

PHOTOVOICE AS A TOOL TO EXPLORE IMMIGRATION FOR STUDENT MOTHERS

ANDREA COOK

A Research Paper
in
The Department
of
Creative Arts Therapies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

AUGUST 2, 2019

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This research paper prepared

By: Andrea Cook

Entitled: Photovoice as a Tool to Explore Immigration for Student Mothers

and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Creative Arts Therapies; Art Therapy Option)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality as approved by the research advisor.

Research Advisor:

Janis Timm-Bottos, PhD, ATR-BC, ATPQ, PT

Department Chair:

Guyllaine Vaillancourt, PhD, MTA

July, 2019

ABSTRACT

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ANDREA COOK

The following pilot study explored whether PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) could serve as an art therapy strategy for exploring acculturation with a group of immigrant student mothers. Additionally, the research investigated the potential of adding a quantitative measure of acculturation to the qualitative design of the PhotoVoice methodology. Data collected through the images and audio recorded sessions supported that PhotoVoice could be a strategy as well as a qualitative research method for identifying issues, strengths and challenges of a community of student mothers that have immigrated. The mothers identified four themes relevant to their immigration journey: 1) Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny: Coming from Different Backgrounds; 2) Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance; 3) Food is an Element of our Life; 4) The Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the student mothers that participated in this project. The vulnerability and courage you portray in sharing your journey is inspiring. My life has been forever touched and transformed by hearing and seeing your incredibly deep, rich experiences.

My sincere thanks to the Art Hive Network and my research supervisor, Janis Timm-Bottos for granting this project an Art Hive Internship award. The support has allowed a deeper investigation into cultural identity and the use of PhotoVoice techniques while maintaining research practices that respect the voice of the community. Thank you also to Janis Timm-Bottos for the belief and support you have invested in me. Your expertise and unwavering support are humbling and invaluable.

I would like to thank the American Art Therapy Association for awarding this research with the Pearlie Roberson 2018 Award. The award goes to an art therapist professional or student supporting multicultural study and capacities of art therapy. I feel these goals are reflected in the stories of the women that shared their immigration experience.

A special thank you to the Concordia University Dean of Students and Concordia University Student Parents centre (CUSP) for providing the funds to acquire camera equipment, food and print materials. The collaboration between the Concordia University Dean of Students, CUSP and the Concordia University Art Hive (CUAH) helped realize this research project.

An additional, heartfelt thank you goes to Sumaiya Gangat, the coordinator at CUSP for the active support and belief in this project. You are a wonderful bridge between parents and the academic institution, and your assistance has been incredibly valuable. I am eternally grateful.

Thank you also to the CUAH for providing the space to conduct meetings, host the exhibition and for art materials. I wish a special thank you to Rachel Chainey for being so communicative, flexible and present. You are a coordination wizard. Thank you also to facilitators, Ellen Smallwood and Diana Vozian and to volunteer Adam Wanderer for creating a welcoming environment and assisting participants in the final preparations for the exposition. My gratitude also extends to Sondra Goldman for guidance and supervision, especially in the early stages of this project. You continuously offer new insights into the therapeutic aspects of social and community-based art therapy.

Thank you to photographers Phil Borges and the late Tim Hetherington for the social documentaries that inspired my belief in the power of the photo to convey the depths of human experience.

Thank you also to Carolina Wang and Mary Ann Burris for designing a research methodology that puts the photographic power into the hands and voice of the community members themselves.

Thank you to Emily Martin for your amazing editing abilities.

I am also deeply grateful for my young daughter, Keavey Cook-DiSandolo who constantly inspires me. You remind me of the importance of providing parents creative opportunities to break isolation and foster connections with communities that transcend cultures, generations, abilities and sexual identities.

Thank you to my enduringly patient partner, Tom DiSandolo for supporting me through the sleepless nights and stress while completing steps of the research process.

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Introduction

Canada is a country that champions diversity and welcomes people from all over the globe (Immigration and Citizenship, 2017; Harris 2017). Despite this reputation, controversy surrounds the discussions of whether immigrants have a right to maintain their cultural identity (Shingler, 2017; Urback, 2017) after moving to Canada. This controversy surrounding cultural rights can add to the stress of relocating and adjustment that already have psychological, social, and financial impacts on those immigrating. New immigrants facing these circumstances may benefit from tools to ease the difficulties surrounding immigration and to navigate Canadian culture. This is particularly true for parents raising children within a new culture.

This research project documents a pilot study investigating the use of PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) as one of these tools. This study works with a group of immigrant mothers studying at Concordia University in Montreal to explore whether PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) as an art therapy strategy can serve as a method to explore cultural identification and acculturation while empowering the immigrant parent community in a positive, and productive way. It also investigates the potential of adding a quantitative measure of acculturation to the qualitative design of the PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) methodology.

This paper will begin with a literature review presenting topics and terms which inform the research, followed by the methodology section addressing participant selection, research materials, assessments and measures used, and a description of the meetings. The results and thematic analysis will then present the group-identified themes relevant to the mothers' immigration journeys: 1) Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds; 2) Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance; 3) Food is an Element of our Life; and 4) The Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information. The paper will finish with an evaluation of the project and a discussion of the limitations and recommendations for future use of this method.

Literature Review

This section presents a review of the literature that informs the research project. It addresses the following topics: immigration and Canadian cultural context, the PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) method and how it relates to culture, and a review of how art, art therapy, and photography has explored cultural identity in previous research.

Immigration in Canadian Cultural Context

Challenges. Canada has recently experienced an increase in immigration, particularly from the United States (Harris, 2017). While welcoming people from diverse origins is a hallmark of Canadian culture, immigrants are confronted with uprooting their way of life and face many challenges upon arrival. One challenge is that people who settle in Canada navigate dominant norms and the cultural ideas and social norms of their country of origin. Another challenge is that immigrants may be from underrepresented racial groups and have difficulty connecting with the new culture or may feel that they risk losing their sense of cultural self (Ryder Alden & Paulhus, 2000). The presence of these challenges in Canadian policy (Urback, 2017) emphasize the need for programs and tools to aid immigrants in adjusting to culture in Canada. Immigrants may need strategies to overcome distress and to support a changing sense of identity within the dominant culture without sacrificing the culture of origin (Palibroda, Krieg, Murdock & Havelock, 2009).

Public opposition and strategies. Urback (2017) writes that there are Canadian citizens who feel that an increase in the number of immigrants will put stress on the current economic and social systems and that strategies to aid immigrant integration are required. Urback (2017) adds that some Canadians present a strategy in which the country refuse all refugees and immigrants entirely and more recently, government policy has been adapted to reduce the number of immigrants accepted in Quebec (Shingler & Montpetit, 2019). These exclusionary strategies and attitudes compound the challenges immigrants face adjusting to culture in Canada, while refusing certain groups' entry to Canada may further stigmatize these groups and increase racial discrimination. Therefore, alternative strategies that aid immigrants in the transition to life in Canada are necessary.

Support. What has not been discussed in depth in the media is what is happening to help refugees and immigrants acclimate and adapt to life in Canada. There are social programs and resources available (Immigration and Citizenship, 2017) but the toll that escaping extreme circumstances, and/or adjusting to completely different cultural norms may have on mental health and sense of identity are not addressed.

In their study, Karunakara et al. (2004) note how the substantial stress of escaping violence or another traumatic situation compounds the already stressful events of migration and parenting; they conclude that refugees may have a higher risk of committing suicide and developing PTSD. This evidence aligns with the study by Stewart et al. (2015) which suggests that further research

is needed in mitigating stress in refugees who have experienced trauma. This includes emotional support and services that mobilize and assist immigrant community members and inform health related policies (Stewart et al., 2015). Inability to access economic advantages, employment, and housing at the same rate as individuals already living in Canada provides an additional stressor to many immigrants. For example, immigrants make up 40% of renters in low-income housing in Montreal, Habitations à Loyer Modique (HLM), and the website shows that a greater than average number of these are single parent families (Office Municipal d'Habitation de Montreal, 2017).

There are also increasing numbers of international and immigrant students with children that are enrolling in post-secondary education. The coordinator of Concordia University Student Parents (CUSP) Centre, an organization that provides services to students with children, confirmed that the number of students with children is growing. She has recorded that 10% of students on campus have a child, and although a formal count has not been made, has observed that many are international students or have immigrated to Canada (S. Gangat, personal communication, May 3, 2018). This observation suggests that the need for strategies to explore immigration and acculturation that includes parents may be justified and growing. Moreover, parents are not only concerned with their own acculturation, but how their children will identify themselves culturally as they grow up in Canada.

PhotoVoice Method

PhotoVoice is a participatory action research technique created by Wang and Burris (1994) that enables communities to identify and voice their needs to relevant audiences, such as policy makers, or to rally for social justice (Palibroda, et al., 2009). The goal of the PhotoVoice method is to provide participants within a community the tools to identify their needs by collecting their own data and organizing it in their own voices. This is usually lead by a researcher/facilitator who may also serve as the Primary Investigator (PI) of the project. Individuals from a community or co-researchers, take pictures of everyday life and use the photographs as a tool to identify and record the needs of their community.

Watkins and Shulman (2008) and Wang (2003) write about cultures of silence, a term defined by Freire (1972) in which the dominant culture only considers one reality to exist and does not acknowledge other perspectives. This silences minority communities whose realities differ from the dominant perspective. When the voice of some communities is suppressed, the

silence perpetuates oppressive arrangements of power (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Therefore, PhotoVoice as a method of community organizing may be a way to effectively allow minority community members a tool to break the silence and disrupt dominant narratives of power (Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

In one methodological critique of PhotoVoice, Evans-Agnew and Rosenberg (2016) offer a cautionary note by asking whose voice is being portrayed by reviewing how participant voices were promoted throughout the process of photography and discussion phases, and facilitated within the research methodology and dissemination process (Evans-Agnew & Rosenberg, 2016). They concluded that participant voice was less prevalent in researcher-led exhibition of photos, in communications to policy makers, and in data coding processes because the principal investigators may be doing more of the analyses than the participants themselves (Evans-Agnew & Rosenberg, 2016). Their recommendation to help ensure that research analyses were from the group members themselves was to use a checklist to ensure participants involvement at each stage of the PhotoVoice process.

PhotoVoice and Culture

While PhotoVoice has been used with a variety of different groups, to explore a variety of different issues (Palibroda et al., 2009) the research projects share the same methodology and goals. Wang (1999) developed her first PhotoVoice project to provide Chinese village women a way to define their needs, identify their strengths and record the successes and failures of the project. Wang (1999) suggests that Photovoice has the potential to better the lives of women in policy making on issues regarding class, race, and ethnic boundaries. The method is readily applied to issues of culture explored in the following keywords.

Acculturation. Before exploring the literature on PhotoVoice and Culture, the term, acculturation used in this project is defined as “the process of psychological and behavioral change individuals and groups undergo as a consequence of long-term contact with another culture” (Zea, Asner-Self, Birman & Buki, 2003, p. 108).

Ethnicity. There have been previous studies that make use of PhotoVoice to explore ethnicity. Ethnicity in this research is defined as “the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition” (Lexico, 2019, para.1). One ethnicity study used personal reflections, photographs and stories to explore Black student experiences in an almost exclusively Caucasian South African University (Cornell & Kessi, 2017). The Black

students themselves identified their coping strategies, and stereotypes encountered while analyzing the images. One photograph provided in the study was manipulated by the participants so that race and skin colour was unclear for every member of the group. The use of photography in this way was to render everyone equal and sensitize the audience towards transforming underlying Eurocentric stereotypes experienced by Black students.

Immigrant communities. Another recent study used PhotoVoice as a tool to explore issues facing groups of individuals who share international relocation experiences. For example, PhotoVoice was conducted with a group of self-identified Latina women who had recently immigrated to the United States (Perez et al., 2016). The issues the women identified were “transitioning to life in the US, parenting, education and combatting racism” (Perez et al., 2016, p. 429). Parenting and education are themes that will be addressed in the following study because it includes parents in a university setting.

Eating habits and culture. One study that used PhotoVoice to identify the needs of immigrants added an interesting thematic element, eating habits and culture. The study investigated PhotoVoice and Nigerian immigrant’s eating habits in the US (Turk et al., 2015). They found that the Nigerian ways of living and eating were considered healthy, while American ones were not, and that cultural context is important to promote healthy behaviors. Therefore, sharing food may instigate discussion regarding food and culture.

Food sharing may also build community. Food is important to the immigration process because how food is prepared, shared, and perceived may be culturally specific (Turk et al., 2015). The nature of social action research is that it allows the participants to define how sharing food may influence the project. Clarke (2013) adds that food sharing and preparation is a promising element in art therapy research. She writes “[m]y research suggests it could be valuable to expand art therapy methodologies by including the art process of making food” (Clarke, 2013, p. 40). Therefore, the addition of using meal making in this PhotoVoice project may be beneficial not only to the participants themselves, but to research in art therapy as a discipline.

Art, Photography, and Art Therapy to Explore Cultural Identity

Art is also a powerful non-verbal tool to communicate and express feelings. Like a language, art can provide a way to communicate intense emotions that may too painful to put into words or are not conscious. The act of being creative also contributes to an enhanced sense

of well-being, emotional expression, problem solving and stress reduction for all ages (Malchiodi, 2011). Art therapy with a group is dynamic and offers additional aspects such as: people learn about themselves by interacting with others, modelling and reacting to behavior and through projection of symbols and the self into images (Waller, 2011).

Artistic methods of exploring personal stories are powerful for several reasons. Art encourages new ways of seeing (Betensky, 2001; Rubin, 2016) and images are a powerful way to non-verbally express feelings and change a personal narrative (Gantt & Greenstone, 2016). However, not every culture and country of origin provides the same training in art, and there could be much variation in the group members technical ability or comfort with art mediums. Taking a photograph, however, can be taught easily and does not require as much time to learn as other artistic media, such as drawing or painting, which makes it a readily accessible medium (Weiser, 2004). Photographs can be used as a modern technique that embraces technology to explore the sense of self identity (Fryear, 1992). In North America, camera culture is a part of daily life with access to image taking abilities in the palm of almost everyone's hand on their smart phone or tablet. Using this method may contribute to investigations of acculturation for immigrants that might not have the same access to technology where they come from. The use of digital camera technology in PhotoVoice may be a promising method to develop a collective voice for immigrants living in Canada as well as exploring individual cultural identity (Wang, 2003).

Photographs contain symbols of daily life, and represent feelings and experiences (Fryear, 1992; Weiser, 2004) that makes them a useful tool for exploring ethnography, and personal narratives. Wang (1999) adds that images teach concepts. Images also may influence our definition of a situation regarding social and cultural difference, how individuals see status and outcomes of health and wellbeing. The photographs themselves become the data from which strengths and issues important to the community are derived from.

Images transcend language and photographs contain stories and are useful in situations where communication in words alone may not always be effective (Weiser, 2004). Therefore, photo exploration may be particularly suitable for immigrants to explore their personal histories, particularly if they do not have a fluent ability to communicate in English or French, the national languages spoken in Canada.

Artistic and photographic methods may be beneficial tools in exploring cultural identity and processing traumatic events within a community. Mohr (2014) conducted a study using photography to attribute meaning and foster post traumatic growth with youth that survived a destructive earthquake in the Ica region in Peru. The author concluded that art was a primary source of exploration and healing and that active engagement in the community was a means for posttraumatic growth.

Additional researchers suggest that art making as a collective experience is beneficial to a community (Mohr, 2014, Timm-Bottos, 2016). Timm-Bottos (2016) writes that spaces for creative social connection provide an opportunity for individuals or a community to express their identities and multiple viewpoints. Mohr (2014) adds that participating in art making together may be healing following collective trauma in order to help make meaning of the group experience and to foster bonding in the community.

Methods

The following section presents the research questions, methods used in the research project and the rationale for them. The research questions this project investigates are as follows. Is PhotoVoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) a useful method to explore cultural identification? Does participating in PhotoVoice identify important issues for immigrant parent students?

Another goal of this research project is to address ways to aid immigrant parents by establishing whether PhotoVoice is an effective method of identifying community concerns to pass on to future generations of immigrant parents. The rationale for studying parents with children (instead of individuals) is that parents may be concerned with acculturation of themselves in addition to that of their children. Including multiple generations may provide a richer, more complete picture of the dynamic needs of immigrant families.

The scientific method provides systematic guidelines and goals regarding research that are applicable across disciplines (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2005). It is important to note, however, that research designs commonly used in behavioral sciences are designed to be objective and infer findings from a sample to a large group of people. Since art therapy is a hybrid of art and psychology, attempts to standardize methods in the same ways as cognitive sciences may narrow creativity and diversity of research participants (Timm-Bottos, 2016). Experimental designs that identify a common average may also miss potential information from individual members within a group. Community participatory action designs present an alternative method which engage

members of the community that are directly affected by the research goal (Leavy, 2017). Particularly when exploring the current cultural climate in Canada, daily life rituals within a community are informative and immigrant parents may use it to affect change.

I chose a mixed methods research design to investigate whether adding a quantitative measure to the participatory action qualitative methodology of PhotoVoice provided a richer reflection of acculturation and the issues, strengths and needs of immigrant parents. Upon completion of this project, the PhotoVoice method provided rich, subjective qualitative information, but not generalizable quantitative data. This is presented in the results section. However, the addition of a quantitative measure may provide an additional tool to validate the results acquired in the qualitative data. This is discussed further in the discussion section.

Participant Selection

The following section presents participant recruitment and exclusionary criteria. Ethics certification approval was granted by the Concordia University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Recruitment. Recruitment was focused on the student parent membership of CUSP through the use of a poster, a newsletter posting and word-of-mouth. CUSP employees and support workers were integral to recruitment. While all parents in the organization were invited to join, the employees reached out to potential participants and would refer them to the researcher. In the end, only mothers agreed to be a part of the project. The rationale for recruiting parents was to understand how the family system may be affected by a relocation from one culture to another, and as parents face cultural identification issues of their own how this then may affect their children.

Group size. Participation was limited to five or six parents or parent dyads, because the project required dedication, and a cohesive group dynamic is easier to establish with a smaller group (Palibroda et al., 2009).

Exclusionary criteria. A population of university students was selected because they may have more support, including CUSP resources to rely on with securing basic needs. In order to reduce any perceived or actual risk of losing services or housing through participation in expressing their opinions, inclusion was limited to families that were securely housed, and had been living in Canada for four years. This was to avoid creating fear among new arrivals and/or

refugees who may be too vulnerable to participate with minimal risk (Kama, personal communication, 2017; Timm-Bottos, personal communication, 2017).

Screening. An initial screening was conducted by email when individuals express interest in participating in the project, and included the following questions:

- How long has your family been living in Canada (based on the last person to arrive)?
- How many children in your family are under 18 years of age? How many children in your family are over 18 years of age?

Informed consent and Information Session. Informed consent was read, discussed, and signed by each participant in writing in the first meeting. Due to the challenges of initial recruitment, the hosting organization and I agreed that an Information Session may help any potential participants or interested candidates find out more about the project. Four mothers were registered for the Information Session, however only three attended. An additional participant agreed to participate once the project had started and attended the first session, alone with the PI, but then dropped out before attending a meeting with the group. All three participants included in the project attended the Information Session.

Research Materials

The research materials included four Nikon Coolpix A10 point and shoot digital camera, a Kingston Digital Select 16GB SDHC Class 10 SD UHS-I 80MB/s R 10MB/s W flash SD card, an AmazonBasics large point and shoot camera case, and two AmazonBasics AA performance alkaline batteries per participant. The Concordia University Dean of Students office and CUSP contributed \$600.00 to acquire the cameras and associated equipment. Photo printing was \$15.00 paid for by the PI and took place at Costco's Photo Lab. A Samsung Galaxy G6 cell phone was used to record audio. Snacks were provided by CUSP at a total cost of about \$50.00 and food for the vernissage was \$60.00 paid for by the PI.

Assessments and Measures

Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA). Designed by Canadian researchers, the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder Alden & Paulhus, 2000) is a set of 20 statements regarding acculturation (Appendix B). The measure assesses the degree that acculturation is bidimensional, or that two independent cultural self-identities may exist within an individual.

The VIA is a measure designed to assess alterations in an individual's sense of self identity resulting from a need to accommodate an old and new culture. The measure compares the degree of association with the heritage culture versus the mainstream culture. Responses are scored on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree).

High scores on statements regarding the heritage culture would indicate more association with the culture of origin; lower scores indicate less association. The same scoring applies to statements regarding mainstream, Canadian culture. The responses on the heritage culture statements and the Canadian mainstream culture statements are then compared.

Ryder Alden and Paulhus (2000) suggest that data retrieved using the VIA supports that acculturation is bidimensional and defining it as such is richer than the traditional unidimensional approach. The unidimensional approach claims change in cultural identity takes place in a single continuum over time and focuses on relinquishing attitudes and cultural values of one's culture of origin and adopting values and beliefs of the new culture (Ryder Alden & Paulhus, 2000). The use of the VIA in this project was to compare pre and post participation responses to assess if there was a significant change after participation in the project. Responses were recorded in Microsoft excel.

PhotoVoice Social Action Research. PhotoVoice is a social action research method of using photographs of daily life to assess and identify issues relevant to a community (Wang, 2003). The research took place over eight meetings and included a photography exposition at the end. The following section presents the Wang (2003) and Palibroda et al. (2009) methodology followed by a breakdown of meetings. Some additions were made. The first addition was that pre-scheduled childcare was offered free of charge during meetings. This was to allow parents the opportunity to have children with them and alleviate the demands on their attention while participating.

Food Sharing

Another addition was sharing food. Snacks were available at meetings and were provided by CUSP. Participants were invited but not required to bring a snack that was significant in their culture. Although participants expressed a desire to bring food, they never did due to time constraints and the responsibilities of family and studies. The rationale of adding food is that mealtime is often a time of socializing in different cultures and a unifying activity to build community interaction (Clarke, 2013). Food sharing may also be particularly beneficial to

immigrant parents who may not have solidified reliable sources of income. In this project, food was incorporated into the photographic ethnography of the participants and reflected cultural identity issues. This will be presented in depth in the results and discussion sections.

Description of Meetings

The following section describes each meeting and is adapted from Palibroda et al.'s (2009) guide on conducting PhotoVoice projects. Parents are busy, and the fourteen meeting example by Palibroda et al. (2009) was not feasible for scope of this pilot study and time commitment of the participants. A total of eight meetings took place on average once a week with breaks for final exams, holidays, and a serious illness on the part of the PI. The group defined how often they would meet and when. The meetings were usually planned a week or two in advance. At the participants request, a Facebook chat was created to inform each other if they had to cancel, reschedule, or book meetings. All meetings were audio recorded with a few exceptions, including: the information session before the project began; meeting number 8 which was the preparation for the exhibition of photos; and the Opening at the downtown Sir George William Campus's Concordia University Art Hive (CUAH-SGW). Audio recordings were used to identify themes and to maintain accuracy as defined by Wang (2003) and Palibroda et al.'s (2009) methodology. There was no formal checklist created to respect participant voice in this project as recommended by Evans and Agnew (2016), however I kept a mental checklist to verify that the group defined data collection methods, themes, how to display photographs, and who their audience would be. Also, while conducting thematic analyses from the recordings I used their own words as they were stated.

Meeting 1. Before the meeting an agenda was sent by email to participants that informed a questionnaire would be administered. This was to remain transparent about measures in addition to photographs and discussion. The first meeting was one hour and took place in the CUAH-SGW. Two participants attended. The participant that could not attend and I met individually and did the same as the other two participants in Meeting 1 the following day.

I made pancakes for the group and shared that in Quebec, crepes are served for breakfast instead of pancakes, like where I grew up in English Canada. One child came to the first meeting last minute; there was no arranged childcare, but they made art and ate pancakes.

The goal was to introduce the mothers to each other, explain what the project is, acquire informed consent, specify the number of meetings, and learn how to use the cameras. The project

was introduced as using photographs of everyday life to identify issues that matter to parents that immigrate to Canada. I explained that my role as a research facilitator was to guide discussions and support logistics of the project. I added that each participant was a co-researcher, and would be taking the photographs, discussing the images, and identifying the themes.

As a researcher from the University, being culturally humble and respectful was of critical importance in this project. Following the framework from Mosher, Hook, Captari, Davis, DeBlaere and Owen (2017) to navigate value differences, I revealed my own potential cultural bias, that I am a Caucasian, English speaker born in Canada, the dominant culture and recognized that this creates a power imbalance. I explained that the goal of our meetings was create a safe, open space in which all participants can share. I added that if I said anything that felt uncomfortable or did not makes sense, participants could speak to me in the group or contact me by email or phone. Wang (2003) suggests that including discussion regarding ethics and power dynamics within the community may reduce conformity anxiety amongst participants.

Following this I explained that all information shared at meetings was confidential and that each meeting was audio recorded to refer to when identifying collective themes and that only I would have access to audio recordings which were stored on a password protected computer.

I explained the three central themes developed by Wang (1999), a) “that the [parents, as] photographers are the experts; b) [they] have the potential to educate and inform others about important [...] issues [to immigrant families in Canada] and; c) [that they as a community have] the potential to influence policy” (Palibroda et al., 2009, p. 42). I explained that due to the time limitations, influencing policy may be beyond the scope of this project and added that it would be up to them who their audience would be for the final photo exhibition as well as the issues identified in the project.

This meeting took place in a public space and I offered the participants the possibility of a smaller closed room to conduct meetings in. They said that it did not matter to them.

The participants requested to know where the results of the project would be published. I explained that the photographs and issues identified by the participants would be displayed in a photo exhibition at the end of the project. Then an in-depth analysis of the questionnaire and themes would be added to this information in the final research project write-up that would be submitted to Spectrum, Concordia University’s research repository and may be revised and published in art therapy and/or social science journals.

Participants then provided informed consent (Appendix C), filled out the demographic questions and completed the VIA. I explained that information provided in the questionnaire would be confidential, and that all names are coded to remain anonymous. Following this I taught participants how to use the cameras and explained that it would be best if everyone used the same camera and SD cards to standardize photo taking. However, some images were photographed with a phone in addition to the camera provided at the participants request.

The following directive was given. “Photograph anything that represents you or your families struggles, experiences, strengths from the past, present or future related to your journey immigrating to Canada. It can be anything you feel is significant to you.”

Using the guidelines presented by Wang (2003) I explained that a release form was required for all individuals that were photographed in addition to the participants themselves (see the form in (Appendix D). Finally, participants were invited to select 5 to 10 photographs to bring to the next meeting to download onto the researcher’s laptop computer for printing.

Meeting 2. The second meeting, 45 minutes long, included all three mothers and took place at CUSP in the common room because one of the participants needed to watch a group of children when a colleague fell ill. This was an unforeseen circumstance which required flexibility on the part of the researcher. Therefore, due to the public nature of the space discussion of photographs was tabled until the following meeting. Instead images were downloaded, and participants asked questions about camera troubleshooting. Some conversation about one of the images did come up and is discussed further in the results section. Snacks were provided for participants at every subsequent meeting by CUSP and the facilitator-researcher prepared them beforehand.

Meeting 3, 4, and 5. Meetings three to five lasted one hour each and included sharing of printed 4x6 inch photographs. To facilitate discussion, I used a set of five open-ended questions to prompt discussion from SHOWeD (Wang, 1999), while reviewing the photographs that the mothers had taken. Each capitalized letter in the acronym is the highlighted letter of the keyword in each question. The questions were:

- What do we **S**ee here?
- What is really **H**appening here?
- How does this relate to **O**ur lives?
- **W**hy does this situation, concern or strength exist?

- What can we **Do** about it? (Wang, 1999).

The group was very verbal and engaged in discussion without a lot of leading from the PI. The parents decided to group the photographs together and identified similarities in their own experiences (Palibroda et al., 2009). The group shared their experiences related to the photos with each other and their similar and differing points of view. They also expressed mutual learning from sharing their stories.

Meeting 6. During the sixth meeting, common themes in the images and discussions were identified. This meeting was three hours with the express goal of identifying issues and the facilitator-researcher provided lunch for participants. Following the PhotoVoice methodology, the audio recordings would have been listened to by the group to identify common themes. However, because meetings were frequent enough the participants chose to focus on the images and repeat content from previous discussions instead of listening to recordings. The participants grouped the photos that were thematically similar and identified the common issues that arose. This differed from the methodology laid out by Wang (2003) and Palibroda et al. (2009) that suggest referring to audio recordings, however, this emergent data analysis method was devised by the participants themselves and strictly followed by the PI. This demonstrated another way for the mothers to be the experts in their own research. At the end of the meeting, the group determined the date for the photo exhibition and that it would take place at the CUAH.

Meeting 7. In the seventh meeting participants solidified the final themes, visual display for the photo exhibition and selected their audience for dissemination of their results. Previously, in the first meeting the possibility of presenting the issues to potential policy makers was discussed by the group. However, due to the timeline and commitment to the project, participants chose to invite a small audience to their exhibition. Invitations were sent to CUSP members and their children, the Concordia International Student Association, the Concordia Dean of Students, the Creative Arts Therapies students and faculty and through the Art Hive Network Facebook groups and pages.

The results were presented using the PhotoVoice methodology to assess the community in a holistic way (Wang, 2003) and the mothers addressed the current interests and issues regarding cultural identity that immigrant parents may feel through the lens of their personal journey. Participants intended for the information to be passed along to future generations of parents considering, or in the process of, immigration.

Meeting 8. For the eighth meeting, participants decided to attend the community studio Art Hive at the CUAH-SGW and made collages to hang in the display. Palibroda et al. (2009) suggest that preparing for the exhibition is a promising point to present issues to potential policy makers because it includes research findings in the group members own voice. As previously mentioned, the group chose to present final themes and photos in a creative way. The exhibition was a visual presentation of the research data collected and efforts of the group members (Figure 1). It also provided mothers a way to engage in art making which is something that they said they did not get to do often, especially for themselves.

The logistics of mounting and framing photographs, captions and whether participants will use their real name in the exhibition was determined by participants. Art Hive facilitators assisted in some of the cutting and locating of materials. I explained that because the research that the participants had collected may be influential and educational, it may be helpful to request feedback. Therefore, one participant suggested that a comment book be added.

Each mother chose to do a write-up that was displayed in a way that they chose to accompany each photomontage that they made individually. Then they elected one participant to add a written paragraph to accompany each of the other themes and photo enlargements. I created a written introduction to the photo exhibition that included the title that the mother's selected.

Before concluding the meeting, participants chose not to include their names in the exhibition and then discussed dissemination of their findings. I explained that as presented in the first meeting this PhotoVoice project would be part of an MA research project that would be posted in Spectrum, the university's research repository and may be sent to several art therapy or social science journals. They understood and verbally expressed interest in reading the final research submission.

The rationale for discussing dissemination throughout is that distributing the results is important to talk about and Palibroda at al. (2009) offer several arguments and potential outcomes for this. The photographs may challenge negative stereotypes about the group. Also, the images, by offering up a truer version of the reality of human experiences, may capture attention and gain support of other members of the same community and may even bring attention to a specific policy and lead to a decision to change. Ensuring that the group is part of the dissemination process also respects their voices (Evans-Agnew & Rosenberg, 2016).

At the meeting before the launch of the photo exhibition, group members were informed that they would be completing a questionnaire like the one in Meeting 1 at the end of the Opening event. The exhibition was displayed for two weeks in the CUAH-SGW. An Opening/Vernissage took place at the end of the first week and all three artists/participants attended. Although the participants chose not to have their names identified in the writing that accompanied the photographs they were not anonymous at the Opening and spoke about their art and the project with people that attended. Appetizers and non-alcoholic champagne was provided. Children were welcome and an art making activity was provided by CUSP. Towards the end of the opening the VIA was administered again followed by questions about the experience of participating in the project.

Evaluation of the Project. Three qualitative questions regarding the experience were added to the final questionnaire. The rationale for adding the questions is that towards the end of the project participants commented that they were surprised to learn how much their immigration journey affected them and that they did not realize it until participating in the project. At this late stage in the project I also realized that the statistical analyses may not be as impactful to the community or mothers involved as their individual experiences. The questions were as follows:

- How has participating in the project impacted you?
- Would you recommend this project to other student parents that are contemplating immigrating or have immigrated?
- Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding your experience participating in the project?

Data Analyses

Participant responses to questions were anonymized by coding participant identities with a number and recorded in a Microsoft excel spreadsheet on a password protected computer. The original research design was mixed methods, however due to the small sample size ($n = 3$) there was not enough power or discernable patterns to conduct statistical comparison of the quantitative data. Therefore, the results section includes qualitative analyses only.

Following the photo exhibition, the audio recordings of meetings 1 – 7 were listened to by the PI and analyzed using a thematic analysis method (Aronson, 1994). Statements from the mothers that participated were organized into a narrative according to each theme the group identified and presented.

Expected outcomes were that there would be a difference in cultural identity after participating in PhotoVoice, and that participants would develop clear issues that may be presented to policy makers and other parents, who may be considering to, have already, or are in the process, of immigrating. The issues identified in this project may serve as a preliminary source of information on the usefulness of using PhotoVoice to assess the needs of immigrant student parents. The information may be valuable to future immigrant parents and may have the potential to inform social services and resource development for newcomers to Canada.

Results

Five mothers began the research project but two left after their first meeting due to personal reasons. Three participants were women between 25 and 54 years old, with children between one and 12 years old. All of them studied at least one year at the University before participation, were members of CUSP, and had lived in Canada between 4 and 15 years.

The original research design was mixed methods, adding a standardized questionnaire to a qualitative PhotoVoice methodology, however due to the small sample size ($n = 3$) there were no discernable patterns to conduct statistical comparison of the quantitative data. Therefore, I made the choice to conduct qualitative analyses only and these findings are presented in the following section.

Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)

Although quantitative responses on the VIA were not analyzed, the following section presents relevant results from a qualitative perspective. The mothers completed the VIA in the first meeting before participating in the PhotoVoice sessions and again at the PhotoVoice exhibition Opening, after the project was complete. Participants identified their heritage culture as Greek, Black African, and Latino in the before the project and one response changed from Black African before participation to Rwandan/African after participation.

Responses to statements were highly variable and unique to each participant. However, three statements had almost unanimous responses. Every participant responded with 9, strongly agree to the statement “I am interested in having friends of my heritage culture” each time surveyed. Another response that scored 9, strongly agree for all participants before and after (except one post-project which was an 8) was “I enjoy the jokes and humor of my heritage culture.”

An additional two responses that were consistently strongly agree before participation were related to work. The statement “I am comfortable working with people of the same cultural heritage as myself” was scored 9 for everyone pre and post testing, except for one participant. This individual scored 4, somewhat disagree pre-participation, and 9, strongly agree post-participation. The related statement “I am comfortable working with typically Canadian people was scored 9 pre and post participation for all except one, who reported 8, somewhat strongly agree both times tested.

PhotoVoice Thematic Analysis

The following section organizes the themes that participants collectively identified from their photographs and presents them as they are organized in the final exposition. The group titled the exposition “Journey to Quebec: The Courage to Discover New Aspects of Ourselves.” The majority of the data comes from the sixth and seventh meeting in which the group conducted their own thematic analysis of the photographs. They organized photographs into themes (Figure 1) and each theme highlights an issue that they identified as relevant to their experience as immigrant student mothers. Although the title includes Quebec, discussions were not always province specific and some participants had immigrated to different regions of Canada before settling in Quebec. I recorded the transcripts of the audio recordings following the exposition and added consolidated the statements by the mothers that participated into each theme that they identified via a thematic analysis method (Aronson, 1994). The narrative that accompanies each theme includes statements made by the mothers themselves and are not adapted when direct quotes.

The four themes selected by the group of mothers were: Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds; Food is an Element of our Life; Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance; The Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information.

Home Away from Home

Openness, destiny, coming from different backgrounds. For the Home Away from Home theme the mothers chose to include openness, destiny, and coming from different background as a subtheme. To present the photographic data each mother did one individual and personal photo montage each. Then the montages were aesthetically grouped together in the exposition (Figure 2). The theme represented that in everyday life each of the women participate

in both Canadian culture and that of their home or heritage culture. The group chose to separate the theme into individual montages per person because they wanted to show that each one of them had a similar experience but with a different ‘flavor’ to it. One mother said that “home is where your family is, not necessarily the place. Once you close the door to your house you are home with your family no matter where the physical location may be.”

The carrying of one’s home culture within the self in addition to acculturating to Canadian life participants said is represented in the images of snow and a Cabane à Sucre (or Sugar Shack in English) which are iconic of French-Canadian culture. These are juxtaposed with representations of warmer climates where the women emigrated from, such as the banana plants (Figure 4), palm trees (Figure 3) and a beach (Figure 4). The difference in climate is readily observable in the photos and reminds the viewer of the dual culture that the women identify with.

The choice to add a subtheme to this category is also because mothers were surprised to learn of differing attitudes to relocation. Some people in the group expressed being comfortable in their habits living where they were raised and were resistant to moving to Canada. They stated that they were “afraid.” Meanwhile, others had a yearning to see the world and one mother dreamed of coming to the United States as a child and to meet people from other cultures. All the women said that “after the move to Canada they felt more open to new experiences in all areas of their life than just moving geographic location.” The word destiny was used to symbolize this because the women said that part of their journey immigrating and becoming open to experiences had a spiritual quality. One individual described this as “having an open heart and trusting in destiny to keep her safe” while overcoming hardship and challenge fleeing violence and conflict in her homeland.

Through sharing their different histories in how they came to Canada, all participants agreed that “the experience of immigrating made them stronger, more open people and that spirituality and destiny are part of who they are now.” The group added that “they come from diverse cultural experiences, but that flexibility came when they stop resisting change.” They said that “now they feel they can live anywhere.” The group also felt that by sharing parts of their original culture with others that even if it has a tiny impact that it makes their transition to Canada worth it and more meaningful.

One of the participant’s montages focused on housing and the everyday things (Figure 3) that reminded her of something of her culture in Quebec but also of her home culture. She

explained that “at home it is part of the culture to portray the everyday things used in art forms”. An example of this is in the centre of her montage, a tapestry from Rwanda. She felt this was an important element to demonstrate where she came from and who she is. She also said that one of her family members has a rental business in Canada that “rents traditional clothing and other items from Rwanda for weddings.” In Rwandan culture these items which are part of the everyday serve as symbols and are incorporated into the wedding ceremony in art form. This community and culture specific business provides access to Rwandan culture and traditions here in Canada.

Another mother’s montage depicted her son playing in snow contrasted with pictures of sunshine and palm trees in Miami, her home city (Figure 4). These pictures were taken at the same time of year. In Canada, her son was comfortable playing in the snow which is completely different from her childhood. She also added that family marriage creates different cultural identities for children than their parents. Her children are Algerian in addition to her Cuban/American/Latina cultural background that she actively shares and passes on to them. Her interpretation of Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds also reminded her of her struggle to find all the foods she liked when she first arrived, even though she only moved from the US, which she said is not that different from Canada. Her write-up that accompanied her Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny Coming from Different Backgrounds photomontage, in the exposition, expressed her learning to accept herself in Canada more and more with her children. She also wrote about how her children are Canadian and things like snow don’t bother them. The photograph of Canada 150, which was a sculpture to celebrate 150 years of being a country taken in Canada’s capital city, Ottawa represents when Canada was internalized as home and not a vacation for her. She said it demonstrated the moment she “realized that [she] and [her] children were vacationing in their now home country, in Canada.”

The third mother added more text to her Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds montage than the others (Figure 5) and supplied much of the text that appeared in the exposition. As mentioned previously, the other mothers in the group said that they had all shared their experiences through the images and trusted her to speak, or in this case write for them as a group. She echoed the contrast in climate in her montage like the

rest of the group and added that she “felt happy and nostalgic about Greek summers, but that at least her child is very happy here, despite the snow.”

For her, Greek cultural events hold human emotions. For example, she explained that “through dance and music is one way that in Greek culture people express joy.” She added that it is amazing that “Greek communities exist across the Atlantic Ocean [in Canada] and it is the people, not the place that make the community.” She added that here in Canada being part of the Greek community provides her a balance between her heritage culture and Canadian values, especially because she says “in some ways we can only express ourselves through our language.” One of the other group members agreed that one can spend years in a place and not learn the language and that we have different abilities for language learning.

Food is an Element of our Life

The issues and strengths related to food is an element of our life are laid out in this section. The group members had differing opinions about how much food played an important role in their immigration experiences, however each of them had stories to share related to food. Through sharing their differences and photographs they also identified some commonalities. The photos were identified and selected for the Food is an Element of our Life theme in meeting six and the configuration of how it was displayed in the exposition was carefully planned (Figure 2). Each photograph was arranged aesthetically in the same themed montage (Figure 6).

Food held symbolic meaning and capturing images of prepared dishes and found items represented rich cultural experiences. Some of the symbolism as expressed by the mothers were as follows. “When given as a gift, food represents something made for us and the love and care that one family showed to my family and to my son. Sharing food has a broader meaning than just the nourishing our bodies aspect. Food is also us keeping traditions alive in our homes and passing it to our children.”

Food from one’s heritage culture is also a taste of home, even if the participants hadn’t eaten it in years. For example, a photograph of a food particular to a specific region was a gift received from a friend purchased in a Greek store (Figure 6) in Canada. The mother who took the photo said it was a very Greek product, something characteristic and related to Greek cultural concepts. She said it affects life because it “reminds me immediately of childhood and my country. I remember when I was in Greece and where I ate it. I shared it with my son. Strength in foods that remind you of your culture and accessibility.”

Contrarily, some members of the group felt that food was not positive or seen as a way of celebrating and comfort (like going back home through your associations with food) and may instead represent challenge. For example, one mother said “that after coming to Canada she gained weight and found that challenging. Food is different here. Weight gain and food feel like an epidemic.” Her addition to the collage was a photograph of bananas growing in a greenhouse in Canada (Figure 6). They were something that was part of her everyday environment at home. She described that “bananas grew everywhere, and you could just pick and eat them while walking.”

This led to a discussion of control over food and the choices we make in a new country. For example, before moving to Canada they had total control over what they ate and how they seasoned their food. Now, in Canada they may not be able to get the same ingredients and have by circumstance less control over what they choose to cook and eat. Regarding control over food once in Canada, one mother added, or “if you don’t choose to eat, that is within your control.” I added to the conversation that perhaps the concept of control in relation to food allows paradoxical points of view regarding culture and food to exist even in the same issue. We may learn from each-other when hearing about the different relationships to food.

As mentioned, a lack of accessibility to food and ingredients from their culture was part of the Food is an Element of our Life theme for most of the group members. A solution offered by the group was “that immigrants get together and tell the grocer that they want to buy a certain product. Additionally, the government or societal policy can make sure business loans for small business are available that may cater to culture specific foods for example, Greek, or Mexican. Supporting some culturally specific stores may encourage other cultures to request stores too.” The photographs that represented this are two Hebrew items found in American grocery stores that cannot be purchased in Canada (Figure 6).

Accessibility to social spaces to share food is different in Canada too. For example, one participant explained that “not all restaurants or pubs allow parents to have their child with them.” This was challenging as newcomers without other family to care for their child to spend time socially together as a couple. Whereas in the culture they emigrated from they could simply bring their child with them anywhere to public places that serve food.

Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance

The next theme was identified by participants as having a large part of how people express themselves. The photos for the theme were grouped together and fabric was added as a creative choice to tie in the tactile elements seen in the photographs (Figure 7). During discussions, the dual identity was revealed when group members spoke about how they would dress from their culture of the country they emigrated from but only in certain contexts. For example, African or certain Algerian/Muslim clothes were reserved for events where other members of the same community were present, but not in a public place such as the metro, the subway in Montreal.

Clothing was described by the group as being a way of expressing yourself. One group member selected her photo (Figure 7) because it is a typical dress in her culture. She said “other people from her culture in Canada can match it with other things to try to look occidental and fashionable. She adds that “Africans use clothes to express themselves [and their individuality] like westerners do with hair. The clothing speaks to our culture. It says we are different; we are African.” The group contrasted this with the North American way of dress in which they describe as “everyone wants to look the same.” All members of the group also agreed that there was a lack of colour in North American fashion, and that this was counter to the cultures in which they come from. The photo of fabric (Figure 7) in their montage represented the relationship between self-expression, clothing, colour and quality of fabric that hold a unique importance in cultures that are different from Canadian and North American.

Not only did the group identify how clothing and culture affect their adaptation to life in Canada, but the group defined what can be done about feeling restricted in how to dress and about using clothing to improve cultural understanding. They recommended that “in school we could use clothes as tool to learn about and understand other people’s cultures. We can educate people about allowing everyone the freedom to wear their own clothes and feel accepted.” One mother expanded on this through her own experience. She said “I am going to wear what I like; this respects myself and others. If I wear something that I don’t feel comfortable in I don’t respect myself. Society brings so many limitations. We aren’t bothering others, so why bother us. The basis of an outfit is to shine and be yourself. Everyone else is going have some idea of what you should do, be it depending on age or this or that. I just want to be me.”

As this was a group of mothers, the cultural relationship to pregnancy and expressing one’s self with clothes was another issue identified within this theme. This is represented and inspired by the photo of traditional African dress in the Clothing as A Symbol of Dual Identity and

Acceptance montage (Figure 7). One mother explained that “in African culture having a baby is considered when fabricating clothing. Outfits are custom made with enough room to accommodate a pregnant woman’s changing body.” The rest of the group added that “this is completely different in Canada. An entirely new set of wardrobe needs to be acquired when a woman becomes pregnant and this can get expensive,” especially when someone is new to Canada and has not established consistent means of financial support.

One mother added that her cultural identity in dress habits were revealed to her when someone noted that she put lipstick to go to the store. She said “most Canadian women do not put on makeup and don’t really care. She continued and said that she never thought this was related to her ethnicity. She said this is something everyone does where she is from, it is very Greek, but that she didn’t do it consciously.” This made her realize that people carry their culture wherever they go.

Another internal sense of dual identity related to clothing was also revealed by the group as how people dress in their new roles in Canada. They said: “as professionals in our country of origin we dressed formally versus here, as we adapt to life as a student we dress practically and comfortably.” The women all had careers before becoming students in Canada and some could no longer work in their professional fields because their education and experience was not recognized or licensable in Canada.

Another concept identified within this theme of clothing as dual identity and acceptance is the freedom of choice. The group said: “most immigrants have a dual identity in terms of fitting in and preserving culture for us and our children [regarding] language, food, religion, clothing, etc.” One group member explained that after many years in Canada and following a divorce which left her questioning her identity, she asked herself “how can I adapt to life in Canada and be me?” One way was that she decided to wear a hijab, eight years after becoming Muslim. She said “she felt empowered to do something different and that it gave her the confidence to make other big life decisions. Here in Canada the wearing of the hijab is a choice, whereas in some other cultures it is not.”

While participating in this project a significant political event took place that influenced the discussion regarding freedom to choose what to wear. Bill 21 was passed banning religious symbols worn for workers in schools and public services in Quebec (Shingler & Montpetit, 2019). The bill is criticized for oppressing the rights of a group of minority Muslim women that

wear head coverings such as Hijabs or Burkhas (Shingler & Montpetit, 2019). This event incited an emphatic discussion of clothing and how it is interpreted as having meaning in meeting six. One mother noted that she could change an African headpiece to wear in the style of a Muslim hijab which then removes the religious meaning from it. She added that “in Canada she occasionally wears African headpieces, and no one has ever complained.” The group said that “people may be judged as religious but that others [Canadians] don’t even know; they just judge them as different than themselves. That is really sad.”

The Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information

The final theme identified by the group is the Bonjour/Hi Accessibility to Information. As the research facilitator in the project I am adding my words to provide some context into the choice for this title which may not be clear to all readers. In 2017, Quebec passed a law to replace the bilingual greeting “Bonjour/Hi” customarily used by retail workers to a unilingual greeting of Bonjour only (Lowrie, 2017).

This theme groups photographs that capture the struggle with French and accessibility to information in a language in which the group members were familiar and could understand (Figure 8). This theme was the most unanimously agreed upon immigration challenge for the group. One mother said “that having access to information at school that is only in French is the biggest frustration she has experienced. There are both English and French school boards in Quebec, but immigrants are required to register their children in the French school system even if their children were born in Quebec.” She said that “this constantly reminded her that she is an immigrant, an outsider and that life is always a little bit harder for her.” Her photograph is of a letter in French from school explaining that an important presentation was to be given to her child about sexual respect which she could not fully understand (Figure 8). She asked, “How can I prepare my child appropriately for such an important conversation if I can’t understand the language?” This question appeared to resonate with the other group members, and they nodded their heads in silent agreement.

On the opposite side of not understanding the language of a new place is not being understood. The group identified that people in Canada have trouble understanding their accent. They shared that in their country of origin sometimes people might be a snob with others whose accents were hard to understand. After coming to Canada though, they said “that the role is reversed, and that they are now the ones hard to understand. “They said “this affected our self-

esteem”. For example, the mothers felt confident and capable when in their home country, but when in Quebec couldn’t even get access to services, because their French was not understood.

They also added that there seems to be an expectation and pressure (in Montreal) that service employees speak both French and English. They felt that this makes some professionals misrepresent their abilities in language. For example, one mother could not get a pregnancy test because the pharmacist simply didn’t understand English but would not admit it. Instead the pharmacist responded that they did not have it. The mothers emphatically agreed that “this is wrong.”

The Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information theme also includes a photograph of an envelope that one of the mothers used to send document regarding her student Visa to a lawyer in order to complete her studies. This photo represents the additional challenge that newcomers to Canada deal with. She said “I almost had to quit [participating in this] project because I risked being sent back to my country.” She added “it was difficult and challenging and made it hard to continue her studies until it was resolved”.

Photo Enlargements

The group selected two photographs to enlarge that they said represented their collective experience participating in this project. One was the bread with the number 2019 on it (Figure 9). The 2019 represented the context in which the group participated in this project. This bread was also a tradition in celebrating the New Year in Greek culture which was a happy event and brought the possibility of luck. This was the spirit in which the group said represented their experience in the PhotoVoice project.

The other photo enlargement the group decided on represented the global experience of having two cultural identities (Figure 10). The climate in one location with palm trees is entirely different than the climate in Canada with snow at the same time of year, but both images are part of an immigrant’s cultural identity.

Evaluation of the Project

The following section presents responses to the experiential questions that were asked in writing while at the exposition opening (Figure 11). All the mothers had similar responses to the question: how has participating in the project impacted you. They responded that by participating in the project they learned that they have a dual cultural identity. They engage in the cultural practices of both their culture of origin and that of Canada and that this project has increased

their appreciation of other cultures in general. They added that the experience brought to consciousness the transition that they went through and explored connections to all their cultures and that of their children. One participant emphasized that she enjoyed sharing her experience with the other mothers and getting alternative perspectives.

All three participants responded that yes, they would recommend this project to other student parents that are contemplating immigrating or have immigrated. Additional comments and suggestions regarding the experience participating in the project were as follows. That being a part of the project was a pleasure. The mothers appreciated the opportunity to express themselves at deeper levels and to reveal aspects of their immigration journey that were unconscious before. One participant responded that the facilitator helped her feel comfortable, safe and encouraged to be creative in a way that she had never thought herself capable of before.

Discussion

The themes identified support the literature that the PhotoVoice method may be useful to provide qualitative data relevant to a community (Wang, 1999,2003; Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997; Wang et al. 1998) of immigrant student mothers. Additionally, the themes and images identified by the participants suggest that PhotoVoice may be an effective tool to explore acculturation and may mitigate stress related to the immigration process.

One way that PhotoVoice may be effective is that it can allow participants the ability to explore cultural attitudes. As Shingler and Montpetit (2019) wrote, current immigration policies may stigmatize immigrants and increase racial discrimination, and this was a dynamic and impassioned discussion during the project inspired by photographs in the Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance theme.

The results of this project suggest that the PhotoVoice method might contribute solutions to minimize discrimination from the members of the community's perspective. Participants in this project were provided the opportunity to use photographs and discussion to explore their immigration journey and identify their needs and strengths. They said that their experience sensitized them to differences between cultures, but also allowed them to create solutions for helping future immigrants and ways of addressing exclusionary attitudes and behaviours towards minorities in Canada. For example, one suggestion was that clothes from one's culture of origin be used as a tool to learn about and understand people's differences. They added that

discrimination may be reduced by educating people about the importance of allowing everyone the freedom to wear clothes from their culture of origin and feel accepted.

The data collected in this project may respond to Stewart et al.'s (2015) call for more research into services that mitigate stress for refugees that have experienced trauma. Specifically, they write that by mobilizing support from other members of the immigrant community researchers may have the potential to inform health practices. One reason is that the PhotoVoice method implemented in this project allowed the group to identify issues and suggestions through shared photographs and discussion regarding their immigration experiences as a community. Furthermore, the participants collectively learned by sharing their immigration narratives and were provided an opportunity to creatively express cultural identity and present their findings to an audience of other immigrant parents.

Additionally, participants provided recommendations about how to address issues important to immigrant parents, such as in the Food is an Element of Life theme. The suggestion was that the government implement funding for small, culturally specific grocers and provide accessible communication for families in multiple languages. Also, in the Clothing as Dual Identity and Acceptance theme it was suggested to use culture specific clothing to improve cultural understanding and sensitization for Canadians. Although presenting these issues and suggestions to policy makers was beyond the scope of this project, they were nonetheless passed on to those that attended the exposition and heard about the project from the mothers that participated.

This PhotoVoice project contributed to a growing body of qualitative data in ethnographical studies (Cheyney, 2015; Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Palibroda et al., 2009; Perez et al., 2016; Turk et al., 2015). The themes identified by the group indicated that ethnography and acculturation may be explored in a myriad of aspects of daily life whether someone has been living in Canada for three or 15 years. Photographs of food, language, cultural customs and clothing symbolized their cultural identity and immigration journey to Canada.

Additional support for the benefit of the PhotoVoice method is that although the VIA responses were not analyzed quantitatively, there may have been qualitative value of assessment for individuals that participated. The VIA compares measures of identification with one's heritage culture to identification with the mainstream Canadian culture. From a phenomenological perspective reviewing before and after responses with individual participants

may augment their understanding of their personal ethnographical experience. There were three observable and consistent responses for the group, and I relate them to the themes identified in the results. Everyone unanimously responded 9, strongly agree before and after participation to the statement: “I am interested in having friends from my heritage culture.” This relates to the Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds theme and may indicate the importance of maintaining the cultural identity of their home place and feeling a part of that community in Canada. Additionally, expressing one’s-self through clothing and food and being connected to one’s home culture and language relate to feeling accepted. Engaging in dialogue about these findings either in group or with the facilitator may add another factor to understand and enrich the individual’s understanding of their own relationship to culture and identity. When the facilitator is an art therapist, with specialized training in psychological support and art, they will be trained in how to contain intense feelings and assist people with the expression or experience of their cultural identity.

Participants also strongly agreed with the statement: “I enjoy the jokes and humor of my heritage culture.” The participants expressed this verbally as having the freedom to say their jokes, whatever they think and share things that only people that have experienced those things understand. This may relate to the Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information theme and how non-English or non-French speakers may be able to express themselves clearly and comfortably through their first language. Another possible explanation for this response is that perhaps the ability to consciously explore one’s heritage and Canadian cultural as a dual identity may buffer the stress of feeling misunderstood as the mother’s expressed in the Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information theme. Being a part of one’s cultural community in Canada may allow immigrants to express themselves through their own clothing, food and in their native language and possibly increase self-esteem. Increased self-esteem may transfer to other aspects of feeling comfortable participating in Canadian culture.

Another way in which PhotoVoice may be useful is that the data collected is from the community members that participate. By providing communities research methods to determine their own needs provides them a voice and has the potential to influence policy and disrupt power imbalances in cultures of silence as Watkins and Schulman (2008) and Wang (2003) suggest. The mothers in this project assessed the strengths, challenges and suggestions relevant

to the immigrant parent community. The issues identified are in the immigrant mother's words and may serve to be passed on to future generations of newcomers to Canada.

The themes created by the participants provide further data regarding designing research that includes whose voice is being represented, in line with Evans-Agnew and Rosenberg's (2016) suggestion that PhotoVoice projects should include participant voice at all stages of research. To achieve this as much as possible in this project the mothers defined their data collection methods and the final photo exposition themselves. They determined that they would identify themes by looking at and organizing the photos rather than through review and analysis of the audio recordings. PhotoVoice methods suggest flexibility on the part of the facilitator to adapt the methods to the needs of the community (Palibroda et al., 2009, Wang & Burris, 1997, Wang, 2003) and to respect the group's desire to choose for themselves. Finally, in respect of the voices and by request of the mothers, the final research paper was shared with them.

The photographs were ways to express individual and collective immigration journeys and readily inspired discussion regarding culture. Although the images were not manipulated post-production as the ones in Cornell and Kessi's (2017) study of Black students experiences in a Caucasian-dominant school, photography may have been a way to share cultural experiences through a visual-arts medium. The photographs in this PhotoVoice project almost instantaneously inspired discussion regarding culture.

My personal observation was that once photos were shared, I rarely needed to facilitate discussion using the SHOWeD questions (Wang, 2003). The conversations regarding cultural background and what it meant to be living in Canada occurred organically and the mothers offered their opinions and collaborated enthusiastically. As the presence of their cultural issues and identity from both their culture of origin and their culture in Canada became more articulated the discussion flowed easier. Over time the themes and issues that came up in one person's photos were more readily mirrored by the images and shared experiences of others.

PhotoVoice methodology helped to explore acculturation issues similar to the findings in Perez et al.'s (2016) study with Latina women in the United States. The themes the immigrant mothers identified in this project were similar but labelled differently and involved different personal experiences. The theme identified by the Latina women in the Perez et al. (2016) study: *Transitioning to life in the US*, may be reflected in the Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds theme. The comparison of being from their culture

of origin in addition to that of Quebecois and Canadian culture was presented in each of their photo montages. The Latina women identified issues regarding parenting and education (Perez et al., 2016) and in this project, these were related to the Bonjour/Hi: Accessibility to Information theme. In the photos and discussion, the mother's shared the stress of not understanding the language in the educational school system and navigating access to places for children that are different in Canada. Like the group in the Perez et al. (2016) study, sharing parts of their cultural heritage and parenting was also present in all the themes for the mothers in this project.

The final issue in the Perez et al. (2016) study, combatting racism, was indirectly addressed through exploration of clothing and food as a symbol of dual identity and acceptance themes. Two potential suggestions for combatting racism and changing negative cultural attitudes were to educate people to respect another's culture by speaking about clothing of different cultures and garnering government involvement in supporting access to foods and ingredients from specific cultures.

As mentioned in the results section, an animated discussion inspired by photographs regarding racism was influenced by a major significant event that occurred during this project. The Quebec government passed secularism Bill 21 in Quebec that made it illegal to wear religious symbols at work in public service positions (Shingler & Montpetit, 2019). This impacted the discussion regarding the photographs of clothing and racism in the Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance (Figure 7). One of the participants wore a Hijab for religious reasons and all the mothers agreed that Bill 21 oppressed people's right to freedoms of expression. Photographs of traditional and or typical non-Canadian ways of dress were included in the photomontage. Therefore, the ability to connect their own cultural identities to current issues facing injustices in policy for current immigrants may be an additional facet supporting the use of PhotoVoice to explore culture.

Another effective way that PhotoVoice identifies issues is by creating a platform for open discussion of different, or divergent opinions. For example, food was largely present in the photographs and the Food is an Element of our Life theme contains contrasting experiences regarding cultural relationship to food. For some group members food held cultural traditions that connected people and food was a positive, celebratory act. For others though their relationship to food after immigrating to Canada was negative. Some mothers felt that Canadian and American cuisine make people gain weight and this is an epidemic in North America. This

contrasted with the diets in some places of origin for the participants which consisted of raw, vegetables and fruit mostly that villagers themselves grew and were picked and eaten right from the tree. Therefore, North American, and Canadian eating habits may be perceived as less healthy than that of one's cultural origin. These findings support what Turk et al. (2015) suggested, that cultural context should be considered in a culture's relationship to food and healthy behaviour.

An additional consideration in this PhotoVoice project was whether sharing or preparing food fostered a sense of community within the group members. Clarke (2013) wrote that preparing and sharing food bring people together and may be a positive addition to art therapy research designs. The concept of sharing food from one's culture of origin was discussed throughout meetings and even though the mothers did not have time to bring a dish from their culture of origin, having food available provided breaks and discussion regarding food habits. This may at least in part have inspired the photographs that were taken of food that were part of the Food is an Element of our Life theme (Figure 6). The concept that eating together bonded people was present in the Food is an Element of our Life photomontage. Many dishes photographed were shared with other members of their cultural community and were different from those of traditional North American cuisine. Another use of food to symbolize the context and spirit of sharing cultural traditions and differences was in the "2019 Loaf of Bread" photograph (Figure 9). Although there was no measure to collect quantitative data regarding the effectiveness of food sharing as part of an art-therapy research project my observations included that having food available and present gave participants a moment to break from what was sometimes intensely emotional discussion. They could share or embellish their stories in a more relaxed way and it was hopefully a small way for them to feel their time and participation was valued by me.

Regarding the power of the image and photographs, PhotoVoice presented several advantages. First, as Weiser (2004) suggested the camera is a readily accessible medium and all participants were eager to take pictures from the beginning of the project. There was a diverse range of levels of photography experience within the group that was bridged by keeping the instructions on how to use the camera simple. I also emphasized that this project did not require any specific art or photography skills, and all levels of experience were welcome. I added that

while meeting we would work together to create a non-judgmental space to share photos and learn together.

Making art through photographs may be less threatening than other medium (Loewenthal, 2013) and may have served as a springboard to increase comfort using other art media later in the project. My personal observation was that at the beginning the mothers were hesitant to make art and worried about not knowing what to take pictures of. They also verbalized that they weren't very creative. Over time and after sharing photographs they became more comfortable taking pictures and made beautiful, complex photomontages with other art materials, such as collage, mixed media and drawing in preparation for the final exposition. The use of photography first may have provided confidence in their artistic abilities that allowed them to make art in ways that they would not have in the first few meetings. Also, the power of presenting the photos and data collected may have created a sense of preciousness and pride in the artwork for the mothers. They each took their own photomontages home and decided together who would keep which collective ones.

Additionally, the data collected in the photographs and themes identified by the group offer preliminary evidence that in PhotoVoice the images may reveal new understandings and perspectives. Participants responded that taking the photographs revealed subconscious aspects of their cultural identity. They added that having shared them with the other immigrant mothers in the group increased their appreciation of Canadian culture, the different cultures of the individuals that participated and all other cultures. They stated that interest, understanding and respect for different cultures expanded as a result of learning from each other and gaining new insights. This supports Betensky's (2001) and Rubin (2016) suggestion that art has the power to provide new ways of seeing.

Beyond seeing cultural experience in a new way, the mothers learned from each other. This supports the Photovoice methodology conclusion that images teach (Wang, 1999). Results that support this are that the group expressed that by taking pictures of moments in current, everyday life they learned that their culture of origin was always a part of who they are. For example, there were several occasions where one participant would say that they did not realize that someone could have such a different opinion. When discussing the Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny Coming from Different Backgrounds one woman was surprised to know that

other's may be fearful of moving to a new place, because she was forced to move a lot as a child, always loved exposure to other cultures and was comfortable with the risk of the unknown. While organizing the photographs for the Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance theme another mother said that she did not realize that in African culture politics and economics influence how hair is styled which is very different than her culture of origin and Western culture. She voiced that she learned something new. For this reason, the PhotoVoice method may foster conscious awareness and acceptance of one's own cultural identity and also that of other peoples. The mother's expressed learning about different cultural practices from each other and different attitudes towards the same things. Therefore, this study may provide insight into using photographs as a tool for mutual learning which is uniquely designed for exploring cultural narratives and acculturation.

Additionally, the themes identified while organizing the photographs (Figure 1) inspired the sharing of feelings and comments about the subject matter photographed. After visually seeing the categories develop, the symbolism and issues being represented became clearer and the group members were able to express their acculturation journey as narratives. Findings like this support the importance of the images to allow people greater access in expression of feelings non-verbally and eventually lending support to the transformation of narratives (Gant & Greenstone, 2016). The group also reported that their immigration narratives now include an acceptance of having multiple cultural identities in addition to being Canadian, after participating in the project regardless of how long they had been living in the country.

Additionally, the photographs themselves are an externalized image that may be less personally connected and therefore less threatening to discuss issues of culture. The use of photographs, especially in the beginning of the project supported the suggestion that verbal communication may not always be useful (Weiser, 2004) and photographs may be one way to engage with a topic or issue in a non-verbal way. The mothers were reticent to share parts of their own cultural journey in the first few meetings. Over subsequent meetings more emotionally and politically loaded discussion occurred as a result of sharing the photographs. The sharing of personal and meaningful challenges and strengths required a vulnerability and trust in the group and process that may not have occurred without the use of the photos to start discussion from a less direct verbal starting point. Perhaps using the images in the beginning was a safer way to cautiously begin talking about culture, which can be difficult or even scary when several people

of different backgrounds are in the same group. A conclusion that the mothers revealed was that participating in the project revealed their relationship with culture that they had not thought of before. They added that by using photographs of daily life they were surprised to see how much their culture of origin was still an active part of their lives.

The use of photography may be a medium of creative expression that is particularly accessible to a community exploring cultural identity. The impact and presentation of the collective themes regarding the immigration journey for the student mothers that participated in the final exposition exposed genuine strengths and issues that immigrants may face while trying to accommodate their culture of origin with that of the Canadian culture. This supports the use of the method of using a camera as a tool to creatively explore identity (Fryear, 1992). PhotoVoice adds the co-creation and community building aspect that may make immigrants feel less isolated and normalize that more than one cultural identity may be an acceptable part of adjusting to life in Canada.

Another point that this PhotoVoice project may provide evidence of is that photography was a readily accessible medium (Weiser, 2004). Participants only required a 20 minute training to be able to take pictures and expressed positivity at being able to use their creativity in a way that was not what they considered art, referring to painting or drawing. They also started to take pictures immediately following the first meeting and some had a few ideas of what to photograph in the first meeting.

PhotoVoice may also be effective in that it allows feedback and opinions to exist from multiple individuals within a community and that this collective experience in combination with creative expression may create meaning. Like Mohr's (2014) findings in her thematic photo elucidation project following a natural disaster the women in this project may have discovered meaning regarding their immigration journey through their collective creative experience. Mohr (2014) concluded that the collective experience strengthens the community and helps overcome trauma. Therefore, the value of community and creativity may have the power to overcome barriers and produce change. Change in the openness to all cultures and an acceptance of being Canadian without sacrificing one's cultural identity of origin was evident in this project and were presented in the exposition to pass on to the future generations of immigrant parents.

Additional support of the use of art is the power of the creative experience in a community. At meeting eight the mothers created the photomontages based on their sense of aesthetics at the

Concordia University Art Hive. This meeting was not audio recorded because it was a public space. However, I noted several statements regarding art making. Group members expressed joy in being given a moment and place to be artistic and creative in a way that they had not been since childhood. They said that this made them “feel playful”. One person added that they “felt a therapeutic benefit of engaging with others in an artistic way that they had not done in years.” Therefore, the ability to share the art making experience in a community art studio welcome to everyone may have emphasized the bond between the mothers in a creative way. As Timm-Bottos (2016) suggests, spaces for creative social connection provide an opportunity for individuals or a community to creatively express their identities and multiple viewpoints.

The methodological addition of the evaluation questions post exposition was in response to observations that I made while facilitating the project. As mentioned, I would be at CUSP for other reasons and would occasionally see the participants outside of the context of this project. I observed comments of how surprised they were to learn about themselves and from the other mothers’ cultures. The rationale for adding the evaluative questions was that the individual experience and perception of value in participating in this PhotoVoice project may yield knowledge regarding this project and inform other PhotoVoice projects.

Participants kept the cameras after participation. The rationale behind being able to keep the cameras comes from Wang’s (2003) chapter on the methods of PhotoVoice as a participatory and issue selection tool with a group of homeless men and women. Wang (2003) writes “[t]he camera is an unusually motivating and appealing device for many people, and PhotoVoice provides a source of community pride and ownership” (p. 182). Giving the cameras was also a way to thank the mother’s for participating.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was that the sample size was small and analyzes were not generalizable to all immigrant parents. However, the VIA as a measure for acculturation is short and easy to administer which is critical when conducting research that requires the amount of commitment that this project did. Additionally, there may be phenomenological value in that participants may augment their understanding of their personal ethnographical experience by reviewing before and after participation responses.

One other limitation was accessing participants. Recruitment lasted for seven months and the employees at CUSP were helpful in finding people that were interested. However, due to the commitment of the project some people did not agree to participate or dropped out.

This project required a lot of time and commitment and a limitation may have been participant fatigue. Due to responsibilities outside the project some participants said they were too tired to add text to the images for the final exhibition. It also required a tremendous amount of flexibility by me as facilitator. Meetings were often rescheduled or shortened because of parenting responsibilities and exams. This flexibility on the part of the research is something to be mindful of and Palibroda et al. (2009) do make note of this in their guide. However, the knowledge and power that the mothers expressed having achieved by participating far outweighed researcher inconvenience.

Recommendations

The following section provides recommendations for future PhotoVoice research projects. Provided the sample size is large enough to have statistical power the VIA may be a useful quantitative measure to add to PhotoVoice projects that explore acculturation in the future. One suggestion for achieving a larger sample is by collaborating with an organization that either commonly conducts PhotoVoice projects or has access to communities that already regularly meet. This way data could be collected over time with multiple projects and pooled. With enough quantitative responses from several groups, statistical analyses could be conducted. For example, Palibroda et al. (2009) have used PhotoVoice with different community groups that meet regularly at their centre.

Regarding the phenomenological value of the VIA responses the qualitative data yielded may validate the data in the themes. The facilitator could offer the participants an opportunity to review their VIA responses post participation to compare their responses. Additionally, the facilitator could offer the mothers the option to share their results with the group which may enhance the collective understanding of cultural identity by comparing similarities and differences. However, it would be important to suggest this to a group that had trust with one another, as this group did. An important point to emphasize would be that participants do not have to share their responses if they do not want to and that it would require unanimous agreement to discuss the responses, otherwise the VIA results remain anonymous.

One solution for the intense flexibility and time spent making adjustments to the schedule by the facilitator in this PhotoVoice project would be to have two co-facilitators that could accommodate the schedule.

Another recommendation is to assess if participants have smart phones that take pictures and if they do, to use them instead of cameras for cost efficiency. The mothers that participated in this PhotoVoice project had a positive reaction to using and receiving an actual camera, however some felt more comfortable using their phone in certain situations, such as low light. Assessing who has access to a smartphone could be done anonymously so that there is no risk of socioeconomic status discrimination. Wang (2003) suggested that being given a camera may provide an individual in a community that may face poverty or have no access to technology a sense of ownership. Therefore, a PhotoVoice project facilitator could incorporate the use of the camera into their design depending on the cultural practices of the specific community. This reiterates the importance of consulting the community before conducting research with minority or at-risk populations (Martinez, Callejas & Hernandez, 2010; Wang, 2003; Watkins & Shulman, 2008).

From my experience sometimes researchers that conduct studies with participants do not consider asking participants for feedback. Therefore, the methodological addition of the evaluative questions in future studies may enhance data collected in the project and provide additional data that reflects the individual experience.

Conclusion

The aim of this pilot project was to investigate PhotoVoice as a method to explore acculturation for student parents. The expected outcome that there would be a quantitative difference in cultural identity after participating in PhotoVoice was not directly displayed in the data. However, the qualitative analyses revealed that participants experienced a strong sense of revelation, acceptance and understanding that one's concept of identity can include more than one culture when immigrating. Using a creative medium, the participants developed clear themes that could then be presented to other parents, who may be considering, have already, or are in the process, of immigrating.

An emergent methodological consideration to respect participant voice at each step of the research process as Evans-Agnew & Rosenberg (2016) suggest is the ability of the researcher to adapt data analysis methods discovered and refined by the participants. At the outset of the

project I had an idea of how data analysis related to acculturation for immigrant student parents would happen with the PhotoVoice methodology. However, in choosing to follow the lead of the people willing to explore acculturation in the project with me, new tools for analyzing the photographic data was directly community informed. This may provide tools for future researchers interested in acculturation and adaptability to allow the community members to maximize their participation.

The issues identified in this project may serve as a preliminary source of information on the usefulness of PhotoVoice to not only assess the interests and needs of immigrant student parents but to offer an organizing tool for the collection and dissemination of strength-based solutions. The information may be valuable to future immigrant parents and may have the potential to inform social services and resource development for newcomers to Canada.

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Figures



Figure 1. Participants grouping images together and identifying themes and issues.



Figure 2. Photography displayed by theme in the exposition. The three Home away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds individual montages are hanging at the top. The Food is an Element of our Life montage is on the bottom far right of the recessed section.



Figure 3. Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds photo collage made by a student mother that was displayed in the exposition.



Figure 4. Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds photo collage from a mother that immigrated from the United States but was originally from Cuba.



Figure 5. Home Away from Home: Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds montage made by a group participant that immigrated from Greece.



Figure 6. The photo montage, Food is an Element of our Life is a collectively identified theme presented in the final exposition. The top left photo is of bananas, a part of the everyday environment in other culture. The bottom left two photos represent a lack of accessibility to foods in Canada that are specific to other cultures. The bottom mid-photo represents a taste of home and a typical food that is characteristic of Greek culture. The rest of the photographs symbolize different shared foods and the relationship to cultural and social traditions for immigrants to the country they come from.



Figure 7. Clothing as a Symbol of Dual Identity and Acceptance Theme. The top left and bottom right photos depict the richness of colour and quality of fabric that may differ from Canadian and North American culture. The middle photo is of traditional dress in Greek culture. The top right is a photo of Algerian dress, while the bottom left is a photo of customary African dress.

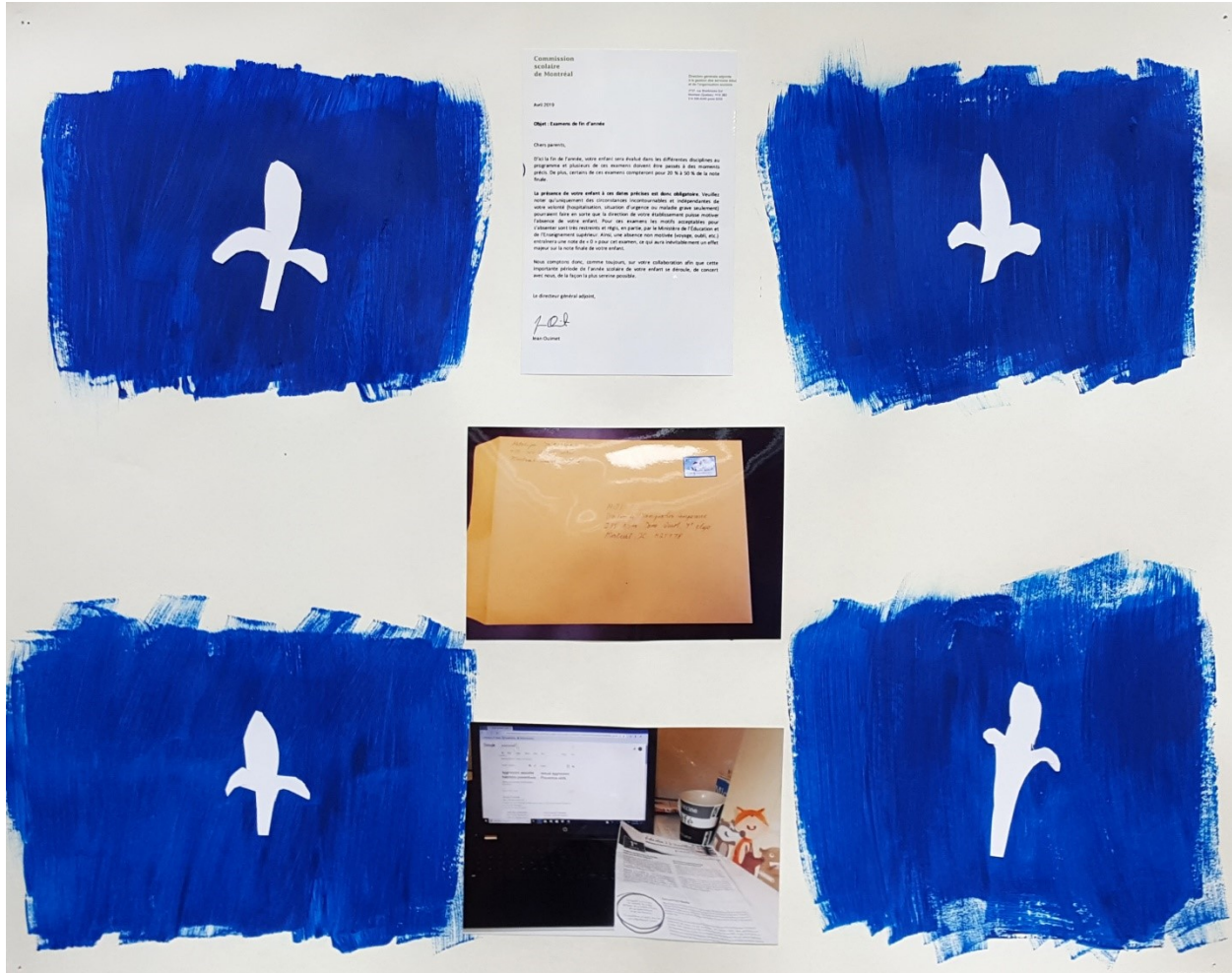


Figure 8. The Bonjour / Hi. Accessibility to Information Theme. The top photo depicts a letter in French sent to one of the mothers that she could not entirely understand. The middle photo is an envelope sent to a lawyer while navigating the stress and challenges with acquiring her Visa to stay and study in Canada. The bottom photo is another document in French only.



Figure 9. Enlargement of the bread that was part of the Food is an Element of our Life theme. This was a collective representation of the group experience participating in this project.



Figure 10. Enlargement of one mother's Home Away from Home Openness, Destiny, Coming from Different Backgrounds theme. The group depicted the dual climates from Canada and their cities of origin in their individual montages and collectively chose this one to represent symbolize having two cultural identities for the entire group.



Figure 11. This is the PhotoVoice exhibition Opening. The artists (mothers) were present to answer questions and make comments for people that attended.

Appendix A



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Andrea Cook
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Creative Arts Therapies
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: PhotoVoice: Identifying Immigrant Family Interests in
the Current Canadian Cultural Climate
Certification Number: 30009002
Valid From: November 21, 2018 To: November 20, 2019

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Hebblethwaite".

Dr. Shannon Hebblethwaite, Vice Chair, University Human Research Ethics
Committee

Appendix B

VIA Questionnaire (Ryder et al., 1999)

Vancouver Index of Acculturation

Please answer each question as carefully as possible by circling one of the numbers to the right of each question to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement.

Many of these questions will refer to your heritage culture, meaning the culture that has influenced you most (other than Canadian culture). It may be the culture of your birth, the culture in which you have been raised, or another culture that forms part of your background. If there are several such cultures, pick the one that has influenced you most (e.g., Irish, Chinese, Mexican, Black). If you do not feel that you have been influenced by any other culture, please try to identify a culture that may have had an impact on previous generations of your family.

Please write your *heritage* culture in the space provided. _____

Use the following key to help guide your answers:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/ Depends	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	9
1. I often participate in my heritage cultural traditions				
2. I often participate in mainstream Canadian cultural traditions.				
3. I would be willing to marry a person from my heritage culture.				
4. I would be willing to marry a Canadian person.				
5. I enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage culture as myself.				
6. I enjoy social activities with typical Canadian people.				
7. I am comfortable working with people of the same heritage culture as myself				
8. I am comfortable working with typical Canadian people.				
9. I enjoy entertainment (e.g., movies, music) from my heritage culture				
10. I enjoy Canadian entertainment (e.g., movies, music).				
11. I often behave in ways that are typical of my heritage culture.				
12. I often behave in ways that are 'typically Canadian.'				
13. It is important for me to maintain or develop the practices of my heritage culture				
14. It is important for me to maintain or develop Canadian cultural practices.				
15. I believe in the values of my heritage culture.				
16. I believe in mainstream Canadian values.				
17. I enjoy the jokes and humor of my heritage culture.				
18. I enjoy typical Canadian jokes and humor				
19. I am interested in having friends from my heritage culture.				
20. I am interested in having Canadian friends.				

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Appendix C
Parent Consent Form



INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: PhotoVoice: Identifying Immigrant Family interests in the current Canadian Cultural Climate

Researcher: Andrea Cook, Masters Student in Art Therapy

Researcher's Contact: andrea.cook@mail.concordia.ca, 514-585-1722

Faculty Supervisor: Janis Timm-Bottos, PhD, ATR-BC, ATPQ, PT

Faculty Supervisor's Contact: Janis.Timm-Bottos@concordia.ca, 514-848-2424- ext. 4799

Source of funding for the study: Applied to SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship Masters program

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to investigate cultural identity and community empowerment for immigrant families using Photography.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to agree to attend a specified number of meetings, determined by the group. You are to take photographs based on a group defined theme,

targeting issues important to you and your community. You will also share a meal during meetings in which you will discuss the photographs, and identify key issues regarding your cultural community. The final project you would be a part of is a collective photo exhibition.

In total, participating in this study will take 4 – 8 weeks, depending on the number of meetings the group defines. The Photo Exhibition may be later than 8 weeks depending on the group desires.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks include: experiencing questions regarding your culture of origin to better understand the needs of families that have, or are immigrating to Canada. Memories of challenges faced may arise while taking photographs, and/or participating in the study. Some of the issues identified may be politically sensitive in nature.

Potential benefits include: identifying community issues to present to policy makers, and empowering the group members as ambassadors for future generations adapting to the dominant Canadian culture. An additional benefit is building bonds with other members of the community while engaging in a creative activity.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: responses in questionnaires, as well as group discussions. Participants can choose whether they would like their names, or a pseudonym to appear with the photographs in the exhibition, but are not required to do so.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be anonymous, and names will be coded (assigned a numerical, value) while the research is in progress.

We will protect the information by keeping it password protected on a computer that is in a locked office accessed by the principal researcher and advisor. All hard copies of photos and notes are also locked in a filing cabinet accessible by the principal investigator and supervisor only.

We intend to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you, because all names will be changed, and no other personal information will be included.

This project allows a group to stand behind their voice and issues raised, and members may collectively choose to distribute the findings to policy makers. This may require identifying information. However, the decision to use identifying information must be unanimous, and will be agreed upon by all participants.

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study, however digital copies of the photographs included in publications will still be available.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before the photo exhibition.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix D
Release Form for Photographs



RELEASE FORM FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Study Title: PhotoVoice: Identifying Immigrant Family Interests in the Current Canadian Cultural Climate.

Researcher: Andrea Cook, Masters Student in Art Therapy

Researcher's Contact: andrea.cook@mail.concordia.ca, 514-585-1722

Faculty Supervisor: Janis Timm-Bottos, PhD, ATR-BC, ATPQ, PT

Faculty Supervisor's Contact: Janis.Timm-Bottos@concordia.ca, 514-848-2424- ext. 4799

I consent to my image being used in the photographs as part of the PhotoVoice project, at a present or at a future date.

NAME _____

PARENT/GURADIAN NAME (please print) for children under 18 years old

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca