiene que salir."

196 Family Interview, Delia: "D: no, los niños primero se van, a estudiar porque el bus amarillo entonces los recoge a ellos, y ya nosotros nos vamos en bus.".

197 Family Interview, Rudy, Maria, Francy, Jorge: "R: otro idioma, dice la niña. Venga, chicos… ustedes, ¿cómo les ha parecido la experiencia de, de inglés aquí en Canadá?
F: ¡Bien! J: yo, ok… a mí me ha parecido easy. M: ¿fácil? J: sí. Pero a veces, challenging… M: sí, ¿por qué a veces es challenging…Jorge? J: porque a veces hay unas palabras really long y "" (min: 16:25)."

because it has been hard for them as adults learning a new language. Delia explains learning English has been difficult: *"because it is not from one day to another, there are things that one doesn't understand, or want to pronounce correctly but does not come out. So, it is like very difficult, it is like a little by little process…*[198]*"*. Moreover, Delia pointed out how hard it is being in her thirties and having to

> *"go back to school like when I was little… do you understand? Because I stopped studying a long time ago, and then, again, it is like… honestly… sometimes… haha difficult, I mean, to me… it is difficult taking LINC one, two, three… it is like starting since first grade again […]. Like starting all over from preschool, so, yes, sometimes it is like a little hard*199*".*

Rudy also shared her experience emphasizing how hard it was getting started with LINC's first level for they never learned English in Colombia and when she started classes, she *"didn't understand anything"*. She recalls her teacher making signs, showing them pictures for them to become familiar with the language. Rudy failed her first listening test and it took her about six months to accomplish LINC's first level[200].

198 Family Interview: M: "¿Y de pronto les gustaría compartir un poquito sobre la experiencia aprendiendo inglés todos, cómo, cómo ha sido la experiencia de aprender inglés? J: easy! O: hahahaha… disque easy! D: ay no… para mí ha sido difícil. De verdad. M: ¿sí? D: sí, o sea, aprender un idioma nuevo pero… es difícil, bueno, hasta ahora me cuesta. Porque no es de la noche a la mañana, hay cosas que uno no entiende, o quiere pronunciar como… correctamente… y como que no le sale tampoco. Entonces es como bien difícil, es como un proceso poquito a poquito, como de… ¿cómo le dice uno?".

199 Family Interview, Delia and Roncancio: "M: ¿y cómo, por ejemplo, la escuela ha afectado el diario vivir? O sea, ¿cómo sienten que la escuela, digamos, como que… qué los ha afectado para ajustarse a rutinas, como… como ha sido ir a la escuela? Por ejemplo, en tu caso… o en le caso de doña Gloria. D: o sea, para uno volver a la escuela es como…hahaha… como cuando está otra vez chiquitico… ¿si me entiende? Porque ya hace tiempo había dejado como de estudiar, y otra vez, volver otra vez es como… de verdad que a veces es como… haha difícil, o sea, para mí… difícil otra vez tomar como… porque, por ejemplo, tomamos el LINC 1, 2,3, es como empezar desde primero, otra vez…R: de pre…D: como desde preescolar, entonces sí, a veces es como… sí me parece un poco difícil.".

200 Family Interview, Rudy: "R: para mí, el… el aprender el inglés ha sido… también difícil… porque… eh… pues un nuevo idioma, nosotros nunca en Colombia, bueno, yo nunca aprendí la verdad, nunca estudié inglés… eh, no más lo que a uno le enseñaban en la escuela, qué se me olvidó ya, después ya no sabía nada. Y … y empezar desde el nivel 1. Me acuerdo cuando, cuando empezamos el 1, ay no… yo no entendía pero nada. La profesora habla y era como… yo no sé pero no entendía asolutamente nada…y eso que la profesora, ella… una profesora muy buena nos tocó, entonces ella se daba mucho a entender… y hacía señas, y ella mostraba fotos… […]. Y lo repetía… no, yo ese examen lo perdí, pero no cogí ni una, me acuerdo, ese fue mi peor examen, porque es que la verdad, cero, cero de inglés. Y bueno, eh… ahí entonces, fuimos aprendiendo, aprendiendo, duramos como… yo duré como eh, 5 o 6 meses en el LINC 1.".

Rudy spoke on behalf of her cousin Lina to share her experience and how her learning process has also affected them as a family. Lina has a disability, and her learning experience in Canada has been very different from her cousin's.

> *"Well, my cousin Lina in Colombia never had the opportunity to go to school because it was expensive. There was not any public school where she could attend to. All public schools were just for people who didn't have any disability, neither physical or mental. Those were the public schools where we were raised. So, unfortunately, she never had the opportunity to go to school […]. She [just] started studying [here], and at the beginning for her it was super hard because it was like a kid from preschool who knows absolutely nothing. Who doesn't know numbers, knows absolutely nothing. So, for her it was like starting all over from zero. So, writing numbers, learning the alphabet, learning all things. So, it has been harder for her than it has been for us, honestly because we are learning a new language, but we have a base. We know many things, I mean, we know how to write, we know how to read. We have knowledge of many things, but she doesn't. And she is just starting to learn, so it is harder for her.".*

Lina has a different routine than her cousins. Although she wakes up early to help her two boys, she stays at home helping with house chores until noon and leaves for class until the evening. It is challenging for Lina taking care of *"her own things and school"*. Moreover, Rudy stressed that Lina doesn't understand *"many things"* the way they do, like *"the culture"*, what makes her feel *"frustrated or sad"201"*.

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201 Family Interview, Rudy translates for Lina: "R: (Lina hablando lenguaje de señas para que Rudy traduzca). Bueno… mi hermana Lina, ella en Colombia, bueno, nunca tuvo la oportunidad de ir a la escuela de estudiar porque… bueno, no… era caro. No había una escuela pública que ella pudiera ir, especial para ella, no. Las escuelas públicas que habían era para personas, digamos, que no tuvieran ninguna discapacidad, ni física ni mental. Esa eran las escuelas públicas; bueno, en la parte donde nosotros nos criamos. Entonces ella desafortunadamente nunca tuvo la oportunidad de, de ir a la escuela. Gracias a Dios aquí sí la ha tenido, entonces, ella igual que nosotros también empezó. Empezó también a estudiar, y para ella al principio fue súper difícil porque fue como una… un niño de preescolar que no sabe absolutamente nada. No sabe de números, no sabe absolutamente nada. Entonces para ella empezar otra vez de hacer las cosas de cero. Entonces que empezar a escribir los números, qué aprenderse el alfabeto; aprenderse todas las cosas. Entonces, fue difícil porque…ha sido difícil para ella, yo creo que más que todos, la verdad, de nosotros. Porque… nosotros, estamos aprendiendo una nueva lengua pero nosotros tenemos una base. Sabemos muchas cosas. O sea, nosotros sabemos escribir, sabemos leer. Tenemos conocimiento de muchas cosas, pero ella no. Ella es como una niña que no tiene conocimiento de muchas cosas. Y qué recién está aprendiendo, entonces es más difícil para ella. Entonces… eh, bueno, el empezar para ella, eh… estudiar. Entonces, ya Lina su rutina

Delia also translated for Lina conveying that she feels *"frustrated because she sees that other [students] pass the course, and she remains in the same one [since she started], so, seeing that she doesn't pass, like she doesn't advance, [makes her] feel like a little sad*[202]*"*. Lina expressed feeling uncomfortable in class when one of her classmates made fun of her for not knowing how to write and read. Most of them *"are not learning writing and reading as she is; they are just learning the sign language"*. Rudy *"supposes"* Lina wonders: *"why do they know more than I do?"*. Rudy has explained Lina that *"her classmates went to school since they were little […], but she didn't […] she is just having the opportunity [until] now"*. It has been hard for Lina to cope with her classmate mocking her and catching up with studies. However, Lina feels supported by one of her friends who visit her to do their homework together [203]. Lina also receives additional assistance with another teacher who helps her after class, and throughout the course she has sat aside from her classmates, accompanied by another *"woman [who] helps her"*[204].

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es, ella también se levanta como Delia, todos los días, eh… a las 6 de la mañana organiza sus 2 niñas, a Francy toma el bus aquí en la casa, el bus amarillo. Se la llevan, y luego organiza a Betty, ella va y la deja hasta la escuela. Luego viene Lina aquí a la casa. Cocina, entonces ella cocina, se organiza y se va a la escuela porque empieza a las 12, la escuela de ella y se termina a las 4 de la tarde. Entonces… sí, todo eso, sus hijas, sus qué haceres que ella tiene. Más la escuela, entonces… creo que ha sido bien pesado para ella. Y muchas cosas ella no entiende. Nosotros entendemos muchas cosas, la cultura y todo, y hay cosas que ella la verdad no entiende entonces yo creo ella sí se sentirá como frustrada, o triste por eso, ¿cierto?".

202 "entonces ella se frustra porque a los otros los van pasando como de nivel. En cambio, ella sigue como en el mismo nivel. Entonces, ella al ver que ella no pasa, qué no, qué no como que no avanza, entonces ella como que se… se pone triste".

203 Family Interview, Rudy translating for Lina: "entonces me está diciendo que también que una amiga, es una muchacha que le ayuda a ella. Entonces, ella también le ha ayudado mucho. Porque aparte… porque ella sí sabe bien la lengua y entonces, ella… a veces viene aquí a la casa, le explica a Lina tareas. Entonces, esa es una amiguita que ella tiene. Con ella ha aprendido también, ella ha sido, sí, una ayuda bien. Bastante para ellas. Sí, uno con ella va aprendiendo."

204 Family Interview, Rudy and Delia translating for Lina: "L: hablando en señas a Rudy para que traduzca. R: sí, Lina nos cuenta mucho eso. Ella dice que había una compañerita que… como que se burlaba de ella. Entonces para ella ha sido difícil porque… ellos, los compañeros con los que ella está, ellos no están aprendiendo a escribir, a leer como ella. No, ellos están aprendiendo en sí la lengua. En señas. Ellos fueron unos niños que sí en su país, qué en el país de ellos sí que estaban pequeñitos, ellos fueron a la escuela. O sea, ellos sí tiene toda la lengua completa. Pero ellos no entienden eso, que Lina no, qué ella recién está empezando aquí. Entonces, para ella sí, eso ha sido lo más duro. Entonces, sí. Qué había una compañerita que se burlaba de ella. Entonces era así toda pesada con ella. Y eso, qué entonces a veces ella… ella me imagino que ella se preguntará digamos: "¿por qué ellos sí saben más que yo?" (min 30:03). Pero entonces, eso es lo que yo el otro día le explicaba a ella. Le decía que ellos desde que estaban pequeñitos, qué ellos fueron a la escuela y estudiaron, pero ella no. Pues ella nunca tuvo la oportunidad de ir a la escuela. Sino es que recién ahorita que lo está haciendo. Y bueno, gracias a Dios ella tiene una buena profesora, entonces la profesora ha entendido eso. Y… y ella tiene aparte de la profesora, ella tiene como… como otra profesora, una persona que le ayuda. Entonces, la profesora se enfoca en explicar el tema pero entonces a Lina le tienen otra profesora donde ella sí le explica bien, porque ella no va en el nivel que van los otros. Entonces, para ella ha sido eso bien difícil, la verdad. […]. Qué los compañeros están a un lado y ella a otro lado porque como ella está en

Gloria, Lina's mother is nearly seventy years old. Her experience accessing education in Canada has been similar to Lina's: *"Lina and I are started the same process. The difference is that she doesn't speak, she uses signs because she doesn't talk*[205]*"*. Although Gloria believes Canada is *"a very welcoming country"*, she decided to quit school when her classmates bullied her for not knowing how to read. Gloria never had the opportunity to study in Colombia, therefore, she didn't learn how to write and read. The school she was attending in Edmonton was focused on helping students improve their writing skills rather than speaking *"because a lot of people who came from Africa didn't go to school but they spoke English, so there were a lot of people speaking […]*[206]*"*. Gloria says:

> *"When I started in the first school I had to quit because my classmates bullied me because I never studied. I never studied English nor Spanish […], so I have had to learn. So, I saw my classmates using their translator and writing everything, but I do not because I don't read Spanish nor English. For instance, Spanish, English here have been hard languages because, practically, I never studied at school, neither I learned it in the street, nor pronounced it, nothing. So, I am frustrated because of that, English…*[207]*"*.

Gloria says she *"really likes English"*, she first attended another school, but Simón stressed the location was *"too far… super… she had to take the train, later a bus […] and there*

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otro programa, entonces los compañeros…es el mismo salón pero ellos a un lado y ella a otro lado y ella tiene un señora que la ayuda. Sí, qué le ayuda".

205 Family Interview, Gloria: "digamos que Lina y yo, como vamos dentrar a un solo proceso. La diferencia, porque Lina pues ya… yo hablo y ella pues no habla sino sus señas porque ella no habla.".

206 Family Interview, Simón: "sí, es que la escuela de, en la escuela de allá… eh… solamente te enseñaban a escribir. Porque varias personas de África que ya… pues nunca fueron a la escuela… pero sí hablan inglés, entonces sí había muchas personas que hablaban. Eh… la… no escribían, entonces eran unas personas… para personas que desde su país no aprendieron… no tuvieron la oportunidad de ir a la escuela. Entonces, iban a esa escuela, le ayudaban a escribir".

207 Family Interview, Gloria: "G: la verdad es que aquí en Canadá… haber yo llegado aquí a esta tierra es una bendición muy… este es un país muy acogedor, de gran bendición. Pero… antes de todo el colegio, me ha ido muy… no me ha ido tan bien. Porque cuando llegué allá donde el primer colegio que estuve, me tuve que salir porque ya las compañeras me empezaron a hacerme bullying porque yo como nunca estudié. Yo nunca estudié el inglés ni el español entonces por ejemplo, eso mismo me ha tocado aprender. Entonces, yo veo que las compañeritas, por ejemplo, ellas están ahí y así fue en la escuela, ponen su traductor y están escribiendo todo. Pero yo no, porque yo como yo no leo ni español ni inglés. Y a mí por ejemplo el español… el inglés acá, para mí fue una lengua muy difícil. Porque prácticamente yo, como no he estudiado ni en la escuela, ni en la calle no lo aprendí. Ni a pronunciarlo ni nada. Entonces, yo estoy frustrada por eso todavía porque yo… el inglés…".

were no close bus stops". Gloria had to walk extensive distances to transfer buses, also awaiting at locations without shelters from cold weather in Winter. The latter discourage her to continue attending classes[208]. Moreover, although low Winter temperatures in Edmonton have been challenging for all of them, Gloria has noted a significant increase of joint pain since they arrived, which makes it harder for her to spend long time outdoors.

Lina and Gloria accessing education has also shaped their everyday interactions as a family. In the case of Lina, she and her family established their own sign's system communication at home since she was a child. However, while she has attended school in Canada, Lina is continually replacing her own communication system with the official sign language. Lina's learning advances has also pushed her family members to relearn along with her with the official sign's language. Simón pointed out that she *"has already advanced in signs, so she throws the words at me and I get lost… so, Rudy has learned more signs"*. However, when I asked Rudy to enquire with Lina what kind of support she would consider helpful to strengthen her learning process, she replied not knowing how to ask her. Rudy said: *"I wouldn't know how to ask her that, there are things I don't know how to ask her, but [when] she tells me, I guess. I realize that she needs a lot of support learning numbers […] it is not enough at school[209]"*. Delia occasionally understands what Lina is saying, it is harder for her to grasp what Lina is trying to convey. Thus, Lina's learning process has reshaped her family unit communication[210]. All of them have been re-

208 Family Interview, Gloria, Simón: "G: yo sí estudio porque a mí en realidad el inglés me gusta, porque si no me gustara yo no estudiaba porque es la primera escuela donde salí, porque me azaré demasiado.S: también era muy lejos. Súper que… tocaba ir… tocaba coger tren, del tren otro bus para que… y no había parada cerca…R: caminando. S: y en estos climas tocaba caminar. Entonces de andar caminando, imagínese con estos climas. Era como por allá más metido entonces tocaba salir hasta la carretera porque ahí no pasaba el bus. Entonces, toda la carretera no salía, entonces tocaba salir como 2 cuadras hacía adelante para coger el bus. No sé, y no había parada donde meterte. Entonces, ahora en Winter, que hace bastante frío, no hay ninguna parada así…".

209 Family Interview, Maria, Rudy: "M: ¿Ella qué cree que de pronto podría facilitar su proceso como de aprendizaje de… ayudarla a como avanzar en la escuela? R: ay, yo no sé cómo hacerle esa pregunta…le pregunta cómo puede, y los hermanos. Pero no sabría cómo hacerle esa pregunta, pero… hay cosas que yo no sé cómo preguntarle a ella pero que ella me las dice a mí, entonces yo descubro eso, cierto. Y algo que he visto eso, qué ella necesita es mucho apoyo. O sea, en el sentido de que… en la escuela, por ejemplo, ella ahorita está aprendiendo los números, entonces necesita ese apoyo […]. Entonces, eso sí he visto que… no es suficiente en la escuela."

210 Family Interview, Simón, Delia, Rudy, Maria: "S: entonces ella se ha vuelto muy familiar en señas. Habla ya… te está hablando normal y ya te mete las señas. M: como en el leguaje oficial de señas. Todos: ¡sí! S: sí, entonces ya te quedas como que…M: ¿y antes, antes digamos se comunicaban de la forma en que ustedes aprendieron como en familia a comunicarse con ella? S: ya, claro. R: exactamente. D: porque por

establishing their own family sign language: *"along with her one also learns a lot because what she is learning she teaches us, so one catches more…*[211]*"*.

In Gloria's case, *"life in Canada hasn't been easy […], it has been difficult […]"*. Since she started studying, Gloria asks her children to orient her doing her homework. However, since Rudy, Simón, Roncancio and Delia are also studying and helping children with schooling, they only help Gloria if time permits. When Gloria has received support from her children, she believes her teacher

> *"gets mad because […] a lot of times she thinks that because [my children] help me here with homework is because I know English, but I don't. [They] tell me: 'mom, do this and that', and they teach me, and I do it. […] But no, sometimes she thinks I know and that I am 'playing stupid'212"*.

We also discussed how easy they find accessing things in Edmonton, financially speaking. Gloria thinks *"it is very difficult. The money that comes [from government's welfare] is for the lease and utilities, [Rudy: and food]"*. Delia also thinks it is *"hard"* and Gloria explains that their financial situation is restrained:

> *"Right now, to get things it is really hard for us because none of us is working and we don't receive enough money to buy things…merely what we have is to survive. And to give ourselves the luxury to buy things there is no way… one does not find it viable to have the luxury to buy… and we don't even have a television, we don't have the capacity [to purchase one]*[213]*"*.

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ejemplo, ella a veces está hablando en señas y yo le entiendo. Pero hay otras cosas que son como más difíciles entonces no".

211 Family Interview, Rudy: "Sí, uno con ella va aprendiendo. Bastante. Porque mire, ella está aprendiendo y entonces lo que ella va aprendiendo, nos enseña a nosotros. Entonces, uno ya la va cogiendo más y todo".

212 Family Interview, Gloria: "Y entonces, sí, la profesora a veces se enoja porque como hay varias mujeres ahí que ella, por ejemplo, no, no saben ni escribir pero sí saben hablar su inglés, entonces ya muchas veces piensan que porque yo estos muchachos me ayudan acá con la tarea… es porque yo sé el inglés o algo, pero yo no sé. Pues yo solamente mis hijos me dicen: "mamá, haga esto… qué lo otro", y pues me enseñan, pues yo lo hago. Porque hay tareas que por ejemplo… pero no, ella a veces piensa que es que yo sé, y me hago es la pendeja."

213 Family Interview, Gloria: "por ahora en estos momentos que estamos, no… para conseguir cosas es muy difícil pa' nosotros porque ninguno estamos trabajando y no nos llega plata suficiente. Para nosotros comprar cosas… a penas nosotros no más lo que tenemos para nosotros sobrevivir. Y porque como pa' nosotros darnos el lujo de comprar cosas no hay… no halla uno la facilidad de uno darse el lujo de comprar… y no tenemos,

However, Simón stressed it is important to differentiate between *"needs"* and *"luxury"*. I asked what do they consider a "luxury"? Delia replied: *"a Ferrari, hahaha"*. Simón says it also could be something *"lower… maybe a pair of sneakers, a shirt… trousers, maybe. [Rudy: a phone]. All those things for me are a luxury, just luxuries, not needs. I don't know, so, I think we are hindered at the moment to buy that kind of things, to cover that kind of luxuries[214]"*.

They shared how their monthly income doesn't allow them either to go out to eat in a restaurant: *"sometimes it is difficult going out to have dinner, although it seems the most basic… , but we can't, I mean, at this moment one can't do that because money is not enough"*. Rudy agrees with Delia, outlining that going out for dinner for a big family like theirs is unaffordable, therefore they always prefer to cook and eat at home. Delia indicated how even planning a trip together to Banff is not viable *"because a lot of money is required. I mean, we haven't even had the opportunity to go there because our budget is not enough. I mean, those are little things, do you understand? But at the same time they are big"*. Gloria expressed that at times she doesn't *"feel well staying at home all times. Like, that is a little bit stressful because you don't have money to go out for a little trip[215]"*. Gloria thinks that if she goes on a trip it would *"remain in your mind"* helping to alternate

mira que no tenemos televisor tan siquiera, porque no tenemos la facilidad pa' ni noticias (risas todos los hijos). No tenemos la facilidad."

214 Family Interview, Simón, Rudy, Delia, Maria: "por ahora en estos momentos que estamos, no… para conseguir cosas es muy difícil pa' nosotros porque ninguno estamos trabajando y no nos llega plata suficiente. Para nosotros comprar cosas… a penas nosotros no más lo que tenemos para nosotros sobrevivir. Y porque como pa' nosotros darnos el lujo de comprar cosas no hay… no halla uno la facilidad de uno darse el lujo de comprar… y no tenemos, mira que no tenemos televisor tan siquiera, porque no tenemos la facilidad pa' ni noticias (risas todos los hijos). No tenemos la facilidad."

215 Family Interview, Delia, Rudy, Gloria: "D: o salir a comer afuera de la casa. A un restaurante. "Bueno, vamos…", sí, no se puede. Entonces, eso también. A veces, sí es difícil… es difícil salir afuera a comprar, sí, a comer. Porque parece lo más básico, como lo mínimo, no. Pero no se puede. O sea, no… estos momentos uno no puede porque el dinero no le alcanza. R: pa' una familia tan grande. 10 personas comiendo en un restaurante. Entonces, preferimos, mejor, cocinar algo en la casa y comer, cierto. Sí, es eso, la verdad. D: uno ni a Banff puede, ¿si me entiende? Porque se requiere también, o sea, no mucho dinero pero sí. Se requiere un poco. O sea, ni allá ni siquiera hemos tenido la oportunidad de ir, por eso. Porque el presupuesto no nos da. O sea, son cositas como pequeñas, ¿si me entiende? Pero a la misma es para uno es grande. A no poder acceder a esas pequeñas… G: y uno se mantiene encerrado aquí todo el tiempo en la casa. D: sí, uno la ve enferma. G: y está uno como que uno no se siente bien. Como que le estresa un poco. Porque al menos no tiene plata para usted salir a darse un, bueno, un paseíto para cualquier…"

the routine and the confinement at home[216]. Likewise Rosita and her family, Gloria's family, were used to spending most of their time outdoors in Colombia.

I asked them if they have considered the possibility of working and studying at the same time. Rudy explained to me that even though they can work and study at the same time, they would no longer be receiving government's support. In that case, Rudy, her cousins and siblings *"would have to work independently and assume [their] own expenses for school"*. Rudy and her family have decided to continue studying while receiving government's welfare. They are glad for having the opportunity to access education in Canada because their chances in Colombia were too limited. Rudy says she doesn't want to start working yet, she is *"more interested in improving [her] English skills and get ahead[217]"*. Their family goal is gaining English language proficiency, they perceive this process as *"the mainly step; English is like the key to opening all doors*[218]*".* Rudy, Delia, Lina and Simón would like to continue studying English and start a diploma or a certificate program. But Roncancio wants to start a degree in political science.

Similarly to what Rosita mentioned, Rudy and Delia have heard of *"a lot of people"* abandoning their studies to work: *"they say: 'no, I don't want government's support, and become independent', but they don't study, they just work"*. Delia perceives that some newcomers chose working over studying because they *"will be earning a lot more money and afford all what they need"*. She explains that some newcomers are not able to fully cover their expenses with government's welfare. In their case, being a big family allows them to gather their incomes together and share their monthly expenses. For instance, Delia had classmates who *"learned English very fast in the street because at school the process is too slow, so, for instance, I know about classmates who started with me and decided to*

216 Family Interview, Gloria, Delia: "y no darse uno un paseíto y decir: "ay qué rico qué estuve por allá", porque eso a uno le queda en la mente. Pero uno todo el tiempo en el encierro, de la escuela a la casa, es muy duro. R: la rutina (min 1:10:18)".
217 Rudy: "la verdad yo no quiero empezar a trabajar ahorita…quiero mejorar…M: quieres seguir estudiando. R: quiero mejorar mi, mi inglés… quiero salir adelante […]".
218 Family Interview, Rudy, Delia, Gloria, Simón: "S: no, pues el inglés, primeramente. Primeramente, aprender el inglés, no…D: como el primer paso, el inglés. R: es como la llave. D: porque sin inglés, no se puede. (Min 1:00:16). R: el inglés es la llave que abre todas las puertas."

work and their English is super, I mean, not super but you can clearly see they have acquired a much more advanced English level than mine[219]".

Delia and Rudy think that the chances of improving English skills while working at the same time, also depends on where people can find low income jobs. Rudy has met newcomers living in Edmonton for more than ten years, and never learned English because they found jobs among their community. Delia thinks gaining English language proficiency can be strengthened while studying and working at the same time, however, not accessing postgraduate education after completing the English program won't grant them finding different types of jobs: *"if you only know the language you will just find a normal job, to do cleaning, things like that[220]"*. Roncancio has heard that if *"he continues studying and starts a bachelor's in political science",* after completing his degree, he would be able to earn money like *"a normal person [does]"*. Likely Rudy, he thinks that if he has to *"sacrifice these [first] years"* he would be able to have a *"very good stability"* in the future, so, for him *"it's worth the sacrifice[221]"*.

We also chat about their experiences living in their leased house. Gloria says the house is *"good"*, but children wish they could move to another place[222]. The kids feel uncomfortable not having their own bedroom, Francy *"sleeps with her mom and her*

219 Family Interview, Rudy, Delia: "R: sí, se dedican mejor a trabajar. Y hay muchas personas también que llevan aquí 10, 15 años viviendo y no saben esto de inglés. Porque vinieron por el gobierno y dijeron un día: "uy no… yo necesito más plata", y nunca estudiaron, entonces se salieron de la ayuda del gobierno y se fueron solamente a trabajar. Y ahora recién regresaron a la escuela después de 10, 15 años. Y tienen cero de inglés porque empezaron a relacionarse no más en su comunidad… (min 1:55:16) a trabajar en su comunidad y nunca aprendieron el inglés. D: pero hay otros que sí. R: qué también. D: qué sí los han aprendido, o sea, súper rápido en la calle porque en la escuela es un proceso muy lento, en cambio, empiezan a trabajar y a relacionarse, entonces… por ejemplo, he visto compañeros míos que empezaron conmigo. Y entonces se fueron a trabajar y ahora… hahaha… o sea, el inglés, mejor dicho, súper, o sea, no súper pero a leguas se nota que tienen un nivel de inglés mucho más alto, mucho más avanzado que el mío."

220 Family Interview, Delia: "Entonces, yo creo que se requiere el idioma y estudiar, superarse, van de las dos manos porque si solamente usted sabe el idioma igual va a conseguir un empleo normal, de limpieza, o sea, cosas así.".

221 Family Interview, Roncancio: "O: pues tengo entendido que en este momento si uno… si por ejemplo, yo me saliera en este momento y me colocara a trabajar, o sea, sí ganaría dinero. Y ganaría buen dinero pero tengo entendido que si yo sigo estudiando y hago una ingeniería civil, eh… un ingeniero civil gana más todavía que lo que gana una persona trabajando normal. O sea, tengo que sacrificarme ahora estos años pero cuando lo logre, pues voy a tener una muy buena estabilidad. Entonces, vale la pena el sacrificio."

222 Family Interview, Gloria: "G: pues en la casa bien. Porque la casa… los niños ya no se han amañado en esta casa, porque ellos a cada ratico porque ellos dicen que busquemos otra casa, qué a ellos que no les gusta vivir…".

brother, and she wants her privacy[223]". Rudy thinks differently from Delia and believes that children want *"a new house"* just because they want to alternate the routine. Rudy believes *"nothing is wrong with the house […], I mean, there is no money to hang out and do something different"* because *"routine is tiring"*. However, she also mentioned they had a few issues during their first year of lease, once they took accountability of the leasing by themselves (without the orientation of the social workers that initially supported them). One time the kitchen's grill melted for long use. They contacted the landlord, but he delegated his nephew to look after his leasing responsibilities. The *"young guy never answered the texts, never… we had emergencies and he never got back to us[224]"*. Acquaintances helped them by providing electric pots while Mr. Rubiano fixed the kitchen and installed a new stove. Something similar happened when they required assistance for the washing machine, the stairs and the piping system.

These kinds of situations haven't been easily navigable for them for two main reasons. Firstly, it is still hard for them to find ways to communicate and convey their needs in English to the landlord. Secondly, they were not informed of rights between landlords and leaseholders:

> *"That was a challenge because nobody explained to us: 'this works this way', but we, little by little, found out how things are. […] In that part, it is very difficult, honestly, that has been hard… There are people here that abuse from that, I think [they believe]: 'ah ok, they are new in Canada, they don't know their rights' […]. The owner of the house is very funny, he speaks to us as if he was doing us a big favour*225*".*

223 Family Interview, Delia: "D: qué porque no tiene un cuarto sola y porque le toca dormir con el hermanito y la mamá. Porque ella quiere su privacidad.".
224 Family Interview, Simón, Rudy: ": S: ya se derritió porque como cocinábamos bastante… entonces, estaba vieja pero no la utilizaban tanto, entonces, llegamos nosotros y lo utilizamos pues todos los días y horas, no, entonces la parrilla mucho calor ya se derritió… se puso así… R: "Le mandábamos los mensajes, así como eso… como lo de la estufa eso es una emergencia. Ese muchacho ¡Nuncaaa! Él nunca nos contestaba, nunca… o sea, pasaban así cosas que eran emergencia, y él: "¡jum!", nunca nos contestaba.".
225 Family Interview, Rudy: "Y así muchas cosas, entonces, eso ha sido bien tremendo pa' nosotros. Primero, el idioma. Segundo, no sabíamos cómo se manejan las cosas aquí entre el arrendador y el arrendatario, ¿cierto? O sea, ¿cómo eran las cosas? Entonces, eso fue un reto, nadie nos explicó, nos dijo: "esto funciona así". Pero nosotros poco a poco fuimos descubriendo cómo eran las cosas. Y… entonces en esa parte, sí bien difícil, la verdad. Nos ha costado. Y todavía, porque hay gente que, como que abusa de eso, creo. "Qué ay bueno, es nuevo aquí en Canadá, no conoce sus derechos", entonces creo que… y lo otro… ella a veces, la

They explained to me that Mr. Rubiano has repeatedly stressed the *"same thing 'it is hard for you to find a lease for all of you in another place'; like [suggesting] he is doing us a favour*[226]*"*. Delia agrees with Rudy, she feels that the landlord makes them feel uncomfortable when he ignores their requests and *"didn't even allow them talking"* when they met to renew the contract. Delia highlighted he didn't *"even give you the opportunity for you to express yourself […], he is the only one who talks, and things can't be that way… I mean, there should be a balance"*. Moreover, they choose among them who is more fluent in English to communicate with him, however, it is still hard for them to convey everything they would like to tell Mr. Rubiano.

All of them share the lease and utilities' expenses in the house. Each member of this family brings together government's financial aid to pay about 3,000 thousand every month. Considering the inconvenience with him and lack of response when facing emergencies, they have been searching for new places to move. They also would like to find a more convenient location to commute to school, and less expensive to be able to make some savings. However, they realized *"it is hard to find a house like that for all, located in a good place"*. Taking this into account, Rudy believes *"it could be a good option leasing two apartments or two houses*[227]*"*. However, they have only found affordable places with three or four rooms for all of them, which is not an option because their family unit consists of eleven members sharing monthly expenses.

Gloria also thinks that living in their actual house is very *"comfortable and the neighbourhood is wonderful […]. In this neighbourhood you could go out [safely] at any time, you won't see a soul there. […]*[228]*"*.However, similarly to what Sonia and Mercedes

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dueña de la casa es bien chistosa. Ella nos habla en un sentido de que ella nos está haciendo un favor muy grande a nosotros.".

226 Family Interview, Rudy: "R: ella lo habla así. Ella siempre nos repite lo mismo, dice: "ustedes es difícil que le arrienden en otra parte 10 personas juntos", o sea como que yo les estoy haciendo un favor, ella lo tra… siempre, a la hora de ella hablarnos nos recuerda eso, nos recuerda eso, nos dice lo mismo. Como que es un favor.".

227 Family Interview, Rudy: "R: sí claro, entre todos. Entonces, estábamos buscando algo más central. Eh… qué ahorráramos otro poquito, y sí es difícil. La verdad que sí es difícil encontrar una casa así para todos, que quede en un buen lugar. Qué quede más cerca la verdad de la iglesia. Entonces, creo que de pronto sería una buena opción de pronto buscar como arrendar dos, dos apartamentos, dos casitas.".

228 Family Interview, Gloria: "G: y también esta casa me gusta porque esta casa es confortable. Y el uno… este barrio es divino para vivir. Es súper confortable… este barrio usted puede salir a la hora que sea, usted no ve un alma por ahí.".

mentioned, Rudy and her family have perceived that since they established in the house they haven't *"even know [their neighbours]" as it was in Colombia, where they greeted them everyday"*[229]. Although the area is *"very tranquil [and] nobody messes with nobody"*, this family perceives *"people here [live] like [sunken] in their own worlds, in their lives and things, so I think that is the culture here*[230]*"*. Delia feels *"totally ignored"* by her neighbours, but she agrees with Rudy, concluding that these forms of interaction are part of *"people's culture… we came from a culture where everyone talks to each other: 'hey, good morning, vecino…', but arriving here, it is very different*[231]*"*. Delia says the restricted interactions with her neighbours make her feel like in *"solitude"*, she has realized some people are *"more kind"* than others, but she hasn't encounter people greeting her much; she doesn't like feeling that *"much solitude*[232]*"*.

This family shared with me their future plans from five years on. Gloria wishes she could have been a doctor, but she thinks she *"cannot make it"* at her age. Rudy thinks that the most important thing for her to achieve her goals has to do with *"effort…the attitude you have to face all things in life. In my opinion, I have learned that you need to have a good attitude about the language, I mean, not become lazy for it, or reneging […]; being consistent*[233]*"*. Rudy also thinks it is important to establish networks with people who have been through a similar process what they are going through to achieve their goals, *"as they*

229 Family Interview, Rudy: "R: bueno, uno en Colombia tiene eso, nuestra cultura, qué uno se levanta… qué uno: "vecino, ¿y cómo amaneció?". Y está la vecina… uno es chismoso, no… como eso… entonces, el chisme, entonces uno está pendiente del vecino, si llegó, si no llegó, si tiene familia, si está solo… uno sabe porque uno habla con las personas, entonces uno sabe eso. Y uno llegar aquí, uno no conocer ni el vecino.".
230 Family Interview, Rudy: "Entonces el barrio sí la verdad muy tranquilo, nadie se mete con nadie. Nadie se mete aquí con nadie, pero los vecinos sí no los conocemos. La gente aquí no… está como en su mundo, en su vida, en sus cosas, entonces, es eso, yo creo. Y la cultura también, esa es la cultura de aquí. Entonces…".
231 Family Interview, Delia: "D: lo mismo, qué la gente no… no interatua con uno, no le habla, no nada… uno totalmente ignorado. Entonces sí, así como Rudy dice, es la cultura de la gente de…como uno venía de una cultura donde todo mundo se habla: "ay, buenos días vecino, como esto…", en cambio, llegar acá es bien… diferente.".
232 Family Interview, Delia: "D: no sé, pues a veces, no me gusta tanta soledad, así. De verdad. No… pues todo mundo no, pero no me gusta tan… ¿sí me entiende? O sea, como la gente, o sea, nadie, nadie… entonces, no es que me guste mucho. Y pues no es que la gente le esté preguntando la vida de uno pero hay mucha gente que son como más amables, no. Qué … bueno, le saludan a uno y así. Pues a mí no me ha tocado eso que me estén saludando, no sé… de pronto a estos muchacho porque yo. Tampoco la soledad tan… no me gusta mucho…".
233 Family Interview, Rudy: "Primero, sí… esforzarme, yo creo va mucho en la actitud que uno le ponga a las cosas, para aprender todo en la vida. Hay gente que… bueno, en mi opinión, yo he aprendido que uno tiene que tener una buena actitud, ante el idioma, o sea, no empezar a cogerle pereza, estar renegando: "qué no, qué ese idioma tan difícil". No, si no, tener una buena actitud, esforzarse. Todo tiene un esfuerzo, la verdad. Entonces, yo creo que, el uno esforzarse, ser constante en las cosas."

can help giving advice[234]*"*. Rudy feels grateful for having the opportunity to be here with her family, she *"knows it is not easy for a lot of people that live alone in Canada, [who] don't have their family and in that sense they don't have like that support*[235]*"*.Besides counting on each other as a family, staying connected with Latino communities has eased their process of adaptation in Edmonton.

Like Simón, Roncancio agrees *"that the older you are, it is harder"* to learn English. However, he also thinks that people's language skills progress is dependent on the type of opportunities you have access to. He specifically mentioned the case of *"a lot of Latinos, from other places that arrive here with other [type of] documents, so, they arrive here and in most of their job places they don't have to speak English, [they share] with the same people, same community and same language. So, they don't learn because they are speaking Spanish all day, so they don't learn English.*[236]*"*.

234 Family Interview, Rudy: "Eh… relacionarse, también creo que tiene mucho que ver con quién uno se relaciona aquí en este país para alcanzar también muchas cosas. Si uno se relaciona con personas que ya pasaron el proceso de uno, qué lo pueden ayudar, no… como ya vivieron eso, entonces le pueden dar un consejo. Le pueden dar una buena opinión: "bueno, vaya allá, o haga esto". Porque ellos ya pasaron por ese proceso."

235 Family Interview, Rudy: "Sé que para muchas personas el vivir en Canadá eh… no es fácil porque mucha gente viene sola, entonces, no tienen a la familia y en esa parte pues se sienten, no sienten ese apoyo, ¿sí? Para mí ha sido una bendición porque estoy con mi familia."

236 Family Interview, Roncancio, Delia: "bueno, algo que yo he notado es que entre más joven esté uno, más rápido aprende el idioma. Entre más joven, no sé por qué pero…

D: entre más niño. O: entre más joven, más, más… o sea, en meses lo agarras, entre más adulto uno esté, más difícil se le hace. Oí decir que el cerebro como que ya estaba configurado para el idioma de uno y no para un idioma nuevo. Bueno, aparte de eso también hay que tener en cuenta que no todo el mundo tiene las mismas oportunidades. Por ejemplo, en el caso mío gracias a Dios, tuve la oportunidad de llegar aquí con ayuda, entonces… eh… no me tocó ir a trabajar de una vez como muchas personas que… muchos latinos o gente de otro lado que llegan aquí con otro tipo de… de… de yo qué sé, de documentos, pues. Entonces, ellos llegan aquí e inmediatamente tiene que ir a buscar trabajo. Y muchas veces los trabajos no son en lugares donde se habla inglés sino con gente de la misma… de la misma comunidad, el mismo idioma. Entonces, no aprenden porque todo el día se la pasan hablando español, entonces no aprenden inglés."

CONCLUSIONS

In this study I portrayed how people who experienced forced displacements understand the emigration conditions that pushed them to leave their home countries in relation to social, historical and political processes in Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia. Considering emigration and immigration as mutually influenced processes (Sayad 2004; Karimi and Bucerius 2018), I also displayed how Rubiela, Sonia, Berenice, Mercedes, Manuel, Rosita, Rudy, Simón and Roncancio navigated asylum and the resettlement conditions in Canada. I developed a narrative and experiential approach (Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Chase 2008; Eastmond 2007; Katsiaficas et. al 2011; Reczeck 2014) to convey how their migration journeys have affected them in relation to their 'selves' (Deaux and Perkins 2001; Conrandson and Mckay 2007; Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008; Bräuchler and Ménard 2017) and the environments where they eventually interact (Vigh 2009).

In the first chapter of this work, I framed their trajectories and experiences of emigration in light of Vigh's (2009) concept of social navigation. I explained how my participants fled Guatemala, El Salvador and Colombia seeking to "escape confining structures" (Vigh 2009: 419, 433) and violence in uncertain conditions, in which their "power of movement [was] situationally defined" by the civil wars in Central America during the 1980's; and the Colombian armed conflict in the 2000's. I also highlighted how constantly changing events pushed them to move out to different temporary institutionalized and non-institutionalized asylum locations, seeking possibilities to reposition themselves "toward better positions" aiming to survive and rebuild their lives, according to the "push and pull of social forces" at different locations of their pathway (Vigh 2009: 432). My participants' "forms and conditions of movement" convey how their migration journeys are comprised by a continuous process of uprootedness (Ahmed, Castañeda, Fortier and Sheller 2003: 1), however, their emigration pathways also allowed them to make experiences of regroundings (Ahmed et. al 2003) at different levels and gradations in the temporary asylum locations before arriving in Canada.

In the second chapter I outlined how processes of mobility reconfigure identities and spatial relations in the host environment (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017; Sakti 2017; Vigh 2009). I portrayed my participants' stories in relation to their own perceptions of their resettlement process in Canada, while outlining how their experiences vary according to the time, place and age of arrival; 'culture shock'; family roles and structure of their family unit, as well as their premigration experiences. In this sense I emphasized how "multiple background variables" influenced my participants' social navigation along their resettlement process in Canada (Vigh 2009: 430). Their social trajectories are forged within forms of movement that "shape people's subjectivities and leads to the emergence of new or the reconstruction of established collective [and individual] identities and modes of belonging" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 391). Their narratives convey particular "ways of knowing and being" in relation to social, historical and political processes that have forged their trajectories over time at different locations (Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 1; Conrandson and Mckay 2007; Hajdukowski-Ahmed 2008, Vigh 2009).

To develop a first level of understanding of my participants' experiences, I followed Conrandson and Mckay's (2007) approach to consider that "forms of subjectivity and feelings emerge through geographical mobility" (167). Within debates of "transnational migration", the authors assert that the 'self' is shaped in between "multiple connections with people, events and things" (Conrandson and Mckay 2007: 167). From this first dimension of my narrative analysis, I described how my participants reflected differently about themselves while adjusting and navigating changes in relation to a new social environment (Vigh 2009), and the tripartite dimensions of the self: individual, relational and collective (Deaux and Perkins 2001). For instance, Sonia, Rosita and Manuel arrived in Canada as teenagers, regardless that Sonia arrived in the mid 1990's, their interactions in school were marked by similar experiences of exclusion, discrimination and racism. In their environment, lacking language skills hindered communication with their local classmates, *"exaggerating"* the feeling of *"difference"*, but also for their skin color and for the fact of being immigrants. All three of them mentioned how their *"character"* or "personality traits" (Deaux and Perkins 2001: 301) influenced the way they navigated hardships along their educational experiences. Sonia mentioned being *"introverted"*, and Rosita thought

about herself as *"shy*[237]*"*. In the case of Manuel, he perceived himself at that time as *"peaceful"*, like a person of *"few words"*. Nowadays, he feels the need to communicate memories that he has withheld with sadness and pain, which have impacted his mental health.

Through these narratives I also outlined the overlapping dynamic within my participants' journeys of mobility, movement and "reterritorialization of [their identities]" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 381; Deaux and Perkins 2001). Sonia emphasized that she *"belongs in Canada"* regardless of *"the cold weather"* and the *"strong and subtle racism"* that she has encountered since she has lived here. Sonia also *"loves going to Guatemala"*, as Berenice likes visiting El Salvador for a couple of weeks. However, in the case of Sonia the rates of crime in Guatemala makes her *"never think"* of it as her *"home"*. Sonia feels she belongs here also because her community is in Canada, which she identifies as mostly being Latinos; and at some point of her life she also thought of Mexico as her *"home"*. In Berenice's case, going back to her country makes her fear driving, while in Edmonton she feels *"very comfortable"* doing so. Likewise, in the case of Rubiela, she arrived in Canada against her will. However, nowadays she believes she has positively *"changed"*, empowering herself as a woman, but at the same time she is still belonging and connected to Guatemala. Although she has the Canadian citizenship, she is still *"proud to say"* that she is *"Guatemalan"*.

Further, to develop this second level of my narrative analysis, I pointed out how my participants' have "multiple attachments" to different locations, by preserving "cultural and historical linkages" to Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala (Sakti 2017: 489). These narratives convey how forms of belonging are "often located in the imaginary", but at the same time linked to specific geographical locations (Chamberlain and Leydesdorff 2004 cited in Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385). While my participants convey emotions and a sense of "personal attachment to the homeland", remembering their "home also involves cultural productions and discourses" in relation to it (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385). Sakti (2017) uses Conrandson and Mckay's (2007) concept of "translocality" to portray

237 Rosita: "y ahm…era muy tímida yo también, entonces, aunque agarré la lengua… bastante rápido, pues que no es que me hacía así amiga súper rá… súper fácil de niños y todo eso, tenía más amistades pues con los latinos".

how communities in Indonesia transcending geographical borders bring with them their "[memories] of place to extend their 'homeland' and to reimagine their new lived world" (Sakti 2017: 465). In this framework, she argues that individuals' "changed situations of mobility made salient their awareness of multi-locality" (Sakti 2017: 468), like in the cases of my participants. Moreover, Sakti (2017) emphasizes how "narratives of sameness" convey people's emotional connection and a sense of solidarity among the receiving communities in West Timor (469). Although, the author uses the term to convey how newcomers "shared histories and genealogies […] [and] evoke empathy and prevent conflict" in the West Timor communities, I think that idea of "sameness" is also embedded in my participants' narratives to some extent (Sakti 2017: 469). Especially on how their lives are "linked" together (Reczek 2014) in relation to how they have maintained their "community cultural wealth" and the "ability to [keep] hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of […] barriers" (Yosso 2005: 77; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). My participants carry with them a "sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition among family" (Yosso 2005: 77; Yosso and Burciaga 2016: 2).

On the other side, for most of them, encountering people speaking Spanish or meeting people who identify themselves as Latinos or Hispanic, facilitated forms of connection with them, as a way to preserve their *linguistic capital* (Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). In the case of Sonia, she and her parents immediately connected with people in the street for speaking their home language, to the extent that Sonia felt she encountered a relative, her *"uncle or grandpa"*. Manuel and his family became friends with a Canadian family Spanish speaking. Likewise, Berenice, Mercedes, Rudy and their family mostly interact with people who speak their home language. On the other side, my participants pointed out how Latino communities previously established in Canada expressed solidarity by supporting them throughout their resettlement process as a way to enrich their *social capital* (Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). In fact, in the case of Manuel and Rosita, these connections facilitated them moving from Ontario to Alberta. In the case of Rudy, she believes that it is important to establish networks with people who have been through a similar process than theirs to overcome challenges. Likewise, Rosita and her family feeling of "sameness" (Sakti 2017) was expressed throughout their support to other families because she *"relates to them…[she] can say: 'oh, I went through this too,*

like you know, you are not alone[238]*"*. My participants' narratives also convey forms in which they strengthen their *resistant capital* (Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). Along their journeys, Sonia, Rosita and Manuel developed skills to face different forms of racism, exclusion and discrimination at different points of their trajectories. Nowadays, all of them have completed post secondary education degrees, regardless of experiencing forms of racism and discrimination in the different educational environment where they interacted.

I echoed Yosso (2005), and Yosso and Burciaga' (2016) critique to the Bourdieusian capital approach, not just because Bourdieu's (1986) analytical framework presumes the idea that knowledges different from the "upper and middle classes" tend to be addressed throughout lens of a "deficit thinking" (Yosso 2005: 75). Yosso (2005), and Yosso and Burciaga's (2016) reflections also invite me to overstep analytical "overgeneralizations" of individuals' trajectories (75). To expand the discussion around Bourdieu's (1986) capital and field paradigm, Vigh's (2009) discussions served me to frame my participant's trajectories within social environments that are constantly in motion, and do not necessarily fit within Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital, and consequently, not in coherence with the concept of field. Reframing my participants' trajectories within Vigh's (2009) notion of social navigation allowed me to portray the multiple nuances of events that shaped my participants' journeys of emigration, asylum and resettlement in Canada, while emphasizing how their aspirational, navigational and familial capitals served them in favour of their own process of mobility (Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016). Gloria and Lina never attended school in Colombia, and didn't know how to read and write in Spanish; but their aspirational, navigational skills, and their family ties played an essential role for them to cope with the institutional bureaucracies to claim asylum out of Colombia, just to name an example (Yosso 2005; Yosso and Burciaga 2016).

Narrative linkages (Chase 2008; Chase 2005 cited in Katsiaficas et. al 2011) among my participants' experiences also convey a sense of "shared histories" (Sakti 2017: 489) or

238 Rosita: "Pero realmente cuando las personas me dicen de compartir mi experiencia, o que otra persona comparta una experiencia de ellos, qué no sé, me hace em…estoy perdida en mis pensamientos… hahahaha…como que… I can relate, I can relate to them…I can say: "oh, I went to through this too, like, you know, you are not alone…and ah…".

"linked lives" (Reckzeck 2014) of resettlement in a two folded way. First, all of them, with the exception of Mercedes, felt welcome by the government's social support since their arrival in the airport, when social workers were waiting for them to receive accommodation in residences for newcomers. In the case of Manuel, the experience of *"needing a lot of help"* in their early years of resettlement, made them feel like *"babies"*. Likewise, Delia thinks of her own educational experience and her cousin Lina's as a process that requires them to *"start all over"* like if they were *"little"*. Further, their stories are linked by experiences of financial constraints at different stages of their trajectories, regardless that they received government support. Most of them have followed what they described as the government's resettlement pathway, which is determined by a period of language skills acquisition, considered as a previous requirement to access upgrading programs, higher education or the job market. In this sense, their narratives convey how "national policies of immigration and political discourses about immigration" forge their "interactions between [immigrants] and local authorities and populations" (Bräuchler and Ménard 2017: 385). In fact, Rosita's father, like Mercedes and her family, searched for low income jobs to help them make ends meet. Rudy and her family's case nowadays touches on Rosita's and Mercedes' motivations to search for alternative income sources rather than remaining with government's welfare. However, for Rudy's family, searching for job opportunities entail missing the opportunity to continue studying because they are not allowed to work while they receive financial aid from the government.

While reflecting on Mercedes' case, and contrasting her experiences with the rest of my participants, I consider it important to develop further research aimed to understand how the resettlement conditions affect newcomers differently if they arrive in Canada privately sponsored. Mercedes faced different adversities with her family during their resettlement, and she wishes they could have had more support, particularly in terms of psychological assistance. I wonder if the source of funding played a role in her case. I consider it important to gain a broader understanding of how newcomers receive mental health support and cope with the memory of traumatic experiences, while it affects their everyday life interactions. I pose this first angle of inquiry considering Manuel's, Mercedes' and Rubiela's experiences. Manuel emphasized that economic support does not grant an integral experience of wellbeing. He highlighted how *"family bonds, spiritual or*

psychological support" are significant means to learn how to deal with past experiences of trauma. Likewise, Mercedes stresses that access to counselling and orientation would have benefited her family unit to navigate life changes. Although Rubiela mentioned she received different forms of support from different organizations, she experienced a certain kind of depression; what made her process of adjustment harder during the first years of resettlement. Sadler and Clark (2014) have previously posed that "refugee trauma is related not only to pre-migration stress but also to ongoing experiences of discrimination, structural violence, lack of support, and stress during the resettlement process", as it occurred in the case of some of my participants (184). Moreover, the experience of trauma could increase by "challenges related to access to employment, language skills, education and health" (Sadler and Clark 2014: 184). A Participatory Action Research approach (Stoecker 2012) could be used to enhance pre-existing channels to support newcomers to face mental health issues along their resettlement process.

Likewise, further studies will serve to better understand how newcomers' decision trails are informed by forms of exclusion and inclusion embedded in refugee integration policy, that dictates pathways of incorporation in the different realms of the receiving context (Darling 2017). While identifying how the founding source – government or private sponsors – impact newcomers' process of adaptation in Canada in different ways, further research could inform how forms of access to education, employment and housing affect newcomers' adaptation when they are privately sponsored. Once I finished the interviews with Rudy, she emphasized not knowing how to pursue educational opportunities once she completed the LINC program. I helped her search for possible post secondary programs, however, we both lacked knowledge of how the government's funding system would cover her studies. Rudy and her family are still in a stage of their resettlement seeking to improve their language skills. I helped her by calling different post-secondary institutions a few times to inquire about the possible "pathway" for her to continue studying. She mentioned that it would have been hard for her to understand the requirements if I hadn't talked with her. Similarly, I accompanied Roncancio to a post-secondary institution to inquire what possible pathways would work for him to continue with his studies. He told me that the first time he went by himself the front line staff of this institution didn't provide him the information that he received when I went with him.

Last but not least, further research needs to inform how systemic forms of racism and discrimination affect newcomers' experiences at school and different educational institutions. Manuel, Sonia and Rosita experienced racism at school but they were not the only ones. Gloria and Lina have been significantly affected by discrimination and bullying in their educational settings, for not having the same educational level as her classmates. To the extent that Gloria quit her studies. Further research could inform possible ways to establish and improve means of incorporation of newcomers in educational settings in benefit of their wellbeing and adaptation (Tecle and James 2014: 147).

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