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Colombian Transnational Families : Experiential, Emotional and Relational Dimensions of Migration

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Abstract:

This thesis highlights the importance of the affective and relational aspects of migration for Montréal-based Colombian migrants as they care at a distance for their transnational families while remaking their homes and crafting life projects. In particular, the focus is on the lived and emotional dimensions of migration, which allows a nuanced perspective on migration as an embodied reality.

My research offers insights into the personal motivations and decision-making processes involved in transnational movement, recognizing, as the ethnographic literature suggests, that transnational migrants' decisions to live their lives across national frontiers are never purely political or economic. Indeed, migrants do move within the limits imposed by political, economic, and social structures. However, these realities are counterbalanced within the domestic and affective life sphere by shared intimacies and other factors that extend beyond the reach of government policies or fluctuations in global labour markets. Thus, the emphasis on lived experiences and on the ambiguous and uncertain nature of the emotions of the transnational family highlights ever-changing processes involved in transnational migration that are not always taken into account in the academic literature.

My analysis draws on an experience-centred approach, and attention is given primarily to the body as a site of culture. Consequently, sensorial participation and embodied experiences, such as eating and walking are given a privileged place in the study. I provide a detailed description of the lived experiences and felt emotions of Colombians who have migrated to Montréal. In so doing, I attempt to give a more complete picture of migration as lived by its principal actors and of Colombian migration in particular.

Keywords: Anthropology, cultural anthropology, transnationalism, home, migrants, transnational families, embodiment, experience, emotions, the body, life project

Résumé :

Cette thèse souligne l'importance des aspects affectifs et relationnels de la migration pour les Colombiens migrants vivant à Montréal, qui s'occupent de leur famille transnationale, tout en refaisant leur foyer et en élaborant leur projet de vie. L'accent est mis particulièrement sur les dimensions vécues et émotionnelles de la migration, ce afin de proposer une perspective nuancée de la migration en tant que réalité incarnée.

Ma recherche offre un aperçu des motivations personnelles et des processus décisionnels impliqués dans le mouvement transnational des migrants colombiens, reconnaissant, comme le suggère la littérature ethnographique, que les décisions des migrants transnationaux de vivre leur vie au-delà des frontières nationales ne sont jamais purement politiques ou économiques. En effet, les migrants se déplacent dans les limites imposées par les structures politiques, économiques, et sociales. Cependant, ces réalités sont équilibrées et contrebalancées dans la sphère de la vie domestique et affective, dans des intimités partagées en famille et d'autres facteurs qui dépassent la portée des politiques gouvernementales ou des fluctuations des marches du travail mondial. Ainsi, l'accent mis sur l'expérience vécue et sur la nature ambiguë et incertaine des émotions de la famille transnationale met en évidence des processus de migration transnationale en constante évolution.

Mon analyse s'appuie sur une approche centrée sur l'expérience, et l'attention est principalement portée sur le corps, en tant que site de culture. Pour cette raison, la participation sensuelle et les expériences incarnées, comme manger et marcher, occupent une place privilégiée dans l'étude. Je fournis une description détaillée des expériences vécues et des émotions ressenties par les Colombiens qui ont émigré à Montréal. Ce faisant, je tente de donner une image plus complète de la migration telle qu'elle est vécue par ses principaux acteurs et de la migration colombienne en particulier.

Mots-clés: Anthropologie, anthropologie culturelle, transnationalisme, chez soi, migrants, familles transnationales, expérience, émotions, corps, projet de vie

Resumen:

Esta tesis destaca la importancia que los lazos afectivos pueden llegar a tener para algunos migrantes colombianos radicados en Montréal, los cuales a la vez que mantienen lazos afectivos con sus familias transnacionales, rehacen sus hogares imaginan y planean un mejor futuro. El énfasis en la dimensión emocional y cotidiana de la migración nos ofrece una visión de la migración como realidad corporal.

Mi investigación ahonda en las motivaciones personales y los procesos de toma de decisiones que intervienen en el movimiento transnacional, reconociendo, como sugiere la literatura etnográfica, que las decisiones tomadas por las migrantes transnacionales de vivir sus vidas a través de fronteras nacionales, nunca son puramente políticas o económicas. De hecho, los migrantes se mueven dentro de las estructuras políticas, económicas y sociales. Sin embargo, estas realidades se equilibran y contrarrestan en la esfera de la vida doméstica y afectiva, en las intimidades compartidas en familia y otros factores que se extienden más allá del alcance de las políticas gubernamentales o las fluctuaciones de los mercados laborales mundiales.

Así pues, el énfasis en las experiencias vividas y en el carácter ambiguo e incierto de las emociones de la familia transnacional pone de relieve los procesos siempre cambiantes que conlleva la migración transnacional y que no siempre son tenidos en cuenta.

Mi análisis se basa en un enfoque centrado en la experiencia, y se centra principalmente en el cuerpo como lugar de cultura.

A su vez, la participación sensorial y las experiencias corporales, como comer y caminar, ocupan un lugar privilegiado en el estudio. Proporciono una descripción detallada de las experiencias vividas y las emociones sentidas por los colombianos que emigraron a Montréal. Con ello, trato de dar una imagen más completa de la migración tal como la vivieron sus principales actores y de la migración colombiana en particular.

Palabras clave: Antropología, antropología cultural, transnacionalismo, hogar, migrantes, familias transnacionales, experiencias, emociones, el cuerpo, proyecto de vida.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

A.C.C.U.	Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá Peasant Self-defence Forces of Córdoba and Urabá (paramilitary group)
A.U.C.	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia
BACRIM	Bandas Criminales (Criminal organizations)
BVORs	Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees
CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency Agence des services frontaliers du Canada
C.E.R.	Comandos Ernesto Rojas Ernesto Rojas Commandos (insurgent organization)
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada changed in 2015 to IRCC
C.G.S.B.	Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar Simón Bolívar Guerrilla Coordinating Board (insurgent organization)
CRDD	Convention Refugee Determination Division
CSQ	Certificat de Sélection du Québec
COIN	Counter Insurgency Operations

DANE	Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística National Administrative Department of Statistics
E.L.N.	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (insurgent organization) National Liberation Army
E.P.L.	Ejército Popular de Liberación (insurgent organization) The Popular Liberation Army
E.R.P.	Ejército Revolucionario Popular People's Revolutionary Army (insurgent organization)
E.R.P.A.C.	Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antiterrorista Colombiano Popular Revolutionary Anti-Terrorist Army of Colombia (paramilitary group)
F.A.R.C.	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (insurgent organization)
GARs	Government-Assisted Refugees
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2015)
M-19	Movimiento 19 de Abril April 19th Movement (insurgent organization)
NCHM	National Centre for Historical Memory
PCO	Peace Time Contingency Operations

POE	Port of Entry
PSRs	Privately Sponsored Refugees
QSWP	Québec Skilled Workers Program
STCA	Safe Third Country Agreement
AGU	United Gaitán Self-defence forces (paramilitary group)
UP	Union Patriótica Patriotic Union
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Para Julián Salcedo y mi vida también

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Introduction

Background and Context of the Study

This study emanates from a long-standing interest in the impact of the armed conflict on the people of Colombia. It started in 2007 when I sought to answer the question of how Colombians forget or remember collectively in their everyday lives, and how these practices are affected by the ambiguities caused by violence. I chose a historical event: the siege of the Palace of Justice,[1] seat of Colombia`s Supreme Court (Carrigan, 1993) in Bogotá (1985) by the M-19 guerrillas, and the subsequent retaking of the building by the army when civilians were made to disappear.[2]

For my master's thesis (2010), I focused on the struggles for memory and justice by eleven families of the cafeteria staff (working during the Palace of Justice siege), who were suspected of being infiltrated by M-19 guerrillas and consequently made to disappear by the army, as recent evidence has demonstrated.[3] I explored the question of whether hatred and revenge were

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[1] On November 6, 1985, the M-19 guerilla group laid siege to Colombia's Palace of Justice, seat of the country's Supreme Court, which stands in the heart of the capital of Bogota. The M-19 took 300 hostages and demanded President Belisario Betancur and his Defense Minister on trial for violating a peace agreement. After the seizure, the high command of the Armed Forces of Colombia decided to take back the palace through a 27-hours long counter-siege. During the course of the military operative, 12 people were forcibly disappeared, and 11 Supreme Court magistrates were killed.
The events that took place during and after the siege and counter-siege of the Palace of Justice were milestones for the country's history, representing Colombia's context of impunity, lack of effective implementation of the right to truth and breach of the State's responsibility to identify all the victims who disappeared and died. See: https://cejil.org/en/palace-justice, Accessed 17 June 2020.

[2] The operation, "included a badly conducted effort by the Colombian army to retake the building" (Marcella, 2009). See Democratic Governance and the Rule of Law: Lessons from Colombia, at https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11338?seq=21#metadata_info_tab_contents p. 15, Accessed 8 Sept. 2020.

[3] On the 10th of December 2014, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (ICHR) condemned the Colombian state for serious violations of human rights committed during the siege and capture of the

part of the legacy that Colombians transmitted from generation to generation, perpetuating and sustaining cycles of chaos and terror for decades. I found that memory is a contested, non-fixed, moving terrain linked to imagination, hope, and ideas about the future and that families who had suffered the forced disappearance of a loved one continued their search for justice through active participation in the landscaping of collective memories in Colombia. While many forgave, others could not. After more than thirty years, families of those made to disappear gather at Bolivar Square in Bogota on the 6th and 7th of November to remember what cannot be forgotten, the forced disappearance of civilians who were inside the Palace of Justice on those dates in 1985.

While studying the disappearance of civilians for my master's degree, I began to understand the complexity of the armed conflict and to see migration as part of its aftermath. The armed conflict in Colombia is multipolar (Osorio et al., 2019). Its main actors range from rebel fighters, to drug traffickers, paramilitaries, state forces, and between 3,800 and 10,000 criminal bands *(bandas criminales)* known as BACRIM[4] (which include former paramilitary fighters, involved in drug-trafficking and extortion), all with records of human rights abuses.[5] The BACRIM (**Ba**ndas

Palace of Justice, including the forced disappearance of a member of the M-19, seven cafeteria workers operating at the headquarters of the Palace, and two visitors (see: https://cejil.org/en/inter-american-court-issues-verdict-emblematic-palace-justice-case 2 Feb, 2021).

[4] Mapping Militant Organizations is an academic research project based at Stanford University that traces the evolution of militant organizations and the interactions that develop between them over time, it is based on media monitoring, "BACRIM emerged predominantly from the AUC, it is different in that it has no clear political agenda. While paramilitaries were criminal gangs, they actively combated guerrilla groups and their supporters. BACRIM, on the other hand, is exclusively involved in cocaine production, smuggling, and extreme violence. BACRIM's goal is territorial gain and control of the drug trade within its regions of control" (Mapping Militant Organizations, 28 Aug. 2015) https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1397943.html, Accessed February 10, 2020).

[5] Left-wing guerrillas (E.L.N., F.A.R.C., E.P.L., *M-19*), the right-wing paramilitary forces (AUC, CONVIVIR, ACCU), the Gulf Clan (a new drug-trafficking group formed in 2006 by disarmed right-wing paramilitaries, F.A.R.C. dissidents, members of the now-disbanded E.P.L, Marxist guerrillas and still-active E.L.N. members), and the Colombian armed forces. See *Mapping Violent Presence of Armed*

Criminales) have used, mostly from the mid-1990s to 2008, various tactics of terror including massacres, forced disappearances, homicides, landmines, land grabbing, and forced displacement (Riaño-Alcalá and Goldring, 2014).

Peace Agreements and Displacement

In November 2016, after four years of negotiations between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (F.A.R.C. the oldest guerrilla in the Americas), the Peace Accord formally ended a 52-year armed conflict, the longest in the Western hemisphere (Engstrom, 2012). The F.A.R.C. signed a peace accord[6] with then-President Juan Manuel Santos (in office from 2010 to 2018) and surrendered their weapons to United Nations inspectors (Arredondo, 2019). However, despite the peace agreement, the armed conflict took a huge toll on Colombian society, prompting the voluntary and forced displacement of Colombians. Therefore, the migration of Colombians is understood being at least in part the result of

> a war strategy that produced one of the world's largest movements of migration within and outside the borders of the country. By 2008, the number of Internally Displaced People (IDP) reached 4 million. During these years, Colombia also became the main source of refugees in the Americas and, as of 2008, one of the three main sources of refugees worldwide. (Riaño-Alcalá and Goldring, 2014)

Actors in Colombia for a visual and interactive heat map of the violent presence of armed actors from 1988 to 2017. (See, https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ecec71bacd204475844d9526cc8df7f1&extent=-9944985.093%2C-640464.5863%2C-6129248.641%2C1556029.8585%2C102100, Accessed 5 June, 2020).

[6] A similar Ceasefire, Truce and Peace agreement was signed in 1984 between President Belisario Betancour and the F.A.R.C. (https://www.nytimes.com/1984/05/29/world/colombia-cease-fire-begins-and-the-capital-celebrates.html, Accessed 20 February, 2020).

In the research presented in this thesis, I continue exploring the multifaceted nature of the Colombian armed conflict and its long-lasting impact on Colombian migrants. In particular, I will examine the affective, relational and emotional dimension of migration to highlight migrants' immediate lived realities. Specifically, I will focus on the ways Colombian migrants live their everyday lives, the emotions they experience while caring at a distance for their transnational families, and in the intimate and domestic sphere, on the way transnational migrants reinvent their lives, sustain their families and rebuild their homes.

Economic, Political and Relational Dimensions of Migration

Generally, Colombian migration is examined by taking into account economic and political factors influencing migrants' decision-making processes. For example, research on the migration of Colombians to North America focuses heavily on its economic dimension, on themes such as remittances, and investments in the homeland (Guarnizo et al, 1999; Portes et al. 2003 and 2005; Guarnizo et al., 2003; Portes et al., 2005; Mahler, 1999; Gaviria and Mejia, 2005; Portes, Escobar and Radford, 2007; Sørensen, 2005). The political aspect of migration generally concerns transnational networks, comparative studies of refugees, and transnational electoral participation (Balcazar et. al, 2009; Riaño-Alcalá, Colorado, et al. 2008; Landolt P. and Goldring L., 2010, Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999; Escobar, 2004 and 2010; Riaño-Alcalá and Goldring, 2006).

Indeed, Colombians' migratory journeys can be partly understood by looking at macro-level, economic and political frameworks. For example, some participants in this study (international students, and skilled workers) attended Québec's government information sessions "*Un Bel Avenir au Québec*"[7] offered in Colombia's largest cities, mainly to attract economic investment

[7] **Un Bel Avenir au Québec**

"Québec is a modern society that offers a stimulating environment that is truly unique in the world. Recognized for its quality of life, it is a place where everyone feels safe and can find their place. Québec stands out for the warmth of its people, its job opportunities and its values based on tolerance and cultural diversity". (http://unbelavenir.gouv.qc.ca/en/chooseQuébec-index.php, Accessed 9 July 2020).

and prospective immigrants to *la belle province*. In this instance, Colombian migrants migrate in part because of the possibilities of integrating into the Canadian labour market. However, participants' decisions to migrate do not happen in a vacuum, but originate in a particular local historical context, that of armed conflict. Moreover, motivations to migrate are largely linked to distinct emotional states, and to concerns for the well-being of the migrants' families. Therefore, it is important to consider the affective dimension and the role played by emotions when studying migration. While there are still relatively few academic studies on Colombian migrants, interest in them is growing.[8]

Stephanie Arsenault's work (2006, 2009) on the affective importance Colombian refugees accord their transnational families offers potentially interesting directions for exploring the transnational connections migrants sustain over time. Arsenault corroborates through her research that family is generally the main reason why Colombian refugees sustain transnational ties with their country of origin. In keeping with these findings, I seek to enlarge the focus of the analysis by incorporating Colombians with diverse legal statuses, Colombians who keep transnational connections to family living in Colombia and all over the world. Moreover, Colombians in Québec provide a particularly interesting case study not only because they have a variety of legal statuses in Canada, but also are of varying socio-economic backgrounds, which also means different levels of access to mobility, technology and the general resources needed to sustain a transnational family.

Here, I propose to explore migration as a relational process deeply rooted in the intersubjective space of the family (Horton, 2009), an intimate and shared experience lived within the many homes migrants create to sustain their families. Family[9] is for Colombians generally at the

[8] "Of all the countries in Latin America, Colombia is the least studied and perhaps the least understood (by outsiders), according to David Bushnell, an American historian. (The Economist, 21st April, 2001. https://www.economist.com/special-report/2001/04/21/a-country-apart, Accessed 20 July, 2020).

[9] Since my focus is on the intersubjective space of the family, on the emotional and relational dimensions of family life and on the lived experiences shared by Colombians, I am not defining or determine a specific type of family. Instead, I include in my study diverse types of families reflective of current and more flexible ideas about what constitutes a family. As such when I refer to Colombian transnational

epicentre of important life-changing decisions: it justifies abrupt changes, sacrifices, uses and abuses; it structures experiences, emotions and plans for the future; it shapes the past and influences the present; it is a structure of experiences deeply infused in Christian teachings, systems of obligations and expectations. Family as an institution and as a set of experiences offers many Colombians a way to hope,[10] to move forward and to make sense of their everyday lives.

An emphasis on the emotions of the transnational family shows the importance of families, home-making practices, and life projects have in migration processes. Migrants may move as a result of particular situations, not solely economic (neoliberal policies that promote upward mobility) or political (armed conflict); It is important to acknowledge that despite my focus on Colombian migrants' experiences and emotions throughout this research, there are underlying dynamics that are inherently human and not unique in any way to Colombians. Migrants, regardless of birth place or cultural background move sometimes out of love, anger, hope, sadness, or despair, they value family, food and as any other human being, they have life projects and existential dilemmas with changing rather than static existences, with intellectual and emotional involvements that significantly constitute what or who they are and where they go.

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families, I am referring to intact nuclear families, extended families, matrifocal extended families, and stable monoparental families led by women and men.

[10] Migrants exercise the capacity to hope, to move forward in life, the "capacity to aspire" (Bordieu, 1979; Appadurai, 2004; Carling, 2018). (See Carling, (2018) at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1384134).

Overview of the Thesis

In Chapter 1, I describe the approach I have taken to address my research questions, i.e., the experiential/phenomenological approach, which allowed me to attend to Colombian migrants' embodied experiences, emotions and ways of sustaining their transnational families. I begin exploring the significance of the emotional and the relational dimensions of migration within the theoretical framework of transnationalism.

In the same chapter, I describe my field work offering a complete socio-demographic profile of participants, while discussing a few ethical considerations. And finally, I present certain aspects of my personal biography to acknowledge my positionality and to practice reflexivity offering insight about the suitability of the paths I took to arrive at statements of understanding about Colombian migrants.

In Chapter 2 I begin by exploring transnationalism. Existing research on transnationalism tends to focus on the economic and politic aspects of migrants' lives. Nonetheless, many scholars have acknowledged that transnational migrants' decisions to migrate across national frontiers are not solely economic or political in nature (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 2001; Fuglerud, 1999; Le Gall 2005, Svašek, 2008; Baldassar 2007, Pribilsky, 2012) and that affective networks such as those articulated in the family play a prominent role in the decision-making processes related to migration.

In the same chapter, I present a review of the literature on the transnational migration of Colombians. Here one finds studies focused on the economic and political dimension of migration. I note the lack of studies on the affective and relational dimension of migration as regards Colombians. Also, I explore the question of what is a transnational family, and look at recent research on the relational and affective dimensions of transnational migration, with an emphasis on emotions (Horton 2009; Ferguson 2010).

Chapter 3 explores the themes of experience, emotions, and embodiment within the framework of migration studies. I begin by looking at phenomenology in anthropology and other developments brought about by anthropologists studying extraordinary experience (Goulet and

Young, 1994; Meintel 2007; Classen 1993), tracing, the study of phenomena such as dreams, visions, sorcery, shamanism, and religion where researchers demonstrate that human beings not only have, but also are, bodies. A focus on the body helps to acknowledge the ever-changing changing, non-static lives of migrants. By exploring migrants' emotions, I follow in the steps of phenomenological anthropologists and those interested in extraordinary experiences, and social scientists for whom attending to human experiences prevail over the analysis of discourse.

Chapter 4 takes up the macro social structures related to the immigration apparatus: the policies, conditions, and environment of the host country- province, Canada-Québec. I focus on the history of migration to Canada, on changes in the objectives of immigration quotas and regulations and on the categories used to regulate migration. I also discuss the categories and procedures used by the government to manage immigration to Canada and Québec. Following this, I present a statistical portrait of Colombian migrants in Canada and Québec to contextualize their migration within the wider landscape of migration to Canada over the recent decades.

I also examine the legal status of Colombian migrants participating in this study (refugees, including secondary migrants seeking asylum from the U.S., and countries other than Colombia, government-assisted refugees (G.A.R.s), skilled workers, international students, and persons under the category of family reunification). Finally, I look at the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement to understand the impact that immigration policies have had on Colombians' migratory journeys.

Chapter 5 presents the historical context of Colombian migration, which helps us connect the dots between patterns of migrants' movement, and the social, economic, or political conditions that may have prompted such movement in the first place. By considering the historical background of a particular mass migration or mobility trend we are also considering the impact of global forces at play (Glick Schiller and Caglar, 2008). In this chapter, I present events in Colombian history, focusing on periods that are important in relation to the mass migration of Colombians, in particular to North America. I provide empirical evidence that brings into sharp relief the impact of violence and war in the everyday lives of migrants as it is encompassed within global processes, such as the demand for drugs, and the flow of weapons and money on

a huge, almost unbelievable scale. Finally, I discuss the barriers that slow and prevent the formation of a cohesive Colombian community in Montréal.

In Chapter 6, I present a socio-demographic profile of Colombian migrants, highlighting patterns of mobility and settlement in Québec and Montréal. I explore the migratory waves that brought them to Canada and connect these waves with particular historical events. I also address research on the transnational migration of Colombians to North America and Québec and summarize scholarly studies that look at the presence of Colombians in the province, including a few studies of Colombian transnational families. Finally, I explore the associative life among Colombians in Montréal, the places (restaurants, dance schools, religious places of worship) they frequent places of solidarity where they engage in cultural exchange and develop new forms of mutual support.

Chapter 7 goes into the stories of transnational Colombian families living in Montréal and shows how migration is embedded in personal biography, in the maintenance of long-distance relationships, in embodied sensations, memories and emotions, and finally in people's actions and imaginations. The life histories in this chapter illustrate that Colombian migrants have had highly diverse migration journeys and that their experiences, emotions, life projects, desires, and ways of connecting are also diverse, as are the ways of remaking a home and imagining a future. In this chapter, I also begin approaching migration as a relational phenomenon and explore family as an intersubjective space and as a structure of experiences, not only as an institution. In doing so, I focus on intimate accounts of family life that extend beyond national

borders, offering personal accounts to counter simplistic discourses[11] on migration and anti-immigrant rhetoric in the media and among politicians who promote hate and scaremongering.[12] Finally, I explore the way migrants stay in touch and practice distant care (Baldassar, 2007). Staying in touch and distant care are notions that allowed me to anchor the volatile nature of emotions, and the fluid and changing makeup of families in movement, not only across space

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11 In, *Les migrations internationales contemporaines* (2009) *by* François Crépeau, Delphine Nakache and Idil Atak the authors bring together a number of papers presented at a transdisciplinary seminar organized by the Canada Research Chair in International Migration Law (CDIM) in 2005–2006. This seminar aimed at a transdisciplinary exploration of the complexity of international migration. It was attended by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, jurists, political scientists and economists who aimed to respond to the simplistic discourses on migration, whether they were delivered by politicians or conveyed by the media. (See: https://books.openedition.org/pum/18411?lang=en, Accessed 29 July, 2020).

[12] For example, recently Green ex-leader Elizabeth May poked at Conservative leader Andrew Scheer for fanning misinformation about migrants unauthorized crossings at Roxham Road in Québec, she said:

> You act as if people are illegal when they come here as refugees. Under international refugee conventions, people have every right to come and claim refugee status, she said. To what Scheer answered: There is nothing compassionate about forcing refugees to wait longer in refugee camps in places where there is a civil war, where they have to wait longer because there are some people skipping the line and jumping the queue by coming into Canada.

Technically it is illegal to cross a border unless it is an official Port of Entry (POE), ironically there is a (POE) close by, the STCA prevents migrants from entering Canada legally, I will explore this in chapter 3. However, once in Canada, people have the right to claim for refugee status. Some residents of the area share Mr. Scheer's views on the matter: "we should put a fence", build a wall, to deter "spontaneous asylum seekers", "illegal asylum seekers", "bogus asylum seekers", "economic refugee/asylum seekers", "illegal migrants", "trafficked migrants", "overstayers", "failed asylum seekers", "queue jumpers". I explore in chapter 3 the business of labelling refugees.

(See also How Thousands of Asylum Seekers Have Turned Roxham Road into a De Facto https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1384134

Border Crossing, Susan Ormiston, CBC News, Sept. 29, 2019 https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/the-national-roxham-road-immigration-border-1.5169249, Accessed 30 July 2020).

(e.g., migration) but also across time (e.g., life course). Most importantly, this focus allows me to effectively study migration using an experience-centred approach.

In Chapter 8, I examine the concept of home, which can be understood as a set of routine actions and interactions, of embodied practices that offer a sense of belonging to a known social universe (Rapport and Overing, 2000). I look at the emotions associated with the making of a home in a deterritorialized world and also explore the theme of nostalgia (Phillips 1985; Starobinski and Kemp 1966; Hutcheon 2000; Baldassar, 2007; Seremetakis 1994), an emotion that lies at the epicentre of many migrants' everyday lives. Nostalgia motivates return trips, purchases, plans, and even eating practices. In particular, I will explore the embodied aspect of food consumption and argue that since eating has multisensory qualities, it evokes a multifaceted experience of place (Law, 2001), recreating "sensory landscapes of home" (Seremetakis, 1994).

I will also explore how health practices are chosen and experienced, whereby the body itself is made a home, to be taken care of in a particular way. These practices recreate, in a sense, what home felt like for some migrants. In sum, I show how Colombians remake their homes in virtual environments and other places, by sharing meals via Skype, or by buying, cooking and preparing ethnic meals, or attending to the body and the spirit in specific ways known to them. I do this to highlight belonging (home) and connection (family ties).

I discuss the importance that some Colombian migrants living in Montréal give their transnational families, concluding that family is at the epicentre of migrants' life-changing decisions. It justifies abrupt changes, sacrifices, uses and abuses; it structures experiences, emotions and plans for the future; it shapes the past and influences the present; it is a structure of experiences deeply infused in Catholic teachings, systems of obligation, and expectations. Therefore, it is crucial to emphasize the affective dimension of migration which offers a vision of migration as an embodied reality.

In this chapter I show that the motivations and choices that propel transnational movement are not driven purely by political or economic reasons. In fact, as migrants advance through political, economic and social frameworks, these frameworks are in turn embedded in the

everyday spheres of home and affective life, in intimacies shared with the family. The attention given to the experiences and the uncertain and ambiguous nature of transnational family emotions reveals the always changing nature of transnational migration, which sometimes is forgotten in the analysis of migration from countries where there has been political unrest and armed conflicts, as is the case for many migrants who have come to Canada and Québec.

CHAPTER 1: The Research

Introduction

This thesis will examine the experiences of Montréal-based Colombian migrants, as they care for family members abroad. Different stages in the family life course incite migrants' mobility. In turn, mobility is overwhelmingly motivated by emotions. I will look at the experiences of six Colombian families and their close kin whose transnational migration has resettled them across the Americas. My methodology is influenced by, phenomenology and more generally, by experience-centred approaches, including the idea of resonance (Wikan, 1992). I will observe and study changing attitudes and dispositions, emotions, first-hand lived embodied experiences and perceptions of people who migrate.

In this chapter, I begin grounding my research in anthropological concepts such as the concept of home, which allowed me to examine emotions, particularly nostalgia, as embodied experiences rooted in homemaking practices and in concrete places. I also begin exploring the significance of the emotional and the relational dimensions of migration within the theoretical framework of transnationalism, particularly distant care and the importance of migrants' life projects. In addition, in this chapter I present my research questions and I explore briefly the experiential/phenomenological approach, which informs my methodology.

I also discuss my fieldwork offering a socio-demographic profile of my participants, considering some initial obstacles while recruiting participants, the rationality behind chosing certain families over others, the location of interviews and a number of ethical considerations. Lastly, I practice reflexivity by interweaving my personal biography and diverse parts of my background (as an anthropologist, a Canadian citizen, a former Colombian refugee, a Canadian federal employee and an exchange worker) with my topic of study to reveal how I conducted my research and the position from which I came to understand previously unthought-of categories and unseen systems of meaning. A reflexive examination of my positionality may offer insight

into the suitability of the paths I took to arrive at statements of understanding about Colombian migrants.

Research Questions

Initially, I aimed at answering a set of questions such as: how do Colombians sustain a transnational family's space and how is a sense of home constructed from a distance? What embodied experiences, and practices sustain those connections? What emotions have a tangible influence on a transnational family's everyday decisions? How does the domestic and intimate sphere of certain homemaking practices, such as preparing and sharing a meal or gifts impact on a transnational family's life? How do transnational connections to family living abroad offer potential routes of mobility, and destinies for migrants?

I understood early on that I had to rely heavily on migrants'embodied experiences and emotional states to answer these questions. However, I also needed to approach contemporary migration taking into account that transnational families are an emergent reality in a globalized world. Therefore, I explored transnationalism in depth (see Chapter 2) to better understand the ways in which migrants sustain family relationships beyond national borders.

Research Addressing Transnational Migration

My approach to contemporary migrations begins with an examination of globalization as a phenomenon that is about disconnection as much as about connection. Throughout this thesis transnationalism, is conceptualized as an emergent reality in a globalized world, where social life and people's relationships are structured and exist beyond national boundaries (Roudemotof, 2005; Portes, 2003). Transnationalism, as I will show, characterizes the affective commitments of many contemporary migrants, including Colombians, as it offers a way by which migration can be approached without overemphasizing the influence of political and/or economic systems on migrants (Basch, Glick Schiller, Szanton Blanc, 1994; Faist, 2013).

It is important to highlitht that transnationalism lacks a unifying theoretical framework because it focuses on a phenomenon that is challenging to study or classify in clear and distinct concepts. As such, transnationalism is a fitting perspective for exploring migrants' ways of understanding and perceiving their migration as lived experience. For as Michael Jackson puts it,

> lived experience overflows the boundaries of any one concept, any one person, or any society. (1989: 2)

Transnational families' emotions and lived experiences overflow not only the physical borders of nations[13] but also, the boundaries of theories, concepts, or even academic disciplines. As such, one of my objectives, when thinking about migration using the prism of transnationalism is to engage with a flexible theoretical framework that encompasses an ever-changing and nuanced understanding of migrants' experiences.

Homemaking Practices

Scholars across different disciplines have explored in-depth homemaking practices and migration examining the connections between roots and routes (Castaneda et al. 2003; Boccagni,

[13] This does not imply that contemporary flows of people are subject to the demands of labour markets alone. Migrants everywhere pursue family reunification schemes demonstrating how irrepressible migration can be, notably in countries with guest-worker policies designed to keep settlement temporary (Castles, 2000; Ong, 2002) and this without considering the ever-growing flux of refugees that are crossing borders in uncontrolled numbers. For example, no accurate data on irregular border crossings is available in Canada prior to 2017. "The IRB is unable to report on irregular border crossers prior to February 2017, when system changes gave us the capacity to capture data on this population. However, due to some early inconsistencies in data entry it is possible that not all irregular border crossers are reflected in the statistics. In addition, only partial data is available for the months of February and March 2017".
https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/statistics/Pages/Irregular-border-crosser-statistics.aspx, Accessed, May, 21 2020

2018; Levitt, 2009), perceptions of home in a world in movement (Olwig 1998, 2002; Rapport and Dawson 1998) belonging (Durrschmidt, 2016). In particular, those studying refugees have explored displacement (Dona 2015; Feldman 2006; Kissoon 2015), de-territorialization (Malkki 1992; Ray, 2000; Taylor, 2013) and the myth of return (Zetter, 1999; Warner 1994; Stefanovic et al. 2014). Others have examined themes such as homemaking and emotion and the senses (Svašek, 2010), homemaking practices among highly skilled migrants and mobile professionals (Walsh 2006; Lucas et al. 2007; Wiles 2008), homemaking and remittances (Zapata 2017; Mata Codesal 2014; Lopez 2010) and home and migrant transnationalism (Al-Ali 2002; Brettel 2006; Hage 1997; Skrbiš 2008; Wiles 2008; Baldassar 2007).

In my analysis, I highlight key subcategories that can be identified in this dynamic field of study. I explore home, as a set of routine actions and interactions, embodied practices that offer a sense of belonging to a known social universe (Rapport and Overing, 2000). A place "where everyday life is lived, often surrounded by close family, and as a place associated with a notion of belonging" (Olwig, 1999: 83), with "the feeling of being at home" (Hage, 1997).

Also, I focus on homemaking practices related to particular transnational objects, such as pictures. In particular, I explore homemaking practices associated with food exploring "gustatory nostalgia" (Holtzman, 2006: 367) as an emotional, embodied form of memory surrounding the sharing, preparation and consumption of Colombian food. In Chapter 8, I explore the embodied aspect of food consumption and its multisensory qualities, which recreates for migrants a sensory landscape of home. Coincidentally, sharing food became a key element during field encounters and facilitated the use of an experience-centred methodology. By grounding my research in anthropological notions and concrete realities such as home; I was able to explore observable places and practices such as how migrants stay in touch and practice distant care (see Chapter 2).

Staying in touch and the Practice of Distant Care

Transnational families go through their life course making different types of staying in touch necessary. There are three principal types of care or ways of staying in touch according to Baldassar (2007): *crisis care*, which generally involves unexpected events such as serious illnesses, death, the time leading up to and after the birth of babies, and when parents lose their independence and become frail or ill (Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding, 2007). *Ritual care* generally revolves around special events such as birthdays, anniversaries, and religious celebrations. For these occasions, migrants communicate via e-mails, Facebook, or chats, some travel and reunite with their families whether it is in Colombia or elsewhere in the world.

Lastly, *routine care* involves day-to-day caring, phone calls, e-mails, or prayers, which sustain a sense of family across borders over time. Staying in touch for transnational families is possible thanks to two types of technologies, communication technologies (VoIP—Voice over Internet Protocol, Skype, and instant messaging apps for smartphones such as WhatsApp) and travel technologies (Baldassar, 2007).

Life Projects

I focus on Colombian migrants' life projects. In particular, I look at nostalgia, an emotion that plays a crucial role in the imagination and the alternative future migrants see themselves living when projecting their lives into the future while ruminating about the past. In particular, I explore life projects as they relate to family and home, to better understand migrants' ability to hope. Hage (2003, 2009) explores hope as a social category in contemporary neoliberal-capitalist Australia, arguing there is an uneven distribution of the ability to give meaning to life, a pronounced inability in the current global moment for migrants to be able to make sense of their lives, to hope for a future. In this sense, life projects highlight the agency as a human capacity, and help locate migrants outside economic determinism, and narrow approaches based on the homo-oeconomicus logic (Paquet, 1997; Ley, 2003). In fact, the Canadian point-based

immigration system is based on such logic, along with migration quotas and other "ways through which states distribute societal hope to populations, including to mobile populations such as refugees" (Kleist and Jansen, 2016).

Methodology

Methodologically, I favour an experiential/phenomenological approach and focus on embodiment, people's emotions, and aspirations. This led me to explore the phenomenological world of the immediate, the mundane (eating, walking, hoping, dreaming of a home, and a future, decorating with transnational objects, receiving gifts, caring and praying) or simply put everyday activities in a transnational's' family life for,

> it may be precisely in exploring the phenomenological world of the familiar and immediate, the everyday and mundane, that we stand to gain the most crucial knowledge of how humans perceive, understand and act. (Roger Keesing in Wikan 2012: 23)

Therefore, the experiential/phenomenological approach adds to our understanding of migration processes because truth claims are grounded in people's expressions and experiences, which in turn shape anthropological theory, offering a realistic understanding of social life (Irving, 2007). Furthermore, by applying the experiential/phenomenological approach, the unfinished, transitory, and ever-changing character of people's emotions can be better grasped.

The fact that human beings are and have bodies – and that meaning is produced through the body (Csordas, 1990, 1994) – makes the field of embodiment, in its lived emotionally cognitive sense, a mediator between structures which can be observed on a societal level, and individual life in its intersubjective shaping of everyday meaning (Versteeg and Knibbe, 2008). Moreover, a focus on the body brings subjects, in this case migrants, to the centre of social scientists' enquiries; these are subjects with changing rather than static existences, with intellectual, emotional, existential involvements that significantly constitute what or who they are. By

exploring migrants' emotions, I follow in the footsteps of social scientists who explore seemingly mundane everyday experiences, contingencies, and dilemmas that end up weighing so heavily on people's lives (Desjarlais, 1992; Jackson, 2005; Kleinman, 1995; Stoller, 1997; Turner and Bruner, 1986; Wikan, 1990, 1992).

Following a growing number of social scientists interested in experience-centred approaches[14] my research aims to contribute to the widening study of phenomenologically-oriented anthropology, and migration by complementing the most common debates on the phenomenon, which focus on its socio-economic and political causes and effects, and giving renewed attention to the emotional, sensory and lived experiences of migratory processes. This ethnographic study situates our understanding and theoretical frameworks of global transnational migration as they pertain to the lived experiences of migrants while as well taking individual differences related to personal and family history into account. It is the first ethnography to examine transnational Colombian families, tracing the embodied emotional dimension of their migratory journeys to Montréal, Québec. It is important to remember that Colombians arriving in Canada had endured the longest armed conflict in the Americas (Engstrom, 2012), and that this research was truly challenging as participants had to revive very often emotional and embodied lived experiences of trauma.

A Focus on Emotions

I focus on emotions[15] following the lead taken in the past few decades by anthropologists and other social scientists who have shifted their approach to acquiring anthropological knowledge

[14] See, for example Jackson, 1996; Hage, 1997, 2005, 2007; Howes, 2003, Classen, 2005; Irving, 2007; Howes and Classen, 2013; Horton, 2009; ; Desjarlais and Throop, 2011; Turner, E. 1994; Jackson, 1996; Wikan, 1990, 1991; Fabian, 2001; Goulet and Miller, 2007; Goulet, 2008, 2011; Meintel, 2011 to cite a few.

[15] The Oxford Dictionary indicates the etymology of the word emotion coming from the Latin emovēre: to move. Emotion is a word made up of a prefix (e) and a root (motion). E as a prefix means "out of",

by focusing on the emotions of both their interlocutors and themselves (Ramirez, Skrbis, and Emmison, 2007; Lughod and Lutz, 1990). Some social scientists may not have given enough attention to the dynamics of emotions (Turner and Stets, 2005), in part due to the ambiguous and uncertain nature of emotions, which in fact, highlight the ever-changing processes involved in moving, and the complex realities of migrants. If we want to understand the social, economic, political and experiential complexities of international migration and belonging, it is necessary to include a focus on emotions (Svašek, 2010).

Indeed, I anticipated mistrust, fear, suspicion, paranoia and reticence from the very beginning of my research; emotions that posed significant obstacles to understand the spheres of intimacy that I sought to explore. After all, as I concluded too soon, most of us (Colombian migrants) had experienced some aspect of war starting at birth, and most of us felt distrust, fear and sometimes dread as regards other Colombians before migrating. Following an experience-centred approach allowed me to practice resonance by "going beyond the words" (Wikan, 1992: 473), avoiding an exclusive focus on discourse, which tends to shift attention away from the expressions of the body, and people's imaginations. I consciously attended to silences and engaged in active sensory participation through embodied experiences such as eating and walking. Thus, to my surprise, I was able to suspend habitual thinking and feeling capacities and gain insight into what other Colombians were experiencing.

The methodology I used is therefore, influenced by experience-centred approaches (Turner, E. 1994; Ewing, 1994; Jackson, 1996; Wikan, 1990, 1991; Fabian, 2001; Tedlock, 2005; Goulet and Miller, 2007; Goulet, 2008, 2011; Meintel, 2011), by the anthropology of the senses (Howes, 2005; Howes and Classen, 2013) and phenomenology (see Chapter 3 for a complete literature review). These approaches are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. They offered a way to take into account the unfinished, transitory, and ever-changing character of people's emotions. Thus, I will explore phenomenology, as the

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hence an e-motion can be understood, in part, as that which comes out from motion, whether existential or physical.

> scientific study of experience, [which] attempts to describe human consciousness in its lived immediacy, before it is subject to theoretical elaboration or conceptual systematizing. (Jackson, 1996: 2)

The Fieldsite

Taking into consideration the non-contiguous nature of migrants' homes and home-making practices, our fieldsite had to be co-constructed and reimagined. It was clear that in a world of infinite interconnections and overlapping contexts, the ethnographic field could not simply exist, awaiting discovery. It had to be laboriously constructed, prized apart from all the other possibilities for contextualization to which its constituent relationships and connections could also be referred (Amit, 2000: 6). I met my participants and their transnational families on Skype, and I was given temporary access to Whatsapp family chats. I also visited my participants at their homes and met them at coffee places and restaurants, some initially came to my home for lunch, coffee or dinner. I was able to create a dynamic ethnographic field thanks to my participants' willingness to offer me access to their intimate virtual and non-virtual spaces. In that sense, a multi-sited ethnography was not an attractive option conceptually[16] (nor possible financially). Even if the practice of transnationalism represents various geographical locations, the interconnection that migrants create and experience nowadays allowed me to frequent the same sites and practice the same ways my participants use to communicate, to create a sense of home, to practice distant care and to sustain emotional relationships with their transnational families.

[16] A multi-sited ethnography may lead a fieldworker to spend very little time at each locale, which impacts his/her capacity to build trust with informants. Also, multiple fieldsites require that a researcher constantly needs to negotiate access, which impacts his/her capacity to reflect on positionality in the field. Moreover, anthropologists must choose which trails to follow and which ones to unfollow which, according to Van Duijn (2020) "may lead a fieldworker to be both everywhere and nowhere at once."

Fieldwork

During fieldwork, embodied manifestations of broken social bonds showed me how Colombian society has been atomized by the armed conflict, an adverse geography, regional loyalties and drug trafficking (see Chapter 6) all of which make the formation of a community in Montréal and, according to other scholars, in several other cities around the world, unlikely. In the United States (Guarnizo et Diaz, 1999; Collier and Gamarra, 2003); Spain (Restrepo Vélez, 2006); the United Kingdom (Bouvier, 2007; McIlwaine, 2005) and Canada[17] (Arsenault, 2006, 2009) scholars have shown how the persistent social divisions in Colombia are reproduced abroad; I found this leads them to root firmly in familiar places and experiences such as their homes and families and in mundane experiences and places of solidarity where they exchange with other Latin Americans, and Québécois. These experiences and places of solidarity allow Colombians to, fleetingly, come together to eat, dance, celebrate, pray or play soccer (see Chapter 6).

My fieldwork took place between 2013 and 2016. In some cases, a continued relationship with some participants allowed me to do fieldwork until recently (2020). Data collection included in-depth life-history interviews with members of six families in Montréal and their transnational families overseas. Initially, I circulated an invitation on social networks and in some centers for migrants and I proposed formal interviews. However, a reticence to formal interviews to discuss migration and emotions became evident in my informants. Rescheduling, absences, or cancelations were the obvious evidence of this. Following a series of rejections, I focused on the realm of the informal by changing my approach. I started offering English lessons, after which I offered coffee and snacks.

[17] In Québec prior studies have demonstrated Colombian refugees' gravitational pull towards their families and the difficulties they experience with each other while settling (Arsenault, 2006, 2009).

I was able to observe during casual interviews an invaluable amount of data, avoiding any added distress to my informants[18]. After forming an initial relationship based on trust, I started to become immersed in the social life (including virtual relationships) of some Colombian families

[18] To better understand how I conducted interviews see the table below

	Participants	Interviews
1st family	**Federico** (Montréal) Mother and sisters (Colombia)	I interviewed Federico several times in Montréal and I met and interviewed his mother and sisters on Skype.
2nd family	**Couple:** Elaine, Antonio **Children:** Martin and Jose Luis.	I interviewed the whole family three times on Skype. I interviewed Elaine several times, we usually went for coffee. After about a year, Elaine granted me access to Jose Luis, she asked him to meet me for coffee. I interviewed Jose Luis several times afterwards. I also attended Elaine's virtual birthday celebrations, her niece's baptism, in which I met her family and interviewed them.
3rd family	**Couple:** Estrella, Manuel **Children:** Hernan and Bernardo	I interviewed the whole family twice on Skype and three times in person. However, I continued interviewing Bernardo more often as I crossed him often at the University campus.
4th family	**Couple:** Maria, Pablo **Child:** Andres	I interviewed this family quite often, we shared lunch and coffee/snacks. I met their family overseas on Skype, and I was able to interview Andres and his grandmother, which allowed me to explore in-depth their relationship.
5th family	**Couple:** Monica and Renato	I interviewed Monica and Renato often, and I met their families on Skype.
6th family	**Couple:** Diana, Manuel **Child:** Tomas	I interviewed Diana, Manuel and Tomas three times. In time, I developed greater rapport with Diana and Tomas who I often interviewed informally. Diana's mother and sister came to visit to Canada, and I was fortunate to meet them and to interview them while sharing a meal. I also met Diana's extended family on Skype.

living in Montréal, attending church services, birthdays, children's baptisms and other daily activities by invitation.

I also continued participant observation at events such as the World Cup 2014 celebrations and soccer matches, presidential elections at the Colombian consulate in Montréal, the Week-ends du Monde Festival, and I frequented different Colombian and Latin American restaurants and stores in Montréal. Participants were Québec-based Colombian migrants, whose legal status varied, including refugees, Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs), international students, and skilled workers. I aimed at finding families with different migratory experiences of legality, from diverse regions of Colombia, different social classes and ethnic backgrounds. However, due to Colombians' distrust towards each other (and towards me, as a Colombo-Canadian researcher) and the sensitivity attached to my research topic, I had to develop new recruitment strategies (English courses). I was able to choose six families who generously shared their life histories[19] based mainly on their legal status. I had a harder time finding families and participants with a former legal status of refugees, than families with a legal status of permanent resident.

Moreover, I conducted 50 semi-structured interviews through a chain-referral sampling method. It is important to note that the semi-structured and more formal interviews represent a small part of my data. However, they served as a guide to compare my observations and my in-depth informal interviews. The latter were carried out in the midst of various social interactions in

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[19] Life history is more than simply a biography; therefore, the number of interview participants was not so much of a concern for the researcher as the quality and depth of experiential detail that can be acquired with such an exploratory and reflective approach to the interview process. I explore family histories but and complement my data with a rigorous reflection on the historical, political and socio-economic significance of the particular experiences and perspectives of Colombian migrants. Moreover, I trace historical migration flows that have occurred between the regions featured in the Colombian transnational families' migratory journeys and have discussed border policies (including migratory policies in Canada, the United States and Colombia), that have developed over the decades in these countries see Chapter 4.

which food sharing offered a rare and privileged occasion for one-on-one conversations with informants. Conversations in which they expressed the joys and struggles of family life, settlement experiences, and their existential aspirations.

Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

For this research I conducted the interviews in Spanish, I transcribed and translated all my data to target my main audience (Academia). Also, I typed up my interview and field notes and analysis consisted of a careful reading of the transcripts and notes for themes, underlying patterns, evocative stories, emotional states and embodied expressions. I examined and looked both, at the factual descriptions of experiences discussed during interviews, and also at how Colombian migrants articulated and expressed their lived experiences. Ethically, the main risk of this project is the confidentiality of my participants.

In exploring the life-histories of participants I came across stories about illegality (mainly illegal border crossings, clandestine trips, overstayed visas and employment history in the informal sector), domestic violence (a participant's sibling was murdered by her husband in Québec), and discrimination based on sexual orientation. Therefore, in some cases I offer a composite portrait from similar stories when the identification of a participant is possible due to their biographical information. However, this is done without changing the material relevant for analysis. Such information is valuable to my research and describes circumstances unrelated to their present situations. To my knowledge, all my participants hold legal status in Canada.

I present in the next section a socio demographic portrait of my participants

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of six families participanting in this research

Participants in research	Arrival in Canada	Civil status upon arrival	Legal status upon arrival in Canada	Education	Secondary migration
Federico *currently married, 3 children.	2001	Single	**Refugee claimant** — Legal border crossing	Federico did not finish his post-secondary studies in Colombia — He finished his post-secondary education in QC.	Yes, lived illegally in the United States
Couple: Elaine, Antonio **Children:** Martin and Jose Luis.	2008	Married couple with children	**Refugee claimants** — Illegal border crossing	Elaine and Antonio finished high School education in Colombia. Jose Luis and his brother finished their undergraduate studies in Québec. Elaine finished certificates at Mc Gill University.	Yes, lived illegally in the United States
Couple: Estrella, Manuel **Children:** Hernan and Bernardo	2002	Married couple with children	**GARs** – arrived with 17 members of extended family — Airport border crossing.	Estrella and Manuel studied law in Colombia. Hernan finished College. Bernardo finished an undergraduate and graduate degree in QC.	Yes, travelled to Mexico and immediately after to Canada. Resettled in Québec City.
Couple: Maria, Pablo	2011	Married	**Skilled Workers** — Airport border crossing	Maria, did not finish her post-secondary education in Colombia. She finished an undergraduate degree in QC. Pablo finished an undergraduate degree in	No, travelled directly to Montréal, Canada.

Child: Andres				Colombia, and pursued his education (certificates) in QC. Andres lost a school year. He was taken out of school for a few months before migrating to Canada.	
Couple: Monica and Renato *currently divorced.	2010	Married	**Skilled Workers** — Airport border crossing	Finished post-secondary education, Monica pursued a graduate degree and Renato changed his career in QC.	Yes, travelled to New York and spent a few weeks as tourists (honeymoon) before entering Canada.
Couple: Diana, Manuel **Child:** Tomas *currently divorced.	2009	Married	**Skilled Workers** — Airport border crossing	Diana, did not finish her post-secondary education in Colombia. She finished an undergraduate degree in QC. Manuel finished an undergraduate degree in Colombia, and pursued a graduate degree in QC. Tomas lost a school year. He was taken out of school for a few months before migrating to Canada.	No, travelled directly to Canada.

Fifty participants, generally made up of middle-class urbanites, participated in this study completing semi-structured interviews, here is an overall sociodemographic portrait of these participants.

Table 2: Socio-demographic profile of fifty participants

Participants legal status upon arrival and gender	Arrival in Canada	Education	Secondary migration
27 **Skilled Workers** 17 women 10 men *2 men and 1 woman self-identified as LGBT.	1990's 2000s	**Post-Secondary Education in** -the health care field (doctors, nurses, dietitians and pharmacologist) -Engineers (Industrial Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, Civil Engineering) -Education Field -Sales and Marketing, -Business Administration, -Human resources, -Architects, -Artists (dancers, actors painters, choreographers) -Dentists	Yes 1 participant participated in an Au Pair program in France. 3 participants lived in England as international students. 5 participants previously lived in Spain (no visa restrictions until 2001).
17 **Refugee claimants** 14 crossed a border legally. 3 crossed the border illegally and claimed refugee status in Canada. 12 women 5 men	1997 to 2006	**Post-Secondary Education in** -the field of law (human rights workers) -Union and Community leaders -Journalists -Professionals in the health and justice field -Engineers -Public servants -Social communication -Psychologist 3 Campesinos / peasants less than high school education.	Yes 4 lived in the United States, prior migrating to Canada. 2 lived in Spain, went back to Colombia and migrated to Canada. 2 lived in Ecuador, went back to Colombia and migrated to Canada. 9 came directly from Colombia to Canada.

3 **Government Assisted Refugees** 3 women	2001 to 2005	**Post-Secondary Education in** **-**the field of law **(**1 Human rights lawyer) -1 Journalist -1 High School Education	No Resettled in Sherbrooke and Québec City.
3 **International Students** 2 women 1 man	1999 to 2005	**Post-Secondary Education in** -BussinessAdministration (went back to Colombia, and then to Australia to) -Social Sciences (applied for permanent residency after marrying a Québécois). -Economics (went back to Colombia and then to London, UK for work). .	Yes 1 studied in the United States 1 studied in Italy 1 had lived in England

I also interviewed migrants' family members abroad to explore the way that Colombians experienced transnationality. I contacted migrants' families abroad using the same sites used by participants to sustain transnational connections, namely e-mail, Facebook, Viber, WhatsApp and Skype.[20] In the U.S., Spain, Ecuador, Argentina, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela, United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Germany, and Colombia using these communication technologies. In three instances, I met my interviewees' family members in person when they came to Canada to visit or stay. For example, once an international student became a Canadian citizen, she proceeded to bring her mother under the family reunification category.

[20] Viber is also a VoIP and an instant messaging app for smartphones. Users can exchange messages, images, video and audio media messages. See: http://www.viber.com/en/

I carried out some of the fieldwork with these participants in my kitchen, which allowed me to understand homemaking as an embodied practice. Homemaking includes a vast array of observable experiences, which led me to explore migrants' tangible ways of creating a home and also the accompanying experiential dimension attached to such embodied actions as they express a human need to belong, the need to feel safe in a somewhat known environment (Hage, 1997).

Personal Background: A Note on Reflexivity

I draw from my experience as a civil servant at the (CBSA) Canadian Border Services Agency where I worked for three years, and where I had first-hand experience and access to various data sources which have complemented my research and understanding about the bureaucratic handling and policies related to migration. Learning the categories and systems used to handle the movement of imported and exported goods, and people, I was able to grasp the arbitrariness of everyday administrative procedures to control a border in a state bureaucracy. Moreover, as an anthropologist, I draw upon my experiences in relation to my Colombian family and my cultural background. This proved to be more an obstacle than an advantage, at least initially.

In what follows I present my personal account of family and migration to explore my positionality[21] as regards the research for this thesis. The subject of this research was not necessarily pleasant or easy for me. On the contrary, I worked hard at suspending my own biases about what family may represent and had to question my habitual mistrust of other Colombians and of my family. All this was necessary to understand the importance many informants place on the emotional connections to family. I have done my best to look at my cultural background, my family relationships and Colombians in general, not through distrust and fear, suspicion and paranoia but with an open mind and heart. To the best of my ability, I suspended habitual

[21] "Halfie anthropologists cannot easily avoid the issue of positionality. Standing on shifting grounds makes it clear that every view is a view from somewhere and every act of speaking a speaking from somewhere" (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 468).

thinking and feeling capacities, to gain insight into what others were experiencing and into what seemed to matter to them.

I was born in Colombia in 1981 and grew up in Bogotá. I lived in an area that the government had reserved mainly for members of a reinserted guerrilla group. (I learned this while doing my master's research, about 25 years later. When we talked about the siege of the Palace of Justice that occurred in 1985, I learned that my father used to hide ammunition under my bed). My parents did not finish high school and had to work from an early age. My father started working at age 12 with my grandfather, a self-taught mechanic. He became a political activist, a unionist, and a Marxist who also drank heavily sometimes, which led to chaotic and traumatic experiences of domestic violence sprinkled with a couple of suicide attempts by family members, including my own as a teenager.

My mother started working for an airline when she was sixteen years old, and was married at eighteen. She was born and grew up in the mountains close to a small village in Santander; her parents were peasants and. unfortunately, my grandmother, Estrella, passed away when my mother was 12 years old. Afterward, she went to live at an orphanage for a few years until her father remarried. My mother shared recently that her father used to come back home drunk yelling and shooting at the sky and that she experienced sexual abuse.[22] My family's first migration was from a rural to an urban area;[23] my parents moved to Bogotá as teenagers and had a hard time finding jobs without education or a personal network. As time went by, my father

[22] "For many women, surviving sexual violence means keeping silent. There are considerable difficulties for research in the field of violence against women, particularly in making direct contact with survivors of abuse, many of whom fear retaliation attacks or being shamed by their family and community. Many areas of Colombia are also inaccessible to human rights activists. In other areas of the country, human rights activists are not available to help individual victims because they have been threatened, intimidated, killed or driven out of their communities." https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/colombia-scarred-bodies-hidden-crimes-sexual-violence-against-women-armed-conflict, Accessed, 13 May 2020.

[23] This change could be observed in Latin America over the 20th century when rapid urbanization multiplied internal migratory flows towards the big cities from rural areas, and when women began to join the workforce in great numbers (Jelin, 1998; Piras, 2004).

found a job at a state-owned energy company, where he was targeted and threatened for his political involvement as a trade unionist.

He also ran for office at a municipality in Cundinamarca. Unfortunately, two of his colleagues from Sintraelecol (Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Energía de Colombia) were assassinated.[24] My parents got visas to go to the U.S. as tourists, yet my father decided to stay in Colombia. I decided to leave for a while with a tourist visa and went to Topeka, Kansas where I stayed for four months with a cousin. I told my parents that I did not want to overstay my visa and that I was not going back to Colombia. My parents advised me to go to Canada, where my mother had a friend. My father knew I could ask for refugee protection. My father sent documentation on his case that I carefully carried with me. In 2001, when I was eighteen, I left Kansas and arrived at Vive la Casa, a refugee centre in Buffalo.

Source: https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/buffalo/news/2015/02/28/jericho-road-to-purchase-vive

[24] 16 años de impunidad en el asesinato de la sindicalista Doris Nuñez Lozano, Agosto 2017. Colectivo José Alvear Restrepo- Prensa. https://www.colectivodeabogados.org/?16-anos-de-impunidad-en-el-asesinato-de-la-sindicalista-Doris-Nunez-Lozano, Accessed May, 2018

Crossing the Border at Buffalo

At Vive la Casa I encountered other people who were going to claim refugee status at the border. I was informed about my right to cross the border, and many things I do not remember and that I did not understand well at the time. Once at the border, I had no food and wondered what yellow and red boxes of the tiny dough balls were. (Other refugee claimants were brought Timbits by family members who were waiting for them to be processed). A taxi driver brought us to the border; he had to stay until all of us were processed. We arrived early in the morning, and those who crossed with me left after 5 or 6 hours of waiting. (I did not have a watch with me, so my recollection of time may be inaccurate).

At around 10:00 pm, I was told to come the next day, which meant that the driver had to bring me back to the United States. I started crying and felt lost. Yet, by some miracle, my claim was processed that night. I handed my father's case to Canadian immigration officers at the Buffalo, New York border (Peace Bridge Port of Entry, Fort Erie, ON). I told them that my father was a "syndicalist". I did not know the word in English for trade unionist.[25]

Settlement in Londombia[26]

The Canadian Border Service Agency's officers processed my claim late that day, and I crossed the Port of Entry around 2:00 am. From there I went to London, Ontario, where my mother's friend lived with her family; I slept for a few hours and since I could not stay at her place (so as to not interfere with social assistance regulations), she took me right away to a women's shelter where I shared a room with two young battered women.

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[25]ITUC (The International Trade Union Confederation) finds Colombia still among the world's worst countries for labour rights, 8 June, 2018. See: https://justiceforcolombia.org/news/ituc-finds-colombia-still-among-worlds-worst-countries-for-labour-rights/ Accessed 12 March 2019.

[26] Londombia is the nickname given to Colombians living in London, Ontario https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/london-colombia-fans-world-cup-jose-briceno-1.4717895, Accessed 5 May 2020

A few months later, I moved in with two roommates, students at Western University (UWO). One of them is a friend and a refugee from Vietnam. Her father told me about his migration journey, how he stayed for a year in a refugee camp in Hong Kong eating rice in a little tent with his wife and their 3-month-old baby. While living in London, I finished grade twelve and "grade thirteen" or OAC (Ontario Academic Credit), remaining silent for about two or three years while the English language sank in. During that period, I visited a lawyer who processed my claim and prepared for my hearing. I received social assistance and worked part-time at Couple of Squares, decorating cookies, and at Smith Cheese, a stand at the Covent Market Garden, selling cheese, pasta and sauces. I wanted to learn French and thought about going to Montréal because I knew that many Colombians living in London were moving to Montréal to attend university.

I moved to Montréal in 2003 and studied French at Centre Yves Thériault (Cours de francisation au Québec). My refugee claimant hearing took place in Toronto and I became a Convention refugee in 2004. That is, my case was accepted by the Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), and in three more years I would be able to apply to become a permanent resident. I applied in 2010 for citizenship. Once in Montréal at Yves Thériault, I met Julián Salcedo, my husband. He encouraged me to study and to apply to Concordia. I finished a bachelor's (2004–2007) and a master's degree (2007–2010) there, where I received loans and bursaries and was awarded several scholarships.

As a student I also received the Colours of Concordia Award (2006) for establishing links between Canadian communities and a community in a rural area of Colombia. This was part of an initiative taken by my husband through a grant program at the Université of Montréal, whereby we worked to prevent the involvement of children in war as child soldiers in Colombia. I lived and worked in London, England, in 2009 and travelled through a work abroad program for students and recent graduates.

Suspending Habitual Distrust

For this research, my family did not represent a set of positive intersubjective experiences, nor did home or food hold nostalgic emotional weight for me. Rather, my life project was to escape from senseless and targeted violence. I share my history to highlight the embodied alienation I

experienced and my rejection of the values of a society at war, which, like rust, had corroded my family.[27] Concerned about the fate of my brothers, I convinced my family to come to Canada in 2005, with my help. After several episodes of parental violence against my brothers, I cut ties with my family for a few years.

I did not share most of my informants' devotion and cultural inter-subjective experiences of closeness with their families. On the contrary, I have explored the subject of family by serendipity. Being partially an insider, I understood the language, cultural references, the emotions, and Colombian's strong attachment to their families. Yet, I did not share their devotion to a close-knit family, and I lived in a non-religious household, where Catholic values were not upheld, such that no "honour thy father and thy mother" rhetoric applied to me. To the best of my ability, I was obliged to suspend my prejudice, biases and personal memories so as to be able to partake in the experiences that many of my informants seemed to be having with their families and to understand how they lived and they made sense of their lives (Meintel, 2007). In this thesis I explore briefly and openly ties with my Colombian family and with Colombians in general and show how my initial perspective and relationships shifted in unexpected ways because, as Foucault writes,

[27] This reminds me of Eduardo Galeano's poem in "Dias y Noches de Amor y de Guerra," The System (1983, p.19, Barcelona, Editorial Laia) where the writer speaks of the system. The system that programs the computer that alarms the banker who alerts the ambassador who dines with the general who summons the president who intimidates the minister who threatens the CEO who humiliates the manager who shouts at the boss who demeans the employee who despises the worker who mistreats his woman who beats her son who kicks the dog.

El sistema que programa la computadora que alarma al banquero que alerta al embajador que cena con el general que emplaza al presidente que intima al ministro que amenaza al director general que humilla al gerente que grita al jefe que prepotea al empleado que desprecia al obrero que maltrata a la mujer que golpea al hijo que patea al perro. (See: http://resistir.info/livros/galeano_dias_y_noches.pdf, accessed 10 Sept, 2020).

> si je devais écrire un libre pour communiquer ce que je pense déjà, avant d'avoir commence à écrire, je n'aurais jamais le courage de l'entreprendre. Je ne l'écris parce que je ne sais pas encore exactement quoi penser de cette chose que je voudrais tant penser. […] Je suis un expérimentateur en ce sens que j'écris pour me changer moi-même et ne plus penser la même chose qu'auparavant.
> (Foucault, 1978)

Contribution

This research will contribute to the growing field of phenomenologically oriented anthropology, and migration studies by complementing the most common debates about migration, which usually focus on its socio-economic and political causes and effects and giving sustained attention to the emotional, sensory and lived experiences of migratory processes.

This is the first ethnography focused on Colombian transnational families and the first in Montréal, Québec. I explored the challenges of being a child migrant, regardless of legal status. Some Colombian children live often in precarious housing and experience domestic violence, they feel discriminated against at school; moreover, they are told half-truths about their migration and yet must meet the strict demands of their parents. In a way, they and their families continue experiencing the aftermath of the armed conflict even after migrating.

During fieldwork, a focused on embodied manifestations of broken social bonds showed clearly how Colombian society has been atomized by the armed conflict, an adverse geography, regional loyalties and drug trafficking which makes the formation of a collectivity in Montréal and, according to other scholars, in several other cities around the world, unlikely. In the United States (Guarnizo and Diaz., 1999; Collier and Gamarra, 2003); Spain (Restrepo Vélez, 2006); the United Kingdom (Bouvier, 2007; McIlwaine, 2005) and Canada (Arsenault, 2006), scholars have shown how previous and persistent social divisions in Colombia are reproduced abroad. I found that those divisions leads Colombians to root themselves firmly in familiar places and experiences, particularly in their homes and families (in the cases where the domestic sphere was not dismantled by violence).

As a collectivity, I found that Colombian migrants interact in everyday activities mainly through mundane experiences and in temporary places of solidarity, where they meet with each other, with other Latin Americans and Québécois coming together in ephemeral ways, for example to eat, dance, celebrate, protest, pray or play soccer. After studying this group for more than a decade, I have not encountered long-lasting groups, associations or initiatives. The spontaneous and casual nature of Colombians interactions brings me to acknowledge that after migration, Colombians' long legacy of violence, distrust and suspicion continues to be fuelled by rumors, gossip and scapegoating, which have had deadly consequences in Colombia and unfortunate consequences abroad.

This goes against the typical behaviour of most immigrants, such as the Portuguese, Haitian and Syrian-lebaneses, which brings me to acknowledge the similarities with migrants who have experienced war or internal conflicts, for example, people from the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Syria. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that he presence of a deep-rooted classism is as well a determining factor for Kurds, Iranians, Zimbabweans, and Somalis who tend to avoid social gatherings, mainly due to perceived class differences within their communities (Lewis, 2010). Similarly, among Bosnian refugees resettled in Great Britain high levels of distrust, after the war, undermined in important ways community formation in the host country. Bosnians as Colombians find it difficult to trust each other in their new locales (Kelly 2003).

CHAPTER 2: Transnationalism and Transnational Families

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the concept of transnationalism beginning by considering several scholarly discussions of the perspective it brings to the study of migration. I then focus on the advantages transnationalism offers as an approach to looking at migration as lived experience and examine the transnational family, as an ensemble of social relations (Hage, 2005) as well as one of the institutions that Colombians value highly that greatly influences the migration decision-making process. I situate my understanding of the Colombian transnational family within the context of a globalized world. Following this, I present a review of the literature on migration studies that focus on the relational and affective dimensions of migration.

Transnationalism, an Emergent Reality in the Context of Globalization

Transnationalism is a fairly new perspective, although it is not a new phenomenon. It has been understood and conceptualized as an emergent reality in a globalized world, in which social life and people's relationships are structured and exist beyond national boundaries. (Roudemotof, 2005; Portes, 2003). Put simply, transnationalism is the emergent social, emotional and migratory reality under conditions of globalization. Glick Schiller et al. (1994: 7) define it as:

> The processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. Immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political—that span borders we call, 'transmigrants'. An essential element of transnationalism is the multiplicity of

> involvement that transmigrants sustain in both home and host societies. . . Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation states.

Migrating in a Global Era

"No well-being of one place is innocent of the misery of another"
(Bauman, 2007: 6)

In the scholarly literature, globalization refers to planetary scale interactions between societies. Such interactions have occurred continuously throughout world history, particularly in the form of warfare and religious conversions (Appadurai, 1996). In the 1990s, however, large-scale interactions were considered global, since the degree of connection increased significantly with the advent of new technologies in transportation and telecommunications (Castells, 2000; Vertovec, 2003). In particular, the exponential growth of the Internet, taken up faster than any other technology that preceded it (Urry, 2003: 1) created a series of changes that intensified, mostly commercial and "global interconnectedness". Inda and Rosaldo (2002: 4) describe it as:

> a world of motion, of complex interconnection . . . where people readily cut across national boundaries, turning countless territories into spaces where various cultures converge, clash, and struggle with each other; where commodities drift briskly from one locality to another, becoming primary mediators in the encounter between culturally distant others. Where images flicker from screen to screen, providing people with resources from which to fashion new ways of being in the world and ideologies circulate rapidly through ever-expanding circuits.

Globalization is about disconnection as much as about connection. It has been understood as a set of processes that weakened national boundaries undermining the sovereignty and power of nation states (Sassen, 1996 and 1999) while connecting far-flung spaces in one huge network. Some scholars conceive globalization as a phenomenon driven mainly by capitalist trade

relations, in which migration is often related to human labour which in turn becomes a commodity that can be bought and sold (Harvey, 2000). Because of this, migration involves different family members in different ways. As a result, globalization ends up disconnecting families. Such is the case of the care economy, or the feminization of migrant labour, when women work as caretakers in affluent contexts to sustain their families (children, spouses, parents and other family members) back home (Stalker 2001; Lutz 2016, 2018; Parreñas 2001; Ehrenreich, and Hochschild 2003; Pessar and Mahler, 2003; Hondagneu Sotelo and Avila 1997; Hondagneu 2001; Horton, 2009). Despite the connection that communication and travel technologies may offer, there are significant transformations of care in the family life of transnational migrants (Baldassar, 2016) who cannot always practice co-presence (Urry, 2003) during key moments in the family life course.

Conceptual Limits of Transnationalism

Although transnationalism helps us understand contemporary migration, the term has been criticized "for its analytical fuzziness, overuse, and lack of historical grounding" (Vertovec, 2003: 641). In what follows, I summarize the most common criticisms of this perspective, while seeking to recognize both its strength and its limits.

Before globalization came to the forefront of the social sciences in the '90s, many scholars in the field of migration studies understood social phenomena as happening primarily within the boundaries of nation states. Methodological nationalism was an approach based on the, until then unchallenged "assumption that the nation/state/society was the natural social and political form of the modern world" (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2003: 301). For decades, some social scientists, conceptualized social groups as discrete, bounded entities with separate economies, cultures, and historical trajectories (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton-Blanc, 1994). However, in the 1990s, many social scientists began to observe social relations taking place beyond national boundaries, and started recognizing a multiplicity of factors that had not been evident before when thinking about and conceptualizing migrants' experiences.

Furthermore, migration was no longer conceived as a linear trajectory from place A to place B. Instead, scholars observed how migrants continued to maintain a foothold in their country or community of origin while being settled in another country or circulating through several other countries. (Basch et al., 1994; Rouse, 1991 and Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999; Amit, 2012). Understandably, some social scientists defined and used nation states as primary units of social analysis. Nowadays, this emphasis on nation states is criticized and known as methodological nationalism. "Fighting methodological nationalism has become something of a cause célèbre. Assuming that social life automatically takes place within nation states is a hard habit to break" (Levitt, 2012: 495).

Other habits that are hard to break when using the perspective of transnationalism have been discussed at length among scholars. For example, anthropologist Vered Amit (2012) argues that in migration studies there is always a risk of replacing one set of methodological biases with another. In Amit's view, ethnicity replaced the nation state as a unit of analysis in transnational studies; as she notes a priori assumptions about "contemporary forms of movement primarily being structured through and perpetuated by self-conscious ethnic communities" are present in many studies of transnationalism (Amit, 2002: 21). Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Caglar, taking Amit's and other scholars' concerns into account, propose to develop a "conceptual framework for the study of migration, settlement and trans-border connection that [is] not dependent on the ethnic group as the unit of analysis" (2012: 505; 2008). They have shown how religion, for example, may serve as the base of social anchoring in the new society as well as of transnational ties among migrants (Glick Schiller et al. 2006).

Several scholars have recognized that ethnic identities are socially and situationally structured and several question using ethnicity as a primary unit of analysis when studying migration (Amit and Rapport, 2002, Brubaker, 2004; Glick Schiller, 2012). Yet, even if ethnicity, as a primary unit of analysis, may limit a general understanding of migrant realities, it is a category that contributes to better understanding certain practices. For example, a non-exclusive focus on ethnicity helped me reflect about Colombians as a social category whose members, despite

exhibiting certain similarities (collective history, language, and common ancestry) tend not to want to identify or associate with other Colombians.

Some participants confessed they preferred to conceal their ethnic background in some circles, by identifying as being of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds; for example, saying they were from Costa Rica. Nonetheless, habitual practices such as those related to food were clear indicators of a shared ethnic background. Thus, studying Colombian transnational families cannot take the ethnic group as one of the main units of analysis; yet attention to ethnicity is still important, particularly in the case of Colombian migrants who tend to remain distant and to disassociate from belonging or from interacting with other Colombians. Distrust and fear of each other arising from 60 years of armed conflict may be a factor to consider when making generalizations about Colombians, an issue I will explore later in this chapter.

Another drawback attributed to transnationalism as a perspective is the persistent focus on territory. Social scientists have come to question the previously assumed relation between territory and society necessarily being the framework for social relations. The focus shifted then from nation states, to ethnicity, to territory. The focus on territory is known as "methodological territorialism" (Scholte, 2000: 56); as an antidote, George Marcus (1998), along with many others, has proposed the practice of multi-sited—ethnography. Multi-sited ethnography emerged as a trend in the late '90s. It allowed anthropologists and later other social scientists to draw out systemic features of globalization, ones that are not so easily recognizable when the scope of enquiry is too locally defined (Marcus 1998 and Burawoy 2000; Rouse 1991). A multi-sited ethnography offers several advantages. Data is diverse and comes from numerous sources, facilitating the analysis of transnational relations and networks by taking transnational migrants' multiple affiliations, connections, and loyalties into account.

For some time, multi-sited ethnography was a privileged method for social scientists interested in globalization, migration, and other forms of mobility. However, over time multi-sited ethnography was found to have some limits for studying people's lives in-depth, since anthropologists are rarely able to have a long period with informants in different localities (Hage, 2005). Moreover, it is expensive and sometimes dangerous to follow the routes that

mobile people and migrants have taken (Amit, 2012). Yet another criticism of transnationalism as a perspective is that it tends to give too much emphasis to continuity, overlooking the ruptures and endings that usually accompany migrants during their journeys.

Methodological transnationalism (Amit, 2012) refers to the focus on the continuity that migrants supposedly sustain across their multiple networks in different locales. It is often assumed that transnational ties are maintained by migrants, yet "not all migrants are transnational migrants and sometimes few partake in transnational political, social and economic activities" (Portes, 1999). This is due in part to pressing settlement needs. In the case of Colombians, a focus on the continuity of the transnational family may appear to fall under methodological transnationalism. To avoid forcing any kind of continuity, I attend to the emotions experienced by Colombian migrants when they establish their homes in Canada. Certain emotions they express highlight the fragmented nature of many transnational relations that end, are attenuated, or disappear as time goes by. Furthermore, as I will show, continuity is not simply a matter of willingness; it depends as well on resources, access to communication technologies, and opportunities to travel, having the right legal status to be able to travel. Finally, it is also conditioned by how migrants left, and their reasons for migrating.

Lessons Learned

The many methodological limits of the transnational approach related to continuity, ethnic identity, religious affiliation, the territorial and national importance of boundaries remind us how tempting it is to use units of analysis that offer instant theoretical clarity. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that ethnic, religious, national and other affiliations are real, though to varying degrees, for migrants. After all, to make sense of the global increase in the number of migrants and the corresponding global popularity of anti-migrant rhetoric, we have to consider carefully the embodied impact migrants suffer when coming from particular nation states, when they practice certain religions or identify with particular ethnic identities. At the same time we have to challenge monolithic understandings about migrants, who maintain multiple loyalties, affiliations, and connections in a globalized world. It is therefore crucial to

situate our understanding and theoretical frameworks of global transnational migration in sync with the lived experiences of migrants without neglecting individual differences related to personal and family history.

Transnationalism, an Unfinished Approach

There is much disagreement as to the best theoretical or methodological approach to use when defining or explaining social realities embedded in a world in movement; that is, a globalized world. The concept of transnationalism, as a perspective for studying migration and mobility, has been criticized as lacking a coherent overarching theoretical framework, and also because the term carries a certain analytical fuzziness (Vertovec, 2003) as I have noted. However, transnationalism is a fitting perspective for exploring migrants' ways of understanding and perceiving their migration as lived experience. As Michael Jackson puts it, "lived experience overflows the boundaries of any one concept, any one person, or any society" (1989: 2). Transnationalism may lack a unifying theoretical framework because it focuses on a phenomenon that cannot be easily studied or classified in clear concepts. Migration and migrants overflow not only the physical borders of nations, but also, perhaps, the boundaries of academic disciplines.

One of my objectives when thinking about migration using the prism of transnationalism is to engage with a theoretical framework that reveals a deeper and nuanced understanding of migrants' experiences and that promotes reflexivity in the author and the reader. In that sense,

> Using a transnational methodology means looking at how processes of incorporation, enduring homeland or other involvement occur at the same time, and mutually inform each other. It is not shorthand for how people continue to participate in the economics or politics of their homelands (as is so often the case) but tries to capture how they simultaneously become part of the places where they settle and stay connected to a range of other places at the same time. Using

> a transnational optic may or may not reveal transnational engagement. (Levitt 2012: 3)

Furthermore, transnationalism covers socio-cultural practices, economic political exchanges, networks and flows of information and ideas (Basch et al., 1994) supranational legal conventions, religious institutions, nation states, local and regional governments, migrant transportation networks, employer recruitment, NGOs, media, migrant organizations and networks, families and individuals (Guarnizo et al., 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Landolt, 2008), among other aspects of migrants' transnational lives. Therefore, I decided to favour transnationalism over cosmopolitanism, and other concepts that did not seem to help me understand Colombian migrant's ways of caring for their families, remaking their homes, or planning for their futures. In the following sections I examine family as a network of routes and roots, and offer an understanding of this institution in the Latin American context.

Family, a Network of Routes and Roots

Family is a top priority for many Colombians, prior, during, and after they have established in their new locales. As I will show in the following section, the institution of the family is at the epicentre of many migrants' lives, and is no different for Colombian migrants. I explore traditional perspectives on family as an institution. In the following chapters, I will look at family as an intersubjective space and a structure of experiences (Parreñas, 2005; Horton 2009; Kleinman 1999; Kleinman et al. 1997). Family, whether it is conceived as a structure of experiences, or as an institution helps us establish concrete connectedness among people, since families form "a definite analyzable ensemble of social relations that constitute them" (Hage, 2005: 468). In that sense,

> They constitute a point of attachment, in the way one is attached to a nourishing source. That is, they constitute a person's roots. At the same time, these families are networks of global routes, defining a field of potential social, emotional, and physical mobility for their members. As a **network of routes** they tell us about

> where people can travel. As a network of roots they tell us about the psycho-social dimensions of how people travel: for example, do they travel feeling secure or brittle, and to what extent? (Hage, 2005: 468)

In what follows, I look at the roots of family as an institution in Latin America, taking into account the various dictatorships and conflicts in the region, as well as the historical and social importance given to this institution. Then I present research on the transnational family, and open up the focus to diverse localities and migrants' experiences; that is to say, I examine the conditions of globalization under which transnational families have come into existence. Finally, I examine the relational and emotional dimensions of transnational family lives.

Family: Inequality and Social Differences in Latin America

Family and kinship are key cultural categories in Latin America, these categories represent lived experiences which are tangibly impacted by inequalities and social differentiation based on race, class, gender, and ethnicity (Shepher Hughes, 1992; Milanich, 2007). In Colombia family and kinship are fundamental elements of,

> political power, economic production, elite domination, and plebeian survival, honour culture, the agrarian order, labour systems, entrepreneurship and migration among other social formations. (Milanich 2007: 440)

For the past two centuries the institution was influenced by European homogenous models of the nuclear family, a unit that was considered natural and normal since colonial times (Ariza and de Oliveira, 2008). I will explore first family as a social institution heavily influenced by religion and the imposed vision of the elite. Then, I will proceed to explore alternative family models that have emerged amidst inequality, social differentiation based on class, gender, race, ethnic and political affiliation.

Family has traditionally been conceptualized as:

> A social institution anchored in universal, human biological-based needs: sexuality, reproduction, and everyday subsistence, whose members share a defined social space in terms kinship, married life and motherhood/fatherhood. It is a social organization, a micro-cosmos of relations of production, reproduction, and distribution with its power structure and strong ideological and emotional components. Within families there are chores and collective interests, although its members have different interests rooted in their particular location in the production and the reproduction processes. (Jelin, 2005: 5, my translation)

Latin American countries were colonized by Spain and Portugal, empires that colonized and imposed Christianity in the New World. During the 19th century, colonies were governed according to Roman Law, the Napoleonic code and German Law; these laws, in turn, governed the institution of the family determining a patriarchal hierarchy (*pater familias*) in which the male had the right to decide over the life and death of all the members of the family (Rivas, 2008). Women were not considered citizens, and it was imperative for maintaining public order that they obey their fathers, and after marriage, their husbands. Otherwise older brothers, cousins, and uncles would fulfill the role of the patriarch. Women were thought of as dependent and incapable of conducting activities in public by themselves (Jelin, 2005).

The Industrial Revolution accelerated the disarticulation of the household as the site where reproduction, production, and distribution converged, and brought about a division between work (production) and the household (social space). This global phenomenon could be observed particularly in Latin America over the 20th century when rapid urbanization multiplied internal migratory flows towards the big cities from rural areas, and when women began to join the workforce in great numbers (Jelin, 1998; Piras, 2004). Women started having access to birth control in Colombia when Doctor Fernando Tamayo Ogliastri, a gynecologist, decided to open a centre, Profamilia, to offer women education related to their reproductive rights and health. In the 1960s a Colombian woman had, on average, 7 children; in 2010 the average was 2 children[28]

[28] The Total Fertility Rate dropped from almost 7 children per woman in the period 1960-64 to 2.1 between 2005 and 2009. See: Envejecimiento Demográfico. Colombia 1951-2020. Dinámica

Upper-class women consulted gynecologists and could plan their pregnancies, Dr. Tamayo was asked by a patient to help her maid, and in 1965 he opened the first centre to offer family planning education along with intrauterine devices and the pill to low-income women; later men and women could opt for sterilization.[29] The Catholic hierarchy resisted and fought the changes brought by Profamilia accusing doctors of practising mutilations when referring to sterilization.[30] Families became smaller, while women joined the labour force and pursued higher education in increasing numbers. Moreover, women began to migrate, some bringing drugs to the United States, others working as nannies in the United Kingdom, or the service industry in Japan and elsewhere (Castro Caycedo, 1989).

The ideal nuclear family based on "indissoluble marriage, endogamy, legitimate procreation and careful control of female sexuality by multiple authorities, from the Catholic Church, capitalists, colonial, liberal, developmental, and welfare states" (Milanich, 2007: 451) has historically known many transformations in Latin America where cohabitation without marriage is widespread. For example, illegitimate children accounted for 25 to 40 % of births (27 percent of Uruguayan children were illegitimate in 1987; 30 percent of Paraguayan children in 1985; over 33 percent of Chilean children in 1988; 41 percent of Costa Rican children in 1991; and 58 percent of Argentinian children in 1990) (Milanich, 2002, Lima, 1993). As a result, many children grew up in matrifocal households, in which women were the de facto leaders and

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Demográfica y Estructural Poblacionales del Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/DE/PS/Envejecimiento-demografico-Colombia-1951-2020.pdf, Accessed 10 Sept, 2020.

[29]El hombre de la revolución femenina, Viviana Londoño, (2010). See: https://www.elespectador.com/impreso/cultura/vivir/articuloimpreso-224571-el-hombre-de-revolucion-femenina, Accessed 8 January 2019.

[30] Battleground in Colombia: Birth control (1984) New York Times, Alan Rading https://www.nytimes.com/1984/09/05/world/battleground-in-colombia-birth-control.html, Accessed 9th Jan 2019.

breadwinners. Matrifocality has characterized families from Lima to São Paulo (Kuznesof and Oppenheimer; 2002).

In Colombia, certain geographical regions were heavily influenced by the Church, which structured families (Pineda, 1968)[31] around patriarchal and religious ideas and bourgeois values of individualism, privacy, heightened maternal investment, strong affective ties to sustain a close, loving and religious family, in which children are valued for their emotional rather than economic input (Milanich, 2007). In general, families living in coastal regions tend to be less influenced by the church, households are more often matrifocal, and are characterized by early motherhood, migration/displacement, and poverty (Esteve et al., 2016), also by higher levels of cohabitation.

The Constitution (1991) and the Church

It was only in 1991[32] that constitutional reforms clearly separated matters of the state from matters of the church. In the 1990s, the power of the Roman Catholic Church over areas such as marriage, family, and education was officially limited through article 19 of the Constitution. For some Colombians, therefore, the idea of the family is heavily influenced by religious teachings. Even with the recent introduction of religious diversity and conversions to evangelical Protestantism, the Bahá'í faith, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Islam among others, the power of the Catholic Church is still overwhelming (Brusco, 1995). This is made evident, for example, by

[31] Anthropologist Virginia Gutierrez Pineda published *Familia y Cultura en Colombia* (1968), an in-depth study of Colombian Families in three regions of the country, the Caribbean, The Pacific, and the Andean regions. The Andean region was influenced by strong patriarchal norms and religious assimilation, in contrast the isolation and poverty of the Pacific region, which has a predominantly black population, less influence from the Church, greater levels of cohabitation and low marriage rates.

[32] Art. 19 Freedom of religion is guaranteed. Every individual has the right to freely profess his or her religion and to disseminate it individually and collectively. All religious faiths and churches are equally free before the law.

the cultural importance given to mothers, who are seen by many men and women in saintly terms.

This perception corresponds with the enormous reverence for the Virgin Mary. In a country at war for decades, "this feminine vision of unconditional love, peace and forgiveness held a power like no other" (Hall, 2004: 2). While the Virgin Mary presents an impossible ideal for women, the desire to emulate her is encouraged and expressed in the Marian culture that permeates the everyday life of Colombians, in particular in relation to the domestic role of mothers. During the 20th century, Colombians experienced heightened periods of violence, and while it was mainly men fought the war, many women sustained their families by performing various work roles in addition to homemaking.

Furthermore, the model of the Holy Family and the Ten Commandments, in particular, "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord is giving you" (Exodus 20: 12) are taught in schools and reinforced by the media. Over the year, there are fourteen Catholic holidays as opposed to two Christian holidays in Canada — (Good Friday and Christmas).[33] Catholicism not only shapes collective time, the calendar, it also shapes the life cycle of people and their entrance into the Catholic community by articulating and organizing the life span through the seven sacraments. Catholics cannot marry in the Church or start a family in the conventional and socially accepted context without first receiving four other sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Reconciliation, or Confession). The first three are not only rituals but also family events where the party is often more important than the ritual itself.

A great majority of Colombian participants in my research perceive family as a top priority; it is cited as the biggest motivation to come to Canada or to eventually return to Colombia and

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[33] These are: the Epiphany (January 6th), Easter Sunday, Saint Joseph's Day (March 19), Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Ascension (39 days after Easter Sunday) Corpus Christi, the feast of the Sacred Heart (June 8), the feast of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29), the Assumption (August 15), All Saints' Day (November 1st), the Immaculate Conception (December 8) and Christmas Eve.

many decisions are influenced according to the life course of the transnational family, including return visits (when a legal status and resources permit) for the celebration of different rites of passage for Catholics. The transnational family has challenged in important ways our understanding of human sociality or lack thereof within the context of a globalized world. In what follows, I will look at the transnational family and then take up the question of the affective dimension of transnational migration.

Defining the Transnational Family

Sociologist Zlato Skrbis (2008: 231) sees the transnational family as "a symptom of our increasingly globalized lives, which take place across borders and boundaries, thereby eroding the possibilities that places of birth, life and dying will coincide". A definition that we often encounter in the literature on the transnational family states that,

> Transnational families are defined [here] as families that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely "familyhood", even across national borders. (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002: 3)

The authors argue as well that transnational families, "by their very nature constitute an elusive phenomenon, spatially dispersed, and seemingly capable of unending social mutations". This elusiveness mirrors the lack of consensus around the concept of the transnational family, as well as the difficulty of defining the contemporary family (Le Gall, 2005). The transnational family has been conceptualized in numerous ways, including "a multi-sited family" (Ong and Nonini, 1997; Vuorela, 2002), a "multi-local binational family" (Guarnizo, 1997), a "transcontinental family" (Kelly, 1990; Le Gall, 2005: 32), and as multi-local families (Jelin, 2005).

Since 2005 there has been a great deal of scholarly work done on the transnational family. Much research is focused on the productive aspect of transnational families, on remittances, gifts, and economies of obligation (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999). Remittances inflows, for example, can

sustain transnational families and also social networks by providing resources for political action shaping political behaviour in home countries with a history of violent democracies (Ley et al. 2021). While other studies focus on gender. For example, Hondagneu-Sotelo et al. (2001) have studied the migration of Mexican women to the U. S., examining how several women move in order to change their relationships with spouses or relatives who are seen to oppress them back home.

By the early 2000s, women began joining the workforce as transnational caregivers highlighting a shift in the labour demand from developed countries. Such changes have been well documented, and constitute an entire area of research within studies on the transnational family (See Hochschild, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1997, 2001, 2002; Parreñas, 2001, 2005; Horton, 2009). However, over the last decade to avoid unidirectional research based on simple dualities, such as migrant and non-migrant family members, or the perspective of women versus men, which through the concept of care allowed women's experiences to be more often known than those of men (Marchetti and Salih, 20017), scholars in the field of transnational family studies acknowledged instead that transnational "mobile lives" (Baldassar 2016; Ducu 2018) are dependent on the way of life of migrants, on the geopolitical context they live in, on their legal status, their socio-economic category and their self-perception of mobility (Fresnoza-Flot, 2017; Fresnoza-Flot, & Shinozaki, 2017).

Furthermore, recent studies have acknowledged the active role children and the elderly play within transnational families (Hărăguș and Ducu Telegdi-Csetri 2018; Ducu 2018; Földes, 2016; Nedelcu, 2017). Transnational grandparenting, reflects three major transformations is today's societies- global ageing of the population, the increased diversification of migration and the transnationalization of lifestyles and everyday "doing family" practices (Wyss and Nedelcu, 2020; Brandhost, 2021; Wyss, 2020; Chiu and Lynn-Ee-Ho, 2020).

Another area of research, to which we now turn, concerns the emotional and affective issues faced by transnational families and looks at how transnational migrants sustain their family lives across distance.

Emotional and Affective Dimensions of Transnationalism

There is an emergent body of research that studies issues of emotion and affect as they regard transnational migration (Baldassar, 2007; Ryan, 2008, 2009; Svašek, 2008, 2010; Faier, 2011; Merla and Baldassar, 2010; Skrbis, 2008; Wilding, 2006; Senyurekly and Detzner, 2009; Vatz Laaroussi et al., 2012; Guarnizo, 2007; Pribilsky, 2012). Anthropologist Loretta Baldassar (2007) argues that members of transnational families are generally able to give their loved ones all the types of care that families in proximity do.

> Our findings unequivocally show that most transnational families exchange all the forms of care and support that Finch (1989), in her landmark study, identified as being exchanged in proximate families, including financial, practical, personal (hands-on), accommodation, and emotional or moral support. (Baldassar, 2007: 389)

In particular, the author focuses on the ways in which parents and children stay in touch in the contemporary era; that is, how they keep channels of communication open and emotional connection alive. Staying in touch is possible through two types of technologies, says Baldassar: *communication technologies and travel technologies* (2007). The type of migration she studies is motivated by a career or desired lifestyle changes. Nonetheless, there are types of support which Baldassar deems to be crucial for every migrant regardless of the reasons, or ways in which they left their home. In general, migrants need financial, personal, emotional, and moral support, and usually the network that offers this kind of support is the family.

Staying in Touch is Hard Emotional Work

Families, as networks of support require a degree of connection to ensure their continuity across national frontiers. Baldassar and other scholars have conceptualized such needs through the

concept of staying in touch, similar to the notion of emotional work[34] (Hochschild, 1983). Staying in touch requires willingness as well as effort. According to Baldassar, it involves three principal types of care practices: routine, ritual, and crisi*s* (2007). Such support often depends on whether or not people had licence to leave, a factor that affects the level and type of support provided (2007). Explain what that means and perhaps give a hint of how it may play out with Colombian immigrants. Baldassar confirms that co-presence is fundamental to social life (2007) and that it is in moments of crisis that families do need proximity to care for each other. As sociologist John Urry argues:

> Physical, corporeal travel forms the basis of contemporary transnational social life and . . . mutual presencing enables each to read what the other is really thinking, to observe their body language, to hear firsthand what they have to say, to sense their overall response directly, to undertake at least some emotional work, such "co-present interaction" is fundamental to social life. (Urry, 2003: 163)

In order to study transnational relationships, Baldassar proposed the three types of care practices discussed above (routine, ritual and crisis). Transnational connections are established *virtually*, through communication technologies such as the telephone, e-mails, chats, and the use of webcams. By *proxy*, through objects, gifts, and food. *Physically*, through return visits for special occasions. And *imaginatively* through prayers, dreams, visions, and plans/hopes to reunite in the future. These transnational connections take effort and willingness by families wishing to sustain a sense of family despite the distance. Colombian migrants often invest a great deal of time in the emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) necessary to maintain mutually beneficial

[34] Arlie Hochschild (1983) says that societies have an "emotion culture" which defines what and how people are supposed to feel in specific situations. Through socialization, people learn "feeling rules", which indicate the intensity and duration of emotions. People also learn "display rules" which indicate appropriate emotional behaviour. Conforming to these rules requires "emotion work" which might include "body work" which can be used to control one's feelings, for example, by deep breathing. It can also help conceal bodily reactions such as deep feelings of panic or fear.

reciprocal exchange relations and sustain their transnational families (Baldassar, 2007; Ryan, 2008; Wilding, 2006). Svašek argues emotions are "dynamic processes through which individuals experience and interpret the changing world, position themselves vis-à-vis others, and shape their subjectivity" (2010: 868).

This understanding of emotions acknowledges that co-presence (Baldassar, 2007; Urry, 2003) is not only shaped by direct interaction, but also by memories and imagination (Casey, 1987) and that actual, remembered and imagined emotional experiences must be differentiated from each other (Svašek, 2010). Svašek (2008) offers a model for understanding emotional processes where she divides them into three different categories, which, she argues, is useful for analytical purposes, even though the three are interrelated on the empirical level. Thes are namely discourses, practices, and embodied experience. Svašek sees emotions as processes; Baldassar understands them as manifestations. Both understandings guided my research and helped me focus on the ways in which emotions were manifested as processes and manifestations, most importantly as regards the fact that sustaining transnational relationships is hard emotional work, requiring a whole series of compromises and efforts.

Svašek and Baldassar rely on Hochschild's (1983) analysis of emotional work. Svašek also explores the emotional dimensions of human mobility and transnational family life, arguing that although feelings of non-belonging are not restricted to migrants, experiences of loss and homelessness can be directly caused by migrant-specific predicaments. As regards feelings of belonging or of home, she argues that they should not be conceptualized as a

> static form of rootedness in one physical locality, but can best be conceptualized as a cognitive and emotional process in which people identify with particular experiences and feel a familiarity with their lifestyles. (Svašek, 2008: 215)

Sociologist Louise Ryan explores migration as an ongoing emotional journey. Here, the author refers to Arlie Hochschild's (2003) work to explore how migrants discuss, describe, and manage their emotions. In particular, she focuses on initial experiences of migration of Irish nurses living

and working in Britain, looking at how they deal with loneliness and homesickness. The study also examines ways that expectations of support and obligation are navigated on the emotional terrain of transnational families' relations.

Support and obligation are recurrent themes in Baldassar's research as well; the author mentions moral and emotional support while Ryan speaks of family obligations and moral expectations. Although both allude to common themes, they do so in different ways. Ryan guided her enquiry by focusing on the stresses caused by marriage and motherhood, paying close attention to the ways in which emotion culture and display rules (Hochschild, 1983) are broken. Ryan integrates her own experience as a mother and a migrant to her analysis, employing a reflexive approach (Ryan, 2008). For Ryan, emotions are the glue that binds people, but they also can drive people apart (Turner and Stets, 2005). This observation complements current research on transnational families, for it takes into account not only the continuities, but also the ruptures brought by distance.

By including factors such as the religious background of the Irish nurses and their kin and the stress brought by divorce in her analysis, Ryan brings to light the negative impact of distance on the transnational lives of the nurses and their families. Since divorce was taboo in Ireland at the time of the study, many nurses concealed the truth from their parents so as to avoid the shame associated with the breakup of their relationships. This shaped in important ways the emotional labour these nurses put into maintaining ties with kin back home.

By acknowledging the potential for failure, ruptures and strains in the relations of the transnational family, it becomes possible to arrive at a more accurate assessment of how migrants and their families stay connected or not in a globalized world. An ideology of what is normal influence definitions and perceptions of the institution of the family, and an assumed harmony often seems to reign over the connections between people who share blood ties, last names, or places of birth. To avoid an excessive focus on continuity and also looking at ruptures caused by migration, I pay special attention to the broken and lost connections among the Colombian transnational families in my study. At the same time, one should not assume that

migration inevitably weakens family ties, nor that all migrants actually have a home that they leave behind.

Bryceson and Vuorela's definition of the transnational family cited earlier mentions that families search for "a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely familyhood across national borders" (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002: 3). But to what extent can families search for unity, and to what extent do they wish to? Baldassar acknowledges her research is biased since it emphasizes cases where successful and continuous contact endured among parents and adult children over ones where it was severed, as it was families who maintained contact that were the raison d'être of her study in the first place. By contacting adult children in Perth, Australia, the researcher was able to locate the parents back in Italy. However, the study does not follow the ruptures, nor the forgotten, and lost family relations that did not survive distance, the lack of resources or the time spent apart.

By taking into consideration dimensions such as strict religious backgrounds, intergenerational exchanges, the production of new knowledge, the care of elderly people and children, language learning (Laaroussi et al., 2001), the lack of knowledge or access to communication or travel technologies (Wilding, 2006; Nedelcu, 2009, 2017; Senyurekly, and Detzner, 2009), and the chains of care that pull women from less advantaged countries towards more affluent contexts (Hochschild and Ehrenreich, 2003), the picture of the transnational family might be enhanced. This would make it possible to better understand how in some cases, migration, emotional attachment, and belonging are not experienced as belonging to two separate places, but rather, as an intensified experience where new connections are forged nurturing the old (Ryan, 2008). At the same time, it would reveal how sometimes this intensification of experience ends in ruptures with past relationships.

Conclusion

The concept of transnationalism offers perspectives full of useful elements, flaws, and lacunae. This chapter has looked at many methodological "isms" that we social scientists are tempted to

use as frames of reference to simplify and better grasp the multiple dimensions of migration, which is not only a physical movement but also corresponds to a personal trajectory. Here I have reviewed the literature on the transnational migration of Colombians, especially as regards the economic and political aspects of migration. Noting my informants' families as the epicentre of their everyday lives, I have explored the few studies that exist as regards the relational and affective dimension of Colombian migration, as well as discussing the Latin American family, the transnational family and the relational and affective dimension of transnational migration.

In the following chapter, I explore the importance of lived experiences and emotions and on its relevance for studying migration. I favoured an experiential/phenomenological approach and focused on embodiment, people's emotions, and aspirations which led me to explore the phenomenological world of the immediate, the mundane (eating, walking, hoping, dreaming of a home, and a future, decorating with objects from elsewhere, receiving gifts, caring and praying, or simply put, everyday activities in transnational family life). I present the development of the experiential approach in anthropology arguing that it adds to our understanding of migration processes because truth claims are grounded in people's perceptions, experiences and understanding of the world, which in turn shape anthropological theory, offering a well-grounded understanding of social life (Irving, 2007).

CHAPTER 3: EXPERIENCE, EMBODIMENT AND EMOTIONS

Introduction

Migration and movement have been associated to the possibility of being one's true self, "d'être soi-même" (Thorpe, 2007). Considering the magnitude and complexity of contemporary migration, which "since the 1990s has been understood as a hybrid, multilayered and multi-temporal phenomenon" (Gray, 2008), I aim to bring to light the experiences and embodied emotions in the daily life of Colombian transnational families. Since affectivity is a way of apprehending the world, attention to emotions is a crucial part of my methodology. I argue that if we want to understand the social, economic, political and experiential complexities of human mobility and belonging, it is necessary to include a focus on emotions, and on lived embodied experiences.

I propose an exploration of the mundane, everyday and phenomenological life worlds of Colombians in Montréal, and so begin this chapter by exploring phenomenology and more generally, experience centred approaches, in anthropology where anthropologists and other social scientists challenged Western rationale's persistent fascination with objectivity and advocated for greater empirical involvements. I also explore how the body is a site of culture, and how it has been linked to the polity and the State (Lanoue, 2017; Taussig, 1992). I try to introduce a note of reflexivity by weaving my personal autobiography and multiple belongings (anthropologist, Canadian, Colombian, woman, refugee, exchange worker) into my object of study to show how I came to see previously unthought-of categories and unseen systems of meaning. In particular, I examine the constitution of the field in this study; the relevance of sharing a language and the impact that labelling has on Colombian's efforts to form a community.

In doing all this, I advocate for a "weaker approach to objectivity" which is based on the assumption that all knowledge is situated, partial, performative and the product of its own conditions of production" (Gray, 2008: 949). For,

> All constructed truths are made possible by powerful "lies" of exclusion and rhetoric. Even the best ethnographic texts—serious, true fictions—are systems, or economies, of truth. Power and history work through them, in ways their authors cannot fully control. (Clifford and Marcus, 1986: 7)

Migration and Emotions as Irrepressible Flows

Awareness of the variety of human experience and of the influences that instrumental rationality places on anthropologists and other social scientists preoccupied with pattern and order, can bring us to attend to people's immediate and embodied concerns, "to put what is unspoken and self-evident to speakers into place before focusing on concepts and discourse" (Wikan, 1992: 471). Migrants' journeys, their and sometimes abrupt arrival at a touristic beach, at land borders, as well as airports are indicators of an almost irrepressible flow of people that challenges government programs, and agreements intended to deter their mobility; for example, the Safe Third Country Agreement, guest-worker policies, and other schemes intended to keep the settlement temporary or intended to avoid it altogether.

Source: Island of Kos, Greece[35]

[35]https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/597101/Europe-migrant-crisis-dinghy-Greece-Kos-holidaymakers-Britain, Accessed 28 Nov 2018

I conducted this research by focusing on the intimate relationships and mundane practices that are meaningful to the Colombians who participated. It is inspired by phenomenology, which I understand as a method more than a philosophical system, and it is informed by experience-centred approaches in anthropology, which offer a rich and nuanced understanding of migration as an embodied experience. I sought to think about the agency that Colombian immigrants exercise within relationships such as those held within their families and within sensations of familiar places such as their homes. At the same time, a strong propensity for nostalgia pointed to a troubling connection with the present, and a longing to recreate an idealized past in the near future, I will discuss this in the course of my analysis (see Chapter 8).

Experience-centred and Experiential Approaches in Anthropology

"We do not engage in existential mobility in order to experience physical mobility. The contrary is true: we engage in the kind of physical mobility that defines us as migrants because we feel another geographical space is a better launching pad for our existential selves"

(Hage, 2005: 470)

At the turn of the 20th century, **Edmund Husserl** (1859–1938) established the movement of phenomenology. In *Local Investigations* (1900–1901) he argued that phenomenology is the sustained attempt by a researcher to describe experiences by entering into the life-world of the research participant without any presuppositions, by bracketing: suspending previous judgments.

Anthropologists have not had to explicitly adhere to the use of phenomenological methodology to actually practice it. However, phenomenology, understood in this research as "a way of illuminating things by bringing them into the daylight of ordinary understanding" (Jackson, 1996: 1), has been increasingly and sometimes explicitly used in anthropology throughout the past 30 years (Desjarlais and Throop, 2011). For example, as anthropologists, we practice bracketing; that is we have to suspend personal prejudices to understand how people live and make sense of their social worlds. Moreover, there is an in-betweenness, a liminality, while being-in-the-field (Crapanzano, 2004; Desjarlais, 2009; Turner, 1991) a sense of being "betwixt

and between cultures" (Stoller, 2009; Turner, 1991) or neither here nor there as Geertz (1988) noted.

In the 1980s and 1990s, during the "crisis of representation" (Fisher and Marcus, 1999) in anthropology, new venues for phenomenological insight were opened up. Lived experiences such as pain, death, suffering and healing (Desjarlais and Throop, 2011) highlighted the ambiguity and the elusiveness of such phenomena, while medical anthropologists found it hard to objectify or analyze certain embodied aspects of experience (Irving, 2007; Scheper Hughes and Lock, 1987) without a heightened empirical focus. An insistence on "radical empiricism" (Jackson 1989; Stoller, 1989) whereby the ethnographer becomes a participant of the reality under study (Meintel, 2007, 2016) and a renewed focus on embodiment and intersubjectivity emerged.

Desjarlais and Throop (2011) have offered a comprehensive overview of phenomenological theories in anthropology, distinguishing four main branches: *hermeneutics-phenomenological approaches,* best exemplified by Clifford Geertz who sought to unveil "meaningful structures of experience. . . through a scientific phenomenology of culture" (1973: 364). C*ritical phenomenology* whose focus is on issues relating to power and to the historical conditions that shape lived experiences*; existential anthropology,* which advocated for a radical empiricism and attention to existential issues, and *cultural phenomenology,* which brings our attention to embodiment (Desjarlais and Throop 2011; Csordas, 1990). In anthropology any attempt to theorize experience is generally considered to have roots in phenomenology (Katz and Csordas 2003; Throop 2003). Csordas (2003) argues that phenomenological and experiential are synonymous.

Phenomenology as a method aims at making philosophical ideas tangible, useful and accessible to people by questioning "the division in Western discourse between the knowledge of philosophers and scientists and the opinions of ordinary mortals" (Jackson, 1996: 7).

Phenomenologically-minded anthropologists insist on the practice of radical empiricism (Jackson, 1989) and participant sensing.[36]

An epistemological approach in anthropology that has been greatly influenced by phenomenology is sensory anthropology (Desjarlais and Trhoop, 2011; Howes, 2003; Classen, 2005; Willen, 2007; Kleinman, 1995 and 1999; Csordas, 2003; Pink, 2009; Irving, 2007). This approach tends to question rational dualities, in particular the mind and body divide.

Several anthropologists returning from fieldwork having lived extraordinary experiences that challenged Western rationale and that involved greater empirical involvement (Rosaldo, 2007; Stoller and Olkes, 1987; Classen, 1993; Classen et al., 1994; Howes, 2003, 2005; Young and Goulet, 1994; Ingold, 2000; Meintel, 2007; Seremetakis, 1996). Moreover, many Western intellectuals have favoured reason over religion, the spirit world, dreams and the imagination. Evans-Pritchard, for example, pointed out how anthropologists were usually agnostic or atheists despite growing up in religious homes[37] Generally, religious phenomena and the spirit world were situated in the realm of the imagination, so that rationalists argued that dreams, visions and religious superstitions belonged to social classes or societies where scientific methods did not prevail, to "those easily enthralled by the power of the imagination" (Tylor in Goulet and Young, 2004).

Hence, extraordinary experiences were included in ethnographic accounts, and the anthropologist was present in the narrative and his or her experiences highlighted as biased. Moreover, the processes by which they were able to acquire experiential knowledge were described. The inclusion of extraordinary experiences is what Jackson (1989: 4) calls: a radically

[36] Pink (2009) proposes "participant sensing" as a reconceptualization of the fundamental ethnographic techqnique of participant observation, arguing that an anthropology that privileges sight is an obstacle to the perception of the worlds of otherness. Instead, participant sensing is a research technique that attempts to combine multiple multisensory experiences, producing in-depth knowledge of lived places.

[37] Larsen, Timothy in the Slain God (2014) discusses some anthropologists' relationship to Christianity, see https://blog.oup.com/2014/08/anthropology-christianity, accessed 19 Oct, 2020.

empirical method, for anthropologists are "experimental subjects" and their experiences are primary data (Goulet and Young, 1994). The physical presence, disposition, and practices of people in the field have been highlighted in recent anthropological research—particularly in medical anthropology—on embodiment (Scheper-Hughes and Lock, 1987; Csordas, 1990; Turner, 2000; Irving, 2007). A renewed focus on the body echoes prior existentialists' interests in the Leib—lived body which will be discussed below.

Embodiment

A focus on the body brings subjects, in this case, migrants, to the centre of social scientists' enquiries, subjects with changing rather than static existences, with intellectual, *emotional*, existential involvements that significantly constitute what or who they are. By exploring migrants' emotions, we follow in the steps of anthropologists interested in extraordinary experiences and of social scientists that place human experiences first, before focusing on discourse analysis or narratives, for example. Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau Ponty accorded sustained attention to the difference between lived body (*leib*) as opposed to the body known as an object (*korper*). Their view, shared by other theorists today, is that "if we treat experience, social understanding, and so on as primarily deductive and calculative, a model in which beliefs and desires functionally cause behaviour, then we have a pale imitation of the human being in the world" (Reynolds et al., 2011: 19).

Aaron Turner (2000) notes that it is now widely accepted that the anthropologist doing fieldwork cannot be simply an observer searching for social facts and processes but must be an active participant in the construction of accounts and representations. It has been suggested that these accounts be acknowledged as partial fictions because they have been actively constructed through the use of techniques that include omissions and rhetoric. "Even the best ethnographic texts—serious, true fictions—are systems, or economies, of truth" (Clifford and Marcus, 1986: 7; Turner, 2000: 51).

The fact that human beings are and have bodies, and that meaning is produced through the body (Csordas, 1990, 1994) makes embodiment, in its lived emotionally cognitive sense, a mediator between structures that can be observed on a societal level and individual life in its intersubjective shaping of everyday meaning. Renewed attention to the body and a focus on the cultural life of the senses (Howes, 2003; Classen, 1993) has opened up a new area of enquiry in the social sciences. The body can be "the existential ground of culture" argues Csordas (1990) as it is constituted through social interaction. This perspective has shifted how anthropologists orient their research, for the focus has changed from the study of a society or a culture to the ways culture unfolds as a living practice (1990: 5).

Turner proposes a "shift from seeing culture as principally located in people's minds in concepts and values to a perspective on culture as the embodied and enacted result of continually coming to terms with the world in which one lives" (Turner, 2007: 53). Csordas (1990) elaborates a paradigm of embodiment[38], which acknowledges that the body is not an object through which we could study culture, but is to be considered as the subject of culture, or the existential ground of culture (Csordas, 1990). To complement empiricist or intellectual explanations, which rely on the mind-body dichotomy, and which may explain speaking in tongues as learned behaviour, or as a psychological suggestion, a physical trance or a nervous-emotional discharge, Csordas (1990) argues that through the paradigm of embodiment, the sacred can be studied as a modality of human experience. Similarly, "embodiment has paradigmatic implications for the division between cognition and emotion" (Csordas, 1990: 37). In the following section, I examine this division between rationality and emotions, through the interest that many anthropologists have conferred to emotions during the past decades.

[38] "By paradigm I mean simple a consistent methodological perspective that encourages reanalysis of existing data and suggests new questions for empirical research" (Csordas, 1988: 5).

Emotions as Embodied Phenomena

Over the past few decades, anthropologists have shifted their approach to acquiring anthropological knowledge by focusing on emotions. Particularly since the 1970s, emotions have been addressed in ethnographic and theoretical work in anthropology and other disciplines (see, for example, Lutz and White, 1986; Lutz and Abu-Lughod, 1990; Leavitt, 1996; Scheper-Hughes and Lock, 1987; Milton, 2002; Svašek, 2002; Pribilsky, 2012; Faier, 2011; Ramirez, Skrbis and Emmison, 2007) perhaps, to counteract the influence that rationalist perspective had on anthropology, as a social science that was structured by colonial regimes during its early development.

Early anthropologists were influenced by dichotomies such as "reason versus passion" or "mind and body", deeply rooted in Western philosophical traditions (Lutz, 1986; Svašek and Milton, 2005; Leavitt 1996). Anthropological studies on emotions continued mirroring prior epistemological divisions between nature, as a universal inner reality versus culture as a particular, public outcome (Rosaldo 1984; Leavitt, 1996; Svašek and Milton, 2005). Emotions were seen by some anthropologists as biologically based and universal inner states and by others, as cultural constructions. Anthropologist Catherine Lutz has noted, for example, that "emotional meaning is fundamentally structured by particular cultural systems and particular social and material environments. . . emotional experience is not pre-cultural but pre-eminently cultural" (Lutz and White, 1986, 1988). Michelle Rosaldo (1980) wrote that the meaning of emotion did not lie in pre-cultural emotional experience; instead, she understood emotions as cognitive judgments that emanated from the pragmatics of social life. However, she acknowledged the importance of the body as the place where emotions come into existence and defined emotions as "embodied thoughts" (Milton and Svašek, 2005; Rosaldo, 1984).

The ecological approach (Milton and Svašek, 2005) bridges the distance between emotions as biological expressions or social constructions, and focuses on embodied experiences. Milton and Svašek (2005) argue that emotions are both biological expressions and social formations dependent on culture that occur in the body. In that sense,

> The approach to embodiment begins from the methodological postulate that the body is not an object to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the subject of culture, or, in other words, as the existential ground of culture. (Csordas, 1990: 5)

Emotions are thus in this study understood as embodied manifestations (Baldassar, 2007) and as dynamic processes (Svašek, 2010) that can be observed when expressed discursively *(through words),* physically *(through the body),* in actions *(through practices)* and in migrants imaginations *(through life-projects and ideas)*. Migrants often invest much time and effort in the emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) necessary to maintain mutually beneficial reciprocal exchange relations and sustain a "sense of family" across distance (Baldassar, 2007; Ryan, 2008; Wilding, 2006) and a sense of belonging, of home.

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild (1983) argues that societies have an "emotion culture" which defines what and how people are supposed to feel in specific situations. It is through socialization that people learn "feeling rules", which indicate the acceptable intensity and duration of emotions. People also learn "display rules" which indicate appropriate emotional behaviour. Conforming to these rules requires "emotion work", which includes "bodywork", for example, sadness, as an embodied emotion, whether it is verbally expressed, or in the action of crying, is culturally discouraged among Colombian boys, for it demonstrates weakness, and it is generally discouraged through shame and a linking to feminine characteristics, which goes against socially accepted masculine archetypes.

Experiential and Phenomenological Approaches for Studying Migration

Experience-centred approaches have generally used when studying religion (Turner and Turner, 1994), dreams (Goulet, 2007), visions, sorcery, dimensions such as time and space (Lanoue, 2017), spiritualism (Meintel, 2007) and also in medical anthropology, when the body is the main focus of study (Irving, 2005; 2007; 2009). In recent years, this current has influenced migration studies. I present a few studies that explore migrants' bodies as the existential ground of culture.

The tendency in some anthropological texts is to highlight the insights gained by the anthropologist when entering into the world of natives, the Others. An explicit experiential or phenomenological study is aimed consciously at "suspending disbelief in one's perceptions" [39] (Meintel, 2007: 156) to partake in experiences that others seem to be having. Furthermore, the process of acquiring experiential knowledge changes ways of knowing or being (Goulet and Young, 1994) and indeed bring the anthropologist "to the level where anthropologist and person are indistinguishable" enlarging his or her sense of human possibilities (Meintel 2007). By focusing on what migrants are feeling and going through, the anthropologist considers different ways of knowing and acknowledges the validity of their experience.

In the following section, I will explore my field site and, in the interest of reflexivity, weave my autobiography and multiple belongings (anthropologist, Canadian, Colombian, brown woman, refugee, exchange worker) into my object of study in order to reveal how I investigated, and how I arrived at understanding previously unthought-of categories and unseen systems of meaning and how I arrived at particular knowledge claims about Colombian migrants.

Embodying suspicion, fear and distrust

Michael Taussig (1992) describes in *The Nervous System* (Chapter 2: Terror as Usual), the relation between the body and war conditions in Colombia, in particular under the doctrine of national security. During fieldwork (1987) he experienced first-hand the normality of the state of emergency, citing Walter Benjamin to the effect this is not an exception but the rule.

> In the murk, an eye watching, and eye knowing. Here you can't trust anyone. There's always one who knows. Paranoia as social theory, paranoia as social practice … The leaders of the Union Patriotica say this (undeclared) war is the outcome of the Pentagon's plan for Latin America, the infamous *"doctrine of national security"* … side by side with this doctrine, and the symmetrical

[39] In phenomenology, the negative move consists in suspending judgment on anything that might prevent us attending to the "things themselves" the famous epoch, or suspension of the "natural attitude" that assumes, for example, that there is an external world (Joseph, Reynolds and Woodward, 2011)

> paranoid circles of conspiracy traced around it, there is this new type of warfare that has come to be called "*low-intensity conflict"* whose leading characteristic is to blur accustomed realities and boundaries and keep them blurred. That is another eye to contend with, grotesquely post-modern in its constitutive contingency. (Taussig, 1995:21–22)

Taussig also discusses suspicion and how it can be triggered by past, often sudden experiences of acts of violence, such as kidnappings, disappearances, threats, torture, and social cleansing. In particular, social cleansing, *limpieza social* creates terror through uncertain violence in which sex workers, the LGBT community, communists, left-wing guerrillas, students, beggars and those perceived as Others, "and all manner of street people supposedly involved in crime and petty cocaine dealing were wiped out by pistol and machine-gun fire from pick-ups and motorbikes… Anyone could be a target" (Taussig, 1992: 24). Suspicion can be fuelled by rumors, gossip and scapegoating, which have deadly consequences in Colombia. For example, if a Colombian is wrongly accused of collaborating with the guerrilla or paramilitaries. Recently, a person was executed by a mob due to a rumor circulated on social networks about alleged child theft in the Acapulco neighbourhood of Ciudad Bolivar in Bogotá. [40]

Moreover, Colombians were socialized through fear, and suspicion of each other. For example, children are discouraged from not obeying parents through constant threats about the policeman who is always watching, or el Loco, a crazy person, usually homeless, who lives and sleeps on the street and who serves as a constant reminder to children of their potential kidnappers, if they fail to obey. Chidren are also controlled through notions of the spirit world and the many legends that recount violent and sudden kidnappings of children who do not behave.

High levels of suspicion are accompanied by misinformation and by imposed silences, which become necessary to survive in a society that has normalized and embraced the "routinization

[40] Una persona falleció por una turba debido a un rumor en Ciudad Bolívar, Bogotá, El Comercio, 2018 https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/mundo-colombia-turba-muerte-bogota.html, Accessed 10 July 2020.

of violence" (Scheper-Hughes et Bourgois, 2004:177) and the "trivialization of horror" (Torres-Rivas, 1996). State terror has inculcated silence as a premeditated strategy in times of political turmoil. Silence has become the first line of defence for many in everyday life that is permeated with political strife. Colombian participants in this research acknowledged that during the winter in Montréal, silence worries them and sometimes makes them feel depressed so they turn on the radio and the TV so to have background noise. I carried out interviews in my participants' homes amidst loud cacophony; soap operas and music were left on in the background as we conversed, and even if it was difficult for me to hear what was being said, it soothed my participants, so I did not ask them to turn off the TV or the radio. A lively atmosphere helped them feel at home.

I anticipated the distrust, fear, suspicion and reticence of the participants in the research, as well as my own. These were emotions that I overcame, by practising "resonance or going beyond the words" (Wikan, 1992: 473). Focusing directly on what the participants were saying shifted attention to the expressions of the body. Accordingly, I consciously attended to silences and engaged in active sensory participation through embodied experiences such as eating and walking together.[41] Thus, it became possible sometimes to create moments of trust and to frequent co-created places of solidarity such as my home and theirs, certain familiar cafés, streets and sometimes metro stations.

[41] I had previously practiced, the walkabout technique during fieldwork in Colombia (2008). I walked with my informants through the Plaza of Bolivar where the forced disappearances of their loved ones took place in 1985. And since I was studying memories of disturbing incidents, this technique proved quite useful for two reasons. First of all, the act of listening intently seemed to sooth my participants who bravely re-created traumatic events, and as one of my informants taught me, when I struggled about my ethical position vis-à-vis asking hard questions that evoked traumatic memories, "*entre mas gente sepa mejor*", the more people know the better. She knew this after more than 20 years of demonstrations, and active participation in truth commissions. And second of all, the act of walking together and conversing brings spontaneous reflection and creates a shared experience in which two people act, think and exchange in unison.

I also assumed that certain commonalities between myself and other Colombians would grant me greater access to their lived experiences as migrants. For example, I had experienced going through the procedures involved in asking for protection as a refugee claimant at a land border, and also the settlement process. Those experiences did help create a trust bond in a few cases, but generally, a shared legal status did not have this effect. The experience of navigating through the procedures to be granted asylum involves technical processes which, I soon discovered, do not lend themselves to forming a basis of rapport with people. However, discussing the very real limitations that a legal status or lack thereof meant for our possibilities of movement, the limitations related to difficulties when finding a job, or the inability to practice co-presence and to instead have to provide care at a distance for an ill or dying parent, all created common ground and brought intimate emotions to the surface, such as fear, shame, anger, sadness, disgust, envy, and sometimes, joy, pride, calm and courage.

These shared experiences were the starting points of convergence that brought me closer to other Colombians, and eating together reinforced the relationship researcher/researched. I invited people who wanted to come to my home for lunch, coffee, breakfast, or an afternoon snack. This allowed me to care for my small daughter. Moreover, I did so in a spirit of reciprocity since I was often invited to the homes of research participants. And while I cooked, people sat across the room at the dining table and opened up in surprising ways. Over a hot chocolate with melted cheese inside,[42] a coffee, or some rice and chicken, I was entrusted with many stories, emotions, frustrations, desires, dreams, imaginations, and hopes for the future.

Eating together allowed me to perceive how Colombians felt as they reflected on their migration journeys. Regardless of their legal status, participants concurred in acknowledging that family was their number one priority and the locus of important decisions related to migration and life in general. And also eating and sitting at the table balanced an otherwise unequal relation, or at least it diminished differences between us. In this way, the experiential approach helped me

[42] Chocolate santafereño is part of a daily ritual practiced in the Andes, a snack that reminded me that I grew up in the Andes. I did not have to offer an introduction to the participants about such a concoction nor did I need one.

channel and focus on the embodiment of culture and to "suspend disbelief in my own perceptions" (Meintel, 2007: 156). I was able to partake in the actions that others were engaging in, not only as a Colombian, or an anthropologist, but as a hungry human being. Attending to everyday experiences changed for me "ways of knowing or being" (Goulet and Young, 1994). The ecstatic side of fieldwork that many anthropologists echo in their findings confirm that we, as persons-anthropologists, are not fixed in our essence, but are open to possibilities through our ecstatic, dynamic relation to ourselves, others and the world. As Joseph et al. put it, "the resistance of many existentialist methodologies to conceptual systems stems from the suspicion that they rely precisely on such essential features and thereby overlook significant features of concrete experience" (2011: 8).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored phenomenology as a method rather than a philosophical system and presented the development of experience-centred approaches in anthropology by focusing on extraordinary experiences, in particular the study of phenomena such as dreams, visions, sorcery, shamanism, and religion where it is clear that human beings not only have, but also are bodies. I have looked at emotions as bodily manifestations and as dynamic processes recognizing the embodied aspect and the hard emotional work that sustains transnational families and homes. In particular, I examined how a phenomenological approach offers a deep and nuanced understanding of migration and of the embodied experiences of fear, suspicion and mistrust that prevail among Colombians.

In the following chapter I will examine the conditions and environment of the host country province, Canada-Québec. In particular, I focus on the history of immigration in Canada, and changes in Canadian immigration policies and the categories used to regulate migration in Canada to contextualize the migration of Colombians to Canada.

CHAPTER 4: Immigration to Canada and Québec

In this chapter I present the laws and apparatus of the immigration system in Canada and Québec, this in order to understand the conditions and environment of the host society where Colombians begin their new lives. In particular, I focus on the history of immigration to Canada, changes in immigration policies, and the objectives and categories used to regulate immigration in Canada and Québec. I also examine the legal status of the Colombian migrants participating in this study (refugees, including secondary migrants who have sought asylum from the U.S., and other countries, Government-Assisted Refugees (G.A.R.), skilled workers, international students, and persons under the category of family reunification). Looking at the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement, ruled unconstitutional in July 2020 but still in force pending appeal, will help us begin to understand the impact that immigration policies have had on Colombians.

Immigration Policy Timeline, Canada and Québec

Immigration has been a historical constant in Canada and Québec, beginning when Mathieu Da Costa, a free black African, accompanied Champlain in his first exploratory *voyages* during the summer of 1606. Later, loyalists coming from the American colonies, Irish, Eastern European Jews, Black Americans, and Chinese and many other groups, have contributed to the making of Canada and Québec (MCCI, 1990: 3), not only through their economic, political and social input, but also by forging a country based on diversity. However, during the 20th century certain immigration policies were implemented as a means of deterring migration to Canada by ethnic groups considered undesirable[43] (Marchildon, 2009).

[43] The category of race was prevalent at the turn of the 20th century; at that time Black Americans were refused entrance, being considered as “unsuitable for the climate”. (Marchildon, 2009: 500)

In particular, before and right after WWII, unequal treatment was accorded to different populations. In 1967, to avoid prejudice and discrimination, Canada introduced the first points-based system for economic migration based on nine criteria that I will discuss later in this chapter. This approach prioritized individual autonomy, pluralism, and economy over criteria such as ethnicity and religion (Blais, 2010), factors that had influenced immigration policy in the aftermath of WWII in Canada and Québec. At this time, "Québec took little interest in the positive role that immigration could play in the economic and cultural development of the province". (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). The point system ensured the selection of "ideal immigrants" based on an economic model (Paquet, 1997; Ley, 2003),

> C'est-à-dire que dans cette perspective l'immigrant idéal va être conceptualisé avant tout comme un outil de développement économique et national qui n'obéit qu'aux lois édictées par l'économie. (Blais, 2010: 45)

The Government of Canada, in consultation with Québec and with input from other sources, plans the total number of immigrants admitted annually into the country so as to best meet Government goals for immigration and to uphold the immigration objectives set out on the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). The federal government also determines the establishment of migration categories (i.e. investor, family reunification, international student); and the overall processing of applications. Moreover, it establishes the eligibility criteria for migrants wishing to apply under the Family Class category. Finally, it is responsible for processing refugee claims made within Canada and for conferring citizenship.[44]

In the following table I summarize Canadian and Québécois immigration history from 1867 highlighting significant laws, events, and instances to understand the development of agreements, policies, and selection processes by the federal government and the provincial government.

[44] Immigration Policy in Canada see,
https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/immigration-policy, Accessed on April 30, 2020

Québec Immigration Policies

In 1976, René Lévesque, premier of the Parti Québécois government at the time, made immigration policies a top priority for the province. In 1979 the Cullen-Couture Agreement was concluded affirming that immigration to Québec must contribute to the province's cultural and social development. It gave the province a say in the selection of independent-class immigrants (skilled workers and businessmen with their dependents) and of refugees chosen abroad. Also, the agreement allowed the province to determine financial and other criteria for family-class and assisted-relative sponsorship (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006; Ley, 2003). Consequently, Québec gained greater autonomy in the selection of migrants, yet it was not until 1991 that a legal agreement concerning migration issues was reached, the Canada-Québec Accord related to immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, was reached. As of 1991, Québec gained full control over the selection process, "a big step in gaining autonomy over its demographic development" (Blad, 2011: 173).

In 2016, Québec introduced the first reform to the 1991 immigration policy in 25 years. Québec's new Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion (*Together, We Are Québec)* was unveiled and adopted by the National Assembly in 2016 as Bill 77 within the framework of the Act Respecting Immigration to Québec. This policy is based on three principles:

- Immigration plays an important role in enhancing Québec's prosperity and the vitality of the French language.
- More effective selection, francization, and integration practices will encourage immigrants' full and active participation in society.
- The full and active participation of people of all origins, in keeping with Québec's democratic values, is both a right and a responsibility.[45]

[45] Together We are Québec report can be found at: http://www.midi.gouv.qc.ca/publications/fr/dossiers/Politique_ImmigrationParticipationInclusion_EN.pdf Accessed September 11, 2018

The policy objectives for selecting foreign nationals wishing to settle in Québec, articulated in the Québec immigration policy's section on the Selection of Foreign Nationals[46], Division II, clause [d], states that immigration should

- contribute to the enrichment of the socio-cultural heritage of Québec, to the stimulation of its economic development and the pursuit of its dem ographic objectives.
- facilitate the reunification in Québec of Canadian citizens and permanent residents with their close relatives from abroad.
- enable Québec to assume its share of responsibilities as regards receiving refugees and other persons in particular distressful situations.
- favor the entry of foreign nationals who will be able to become successfully established in Québec.
- facilitate the conditions of the stay in Québec of foreign nationals wishing to study, work temporarily, or receive medical treatment, having regard to the reasons for their coming and the capacity of Québec to receive them (Publications Québec, 2012).

Thus, the Canada-Québec accord grants autonomy to Québec in the following areas: the number of immigrants it wishes to receive, the selection of immigrants willing to settle in Québec (except the categories of refugee claimants of the members of the Family Class category) and the conditions of residence for new immigrants (such as length of stay and the management of work and study permits). Also, under the Canada-Québec Accord, Québec is responsible for offering financial, linguistic and integration services to new permanent residents; these costs are

[46] In this Act, "foreign national" means a person who is neither a Canadian citizen nor a permanent resident within the meaning of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Statutes of Canada, 2001, Chapter 27) and the regulations there under, who settles temporarily in Québec otherwise than as the representative of a foreign government or as an international civil servant.
http://legisQuébec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/I-0.2 (Accessed on September 11, 2018)

covered and later reimbursed by the Federal government. However, the establishment of immigrant categories is the sole responsibility of the Federal government.

Migrant Categories

The federal government has jurisdiction over the classification of migrants. Citizenship and Immigration categorize immigrants as follows:

Table 3: Immigration Categories

Economic Immigrants	a) Skilled workers and professionals (international students) b) Investors, entrepreneurs, self-employed people. c) Sponsored families, d) Provincial nominees and e) Québec selected skilled workers.
Refugees or persons in need of protection	a) Landed-in Canada refugees b) Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) c) Government- Assisted refugees (GARs) d) Blended Visa Office-Referred refugees (BVORs)
Family Reunification	a) Spouse, common-law partner b) Parents and grandparents c) Children and other family members

Citizenship and Immigration Canada[47]

For this study, I interviewed Colombians with different legal statuses: international students, parents, grandparents, and spouses who arrived under the Family Reunification category. However, key participants (those with whom I had more than three encounters or communications) came as refuge claimants, Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) and skilled workers as described in Chapter 1 (see also Table 4, this chapter). In what follows, I offer a description of the above-mentioned classifications.

[47] https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html, Accessed 18 October 2018.

Who is a Refugee

> "The bodies of refugees are constituted discursively through media representations and materially through the refugee determination process" (Mountz, 2010: 95).

According to the *United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees,* "A refugee is someone unable or unwilling to return to their country owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, members of a particular social group, or political opinion" (United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, 2010).[48] People in need of protection are "persons whose removal to their country of origin would subject them personally to a danger of torture, a risk to their life, or a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment" (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2018).[49] Canada's refugee determination system accepts the claiming of refugee status at any Port of Entry (POE); i.e., any border crossing, airport, or a seaport, at a Canadian Immigration Centre (CIC), at the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) or abroad.[50]

Immigration officers answer to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), a quasi-independent judicial tribunal established by parliament in the 1976 Immigration Act[51] and implemented in 1989. The IRB determines through the Convention Refugee Determination Division (CRDD) who is or who will become a refugee. The Canadian government has established three subcategories to classify and resettle refugees in Canada.

Government-Assisted Refugees are Convention refugees whose initial settlement (for up to one year) is entirely supported by the Government of Canada or the province of Québec. The UNHCR and other organizations refer refugees for resettlement in Canada. For example,

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[48] http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.pdf) Accessed 7 September, 2015 and 18 October 2018.

[49] https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/information-sheets/Pages/FactRpdSpr.aspx, Accessed 18 October 2018.

[50] http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca, Accessed, March 26, 2016

[51]http://www.irb.gc.ca/Eng/brdcom/abau/Pages/Index.aspxA Accessed February 17, 2016

25,000[52] Syrian refugees who came to Canada in 2015 are Government-Assisted Refugees. Between 1975 and 1976, 5,608 Vietnamese Government-Assisted Refugees were resettled in Canada. However, in 1979, thanks to a public outcry, the government of Canada decided to also sponsor one refugee for each privately sponsored refugee. By 1985 there were 110,000 Vietnamese refugees resettled in Canada from these two categories.

The resettlement of thousands of Vietnamese Boat People[53] also illustrates the category of *Privately Sponsored Refugees*, though not all Vietnamese refugees were privately sponsored. This category applies to refugees who met either the Convention refugee or the Country of Asylum definitions and who were brought to Canada by private sponsors, usually organisations such as churches. PSRs were referred for resettlement by a private sponsor in Canada who agreed to provide financial and other types of support for refugees for up to a year.

Finally, there are *Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugees (BVORs).* BVORs Convention refugees are also referred by the UNHCR and are matched with a private sponsor in Canada. The Government of Canada provides up to six months of income support through the *Resettlement Assistance Programs* (RAP),[54] while private sponsors provide another six months of financial support.

Port of Entry Refugee Processing

At the border, refugee claimants receive a folder with the forms they need to fill out; i.e., the Basis of Claim Form (BOC) and the Personal Information Form (PIF). These documents are the main reference for a refugee determination hearing. Once a senior immigration officer accepts refugees as claimants, the PIF must be returned within 28 days to Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Refugee claimants are fingerprinted photographed, their belongings thoroughly

[52]www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/reports-rapports/bp2020/2016/syr-ref-eng.html), Accessed 1 December 2016.

[53] Boat People refers to refugees fleeing by boat. The term originally referred to thousands of Vietnamese who fled in small boats to Hong Kong, Australia ans elsewhere after the conquest of South Vietnam by North Vietnam in 1975. (see: https://www.lexico.com/definition/boat_people), accessed June 22, 2021.

[54] (http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/gar-rap.pdf), Accessed December 13 2016

checked, their identification confiscated and replaced with a brown document that allows them to have emergency health coverage.

IMM 4221 Acknowledgement of Refugee Claim

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When claimants are deemed eligible by an immigration officer at the CIC or the CBSA, their cases are referred to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) where the Refugee Protection Division (RPD) will determine in a hearing held at a later date, whether they are accepted or not. If successful, they become convention refugees. Eventually refugees can apply for permanent residence and later for Canadian citizenship.[56]

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[55] This document caused me anguish and shame when I was a refugee claimant, even though it offered health benefits. I had to unfold I no longer have the original document, only a fading photocopy, because it belongs to the government and it must be returned when applying for permanent residency.

For a full list of documents used for Port of Entry Examinations see :

https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/resources/manuals/enf/enf04-eng.pdf Accessed 30 April 2020

In a hearing room[57] the board member is in charge of the hearing, they read the basis for the Claim and other evidence, they ask questions about the claim and decide whether to accept or refuse the claim. The Minister's counsel represents the government, they take part in a hearing if the government (IRCC and CBSA) is opposing the claim in which case the claimant needs legal help. Finally, since hearings are held in English or French the Immigration and Refugee Board provides an interpreter.

Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)

All GARs participating in this research were originally settled in Québec City and Sherbrooke and spent at least one month at a Welcome House or a hotel, which provides temporary accommodation and settlement services. The resettlement assistance program (RAP), funded by the Government of Canada covers the costs of meeting refugees at the airport or port of entry,

[57] A Hearing Room, See : https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/2019/03/the-tour-was-very-revealing-and-informative/ Accessed July 9, 2021

temporary accommodation, and later helps in find them permanent accommodation and offers basic household items and clothing;[58] it also provides general orientation to life in Canada through talks and documentation. The financial support also offers refugees income support for up to one year or until they become self-sufficient.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) describes the legal process to bring GARs to Canada as resettlement once a Government-Assisted Refugee arrives they gain permanent residency status on arrival. There are three subcategories for resettled GARs:

- *Convention Refugee Abroad*. Refugees referred by the UNHCR or by a private organization that follows the definition of a UNHCR when determining who is a Convention Refugee.
- *Country of Asylum.* Refugees referred by the UNHCR or by a private organization. However, those organizations can refer refugees who do not meet the UNHCR Convention Refugee definition, but who qualify nonetheless as Persons in Need of Protection.

Government-Assisted Refugees also have an interview, and a Canadian Visa Officer assesses each claim for refugee status through an interview process; this is done abroad for refugees and in Canada for refugee claimants. The applicant must also pass a medical examination, a criminal screen, and a security check.

Next, I explore economic migrants' journeys; in particular, that of Colombians who have applied through the skilled worker program within the Québec points system.

[58] Syrian Refugees were welcomed at airports and were offered winter attire to ease their transition during the fall and winter of 2015. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/06/syrian-refugees-in-canada-surviving-the-winter

Economic Migrants, Skilled Workers

To apply for residency as skilled workers in Québec, migrants must first acquire a Certificat de Sélection du Québec (CSQ). [59] They can apply for Permanent Residency to the Government of Canada. To be eligible to apply for the Québec Skilled Workers Program (QSWP), migrants must meet Québec's eligibility criteria.[60] Skilled workers also have to demonstrate that they have relevant training and occupational skills for entry into the Québec job market, adequate language proficiency in French (fewer points are given for those only proficient in English), and they must demonstrate an intention to settle and work in the province of Québec.

The provincial government uses the following point system for assessing the criteria mentioned above:

[59] Once an applicant has obtained the Québec Certificate of Selection (CSQ), the Federal Government only completes the formalities regarding medical and security checks, on receipt of the Permanent Residency Application. See: https://www.immigration-Québec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/permanent-workers/requirements-programs/index.html, Accessed 29 July, 2020.

[60] Québec has an agreement with the Government of Canada on migration. However, the province has its own rules for choosing migrants who will adapt well to living there. In particular, and in accordance with the objectives of the Act Respecting Immigration to Québec, Section B, Québec's prosperity is of utmost importance and economic migration by skilled workers is a strategy aimed at fuelling economic strength and job growth. Emploi-Québec predicts that between 2013 and 2022, new immigrants will fill nearly one in five jobs in Québec.

Table 4: Point System Chart

Criteria	**Point Allocation for each selection factor up to # points**[61]
Age	16 points
Education	26 points
Language Proficiency	22 points
Work Experience	8 points
Family ties with a Québec permanent resident or a Canadian citizen	8 points
Area of training	12 points
Spouse, common-law partner characteristics	17 points
Financial self-sufficiency	1 points
Accompanying Children	8 points
Valid Job offer[62]	14 points

This system allocates points to different variables, such as age, education, language proficiency, work experience, areas of expertise, family ties with a Québec resident, and financial self-sufficiency among others. These are thought to be indicators of a person's capacity to integrate successfully to the host society. The applicant needs to score a minimum of 49 points based on the above criteria. However, applicants applying along with their spouse or common-law partners are required to have a minimum of 57 points. At the same time, it seems clear that Québec is bringing in large numbers of skilled immigrants who cannot find suitable employment through the Québec Skilled Worker Program (QSWP) (Reitz, 2013).

[61] Know the conditions of the Regular Skilled Worker Program, See: https://www.immigration-Québec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/permanent-workers/requirements-programs/index.html, Accessed 29 July, 2020.

[62] It varies from regions in Québec from 10 to 14 points. 14 points are allocated to immigrants who have a job offer in Montréal and the greater Montérégie region. See summary grid (2018) https://www.immigration-Québec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/en/divers/GRI_SelectionProgReg_TravQualif2018-EN.pdf

Recently, an interministerial committee on the recognition of skills of internationally trained immigrants (*Comité interministériel sur la reconnaissance des compétences des personnes immigrantes formées à l'étranger*) helped develop the 2016–2021 Action Strategy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion by identifying means to resolve problems in the recognition of immigrant skills (Consultation Booklet, *Together we are Québec* 2016: 18). I will explore shortly the difficulties that Colombians face when integrating to the job market (Blain, 2005, Viger, 2006). Skilled workers constitute an important, preferred population for fulfilling the objectives of Québec immigration policy as it relates to development challenges in the areas of economics, demographics, and linguistics (MICC, 1990: 24). However, current constraints on professional recognition (Blain, Fortin and Alvarez, 2014; Shields, 2012), pose serious difficulties for dealing with the anticipated massive departure of retiring baby boomers from the workforce.

Following this discussion of migration in Canada and Québec, from the bureaucratic and technical aspect, I now turn to the exploration of secondary migration, and international agreements between the U. S. and Canada, such as the Safe Third Country Agreement[63] (STCA) which shifted Colombian migration patterns to Canada in the years following its implementation.

[63] The Canada: Federal Court invalidates Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement saying its impact "shocks the conscience". On the 23 of July, the ruling of the Federal court recognized that the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by allowing Canada to send refugee claimants back to the United States. https://www.lrwc.org/canada-federal-court-invalidates-canada-us-safe-third-country-agreement-saying-its-impact-shocks-the-conscience-update/, Accessed 30 July, 2020.

Secondary Migration and Deskilling

Scholars have demonstrated that migrants face structural obstacles and may also experience institutional or systemic discrimination (Chicha, 2009; Boyd, 2013). The human capital approach does not explain other factors influencing skilled workers' difficulties when finding a job in their domain, such as the importance of developing a support network (Blain, Fortin and Alvarez, 2014). In measuring the human capital of migrants, the government intends to contribute to the economy and to migrants' attainment of a socio-economic status that corresponds to their qualifications. However, it has been demonstrated "that more than half of recent immigrants with university degrees work in a job requiring only a high school diploma" (Li et al. 2006). Such is the case of Colombian migrants who face systemic obstacles when deploying strategies to integrate the labour force (Blain, 2005).

Colombians participating in this research deployed various strategies to find jobs at their level of qualification. For example, some participants began or continued their education, to obtain diplomas from Canadian Universities and they also volunteered in order to gain Canadian experience. Others decided to leave Québec and go to other provinces in Canada, particularly when facing difficulties communicating in French and when they had previously learned English, whether in the States, England or Colombia. A few participants decided to go back to Colombia when they were unable to find jobs.

An exceptional case involves a couple (a doctor and a dentist) both with masters' degrees from the Université de Montréal who could not get jobs in their field nor in any other field. The doctor got a certificate to teach Zumba, and the dentist found a job on call as a school crossing guard. They had two young children and lived in a small apartment in Côte- des-Neiges; finally, they decided to go back to Colombia saying that they wanted to stay close to their aging parents. However, it has been demonstrated how central economic betterment motivation is to skilled workers, and to international students' secondary migration patterns. And yet this does not mean that Colombians uncritically accept the first job offer they get unless their need is greater than their pride. Some Colombians actually leave jobs in search of language programs and/or

vocational training opportunities that carry hopes of better future employment in Canada or elsewhere.

Colombian Migrants and Secondary Immigration

Migratory movements have become increasingly complex and seem to follow a sequential path with multiple destinations rather than a linear route between two destinations. This generalized tendency in migration today is known as re-migration, or secondary migration. North America, the United States and Canada are not the final destinations for many Colombian migrants, but one of their primary destinations, as is the case for international students as well as prominent politicians, human rights workers, or journalists who came for protection, but whose intention was never to settle permanently in Québec.

For example, some of the Colombians I met transit through several countries and provinces within Canada. Several factors influence and determine their migratory routes; for example, their reasons for departure; entry procedures or transit and exit requirements in host countries; different personal circumstances such as family obligations; material resources available; family members, friends and other transnational social network proximity; sometimes even rumours and chance, geographical proximity or historical and cultural proximity with certain countries. For instance, many Colombians migrate to Spain because of a shared language and a perceived similar culture. However, many other factors are subject to change in the course of a person's migratory journey such that final destinations can and do change.

Few Colombians settle in the first locality or country in which they arrive from where they were born and brought up. Most of those I studied had migrated internally from a rural to an urban area within Colombia or elsewhere in South America. After this initial migration, some continue a migratory movement between Colombia and their present country of residence. Furthermore, taking into consideration the context of departure of Colombian migrants, it is not surprising to see that many of those I met did not migrate to Canada with the intent of seeking a new life, but rather with the intent of preserving their old life in a new location. This observation helps us better understand the nostalgic outlook of Colombians when they consider settling definitively in Canada, returning to Colombia or moving somewhere else. (See Chapter 8). In the following

section I discuss the Safe Third Country Agreement, recently invalidated by Canada's Federal Court. Understanding the Safe Third Country Agreement is important to understand why Colombians came to Canada, instead of asking for protection in the United States.

Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA)

The attacks that took place on September 11, 2001, shaped global policies that sought overall to ensure the safety of citizens in the West. They prompted new agreements between Canada and the U. S., notably the Safe Third Country agreement STCA. The STCA directly affected people who sought protection in Canada and who were coming by land via the U. S. The agreement states that persons in need of protection must ask for refugee status, for example, in the first country that they enter, and that they will be guaranteed to receive equal and lawful treatment in both the United States and Canada.

A few years later, as of December 29, 2004, the Safe Third Country Agreement was implemented. The STCA had five exceptions: [64] it did not apply if a person was seeking protection at any USA-Canada border or if they already had a family member living in Canada with a recognized legal status or with a pending refugee application; if they were unaccompanied minors, if they did not require a visa to enter Canada, and finally if they belonged to the public interest exception.[65] This agreement hindered all migrants' mobility including that of Colombians residing in the States or in transit there. In particular, it affected those coming by land from the U. S to ask for refugee protection in Canada.

[64] One of them was annulled on July 23, 2009; migrants coming from Afghanistan, Republic of Congo, Haiti, Iraq and Zimbabwe could cross the border into Canada even though they came by land through U.S. territory. See:https://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/documents/noticeclaimants.htm Accessed 20 March 2019.

[65] See the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) website on the Safe third Country Agreement http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/agency-agence/stca-etps-eng.html#pi-ex, Accessed 14 August, 2020.

Why Did They Not Seek Protection in the U.S.?

Refugees participating in this research followed a pattern known as secondary migration. However, according to the Safe Third Country Agreement[66] between Canada and the U.S., migrants must seek asylum in whichever country they arrive in first. Colombians participating in this research, who lived in the United States, Spain, Ecuador, prior to coming to Canada said that there were a number of reasons for not having asked for protection elsewhere. Refugee claimants, for example reported that, according to the refugee recognition rates of a particular country, it was evident that the country would not grant protection because of low recognition rates for refugee claims. Also, they knew of the favourable reception arrangements or integration conditions in the destination country where they would not have to fear being potentially deported, detained or separated from their families.

Colombians' tendencies toward multiple migrations can be explained in terms of their efforts to reconcile their goals of economic self-sufficiency with their efforts to accommodate their traditional obligations to family.

Immigration Policies and Public Safety

The events of September 11, 2001, led countries traditionally open to immigration, such as the United States, Australia and Canada, to implement increasingly restrictive policies, thereby turning immigration into a security issue. Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act was passed on November 1st 2001, less than two months after the events of September 11. This new law, which replaced the 1976 Act, had a dual purpose: to reduce the potential dangers posed by immigrants and refugees while ensuring that Canada could derive the maximum social,

[66] The Safe Third Country Agreement between Canada and the United States (U.S.) is part of the U.S.—Canada Smart Border Action Plan. See: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/safe-third-country-agreement.html, Accessed 1 May, 2020.

cultural and economic benefits from immigration. The goal was to promote Canada's prosperity while ensuring that newcomers were not a threat to public safety and security and that they shared Canada's dominant values. Immigration therefore seemed to be explicitly considered, even more so than in previous legislation, from the point of view of the benefits, economic, demographic and other, that Canada derived from the settlement of skilled immigrants who are able to integrate into society and the labour market.

The management system involved in deploying migratory policies has led to the construction of two frameworks for thinking about immigrants, one refers to the convenient immigrant and the other refers to the threat immigrant (Haince, 2011). This duality affected Colombian migrants by adding yet another layer of differentiation and distrust and suspicion among them, based on their legal status. The point system indicates among other things, how immigrants are seen as "human capital", flexible in terms of employment and adaptable to the host society's values. It is clearly indicated by the most recent changes to the points system: 26 points for education, 22 for language proficiency, 8 for work experience, 14 for having a job already reserved in Canada, 16 for age, and 8 for adaptability.[67] These criteria, of course, are subject to interpretation by immigration officers in Canada and in Québec.[68]

The Safe Third Country Agreement thus allows us to understand the alignment of Canada's immigration policies, in the name of security, with those of the United States, especially in the case of refugees for whom Canada introduced the principle of inadmissibility, authorized detention, deportation and removal, obviously always in the name of public safety. In the context

[67]Selection Grid for the Regular Skilled Worker Program Regulation of August 2, 2018 https://www.immigration-Québec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/en/divers/GRI_SelectionProgReg_TravQualif2018-EN.pdf, Accessed 29 July 2020.

[68] Migrants are dying in Canadian detention centres. The government needs to act. 2017 Macleans. https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/migrants-are-dying-in-canadian-detention-centres-the-government-needs-to-act/, Accessed 30 July, 2020.

of the smart border, Canada obliged asylum seekers to make their claims in the first country they arrived under the safe third country mechanism.[69]

It is clear that Canada wanted to win on all fronts by ensuring that immigrants were useful to the Canadian economy, that they had the ability to adapt to the values of the host society, and that they were never a threat to national security. This reflects, without a doubt, the distinctly neoliberal vision of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper's (2006–2015) government.

Increased restrictions of borders and sites deemed to be unofficial crossings has made asylum-seekers resort to irregular crossings to circumvent the STCA. This clearly reduces the effectiveness of the STCA which has failed at deterring future asylum seekers from coming to Canada via the U.S. For example, if places like Roxham Road[70] on the Québec/New York state border is blocked, refugees will cross through remote fields in Manitoba during winter snowstorms.

Recently, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) welcomed July 23, 2020 ruling of the Federal Court of Canada regarding the Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) which was found to violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by allowing Canada to send refugee claimants back to the United States. The Court found that sending refugee claimants back to the U.S. to face the likelihood of arbitrary detention in U.S. jails or immigration centres is a violation of the Charter right to liberty and security of the person. The Federal Court decision is based on Nedira Jemal Mustefa's case, a Muslim woman from

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[69] The Federal Court of Canada found a gross disproportionality established based upon the impact of deportation on one case.

[70] In, *How thousands of asylum seekers have turned Roxham Road into a de facto border crossing* article Susan Ormiston states how "they often prearrange taxis in Plattsburgh for the half-hour ride to the border. Since 2017, the route has become so normalized that taxi companies are branding themselves as border shuttles. A sign on one taxi van brazenly reads: Refugee Border. Another reads Roxham Border—LaColle Border and advertises a group rate, with each ride costing between $60 and $80 U.S., a lucrative and steady business". See: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/the-national-roxham-road-immigration-border-1.5169249, Accessed 20 Sept, 2020.

Ethiopia, who came to the U.S. for medical treatments when she was 11 years old. Nedira entered the U.S. on a visitor's visa and stayed for several years, graduating from high school in 2015. She had arrived in the U.S. after the cut-off date to apply for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and she was unable to get proper documentation to continue her studies in the country.

At the same time, she did not want to return to Ethiopia, as she was a member of the Oromo ethnic group which faced persecution by the Ethiopian government. She came to Canada asking for refugee protection. After being questioned at a Port of Entry (POE) for 30 hours, she was returned to the U.S. Officials in the U.S. placed Nemira in detention at the Clinton County Correctional Facility in Pennsylvania. She was held in solitary confinement for a week waiting for results of a tuberculosis test. She recalls her time in solitary confinement as "a terrifying, isolating and psychologically traumatic experience."[71]

The Business of Labelling

In part, my approach in this research is based on my experience as a public servant. I worked at the Canadian Border Services Agency[72] for three years. This experience provided me with knowledge of the many procedures and policies involved in the management of migration, as I had casual conversations with co-workers, who in 2017 were working as volunteers at different ports of entry to help manage the large influx of refugees. I was working on the regulation of the import and export of goods, which is governed by a complex set of policies that involve a

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[71] U.S.-Canada Asylum Treaty Unconstitutional, Judge Finds, Citing "Cruel" U.S. Behaviour. Matthew Schwartz, July 23, 2020. See: https://www.npr.org/2020/07/23/894859694/u-s-canada-asylum-treaty-unconstitutional-judge-finds-citing-cruel-u-s-behavior, Accessed 30 July 2020.

[72] The Agency was created on December 12, 2003, by an order—in—council that amalgamated the Canada Customs Revenue Agency (CCRA) the enforcement function of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (IRCC) and the Port of Entry examination function of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). See: https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html, Accessed 30 July, 2020.

large number of laws and regulations in regard to tariffs, taxes, penalties, prohibited or illegal items

Likewise, I decided to describe in great detail the management of migration in Canada and Québec, including a historical background, an understanding of the categories, procedures, laws that attempt to organize and manage migration. My aim is 1) to provide an intricate understanding of the migratory system, to highlight how States perform competence through lengthy processes of identifying, categorizing, observing, testing, numbering and recording, and 2) to offer examples that defy such logical and ordered processes. This is illustrated by the STCA considered, for over 16 years, as an ideal and effective agreement to better manage the flow of refugee claimants at shared U.S. and Canada's land borders.

Studying the bureaucratic practices for categorizing migrants demonstrates the importance of questioning seemingly neutral structures and the impact they have on Canadians and migrants. Furthermore, when thinking and referring to the state as a separate entity from society and prior to criticizing structures that may promote systemic inequalities and other social problems, it is important to remember that different government agencies are made up of other Canadians, who perform sometimes monotonous tasks within a bureaucratic structure that deals with enormous quantities of requests not only from Canadians but also from migrants. The following example highlights the impact that a complex set of proceedings to manage migration has on migrants.

The Long Tunnel Thesis

The work of Canadian geographer Alison Mountz on what she calls the Long Tunnel Thesis, is based on her ethnography where Canadian officials renegotiated the relationship between national sovereign territory and the law by modifying the geographical spaces in the Coast of British Columbia when 599 Chinese migrants were smuggled into Canada. The Port of Entry (POE) zone was supposed to be a zone to process migrants, and at the time (1999) the POE zone was elongated in time and in space. Even though the Chinese migrants had reached Canadian soil, they were held for almost two months in an artificial long tunnel of time, space of bureaucratic processes.

> Although the migrants were located on Canadian sovereign territory for the duration of the processing, they were not yet in Canada for legal purposes. Instead, they found themselves in an interstitial processing zone, somewhere between Canada and not-Canada, paradoxically neither in nor out. (Mountz, 2010: xiv)

After a long journey across the Pacific, the 599 Chinese migrants boarded school buses and went to Esquimalt for processing.[73]

Mountz argues that States perform competence through lengthy processes of identifying, categorizing, testing, numbering and recording. Migrants were tagged for identification purposes. For example, uninformed as to migrants' identities and unable to distinguish between enforcers and clients, CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada),[74] now IRCC (Immigration and Refugees and Citizenship Canada) workers numbered migrants with bands around their

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[73] The following description of the process that took place in 1999 when the Yuan Yee boat arrived at the Coast of British Columbia with 123 people from the Fujian Province, was provided by an officer who worked on site:

> We had the medical triage, number one. So they will bring them down in the buses, and we would off-load them in groups of eight just because that's how many showers we had. They would come in the back door, and we'd tag them. We had hospital tags. They just went by a number because that was the easiest way to do it. They'd walk to a table with the interpreter, and we'd get their name, and date of birth and all that sort of stuff and they would go along and get photographed in their outfits that they were wearing. And then they would move to the disrobing station, where they were told they were going to have a shower. All their clothes went into big garbage bags, and they were destroyed. And then they moved into the showers, and so it was a slow process . . . because they had to put nit kits . . . on their hair, like for lice, and you have to leave them on like for ten minutes. It was just like an assembly line, like boat four was very efficient because we were a lot quicker, and they just moved around the gym. So in the gym, the next thing they'd go to, was the medical for a full X-ray. And then they'd come out of that and get issued a set of clothing. Then we would start the examination interviews. Then the files would go to a Senior Officer…. So that's what happened. There were three phases: the medical triage, examinations, and the SIO (Senior Immigration Officer) reviews. (Mountz, 2010: 33)

[74] CIC became IRCC (Immigration and Refugees and Citizenship Canada) in 2015 soon after the new government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took office.
https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html, Accessed 30 July 2020.

wrists and with large numbers in black magic marker on their backs' (Mountz, 2010: 33). Furthermore, when the 599 Chinese migrants disembarked in B.C. the officers protected themselves in white robes preventing the possible contamination of the other. When they left work, their clothes were burned and their heads examined in case of lice.

Mountz offers a glimpse into the inner workings of the process of labelling migrants; in this case, refugee claimants. This demonstrates that labels are clearly not neutral, and that legal status is constituted as well by the media, and in turn is accepted by the general public in the form of pejorative labels such as: "spontaneous asylum seekers", "illegal asylum seekers", "bogus asylum seekers", "economic refugee/asylum seekers", "illegal migrants", "trafficked migrants", "overstayers", "failed asylum seekers". All these terms convey a covert message of dishonesty, suggesting that asylum is a privilege that most claim illegally, not a basic Convention right. These labels impact Colombians over the long term. They already face great difficulties when forming a community in Montréal due to the legacy of armed conflict and an adverse geography, marked regional loyalties, and the drug traffic (see Chapter 6) such that they are already fearful, suspicious and paranoid of each other.

I observed another layer contributing to the atomization of Colombians as a group that is the legitimacy of a particular legal status. Skilled workers, international students, and other migrants classified under the economic category, have voiced their suspicions in online forums, or public venues about the veracity of their compatriots' refugee claims. Moreover, some skilled workers participating in my study stated how they voluntarily left Colombia to study, work and live in Canada or elsewhere in the world; none of the reasons they gave for leaving Colombia were related to the armed conflict. Rather, they stated that it did not affect them directly, except for isolated instances, such as being robbed at gun point in public transportation or on the street.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the apparatus of the immigration system of Canada and Québec. In particular, I focused on the history of migration to Canada, changes in immigration policies, and the immigration objectives and categories used to regulate immigration to Canada and Québec. I also presented a general portrait of the most representative legal statuses of Colombian

migrants participating in this study (secondary migrants claiming refugee status, GARs, and skilled workers) so as to contextualize the recent migration of Colombians to Canada. I also explored secondary migration patterns among Colombians, as well as the arbitrariness of the Safe Third Country Agreement. In the next Chapter, I discuss further the context of departure of migrants from Colombia with an in-depth look at the historical conditions that have led to their migration.

CHAPTER 5: Unfinished Business: The Conflict behind Colombian Migration

We—who are capable of remembrance—are capable of liberation

(Darwish, 2003:151)

Introduction

A transnational perspective highlights the importance of history as an important facet of the ethnographic account. A historical context helps us connect the dots between patterns of migrants' movement and the social, economic, or political conditions that may have prompted such displacement in the first place. By considering the historical background of a particular mass migration or mobility trend we are also considering the impact of global forces involved (Glick Schiller and Caglar, 2008). The following overview contextualizes the migration of Colombians and offers some historical background that allows a better understanding of the migratory journeys of my informants. Here, I present events in Colombian history, focusing on periods that are important in relation to the mass migration of Colombians, in particular to North America. Then I discuss the barriers related to the armed conflict that make it difficult for a cohesive Colombian community to develop in Montréal.

Numbers Matter

The Colombian armed conflict is widely considered the longest, most serious crisis affecting the Western hemisphere (Engstrom, 2012) due to its regional impact and strategic geopolitical importance,[75] "including unique interlinking of guerrilla warfare, dirty war and organized crime,

[75] The Secret History of Colombia's Paramilitaries and the U.S. War on Drugs https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/11/world/americas/colombia-cocaine-human-rights.html accessed 19 June 2019.

the war on drugs, high levels of unemployment, poverty, great inequality and the prevalence of social and everyday violence" (Riaño-Alcalá et al., 2008: 5).

According to the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica*, 218,094 people were killed during the armed conflict in Colombia between 1958 and 2012, of which 177,307 (81%) were civilians and 40,787 (19 %) were combatants. From 1985 to 2012, 25,007 people were made to disappear and there were 1,754 reported cases of sexual abuse, although, the campaign against rape and other forms of sexual violence[76] estimated there were over 489,000 women from 2001 to 2009 who suffered sexual violence. Furthermore, 5,700,000 Colombians were internally displaced from 1988 to 2012, 10,189 people were injured by landmines, with 2,119 deaths as a result of those injuries. There have been more than 27,000 kidnappings, mainly by guerrillas; and the number of recruits for illegal groups is estimated at 5,156 people, including child soldiers.[77]

In this thesis, I explore what could be one of the many outcomes of the persistent and unfinished business of the armed conflict: the mass migration of Colombians, even after the 2016 peace process. For decades, women, children, Afro-Colombian, and indigenous populations have been disproportionally displaced[78] within the country. Moreover, roughly one in ten Colombians lives abroad (Bérubé, 2005). I focus on transnational migrants, Colombians who live and imagine their life projects within several national contexts rather than within the confines of a particular

[76] https://www.lawg.org/wp-content/uploads/storage/documents/Col_Costs_fnl.pdf, Accessed 26 April 2019

[77] http://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/ Accessed 11 November 2016

[78] People in Colombia were and are internally displaced by threats from a conflict among all armed actors paramilitaries and successor groups, guerrillas and the government's armed forces.

According to the National Centre for Historical Memory the number of persons internally displaced in Colombia from 1985 to 2012 is 5,712.506. The Colombian government's Unified Victims' Registry cites 5,185,406 people were internally displaced as of December 1, 2013, and the non-governmental Consultancy on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES) registered 5,701,996 as of May 31, 2013. The comparative global figures are from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Overview 2014: People Internally Displaced by Violence and Conflict, http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia, Accessed 27 June 2020.

nation-state; in particular, Montréal-based migrants who have transnational bonds with family members in Colombia as well as other parts of the world.

In the present chapter, I explore Colombian geography, history, and present main actors of the armed conflict and trace connections between heightened periods of violence, such as the drug era in the 1980s, the repercussions such events had for Colombians and their ability, willingness and/or need to migrate, and the barriers to form cohesive communities once established abroad. I also provide an analysis of census materials, in particular from Colombia, U. S. and Canada, documentary research on migration reports by the International Organization of Migrations (Ramirez and Mendoza, 2013) and reports from El Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, *Basta ya! Colombia: Memorias de Guerra y dignidad*[79] (CNMH, 2013) in an effort to offer a comprehensive historical account, one that includes an examination and recollection of the victims' testimonies during the armed conflict.

[79] The Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (CNMH) purpose is to contribute to the comprehensive reparation and to the right to the truth for the victims of the Colombian armed conflict as well as society in general. The Centre accomplishes this by reconstructing, through the testimony of victims, the serious human rights violations that occurred in the framework of the conflict, searching for truth, justice, reparation and the construction of a sustainable and lasting peace. The Colombian government established the need to create a historical memory within the context of the law—Ley 1448 (Víctimas y Restitución de Tierras) Artículo 154 del 2011.

Colombia Political Map

Source: http://www.vidiani.com/?p=6880

Map of Colombian most Frequent Migration Routes

(Riaño-Alcalá 2008: 77)[80]

[80] Using this map, I trace the geographical routes that Colombian families participating in this study followed prior to coming to Canada.

A Selective Historical Portrait of Colombia

Colombia is located in the northwestern region of South America. It is bordered by Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, the Atlantic Ocean, through the Caribbean Sea, Panama, and by the Pacific Ocean making it the only country in South America that borders both the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The southern and eastern regions are made up of tropical rainforest and inland tropical plains; it is a country that encompasses all the climatic, geological, and natural characteristics of South America (Fougère, 1992). At the end of this chapter, I will explore the impact that Colombia's adverse geographical characteristics have had on the capacity of immigrants in Montréal population to establish community cohesion. For now, I will examine the historical events that helped make up the world that the Colombians participating in this research were born into, a world defined by language, morals, ways of acting, modes of being, beliefs and the colonial past.

In 1492, Spanish adventurers, conquistadors, administrators, and Catholic clergy came to the New World. Viceroys represented the crown in the Spanish Colony of New Granada and exercised power on behalf of Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon. For three centuries, Spaniards sought El Dorado.[81] They were in search of "the gilded one", a ruler purported to be covered in gold dust who lived in the Andes in what is now Colombia. The Spanish colonizers never discovered El Dorado but they did find great wealth in the Americas through the brutal annihilation of the natives, their land and ways of life (Ospina, 2008).

The Spaniards came to believe they had a right to enslave the Amerindians and exploit their labour contributing to serious population decline. Thousands died from pneumonia and malnutrition after being conscripted to work all day in the humid and foul air of the silver mines. Many Amerindians were murdered, despite the exhortation of Christian missionaries and others to treat the natives with decency (Ospina, 2008). During the colonization of the Americas, rebel

[81] Conquistador Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, known as "Knight of El Dorado" founded Santa Fe de Bogotá, the capital of Colombia in 1538.

movements formed against the oppression of the Spanish Empire. Simón Bolívar fought for independence, dreaming of La Gran Colombia, and became the liberator of the Americas.

Simón Bolívar: Liberator of the Americas

Simón José Antonio de la Santísima Trinidad Bolívar y Palacios (1783–1830) was a Venezuelan soldier, a political leader, and the founder of La Gran Colombia. La Gran Colombia was Bolívar's dream of unity for the Americas; a Republic formed by Venezuela, Ecuador, Panama, Colombia, and Peru, which came into existence in 1819 and endured until 1831 (Penaranda et al., 1992). Bolívar fought for liberty and Pan-American unity among the colonies and is considered a hero in many Latin American countries for the way he fought a cruel colonial war, and for his revolutionary intellectual approach to national liberation. In 1799 at 16 years of age, he was sent to study in Europe. He returned in 1804, when Napoleon was reaching the pinnacle of his career.

At the time Bolivar was immersed in the writings of European rationalists' thinkers such as John Locke, François-Marie Aroue (Voltaire), Thomas Hobbes, Claude-Adrien Helvetius, Montesquieu, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The latter two had the deepest influence on his political life. In Paris he met Alexander von Humboldt, a German scientist who had just visited South America and thought that Spanish colonies were ready for independence. Bolívar then made a vow to return and liberate his country.[82]

In 1810 Colombia's armed struggle for independence began, during which the fierce rivalry between conservative and liberal parties sparked the Thousand Days War (1899–1902), the most violent Latin American civil war of the 19th century. Power struggles between the left and the right were temporarily tamed through alternating periods of government, by the conservatives from 1890 to 1930 and the liberals from 1930 to 1946 (Penaranda et al. 1992). However, after

[82]Simón Bolívar Venezuelan soldier and statesman
https://www.britannica.com/biography/Simon-Bolivar, accessed 8 July 2020.

this relatively peaceful period, a bloody era began with the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (1903–1948), an era known as *La Violencia*.

La Violencia (1948–1958) and its Aftermath

On April 9, 1948, during the meeting of the Pan-American Conference (precursor of the Organization of the American States), Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a populist leader of the liberal party in Colombia was assassinated in Bogotá. His death unleashed an extremely violent and destructive riot all over the country, an event that gave rise to an era known as *La Violencia,* an undeclared civil war (Penaranda et al., 1992) that boosted the migration of Colombians to other countries, in particular that of professionals and the middle class, most of whom migrated to the U.S., mainly to New York and Los Angeles (Guarnizo and Portes, 2003; Caycedo, 2008) as well as to neighbouring countries such as Venezuela and Ecuador.[83]

In the early 1950s, amidst intense political turmoil, armed peasants formed republics in rural areas of the country. Peasants (*campesinos*) formed self-defence communities and created a republic within Colombian territory called Marquetalia. In 1964, through the Marquetalia operation, the army attacked and scattered peasants, driving them in great numbers from rural to urban areas, and in the process, transforming Colombia from a rural society to an urban one. Survivors of this attack formed the "Southern Bloc" (*El Bloque Sur*) a precursor of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the F.A.R.C. (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*), one of the oldest guerrilla organizations in the world (Penaranda et al., 1992). In 1964, the National Liberation Army E.L.N. (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) was formed. This communist guerrilla group, the second largest in Colombia, was made up of students, peasants, Catholic radicals, and leftist intellectuals inspired by the Cuban Revolution.

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[83]Mass Atrocities Endingsor Ending? Colombia: *La Violencia* https://sites.tufts.edu/atrocityendings/2016/12/14/colombia-la-violencia-2/ World Peace Foundation, 2016, accessed 14 July 2020.

The Popular Liberation Army E.P.L. (*Ejército Popular de Liberación*), inspired by Maoist theories, grew on the Atlantic Coast. At the time, the national army had difficulties counteracting the mushroom-like growth of leftist guerrillas, and so private armies, later known as paramilitaries, started to emerge in the 1960s. During this decade of heightened political and social unrest, Colombians began to migrate in large numbers, seeking less turbulent places to live their lives. Most were from the middle and working-class and were looking for economic opportunities elsewhere (Guarnizo, 2003).

Other revolutionary movements emerged, such as an indigenous guerrilla, the Quintin Lame, the A.D.O. (Worker's Self-Defense) and the PRT (the Worker's Revolutionary Party).
At the end of the 1970s, Colombians migrated to Venezuela to profit from the oil boom there. Women from the departments of Caldas and Valle del Cauca migrated to England where migration policies encouraged unskilled labourers to come for work in the hospitality industry (Ramirez and Mendoza, 2013). The armed conflict played an important role in the imagination of Colombians, stimulating the need felt by many to emigrate.

Other factors, such as changes in migration policies in host countries, labour shortages or labour booms, and changes in visa requirements ended up facilitating or constraining movement for Colombian migrants across the globe. For instance, the immigration reform in the U.S. in 1965[84] facilitated family reunification by allowing working-class migrants to join their families. This provided an easier migration route for Colombians who had family members in the U.S. However, in the 1990s, changes in U.S. policy imposed new restrictions that pushed Colombians

[84] The Immigration and Nationality Act (1965) eliminated immigration quotas and the natural origins as the basis of American immigration legislation. The Act was framed as an amendment to the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. It established the following new criteria for the selection of immigrants:
(1) unmarried adult sons and daughters of citizens; (2) spouses and unmarried sons and daughters of permanent residents; (3) professionals, scientists, and artists of exceptional ability; (4) married adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens; (5) siblings of adult citizens; (6) workers, skilled and unskilled, in occupations for which labour was in short supply in the U.S. (Braziel, 2010).

in other directions, to Canada, England, Italy, France, Germany, Argentina, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. The growth of the sex industry in Asia, particularly Japan (Ramirez and Mendoza, 2013), opened up a venue for Colombian women from poorer backgrounds to migrate.

An Era of Repression and Drug Cartels

It is important to contextualize Colombian migrants' context of departures, since their migration did not occur in a historical vacuum but rather within a particular political, economic, and social order. In the second half of the 20th century, Latin America was drawn into the dynamics of the Cold War, a pseudo-democracy was therefore imposed on many countries. I speak of pseudo-democracy because, paradoxically, "democracy" was reinforced through dictatorships and dictators who adopted the national security doctrine and the diverse interventionist strategies proposed by the U.S. The many military dictatorships in South America were guided by the doctrine of national security, the logic of the internal enemy, and low-intensity conflict. The low-intensity conflict strategy consists of,

> A military-political confrontation between groups or states under the known level of conventional war, yet above the pacific and routinely coexistence between states. Often, this type of strategy between ideologies and principles creates long-lived conflicts. (Petro and Maya, 2006, my translation)

Once guerrilla movements formed, it was considered necessary to counteract the "communism" that rebels were presumed to espouse. To fight communism, and supposedly to maintain peace and democracy, the low-intensity conflict strategy promoted disinformation about terrorism and cultural and religious subversion. This strategy was made up of four categories: counterinsurgency, antiterrorist operations, operations to maintain peace, and peacetime contingency operations (Petro and Maya, 2006:90–91). Students, workers, unionists and anyone who sympathized with the left were considered "communists" who threatened "national security" which in turn endangered "democracy" and Christian values. It was under these conditions that the armies of Latin America were fortified.

The School of the Americas now known as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), in Columbus, Georgia, offered military training to armies in Latin America, teaching them how to counteract the spread of communism. They learned the logic of integral war, which means that the enemy was now part of the civil population. The enemy was no longer a foreigner; he or she was a civilian living within the boundaries of the state. In Colombia, the era of the drug cartels validated all the more the intervention of the U.S., and the war on drugs became not only an effort to destroy the cartels, but also an effort to eradicate the formation of possible guerrilla organizations. Many governments in Latin America attacked their own populations, in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and other countries where civilians were seen as the enemies of democracy.

President Turbay's (1978 – 1982) government was particularly marked by the conflicts taking place in the Southern Cone (Uruguay, Argentina, Chile) during the '70s and '80s. Insurgency in Latin America was linked with atheism, communism, the left, and guerrillas inspired by Marxist ideas or Maoist doctrines. In this context, many governments established laws that increased political repression. Forced disappearances and the torture of political prisoners intensified: "Torture became a legitimate weapon to fight the insurgency, to destroy the morale of the people, and to preserve the illusion of national security" (Petro and Maya, 2006: 25).

A wave of generalized repression was unleashed. At the same time, the price of coffee dropped significantly; however, high inflation did not lead to a recession or negative economic growth in Colombia, as it did in other Latin American countries. Rather, incoming profit from the ever-growing drug trade made its way illegally into the country, giving an apparently "positive" impression of affluence (Guarnizo and Espitia, 2007).

The undeclared civil war in Colombia was influenced by the globalization of drugs, weapons, and money (Calhoun, 2002). The spread of coca cultivation across large parts of the country turned Colombia into the most important source point in the global supply chain of illegal drugs (Venugopal, 2006). In the context of political repression, huge amounts of laundered money fuelled drug-related violence, drug traffickers sought power over different regions (Cali and Medellin cartels) and since the trafficking of drugs was a very lucrative business, there was an

enormous flow of cash and guns on the streets coupled with hordes of teenagers and young people with no sense of having a future.[85]

These young men and women became *sicarios* overnight. *Sicariato* refers to the phenomenon by which young people from *las comunas* (shantytowns), were offered money to transport "*paqueticos*" merchandise, drugs, or weapons and particularly were hired to kill policemen (Salcedo, 2010).

A growing demand for cocaine by consumers in the U.S.[86] during the 1970s accelerated the production and, most importantly, the smuggling by "*mulas*" (mules) who carried small quantities camouflaged on or within their bodies while travelling by commercial airlines. New "opportunities" opened up to many Colombians who wanted to migrate: these trips, known as *viajecitos*, were undertaken by people who transported drugs or cash for a fee, and in time, many *mulas* decided to stay abroad (Caycedo, 1995). Middle-class Colombians often left because of the insecurity created by the drug traffic. Essentially, a war was being fought within a war. The

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[85] See "El otro, el cine y el intelectual: Víctor Gaviria, el poder de la imagen cinematográfica**"** a study based on the film Rodrigo D. No Futuro, which explores the phenomenon of Sicariato and the emptiness young men faced during the '80s and '90s in Colombia. https://papyrus.bib.uMontréal.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1866/4730/Salcedo_Julian_2010_Memoire.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y Accessed 9 November 2018

[86] A principal actor in the war (usually ignored) is the American consumer. Colombia remains the world's largest producer of cocaine with record increases in coca plantations and its potential for cocaine production in 2017. Illicit coca leaf cultivation increased by 17 % to 171,000 hectares and cocaine production capacity increased by 31 % over 2016 to 1,379 tonnes, figures not seen since the start of these measures in 2001, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said Wednesday in its annual report. Colombia's worst affected department remains Nariño, which borders Ecuador on the Pacific coast. Drug gangs and dissident groups of the former F.A.R.C. guerrilla fight for control of this strategic area for the export of cocaine to the United States, the world's largest consumer. La Colombie reste le premier producteur de cocaïne du monde. Le Devoir, 20 Septembre 2018. https://www.ledevoir.com/monde/ameriques/537161/la-colombie-reste-le-premier-producteur-de-cocaine-du-monde, Accessed 15 July 2020.

government was not only fighting the many guerrilla groups, and dealing with the paramilitaries (which they could not publicly support, but who formed the Sixth Division, by working together with wealthy landowners and politicians)[87] but also new associations or cartels of individuals whose power grew overnight and in unthinkable ways. As the war continued between the government, the guerrillas and the paramilitaries, the drug cartels began fighting among themselves to dominate regions, to install laboratories and cultivate coca.

Also, *narcotraficantes* fought against extradition to the U.S. and sent messages of discontent by planting a large number of bombs in Bogotá, Cali, and Medellín.[88] Cars were often used, and civilians were taught to look for suspicious packages and to call the police immediately if a car was parked in the same spot for more than a few days, something that instilled in Colombians an everyday sense of terror and fear. I will explore shortly how the "routinization of violence" (Scheper-Hughes et Bourgois, 2004:177) is still a major barrier to the functioning of associational life among Colombians in Montréal, Québec.

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[87] *The "Sixth Division": Military-paramilitary Ties and U.S. Policy in Colombia.* "The Sixth Division refers to paramilitary groups working closely to the Army. At their most brazen, the relationships described in a Human Rights' report involve active coordination during military operations between government and paramilitary units; communication via radios, cellular telephones, and beepers; the sharing of intelligence, including the names of suspected guerrilla collaborators; the sharing of fighters, including active-duty soldiers serving in paramilitary units and paramilitary commanders lodging on military bases; the sharing of vehicles, including army trucks used to transport paramilitary fighters; coordination of army roadblocks, which routinely let heavily-armed paramilitary fighters pass; and payments made from paramilitaries to military officers for their support."
Human Rights Watch, 4 October 2001, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/3c2b20470.html, Accessed 15 July 2020.

[88] State of War report: https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/colombia/stateofwar1.htm Accessed February 2, 2017

Illegal Armed groups: Narcoguerrillas and Paramilitaries

From 1982–1984, President Belisario Betancour attempted unsuccessfully to negotiate a ceasefire with three guerrilla groups: the M-19, the E.P.L., and F.A.R.C. Over time, the presence of guerrillas, financed by drug trafficking and kidnappings, grew, especially in rural areas. Discontented regional elites decried the inefficiency of the army and continued financing private armies. Paramilitary groups were strengthened and supported by drug landlords, emerald mine owners, and the new landlords of the elite (Hernandez, 2010).

President Betancour undertook peace talks with different armed groups in 1984 (I will explore further the 1984 and 2016 peace processes in the last section of this chapter). However, in 1985 the M-19 (an urban guerrilla) took over the Palace of Justice in Bogotá and the army responded with a brutal operation that ended the lives of 11 Supreme Court Justices and almost 90 civilians, besides the 11 people who were made to disappear (Caycedo, 2008, Carrigan, 1993).

In 1985 a volcanic eruption buried Armero, a small town, killing 25,000 people. This natural catastrophe further destabilized the country and increased a generalized sense of insecurity, fear and uncertainty. Also in 1985, a political party, the Union Patriotica, known as the UP, was formed by ex F.A.R.C. guerrilla members and the Colombian communist party. It was the beginning of political representation of the guerrilla group in the senate. However, from 1986 to 1988 over 3,000 UP members were threatened and 150 legally elected officials assassinated (Colombian Human Rights 2004). The following year the peace process was over, and the guerrillas went back to the mountains. There they fought against drug lords, who had bought land and formed paramilitary armies to maintain control over their territory (Colombian Human Rights, 2004).

> Paramilitaries carried out massacres against union members and civilians and began a social cleansing campaign against those they believed were disposable: homosexuals, prostitutes, petty criminals, the homeless and street children. (Colombian Human Rights, 2004)

In the late ’80s, President Virgilio Barco (1986–1990) started a new peace process and attempted, again without success, to disarm the paramilitaries by prohibiting the army from arming civilians. The paramilitaries grew despite President Barco’s efforts and became a national movement financed by drug money and the support of the National Army. In the 1980s the drug lords launched a campaign of murder and intimidation against Colombia’s government authorities. They paralyzed the country’s justice system and drove scores of prominent Colombians from all walks of life out of the country and into self-imposed exile (Hanratty, 1988).

Neoliberal Reforms

In the 1990s, Liberal President Cesar Gaviria (1990–1994) began a reform of the Constitution and launched an economic renewal, opening the country to foreign enterprise. These policies drove many Colombians into exile. Law 71, for example, privatized pension funds, and Law 50 created the “flexibilization of labour”. At the same time, the revised Constitution recognized Colombia as a pluri-ethnic, multicultural state with rights for indigenous people and Afro-Colombians (Colombian Human Rights, 2004). Also, to strengthen the economy and migrants’ ability to play a dual role as generators of remittances and international advocates, the Colombian state introduced a series of reforms and programs, such as the right to hold dual citizenship (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999), which facilitated the transnational ties migrants sustained over national boundaries. Many Colombian migrants contribute to their pensions, health insurance, and invest in real estate in their home country, as I will discuss further in Chapter 8.

Peace Agreements

The recent peace agreements (2016) between the national government and the guerrilla group of the F.A.R.C. echo the La Uribe, Ceasefire, Truce and Peace agreements signed in 1984 between the same parties.[89] The *Union Patriotica* (UP) was a political movement (made up of

[89] La Unión Patriótica: memorias para la paz y la democracia https://journal.poligran.edu.co/index.php/panorama/article/view/822. Mora Hernandez Vol. 10 #18

former members of the F.A.R.C.) that emerged as a result of the 1984 peace agreements.[90] Political action marked the 1980s and 1990s in Colombia, and it quickly became a democratic alternative that sought a change in political mores.

The systematic extermination of Union Patriotica (UP) members and supporters during the 1980s and 1990s was carried out on the basis of a set of plans designed and executed to establish strategies and methods of elimination in various forms. For example, the UP presidential candidate (Carlos Pizarro, 1951–1990) was assassinated midflight in a commercial airplane on the Bogota-Barranquilla route, a city in the Caribbean. Five minutes after takeoff, a young man, who sat just behind Pizarro, got up from his seat, went to the bathroom, picked up a machine gun and returned to fire the entire magazine of the weapon on the leftist leader. The *sicario* hit man died under the bullets of the bodyguards who accompanied Pizarro.[91]

The most recent peace agreements of November, 2016 formally ended a 52-year armed conflict, the longest in the Western hemisphere (Engstrom, 2012). After four years of negotiations between the Colombian government and the F.A.R.C., the oldest guerrilla in the Americas, the F.A.R.C. signed a peace accord with then President Juan Manuel Santos (in office from 2010 to

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(2016), Accessed 7 June 2020

90 Colombia leaders sign a truce pact with key rebels. By Alan Riding, New York Times, August 25, 1984. https://www.nytimes.com/1984/08/25/world/colombia-leaders-sign-a-truce-pact-with-key-rebels.html

91 ¿Qué ha hecho la justicia en 29 años del magnicidio de Carlos Pizarro? By Maria Isabel Ortiz, El Tiempo, 30 Abril 2019.

This article discusses the systematic annihilation of presidential candidates in the 90's after the 1984 peace agreements. Carlos Pizarro (ex M-19 leader and UP candidate) was the third of the presidential candidates to be assassinated in a period of nine months between 1989 and 1990. First it was Luis Carlos Galán, candidate of the New Liberalism, murdered in a public event in Soacha in August 1989; then Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, candidate of the UP, was killed in March 1990 in the airport of Bogota, then the ex-chief of the M-19 was murdered.

https://www.eltiempo.com/justicia/investigacion/asesinato-de-carlos-pizarro-29-anos-despues-que-ha-hecho-la-justicia-353934, Accessed 10 June 2020

2018) and surrendered their weapons to United Nations inspectors (Arredondo, 2019). However, by the time the historic peace deal was signed, the armed conflict had taken a huge toll on Colombian society, notably by prompting the displacement of Colombians and pushing them to emigrate.

Colombia's current president, Iván Duque (2018–2022) and his party, the Centro Democrático, have never supported the peace agreement signed with the F.A.R.C. guerrillas in 2016. The current global health emergency caused by the Corona virus pandemic has provided President Ivan Duque an opportunity to avoid its implementation.[92] The government recently called for the exclusion of former F.A.R.C. commanders from politics, a critical element of the negotiations, while killings of demobilized combatants and human rights defenders have risen during the quarantine for the coronavirus. Meanwhile, plans to restart aerial fumigation of illicit crops that had been discouraged by the peace deal are moving forward, and money allocated to peace programs is being used instead to promote the president.[93]

Unfinished Business: the Aftermath of the armed Conflict.

Despite the 2016 peace agreement, the aftermath of the armed conflict still affect Colombian migrants living abroad. In the next section, I discuss the barriers that prevent the formation of a cohesive community among Colombians living in Montréal. I seek to deepen the understanding of the world in which my participants were born into, and in which many of them learned to distrust each other. I begin to explore the embodied experiences of fear, terror, and violence that

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[92]Así va el Acuerdo de Paz: la apertura democrática está amenazada, 20 Abril, 2020 Nicolas Sanchez Arevalo El Espectador
https://www.elespectador.com/colombia2020/pais/asi-va-el-acuerdo-de-paz-la-apertura-democratica-esta-amenazada-articulo-915468, Accessed, 4 June 2020

[93] Colombia's government is using the corona virus to weaken the historic peace agreement. By Laura Gil, Washington Post, May 2020.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/26/colombias-government-is-using-coronavirus-weaken-historic-peace-agreement/, Accessed 6 June, 2020

still affect Colombians' ability to establish communities in Montréal and elsewhere, and that instead lead them to gravitate towards known places (their homes and families), and at the community level, towards everyday mundane activities and to places of solidarity.

Adverse Geography: an "Ordered Disorder"[94]

Data presented in this chapter and throughout the thesis certainly support the idea that living through political violence fragmented collective life in Colombia. However, other factors such as Colombia's exceptionally difficult physical and social geography[95] contribute as well to the ingrained difficulties that Colombians face when trying to establish communities, locally and transnationally.

Colombia is cursed with a geography that is one of the most adverse for economic development (Montenegro, 2003). The geographical diversity of Colombia relates to its location and geology. The country, and in particular the Andes region[96] is divided by three chains of the Andes, the Western, Central, and Eastern Cordillera. Two of these mountain ranges or cordilleras (Eastern and Central) are separated by the Magdalena River which reaches the Caribbean Sea in Barranquilla's Port. The Central and Western Cordilleras are separated by the Cauca River. Even within regions, geographical characteristics reveal a very heterogeneous landscape. For

[94] Let nothing be called natural. In an age of bloody confusion, ordered disorder, planned caprice, and dehumanized humanity, lest all things be held unalterable Bertolt Brecht in the Exception and the Rule (1937) Prologue.

[95] In the survey of Colombian history, published last year and entitled *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, Marco Palacios and Frank Safford argue that "spatial fragmentation … has found expression in economic atomization and cultural differentiation. The country's … most populated areas have been divided by its three mountain ranges … into isolated mountain pockets … that fostered the development of particularized local and regional cultures, regional antagonism and local rivalries" (Palacios and Safford, 2002)

[96] Colombia's natural regions are classified into 5: The Andes mountain range, the Pacific Ocean coastal region; the Caribbean Sea coastal region; the Llanos (plains); and the Amazon Rainforest region. Colombia is the only South American country that has coastline on both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

example, the Andes have mountain peaks of over 18,000 feet high and valleys as low as 1,000 feet above sea level (Mendoza and Rosas, 2012).

The Eastern lowlands plains (los Llanos) extending south and east of Bogotá, is comprised of hot and humid grasslands which top the basins of the Orinoco, and the Amazon region. The North-Western region is home to the tropical forest of Chocó, a highly isolated region where there are no roads,[97] from Quibdó, the capital of this department, to the rest of the country. Here Afro-Colombians have lived in isolation and poverty since the beginning of the slave economy in the 19th century (Bautista et al. 2014).

To the North, the dessert of the Guajira is home to the largest indigenous population in Colombia. The Wayúu, who have also lived in isolation, are threatened by starvation and thirst because the sole water source in the region, the Ranchería River, has been privatized and dammed. Instead of sustaining the Wayuú people, it serves the agricultural industry and one of the world's largest coal mines. 37,000 indigenous children are malnourished in La Guajira, in the Northern tip of Colombia, and at least 5,000 have died of starvation. However, according to Armando Valbuena, the Wayúu's traditional authority, the actual number of deaths is closer to 14,000. The difference is likely because many Wayúu children do not have birth certificates, and their deaths are therefore not officially registered (Guillen, 2015).

The difficult geographical characteristics of these regions, their isolation from the rest of the country, and the limited support provided by the Colombian government[98] are factors that make this country a difficult one to police and to govern. As a result, despite Colombia's population being the third largest in Latin America, it is the most dispersed and disconnected. For example,

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[97] Afro-Colombians use instead the navigable river: Río Atrato or the airport https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/jrobinson/files/choco_talk_harvard.pdf, accessed 27 June, 2020.

[98] According to Wayúu Spokesman Javier Rojas Uriana more than 15 million dollars invested in the Food and Nutrition Program have yet to reach his community, which is engulfed by corruption and ends up being used in political campaigns (Guillen, 2015).

communities in the tropical and mountainous regions are sparse and scattered (Palacios and Safford, 2002).

A Persistent State of Emergency: Everyday Terror

In the Republic of Colombia a permanent state of siege has been in force for decades owing to the doctrine of national security, the logic of the internal enemy, and the low-intensity conflict strategy. In addition, everyday conflicts around resources, community politics, disagreements between neighbours, and family quarrels all combine to undermine community cohesion. As Torres Rivas (1996: 294) writes, "To live in insecurity, with the sensation of a permanent threat, or close to pain and death, all contribute to the breakdown of basic solidarity." The chronic state of emergency has become an embodied reality for Colombian migrants, who even after migrating may experience and reproduce certain dynamics of the armed conflict.

Everyday life during the armed conflict was marked by mistrust and a pervasive and embodied fear that prevails in a post-conflict and even in a post-migration scenario. Distrust and fear are still two of the major barriers to the functioning of associational life among Colombians in Québec. This does not mean that quiet forms of solidarity no longer exist between transnational Colombian migrants but it does suggest that the space for them has been reduced, and as I will discuss in the next chapter, solidarity generally focuses inward towards family, and at the communal level it tends to stay confined to the phenomenological world of the familiar and immediate, to the everyday and mundane activities that foster the creation of places of solidarity, where there can be social exchange through food consumption, dance, arts and sports.

Distrust and Drug Trafficking

> The drug trade is a factor that weighs on Colombians and their capacity to build communities (Riaño-Alcalá and Goldring, 2014). Portes and his colleagues go further in this regard acknowledging how several past studies report that the stigma associated with the drug trade and the perennial suspicion that others may

> be involved lead Colombians to be distrustful of each other and less willing to engage in cooperative activities (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999).

Colombians remain suspicious of each other, they cannot know if their schoolmates, neighbours, or acquaintances were or are involved in drug trafficking activities. Besides, negative stereotypes[99] that damage not only the reputation of the community as a whole, may impact as well as settlement efforts and interactions with people in the host society. For this reason, drug trafficking and the possibility of being linked to it, makes Colombians to be more dispersed than other groups, with few identifiable concentrations (Portes et al., 2001). Colombians' experiences with war, the drug trade, a historically divided society, and an adverse geography are embodied realities that become re-enacted transnationally among Colombian migrants living abroad, a point I return to in Chapter 5 (Goldring and Landolt, 2010).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have contextualized the migration of Colombians by exploring the country's history, beginning with the birth of this Republic and tracing important events that took place in the 20th and 21st centuries. This context helps us ground, understand and connect patterns of migrant mobility, to the social, economic, political conditions surrounding their departure. Furthermore, it also illustrates the living conditions, and the environment in which my participants lived and grew up. A common cultural background and history, however, do not affect people in homogeneous ways nor does it totally determine Colombians' individual or collective identity. However, an historical account offers insight the context of the departure of Colombian migrants and the difficulties they face (having grown up and lived through an armed conflict) when trying to establish a community in a new context. Finally, this overview of the

[99] A negative stereotype does not only concern how Colombians are perceived by others in everyday life. For example, having a Colombian passport at an airport is a source of anguish, fear and tangible consequences. A Colombian can be stopped at random at an airport, or undergo secondary examinations at a port of entry.

situation of Colombia during the 20th and 21st centuries highlights the incidence of global forces at play, and the impact of different policies and programs on the possibilities for Latin American, in particular Colombian migrants to move to Canada.

In the following chapter I offer a profile of Colombian migrants highlighting patterns of mobility and settlement in North America, Québec and Montréal looking at the migratory waves that brought them to Canada and start connecting the dots that link their migration to particular historical events. I will also discuss the research that has been done on the political, economic and relational dimensions of Colombian transnational migration, paying particular attention to research addressing the transnational migration of Colombians to Québec, exploring the transnational activities through which they associate, and the issue of why they do not establish a community in Montréal.

CHAPTER 6: Is There a Colombian Community in Montréal?

"The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the state of emergency in which we lived is not the exception but the rule"

Walter Benjamin last writings written on the eve of World War II

(Bollock and Jennings, 2006)

Introduction

In this Chapter, I present a socio-demographic profile of Colombian migrants highlighting patterns of mobility and settlement in Québec and Montréal. I explore the migratory waves that brought them to Canada and start connecting these waves with particular historical events. I also address research on the transnational migration of Colombians to North America and Québec and summarize scholarly studies that look at the presence of Colombians in the province, including a few studies of Colombian transnational families. Finally, I explore the associative life among Colombians in Montréal, the places (restaurants, dance schools, religious places of worship) they frequent places of solidarity where they engage in cultural exchange and develop new forms of mutual support.

A Portrait of Colombian Migrants

According to DANE (*Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística*, Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics), there are 48,258,494[100] Colombians, of

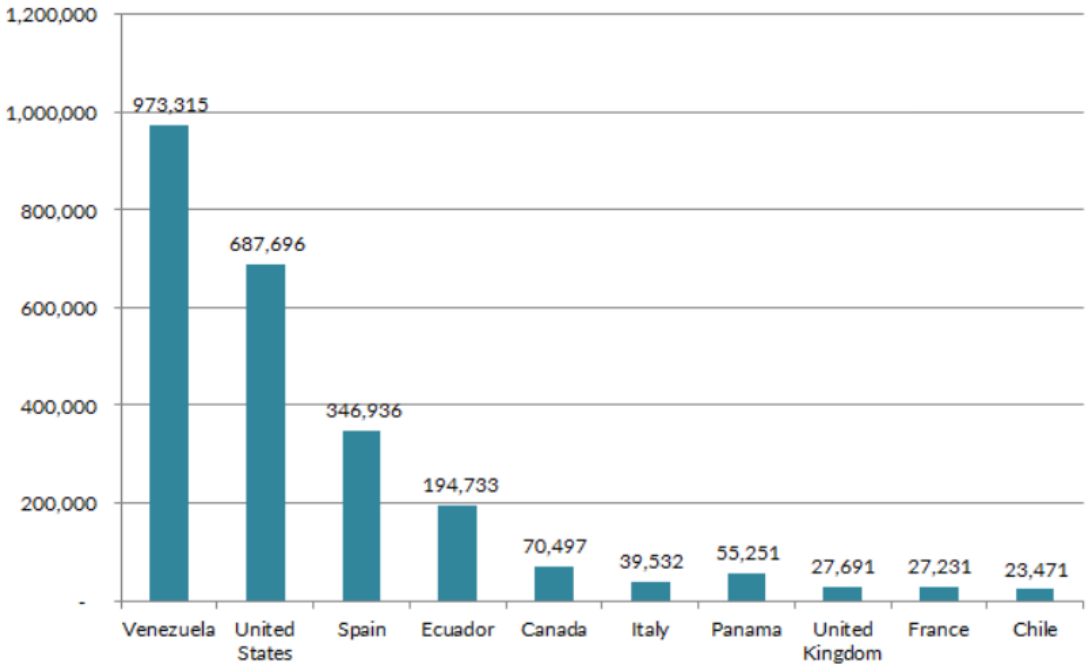
[100] According to the 2018 census, see DANE at https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censo2018/informacion-tecnica/cnpv-2018-presentacion-3ra-entrega.pdf and https://www.dinero.com/pais/articulo/cifras-sobre-los-colombianos-en-el-exterior/269096, Accessed 3 June, 2020.

whom 4,7 million (10%) live outside of the national territory. More than half of these are women (1,711,032 or 51%) as compared with 1,620,075 men (49%). While most Colombian migrants live in North America, they are nonetheless scattered throughout the world, according to the World Bank (Perfil Migratorio de Colombia*,* 2012), and the Migration Policy Institute (2017).

Colombians' top destination countries are the U.S. (687,971) and Venezuela (973,315), the latter because of the oil boom in the late 1970s and the worsening of the Colombian armed conflict in the '90s. The other important destinations are Spain (346,936) which had no visa restrictions until the 1990s, Ecuador (194,733), Canada (70,497), Panama (55,251), France (27,231), Italy (39,532), United Kingdom (27,691); Germany (14,253) and Chile (23,471). Less common destinations include Mexico and Australia.[101]

[101] Migración de colombianos: ¿una expresión moderna de orfandad? Una aproximación a las políticas públicas dirigidas a los colombianos en el exterior by Rocío del Pilar Peña Huertas, see: http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0124-05792006000100003 Accessed April 25 2017, and 9 July 2020.

Table 5: Top Ten Destinations for Colombian Immigrants



Source: UN DESA, Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Origin and Destination[102]

Due to legal restrictions imposed by the United States in the '90s, Colombians emigrated to various other countries, including Canada. In Europe, they went to England, Italy, France, Germany, and in South America to Argentina, Chile, and the Dominican Republic. Increased

[102] As Colombia Emerges from Decades of War, Migration Challenges Mount. Migration Policy Institute (2017) see, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/colombia-emerges-decades-war-migration-challenges-mount, Accessed 5 May 2020

migration of women to Asia,[103] particularly Japan, became evident (Ramirez, Zuluaga and Perilla, 2010; Caycedo, 1995).

Colombians in North America, the United States and Canada

Unlike other Latin American immigrant groups (Salvadorians, Nicaraguans, Guatemalans) in the United States, Colombians have historically been made up of urbanites, a characteristic confirmed by previous studies (Cardona et al. 1980; Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999) as well as by data from the 2005 U.S. Census. According to the U.S. Census, 88% of Colombians reported as residing abroad originally came from urban areas (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999). Besides the fact that women are more likely than men to emigrate (Guarnizo and Espitia 2007), they have generally attained a higher educational level than men before migrating. Guarnizo and Espitia (2007) note that established professionals arrived before 1970, and those from more diverse and more lower-class backgrounds came in the ’70s and ’80s.

In the 1990s migrants from middle and upper-class backgrounds were fleeing political and economic turmoil. The median age among Colombians increased from 30 years in 1980 to 38 years in 2000. Furthermore, the proportion of Colombian immigrants 55 years old and older doubled between 1980 and 2000 (from 8.5% to 17%) (Guarnizo and Espitia, 2007:377).

In Canada, available statistics resemble those from U.S. on Colombian migrants. There is a difference, however, between those who arrive seeking refuge, and those who come to join the labour market as skilled workers. Colombians who come through the skilled workers’ program

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[103] Sexo y pesadilla, la trata de blancas es una amenaza real para miles de mujeres colombianas que terminan como esclavas en Japón y otros países.
Japan has become the major centre for trafficking in Colombian women. According to the testimony of an anonymous trafficker, the presence of Colombian women in Asia began in the 70’s. Some women started marrying members of the Yakuza (a powerful mafia in Japan) and decided to export the business. They contacted women in Colombia through classifieds in news papers or through family networks. Semana weekly magazine, Oct 16, 2000 edition, see:
www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/sexo-pesadilla/43617-3), Accessed 22 August 2019 and July 9 2020.

tend to fall into the 18 to 35 age cohort; this is based on the point system. [104] Resettled refugees include a large proportion of children and youth under eighteen, while the predominant cohort for refugee claimants is between 25 and 44 years of age. (Riaño-Alcalá 2008). Moreover, Colombians in Canada possess high levels of formal schooling. In the year 2000, 23% of Colombians aged 25 to 64 had graduated from college, and the proportion of Colombian immigrants with post-secondary education (college, associate degrees, B.A. degrees and higher) has increased significantly over the past two decades. In the case of refugees, however, secondary education or less predominates among new arrivals (Riaño-Alcalá, 2008).

For the most part, Colombians have settled in three cities in Canada: Toronto, Montréal, and Vancouver. In Toronto and Vancouver, the majority (57 and 62 % respectively) arrived as economic migrants. In contrast, 89 % of those residing in the province of Québec came as refugees (Osorio 2008; Riaño-Alcalá et al., 2008). In Montréal, according to the 2016 census, there are 33,965 self-declared Colombians by ethnic origin of which 50,5% are women and 49,5% men, 76% are first-generation migrants and were born abroad, 21% are second generation and 1,8 are third generation migrants.

This population has a younger age structure than that of the Québec's population as a whole. There is a higher proportion of children under 15 years of age (27% versus 16%), of young people aged 15 to 24 (15% versus 11%) and those aged 25 to 44 (38% versus 26%), as well as a lower proportion of people aged 45 and over (10% versus 14%). In terms of marital status, 34% of people of Colombian origin aged 15 and over are single while 43% are legally married and not separated, compared with 29% and 35% respectively in Québec's population.

The majority (67%) of those of Colombian origin in Québec live in the Montréal census metropolitan area. Another 10% live in the Québec City area, 4% in the Sherbrooke region, 5% in the National Capital Region (Ottawa-Gatineau), and 7% in Laval. Those who live in Montréal

[104] The Summary grid of factors and criteria used to select regular skilled workers, see: https://www.immigration-Québec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/permanent-workers/requirements-programs/index.html, Accessed 29 July, 2020

are found mostly in the neighbourhoods of Villeray, Saint Michel, Parc-Extension (11%)[105], Côte-des-Neiges, Notre Dame de Grâce (13%), Rosemont, La Petite Patrie (10%) and Saint Leonard (6%).[106] Moving on from this socio-demographic portrait of Colombians in North America, we will now examine the research that has been done on Colombian transnational migration to North America.

Studies on Colombian Transnational Migration in North America

Research on the transnational engagements of Colombians has mostly been carried out in the United States, and has mainly focused on the economic and political aspects of their migration. A number of authors look at themes such as remittances, and investments in the homeland (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999; Portes et al. 2003 and 2005). The political aspect of migration is generally studied in relation to the transnational networks developed by Colombian migrants and on their electoral participation in Colombia from abroad (U.S. and Canada) (Balcazar et. al, 2009; Riaño-Alcalá , Colorado, et al. 2008; Landolt P. Goldring L., 2010).

While much scholarship has carried out on the role of remittances and affective labour within transnational families (Pribilsky, 2007; Paerregaard, 2015; Castañeda 2013; Parreñas, 2005; McKenzie, and Menjívar, 2011) research on Colombians tends to focus on measuring the economic impact of remittances and on the role of migrants as development agents (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999; Portes 2005). For example, Sørensen's research (2005) shows that Colombian families living in Italy sent remittances to their families in Colombia so they could build extra rooms to rent, in order to supplement their income.

Remittances are of course very important to countries of origin, and governments usually try to take advantage of the resources that migrants can contribute to the national economy. Colombia is the main recipient of remittances in South America. In 2017, the country received USD 5.58 billion in remittances, 15% more than in 2016, with high annual growth rates in those from

[105] Please note that I round percentages in this section for readability purposes.

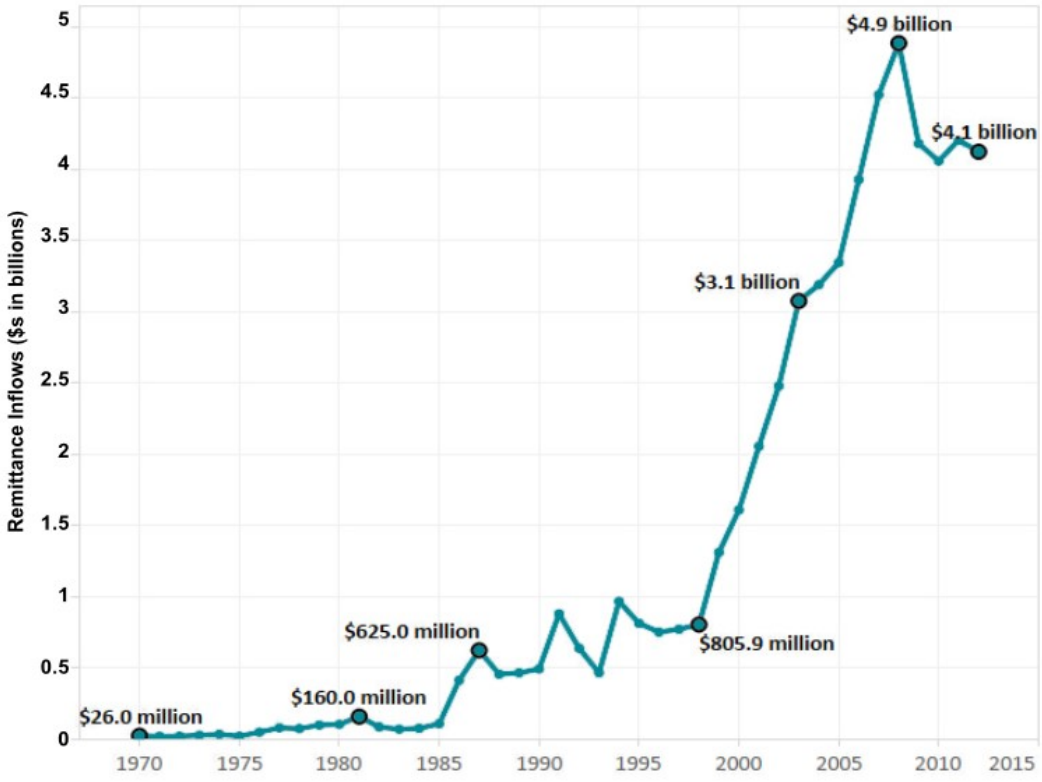
[106] 2016 census, see http://www.quebecinterculturel.gouv.qc.ca/fr/diversite-ethnoculturelle/stats-groupes-ethno/recensement-2016.html, Accessed June 23, 2021.

the United States (14.5%), Chile (43%), and the United Kingdom (18%).[107] Furthermore, the Colombian government has generally encouraged the economic participation of Colombian emigrants by channelling migrants' remittances towards productive investment. For example, programs such as international property fairs[108] permit families who send remittances to apply for credit to buy houses for their families living in Colombia or for themselves in the future (Gaviria and Mejia, 2005).

[107] Remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean in 2017 (2018 report). https://www.cemla.org/PDF/remesaseinclusion/2018-06-Remittances-LAC-2017.pdf, accessed 8 May 2020.

[108] Bancolombia, the largest Commercial Bank in Colombia and Cajas de Compensación Familiar (non-for-profit institutions) receive resources from the private sector to provide social services to low-income families. For instance, the program, "*Mi casa con remesas*", "My home with remittances" developed in 2007 intended to finance mortgage-credit to buy low-income new housing (Casa Propia Colombia, 2018; Viventa, 2017).

Table 6: Remittance Inflows to Colombia, 1970–2012 109



Source: Remittance data are taken from World Bank Prospects Group tables for annual remittance inflows and outflows (October 2013 update), http://go.worldbank.org/092X1CHHD0.

Furthermore, the government has set up several programs to reconnect with and provide services to Colombians living abroad, including Colombia Nos Une, RedEsColombia, Plan Comunidad Exterior, and Colombiano Seguro en el Exterior. All these services and programs offer guidance to Colombians regarding social security, housing banking services, and the sending of remittances to Colombia all while fostering connections between Colombian migrants and their families. Colombian migrants keep up to date with the situation back in Colombia, not only to know about the safety of their families, but also because they wish to keep ties to the country—in particular, as regards real estate investments, health and pension plans. Furthermore, some

[109] The Colombian Diaspora in the United States (2015). RAD Diaspora Profile: The Colombian Diaspora in the United States. MPI, Migration Policy Institute.

Colombians have also planned for a last return trip, for the repatriation of their bodies and a lot in a cemetery close to where their deceased family members already lie.

Nonetheless, even if Colombians' transnational engagements are encouraged by the Colombian government, transnational migrants show lower levels of political participation in their country of origin when compared to other Latin American groups. A study comparing Dominicans, Salvadorans, and Colombians (Guarnizo et al., 2003) found that Colombians were less likely to partake in politics in their home country, in part due to the political violence there. In another comparative study of Mexicans, Dominicans and Colombians in the U.S., Portes and his colleagues found that Colombians engaged in philanthropic activities through middle-class associations (Lions and Kiwanis clubs, charitable women's associations and professional associations). In contrast, Mexicans organized for local community development and Dominicans organized around partisan politics. Differences among these groups were explained by migratory policies in each country and contexts of departure and settlement in their new locales (Portes, Escobar, and Radford, 2007).

Research in Canada on the migration Colombian migration has focused mostly on the political dimension of transnationalism, in particular on refugees' experiences. For example, Riaño-Alcalá et al. (2008) compare the dynamics of internal migration and the international migration of Colombian refugees. Landolt and Goldring (2010) investigate the transnational social fields of emerging political practices in Toronto among social justice activists from Chile, Canada, and Colombia. This last study shows the divergence between Colombian-Canadian and Canadian activists in Canada as to priorities and strategies when collaborating to promote social justice initiatives in Colombia. Community activists from Colombia arrive with their own political agenda and they encounter arenas of political activity conditioned by previous political dialogues between Canadians and Chileans, for example, or Central Americans.

Researchers interested in Colombians have consistently found that mistrust, and a fragmented solidarity among Colombians characterizes the associational life efforts made by its members. It has also been demonstrated how these dynamics are re-enacted transnationally among

Colombian migrants living abroad. According to Goldring and Landolt, Colombians in the U.S., show how:

> The prolonged political instability and the multipolarity of the conflict have produced a generalized climate of insecurity and distrust in Colombia itself, and among Colombian refugees and migrants settled abroad. (2010: 10)

In general, research on Colombian transnational migrants highlights three things: first, that transnational migrants do not make solely economic or political decisions when deciding to migrate across national borders (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 2001; Fuglerud, 1999). Second, in order to study the relations entertained among co-nationals once they have migrated, we must take into account the diverse contexts of departure and settlement. And finally, the availability of new transportation and communication technologies (Castells, 2000; Vertovec, 1999; Guarnizo, Sánchez, Roach, 1999), along with the democratization of travel impacts transnational relations, making them easier to maintain.

Patterns of Mobility and Settlement in Canada and Québec of Colombian Migrants

Colombian immigration in the ’70s and ’80s to Québec was economic. (Labelle et al. 1987; Gosselin, 1984). At the time, most Colombians did not have a post-secondary education and they migrated due to a broad range of socio-economic and socio-political factors. These included the deterioration of living conditions in Colombia, people’s desire to move away from very unequal social structures and the impoverishment of Colombians due to the exploitation and concentration of wealth by the bourgeoisie that tied its fate to that of foreign capital. Also, the decrease in agricultural production caused by latifundism exacerbated the impoverishment of peasants droving them to big cities contributing to a rapid urbanization of the country (Gosselin, 1984). At the same time, problems related to drug trafficking motivated farmers to abandon traditional food crops for more profitable ones such as marijuana, and encouraged fishermen to become smugglers (Gosselin, 1984).

Three main elements attracted Colombian migrants to Québec in the 1970s and 1980s: good salaries, the fact that French was taught in many high schools in Colombia, and the shortage of textile workers in Québec. Many of the first Colombians to establish in Montréal were textile workers at a time when, as Gosselin (1984) points out, this industry was flourishing in Québec and rapidly deteriorating in Colombia. The increase in the arrival of Colombian refugees in Québec since the beginning of the 1990s was due to the rise of paramilitary groups, which contributed to the escalation of armed conflict (Riaño-Alcalá, 2008). In the 2000s the migration of Colombians increased significantly; for the year 2004, Colombia was the primary source of refugee claimants in Canada (Riaño-Alcalá et al., 2008). This trend continued from 2004 to 2012, during which period Colombia was the number one source country[110] of refugees arriving in Canada.

A number of social science studies conducted in the regions of Québec include respondents from Colombia (Blain, 2006; Osorio-Ramirez, 1997; Rojas-Viger 2006; Michaud, 2004; Labelle, Turcotte, Kempeneers and Meintel, 1987; Riaño-Alcalá, 2008; Charland, 2006; Quesada, 2011; Arsenault, 2006, 2009, 2010; Riaño-Alcalá and Goldring, 2014). Some of these studies demonstrate that the growing presence of Colombian migrants in Québec regions outside Montréal can be explained primarily by the application of the regionalization of immigration policy with refugees, family reunification policies, and by the application of the Regular Skilled Worker Program[111] (see Chapter 3 for a complete discussion of Québec migratory apparatus as it relates to this program). I will discuss these broad themes in greater detail in the course of my

[110] The source country category was repealed in 2011, and in 2012 One Year Window Requests were accepted by the Government of Canada. See: https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/bulletins-2011/347-october-7-2011.html, Accessed 9 July, 2021.

[111] Regular Skilled Worker Program allows the province of Québec to receive thousands of immigrants whose skills respond to particular market needs.
https://www.immigration-Québec.gouv.qc.ca/en/immigrate-settle/permanent-workers/requirements-programs/index.html, Accessed, 15 June 2020

analysis (see Chapters 7 and 8) through ethnographic accounts from participants with diverse legal statuses, and diverse contexts of departure and settlement. For now, I will explore further the research addressing the migration of Colombians to Québec.

Migration of Colombians to Québec

A number of studies look at the presence of Colombians in the province, and with the growth of Colombians as a group, scholarly interest in them appears to be growing. Moreover, most of these studies concern Latin American population as a whole (Armony, 2014). When researchers focus specifically on Colombian migrants, they often explore the socio-professional incorporation of this population into the labour market including aspects related to the loss of professional status[112]; for example, Marie-Jeanne Blain's (2006) master's thesis on the difficulties experienced in the socio-professional integration process by Colombians relocated to the Laurentians who hold a university degree. Also worth noting are Rojas-Viger (2006) work on Latin American professional women in Montréal, the conditions of insertion into the university environment and the labour market, Melanie Michaud (2004) master's thesis on the professional trajectories of Colombian male immigrants in Montréal and earlier on, Micheline Labelle et al.'s study (1987) describing and comparing the socio-professional trajectories, the insertion into the labour market and the financial contribution to the family of four groups of immigrant and working-class women in Montréal: Greek, Portuguese, Colombian and Haitian women.

Others have explored Colombian refugees' experiences of forced displacement; for example Riaño-Alcalá (2008) conducted an interdisciplinary research providing a general overview of forced Colombian migration both as concerns country of origin (internally displaced persons in Colombia) and in regard to refugees who left for Ecuador and Canada. Riaño-Alcalá and Goldring (2014) explore widespread fear as one of the main causes for the emigration of Colombians to the city of Vancouver, British Columbia, since the mid-1990s. In this work they address the efforts deployed by Colombian refugees to organize transnational communities.

Martin Charland's (2006) master's thesis explores trust issues among Colombian migrants, living in Québec City, and their experiences of exile while Aurélie Quesada's master's thesis (2011) looks at the socio-cultural integration to Québec of Colombian refugees using an interactionist approach.

Research on the Colombian Transnational Family in Québec

Family-centred transnational practices, and challenges for intra-community relations between migrants from countries in conflict have been taken up by Stéphanie Arsenault (2006, 2009, and 2010). In her 2006 work, Arsenault explores the ties that Colombian refugees sustain with Colombia, which are mainly related to family connections. Colombians sustain their families through visits, calls, gifts, and even plans to return. The author finds that affective ties and family are of greater importance to migrants than any other attachment to Colombia, more than to its territory, climate, lifestyle, or even the culture. Arsenault (2006, 2009) demonstrates that for Colombians, family generates the greatest number of transnational contacts, both through relations of emotional and economic support because

> La famille, nucléaire ou élargie, devient l'élément d'attraction le plus fort et le plus fréquemment invoqué par les participants pour le maintien de liens avec la Colombie. C'est donc dire que pour la majorité des interlocuteurs, les contacts avec la famille à travers les frontières représentent la principale connexion qu'ils souhaitent maintenir. (2009 : 224)

Arsenault's work in Québec opens up new venues to pursue in the study of what family may represent for Colombians and brings a much-needed focus on the affective ties and the emotional landscape of Colombian refugees in Québec. Also, Arsenault (2009) examines the difficulties faced by some Colombians as regards establishing themselves within their ethnic community in Québec. In the following section, I will discuss the places established and frequented by Colombians in which there is a cultural exchange between Latin Americans and with non-immigrant Québécois in Montréal. I conceive these places as sites for developing solidarity networks and new forms of social interaction not marked by the armed conflict that was a

constant in Colombian. Following this, I will look the factors that hinder the lasting formation of a Colombian ethnic community in Montréal.

Even though Colombians are scattered throughout the city, mostly in the neighbourhoods of Villeray, Saint Michel, Parc-Extension, Côte-des-Neiges, Notre Dame de Grâce, Rosemont, La Petite Patrie and Saint Leonard, they settle in neighborhoods that have traditionally welcomed immigrants allowing cultural expression and exchange, such as businesses distributing ethnic products, places of leisure and meeting places such as ethnic restaurants, Spanish-speaking places of worship, cultural associations, dance schools, discotheques, and festivals.

Religion in Colombia and Montréal

The Colombian Catholic Church estimates that 75% of the population is Catholic. However, the national government has never taken a census to better understand the religious affiliations of its citizens. According to the Pew Research Centre (2014), 79% of the population is Catholic, 13% Protestant, and 6% atheist and agnostic, a 5% of the population include nondenominational worshippers and members of other religious groups such as Jews, Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Mennonites. There is also a small percentage of the population that adheres to various syncretistic beliefs.[113]

The above-mentioned religious groups are concentrated in certain geographical regions. For example, Colombians in the Pacific coast blend Catholicism with elements from African animism. The Jewish population is scattered throughout various cities, while most Muslims live on the Caribbean coast because the first Muslims to arrive in Colombia were Arab immigrants fleeing political repression in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century. In the 1960s and 1970s Lebanese nationals fled their home country and settled in Colombia, predominantly

[113] Colombia 2016 International Religious Freedom Report https://co.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/official-reports/colombia-2016-international-religious-freedom-report/, accessed 9 July, 2020.

along the Caribbean coast.[114] Finally, most adherents of indigenous animistic religions live in remote in rural areas. A small Taoist community is located in a mountainous region of Santander Department. In Montréal, Colombians participating in this research stated that they search for religious communities to keep practising their faiths, and a large majority continue or begin practising Catholicism within communities already established by other Latin Americans.

In Montréal, Colombians of different denominations tend to join already established religious communities rather than form their own. Since a high percentage of Colombians and Latin Americans practice Catholicism, their presence in Catholic parishes can be better tracked and understood as compared with the groups attended by those other religious. Most practising Colombian Catholics in Montréal frequent Notre-Dame-de-Guadalupe Basilica for ceremonies in Spanish such as Christmas celebrations; this Basilica is the centre of the city's Latin American Catholic Mission. Other rituals are held at Saint Joseph's Oratory where Latin Americans, including seasonal workers, attend a Spanish service on Sundays at 3:00 pm.[115] Also, the churches of Saint Michel; Sainte-Thérèse-d'Avila; Saint-Gilbert; Saint-Arsène; and Notre-Dame-du-Bel-Amour host masses for Spanish speakers. These activities are organized by half a dozen Hispanic Catholic fraternities and brotherhoods, including those of Señor de los Milagros, San Martin de Porres, Santa Rosa de Lima, San Judas Tadeo, and Divino Salvador del Mundo.

Most Hispanic evangelical Christians frequent the Iglesia Nueva Vida, an extension of the Église de la Nouvelle Vie in Longueuil. Hispanic evangelical Christians are associated with the Association Chrétienne pour la Francophonie and with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The Church of God Ministry of Jesus Christ International, *Iglesia de Dios Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional* (*IDMJI*) was founded in 1972 as a Christian Church by María Luisa

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114 Colombia's religious minorities: the growing Muslim community https://colombiareports.com/colombias-religious-minorities-muslim-community/, accessed 9 July 2020.

115 Schedule of masses, St Joseph Oratory https://www.saint-joseph.org/en/spirituality/faith-encounters/masses-schedule/, Accessed 10 July 2020

Piraquive, born in the municipality of Chipatá, department of Santander in Colombia. Maria Luisa Piraquive is the only woman in the world to lead a church of Colombian origin. The Church has grown and numbers 850 temples in 45 countries. It reaches its many adherents via Bible teachings transmitted by video and in several languages.[116] Lastly, Colombians can be found in the *Iglesia Pentecostal Unida en Montréal* is Protestant movement emphasizes personal experiences of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Colombian Ethnic Food, Folklore, and Festivals in Montréal

According to the Ville de Montréal website,[117] the city hosts over 100 festivals and public events each year, "nearly half of which transcend borders. The number of cultural activities continues to grow, thanks to the friendly spirit of Montréalers, the excellence of its cultural institutions, and the diversity of the arts sectors" (See Ville de Montréal, 2020). Colombians have participated in different festivals including the Weekends of the World at Parc Jean-Drapeau[118], where every summer Colombians and other ethnic communities come together to share their culture and traditions. Colombians in particular come together to celebrate the 20th of July, Independence Day. Musicians, dancers, and other artists also participate in different festivals disseminating Colombian folklore, a rich musical tradition, and other artistic expressions.

Colombian businesses have become more and more numerous in recent years; they include restaurants, markets, and grocery stores located on the island of Montréal and in Laval and Longueuil, including several that are very popular. Through these enterprises, Colombians share

[116] According to https://idmji.org/en/sister-maria-luisa-piraquive/, Accessed 22 July, 2020.

[117]See Ville de Montreal Calendar of festivals and cultural events, 2020. http://ville.Montreal.qc.ca/culture/en/calendar-festivals-and-cultural-events, Accessed 10 July 2020.

[118] "Week-ends du monde event, presented by Loto-Québec, provides Montrealers of all origins with the opportunity to celebrate and share their culture and traditions with the entire population, through music, dance, culinary discoveries and family activities".https://www.parcjeandrapeau.com/en/week-ends-du-monde-Montreal/, accessed 4 July 2020

their culinary and gastronomic know-how with Montrealers and with fellow Colombians. Fellow migrants often express nostalgic feelings evoked by flavours, aromas and memories on their websites. Appendix E provides a list of well-known Colombian restaurants, bakeries, markets, food delivery businesses, dance schools, music bands, and religious places of worship.[119] I will discuss the significance of these places of solidarity in further detail shortly after the following description of Colombian community life in Montréal.

Places of Solidarity: Creating a Colombian Community in Montréal?

The concept of community in the classical sense does not reflect the high degree of heterogeneity of this group, and the fragmentation and distrust across class, regional and ethnic lines (Riaño-Alcalá and Goldring, 2014) that impede the formation of a cohesive Colombian community in Montréal. In the case of Colombians, engaging with co-nationals in Montréal is avoided due to the perceived danger that the unknown other represents. Colombians refrain from seeking out a network among co-nationals due to ingrained distrust. Even when facing pressing settlement needs Colombian migrants find support primarily from the Canadian or Québec government through organizations, or programs intended to welcome newcomers rather than through other Colombians.

In this respect they are unlike other migrants, for example Portuguese, Haitian,[120] Syrian-Lebanese communities[121] who sometimes find support through community networks. Moreover,

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[119] I am not including in this list other places or service providers that Colombians frequent, such as clothing stores, hair parlors, physicians, orthodontists and dentists.

[120] For example, the Haitian community in Montréal sent an open letter to Le Devoir "Une image toxique et fausse de l'essence même de notre identité" to protest a column written by Christian Rioux on the 17 of July 2020 entitled: «**Se rat kay kap manje kay**».
https://www.ledevoir.com/opinion/idees/583036/une-image-toxique-et-fausse-de-l-essence-meme-de-notre-identite, Accessed 28 July 2020.

[121] Our Diverse cities, No. 7 Spring 2010. The Metropolis Project. See:
https://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/ODC_vol7_spring2010_e.pdf#page=75

highly uneven patterns of transnational activities are typical of Colombian migrants (Al-Ali et al., 2001). Once they are settled, Colombians establish networks among those from their country of origin in their new locales (Portes and Dewind, 2007: 10, Riaño-Alcalá et al., 2008) but normally this only happens after they have been able to assess their situation and have had time to get to know other Colombians better.

In what follows I will show that Colombians' experiences with a difficult geography, the lived, learned and reproduced dynamics experienced during an armed conflict, and the impact and the persistence of the illegal drug trafficking are embodied realities which become re-enacted transnationally among Colombian migrants living abroad.

The Long Arm of Regional Loyalties: An Adverse Geography

Colombians, regardless of their legal status (refugees, skilled workers, and international students), social class, ethnic affiliation, or religious background, migrate with a deep sense of regionalism that characterizes the country itself. Each geographical region differs from the other culturally, economically, politically, and socially. Several studies (in the States (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999; Collier and Gamarra, 2003); Spain (Restrepo Velez, 2006); the United Kingdom (Bouvier, 2007; McIlwaine, 2005), and Canada (Arsenault, 2006) have demonstrated how persistent social divisions in Colombia are replicated abroad. Going by these studies, Colombians have difficulties when establishing groups or associations based on a political agenda, and are slightly more successful when organizing cultural activities, festivals, celebrations or musical events to celebrate Colombian cultural traditions. These cultural activities foment ephemeral bonds of solidarity. In Montréal, they take place in urban spaces such as bars, parks, and metro stations. Ocassionally, such events take place at la Maison des Ameriques,[122] a meeting space for the Latin American community in Montréal. La Maison des Ameriques offers cultural activities, business development and social orientation.

[122] See La Maison des Ameriques at : https://maisondesameriques.ca/, Accessed 28 Oct, 2020

Furthermore, in Montréal, some Colombians identify and gravitate, at the community level, towards Colombians from the same region of origin (i.e. people from Antioquia are commonly called *paisas*, from Bogotá, *rolos*, from the Caribbean coast, *costeños*, and from Cali[123], capital of the Valle del Cauca Department, *caleños*. They also interact with Colombians from other regions, other Latin Americans, and with native-born Francophone Québécois. Common interests, non-political in nature, such as cultural activities, the planning of celebrations in which dancing or musical representations are present (Arsenault, 2006) tend to reinforce associational life among Colombians, particularly among people from the same region.

For instance, for *caleños*, salsa music and dancing is a tradition passed from one generation to the next since the 1960's, when it became popular in this region. Originally, salsa emerged in Puerto Rico and New York and then became popular throughout Colombia, especially in Cali. Colombian migrants who travelled to the United States brought records back with them popularizing salsa in the *barrios*. In the 1970's and 1980's drug lords from the Cali cartel sponsored bands and musicians who played at large parties where they showed off their wealth and obtained the support of Cali's salsa music lovers. (Ulloa, 1988). Colombians from the Cali region living in Montréal who participated in my research agree that you must dance if you want to date. In fact, there are quite a few Colombian salsa dance schools in Montréal (see Appendix E).

The Collective Salsa Descalza, for example, founded by Carmen Ruiz[124] and Juan Sebastian Mejia (both caleños) in 2009, offers free dancing workshops and presentations in the streets of Montréal. These sporadic encounters showcase Colombian folklore to Montréalers, and make it possible to create transient moments of solidarity among Colombian passers-by. However, these

[123] Cali is known as the world's salsa capital.

[124] Carmen Ruiz: Al ritmo de la Gypsy kumbia Orchestra, Pulso (2019)
Carmen Ruiz was born in the city of Cali, Colombia. She studied literature and sociology at the Universidad del Valle (Cali). She arrived in Montréal in 2000 at the age of twenty. She studied at the University of Concordia, obtaining a degree in Hispanic Studies and Contemporary Dance. https://www.pulso.ca/2019/02/carmen-ruiz-al-ritmo-de-la-gypsy-cumbia-orchestra/ Accessed 19 July 2020.

dynamics also reveal the lack of group cohesion among Colombians and their inability to distance themselves from previous regional tensions. In Canada, for example, there is fear and distrust of regional affiliation due to "a legacy of suspicion about region of origin, political affiliation or class divisions" (Riaño-Alcalá, 2006). This fear may cause cautious behaviour among Colombians who decide to participate in casual and sporadic events, such as dancing salsa in the streets of Montréal.

The ephemeral and momentary affinities manifested in such public events does not necessarily lead to an ongoing commitment to building community among Colombians. Regional divisions exemplify Colombian's distrust of political and economic institutions, a lack of group identity, and a lack of common vision, and or aspirations (Bouvier, 2007). Some Colombians participating in this research stated that they do interact with other Colombians during festivals, parties, when buying ethnic products from markets or small businesses, to take dance lessons for themselves or for their children. However, as interactions deepen, different political views, or legal status, social class, religious background, and ethnicities have caused divisions and problematic interactions with other Colombians. For example, two participants said that during French as a Second Language (FSL) courses where other Colombians were students, disputes arose between them where they accused each other of being guerrilla and paramilitaries. Their accents indicated that the protagonists were of different regional origins.

Similar cases have occurred during FSL courses in relation to legal status, in which a Colombian with skilled worker legal status overheard a conversation involving a Colombian who was a refugee claimant. The skilled worker accused the refugee claimant of trying to get away with something. Stereotyping, gossiping, scapegoating and unmerited blame fuels distrust among Colombians. In particular, refugees tend to isolate from the group to avoid being criticized. Moreover, their experiences in the home country affect the way they behave in their new country of residence. In addition to isolation, shame, fear and mistrust, my participants were convinced that intense competition, gossip, arrogance were also reasons behind Colombians they fail to come together. A participant briefly states the reasons for not wanting to engage or connect with other Colombians,

> I don't like to get in touch with Colombians because, first of all, some complain a lot about being far away and supposedly they were better than they are here, others are envious and resentful, or they keep badmouthing each other, and at the end of the day, you don't really know who is who.
> (Refugee woman, arrived in 2005).

Although some skilled workers and international students, appear to have closer relationships with other Colombians whom they knew before they migrated (who also tend to come from the same region, be of similar social class and hold the same legal status). Longer- established migrants offer support and share information on waiting times and other aspects of the process of immigrating to Canada. Other participants (of skilled worker status) reported finding living accommodation close to their friends or acquaintances from Colombia and that they were the first link in the networks that allowed them to find accommodation and jobs in Québec.

However, in 2004, during the International Conference on Affordable Housing held in Toronto, Canada, researchers Abigail Moriah, Luz Rodríguez and Luisa Sotomayor stated that Colombians "arrive with large reserves of human capital,[125] but start with little social capital, and that they reject the idea of being geographically limited, as in an ethnic enclave" (Sotomayor et al., 2004). Colombians, particularly skilled workers are healthy, educated, and have job training, work experience and other qualifications. Yet, they lack social networks to mobilize those social resources. This is especially true when conflicts in the home country are revisited, posing important challenges to social integration (Arsenault, 2006).

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[125] Sotomayor and Moriah refer to human and social capital based on Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) theory. Thus social capital refers to the power a person has to mobilize a set of resources that are linked to the qualities of social relationships. And human capital refers to the power to mobilize the resources embodied in an individuals' health, education, job training and other qualifications. Cultural capital is the power to mobilize resources through the values, norms and modes of thinking that an individual has. And economic capital is the power to mobilize financial resources to access any desired good of the society (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

This goes against the typical behaviour of most immigrants, so it is important to study migration from countries or regions with civil war or internal conflicts (for example, peoples of the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Syria) while looking at previous social divisions and thinking about social integration strategies for these populations, which are deeply fragmented internally. For example, the presence of a deep-rooted classism is a determining factor for Kurds, Iranians, Zimbabweans, and Somalis to avoid social gatherings in their communities, mainly due to perceived class differences within their communities (Lewis, 2010). Also, Kelly's research (2003) among Bosnian refugees resettled in Great Britain demonstrated how high levels of distrust, after the war, undermined in important ways community formation in the host country. Bosnians find it difficult to trust each other in their new locales, which leads one to suspect these other groups may be similarly fragmented.

The Long Arm of the Armed Conflict: Fear, Suspicion, and Paranoia

Mistrust of other Colombians was prevalent among those I studied, while cohesion pertained mainly to families and small groups of friends. These immigrants had sporadic encounters with other Colombians at festivals, parties, restaurants, and soccer matches. Luis Guarnizo and Díaz argue that

> Colombians in the States tend not to associate with one another at least not with Colombians they don't know because one doesn't know who the other person is and what they are involved in. (Guarnizo, Sanchez and Roach 1999: 373)

My observations support these conclusions. The lack of social cohesion and high levels of distrust can be observed in Montréal through the ways in which Colombians establish contacts with each other. For example, some participants in this research declared suspicion of other Colombians' political positions, suspected some of having links to drug trafficking and actively avoided associating with people who might tarnish their reputation. This strategy allows them to avoid being stereotyped in negative ways, and to circumvent disputes with people with differing political ideologies. Similar patterns are found among Colombians living in the States

(Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999; Collier and Gamarra, 2003); Spain (Restrepo Velez, 2006); Canada (Pilar Riaño-Alcalá, Arsenault) and the United Kingdom (Bouvier, 2007; McIlwaine, 2005).

> There is little unity among the Colombian population linked with a severe lack of trust and widespread fear… This fear creates a state of perpetual stress for Colombians in London, which serves to deteriorate unity and trust there. Overall, the distrust of political institutions, ongoing corruption, family feuds, and fear of deportation, get imported to life in London. The damage this carryover of tensions from Colombia has on life in London causes some to remain hyper vigilant of their compatriots. (McIlwaine, 2005)

In Spain, Restrepo Velez (2006) notes that the vestiges of the armed conflict in Colombia extends to life in Madrid where Colombians live in fear and distrust each other, believing that other Colombians are informants with political agendas to fulfill. Similarly, in Montréal Colombians said that they felt they had failed to flee the long arm of the guerrilla or paramilitaries, since they could not freely express their political views for fear of retaliation. There is a sense of paranoia among Colombians who feel unable to escape the tensions developed at home. Another example of widespread fear, emanating from personal issues in Colombia, is the fear of family members and close acquaintances who continue to perpetuate domestic or sexual violence. These fears add to an already stressful migration experience by further fracturing an already strongly divided group.

The Long Arm of the Drug Trade

The drug trade has contributed to the social fragmentation of Colombians in part due to the stigma and stereotype associated with Colombia that is a source of frustration and shame for many. Colombian identity abroad has become synonymous with international drug trafficking, such that Colombians tend to isolate and distance themselves from other compatriots. (Guarnizo et al., 2011). This reputation spread via news medias and television shows such as Miami Vice and Narcos. News concentrates on violent stories of notorious drug lords like Pablo Escobar,

instilling fear of Colombians. The great majority of my participants dislike this stereotype, and say they have heard jokes or have been asked at least once by Montrealers whether they were involved in drug trafficking activities. These stereotypes of Colombians at places of destination affect the ways Colombians interact with each other and with the host society. In sum, as Guarnizo and Diaz (1999) have observed as concerns New York, Florida and Los Angeles

> The mistrust and exclusion generated by the stigma of drugs, regionalism and racism prevent even horizontal solidarity from expanding. This process results in high levels of social fragmentation that impede the formation of larger economic, political, socio-cultural transnational ventures. Ironically, the only Colombians who seem to enjoy extended social cohesion are those organized around drug trafficking. Such circles are characterized by patron-client relations, the introjections of similar collective values, bounded solidarity and enforceable trust. (Guarnizo and Diaz, 1999: 416)

Conclusion

Studying Colombians can be challenging, as they do not form an easily identifiable ethnic community. It is important to consider the diversity in Colombian migrants' reasons for migrating and in the demographics that characterize this population, along with the many significant divisions within the group. Nonetheless, there is an underlying and unifying characteristic shared by Colombian migrants that is by no means peculiar to them; namely, the important role given to the family. In this chapter, I offered a socio-demographic profile of Colombian migrants in North America highlighting patterns of mobility and settlement. I also explored the migratory waves that brought them to Canada and addressed research on the transnational migration of Colombians to North America and Québec. I analyzed the obstacles that have generally deterred or at least slowed down the formation of a Colombian community in Montréal, while describing the places and events where Colombians gather to exchange among themselves, with other Latin Americans and others, and where they can eat, dance, celebrate, pray and play soccer in peace.

In the following chapter, I explore in depth the stories of six transnational Colombian families living in Montréal to show how migration is embedded in personal biography, in the maintenance of long-distance relationships, in embodied sensations, memories and emotions, and finally in people's actions and imaginations. I approach family as an intersubjective space and as a structure of experience. In doing so, I focus on the emotions and the experience-near accounts of family life stretched across national borders.

CHAPTER 7: Transnational Family: Imagination, Perception and Experience

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to delve into the life stories of six transnational Colombian families living in Montréal and overseas and to show how migration is embedded in personal biography, in the maintenance of long-distance relationships, in embodied sensations, memories and emotions, and finally in people's actions and imaginations. I begin approaching migration as a relational phenomenon, and explore family as an intersubjective space and a structure of experiences not only an institution. In doing so, I focus on the emotions of my interlocutors and their accounts of family life stretched across national borders.

In particular, I explore the way migrants *stay in touch* and practice *distant care* (Baldassar, 2007). Staying in touch and distant care are notions that allow me to anchor the volatile nature of research on emotions, and on the fluid and changing makeup of families in movement, not only across space (e.g., migration) but also across time (e.g., life course). Most importantly, a focus on people's experiences and emotions allows me to effectively study migration using an experience-centred approach.

Families Keeping in Touch, Routine, Ritual and Crisis Care

Colombian migrants participate in the family life course through an ongoing exchange of emotional and other kinds of support, which in turn sustains transnational families. Despite distance, transnational families do keep in touch and practice distant care whenever possible. Anthropologist Loretta Baldassar (2007) speaks of the aspiration migrants seem to have to

maintain open channels of communication as well as some level of emotional connection with their families. As a transnational family goes through its life course each family member goes through their individual life cycle (birth, marriage, sickness, death), different types of staying in touch become necessary.

There are three principal types of care or ways of staying in touch according to Baldassar: *crisis care*, which generally involves unexpected events such as serious illnesses, death, the time leading up to and after the birth of babies, and when parents lose their independence and become frail or ill (Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding, 2007). This type of care often requires a visit back home. The practice and performance of visits are often motivated by emotions, particularly guilt and nostalgia (Baldassar, 2007), or feelings of obligation, as illustrated by Elaine's case, described later in this chapter.

Ritual care generally revolves around special events such as birthdays, anniversaries, and religious celebrations. For these occasions, Colombians communicate via e-mails, posts on Facebook, or using family chats, usually in WhatsApp, and for very significant events, some travel and reunite with their families whether it is in Colombia or elsewhere in the world.
For example, one of my informants got married in Canada and, via a video call, was accompanied by virtual guests who were not able to come, from Spain, Colombia and the United States.

Lastly, *routine care* involves day-to-day caring, phone calls, e-mails, or prayers, which sustain a sense of family across borders over time. Staying in touch becomes possible through two types of technologies, communication technologies (VoIP—Voice over Internet Protocol, Skype, and instant messaging apps for smartphones such as WhatsApp) and travel technologies (Baldassar, 2007). Many of my participants had lunch daily with their families via FaceTime, and they even

went shopping. Some others started writing letters, sending packages, or gifts with friends and family going to Colombia. Still other Colombians participated in prayer chains.[126]

Continuity and Rupture

Family-related life experiences are a recurrent topic in the life stories of my participants. Certainly, the connections and the continuity in the relationships between Colombian migrants and their transnational families facilitated my research. However, I also look at breakdowns in family relationships, since some participants did not want to sustain a relationship with their families. There are also cases of forced continuity where relationships were maintained out of a sense of duty or moral obligation to parents or other family members. These are harder to explore, as certain respondents associate a feeling of loss and shame about not having an ideal, united and harmonious family.

Family and home often constitute experiences and sites of discontinuity violence where is exercised at some level (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001) and where migration only amplifies the cracks, as we see in the narratives of Colombian migrants. For example, gender roles between partners changed significantly in the host society. Colombians living in Montréal experience a shift in family dynamics because women usually receive financial assistance and other types of

[126] Colombians, usually Catholics, participated in prayer chains. A prayer chain begins with a message through WhatsApp or Facebook to family and friends who want to participate. The message contains instructions to receive the archangels for seven days. Anyone wishing to join should arrange an altar with white flowers, a candle, a letter with three wishes, an apple, and the addresses of three different people. The individual who has finished hosting the angels for seven days will send them to a different house at a certain time and date so that the new host can welcome them. Each person's intentions during the prayer chains are very personal and will vary depending on the person's needs. However, each archangel has a unique mission and brings special blessings, for instance Archangel Jophiel provides protection, enlightenment and clarity of mind, Archangel Chamuel nurtures unconditional love and gratitude and Archangel Gabriel intercedes for a pure heart and generosity. The Archangel Michael provides strength and courage, while Archangel Ariel spreads truth and wisdom on earth, and finally Archangel Sachiel encourages forgiveness and enhances the capacity to be compassionate to one another.

support through governmental benefits such as the CCB, the Canadian Child Benefit, which is meant to alleviate child poverty and is allocated to mothers. Also, access to CPE's, Centres de la petite enfance, allows women to consider joining the labour force, rather than being confined to their homes and traditional gender roles.

In the following section, I present life stories that were shared by participants. Their narratives presenting seemingly mundane aspects of everyday life allow us a deeper comprehension of the relational processes of migration. They also give us glimpses of the unfinished, transitory and ever-changing emotions that are experienced in the inter-subjective space of the family and that influence decisions related to migration.

Federico's[127] Family Story: A Duty to Provide

 [128]

Food and places: Hot chocolate with cheese and baguette, rice and chicken with tomatoes and onions at my home, coffees at Pain doré and at a café in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood in Montréal.

[127] I use pseudonyms, rather than numbers or codes, to humanize my participants' life stories and, at the same time, to preserve their confidentiality.

[128] Regarding the importance of cacao cultivation in present-day Colombia: https://www.colombia.co/en/colombia-country/colombian-chocolate-special/, Accessed 31 July, 2020.

On a rainy Friday afternoon, Federico and his family travelled to the vast tropical prairies of Colombia. Going down the Andes, they climbed into their grandfather's old Jeep and drove through 12 hours of dirt roads; this family loved to spend time outdoors. When he was three months old in the 1970s, Federico made his first such trip and continued to do so almost every weekend for the next 20 years, until he was required to take a much longer, and difficult trip to New York. Federico came from a large family. His grandfather was a wealthy businessman; however, his nuclear family (single mother and sisters) had very limited means. His life was one of contrasts; with his grandfather he went to the Rotary club but at home with his sisters, there was sometimes not enough food in the refrigerator. In high school, at the age of 16, teenagers in Colombia have to decide their future course of studies or line of work. Federico did not really know what to do, but finally chose to go to university to study anthropology. He was not merely choosing a career; he was also choosing a life path that would allow him to find the means to provide for his family.

At the end of the '90s, after many empty hours with his buddies on a park bench, Federico realized that he was in a time and place with absolutely no viable future. Federico had figured out a way to escape, or so he believed. He had started to study anthropology at a state university. Sadly, his mother could no longer afford to pay for his education. As a single mother, she had to reassess the household's priorities. A park bench thus provided a space for Federico to consider his life and his future. Normally he sat there the whole time, watching his friends going off one-by-one to Spain, Brazil and the USA. One Day, while he was seated on the park bench he was thinking to himself: who will be next? And then it was his turn. He decided to request a visa aided by a wealthy uncle who had the means was willing to support his application.

His objective on this trip was to work in the United States, make enough money, go back home to Colombia, pay for his education and help out at home. With minimal English skills, he found a job in a fast-food restaurant and worked there for about 8 months. He made enough cash to pay for another two semesters and also bought a computer for his family, and then returned home as scheduled. He went on with his studies, attended political debates, and joined a football team as well as an organization that organized peaceful political rallies. He started distributing leaflets and invited his classmates to participate in the activist movements of their faculty.

Nevertheless, infiltrating F.A.R.C. guerrilla fighters started to demand more participation and a greater allegiance to their group than he was prepared to give. After he refused to join the F.A.R.C., the militants threatened to give information regarding the whereabouts of his home, and the location of his mother and siblings. Federico was forced to leave, and with little but a valid visa, he returned to the U.S. and remained lawfully for six months, though he worked illegally for a while longer.

September 11, 2001

At this point in Federico's life the events September 11, 2001 dramatically altered his situation. As an illegal alien in the United States, he remained vigilant, distrustful and fearful of deportation or arrest at any moment. Applying for refugee status in the United States took up time and resources that he did not have.

Federico became an illegal alien in the country he had grown up believing was the land of opportunity, home of the American dream. He had heard of Canada, a host nation of refugees, and knew somebody who had the information to get him across the border. He called a lawyer, whom he referred to as "the hippie lawyer". This was a lawyer in Vermont who helps refugees get over the border legitimately, mainly by informing them they have a right to cross it and can ask for protection if their life is at risk in Colombia. Federico purchased a rucksack and bus fare. His main assets were his books and his sense of a future awaiting him across the border. Travelling by bus, he felt that there was not much left to lose. He was haunted by the fear of being detained for holding a Colombian passport, and more seriously by the fact that his visa had expired. He managed to get to the border, despite the checks along the route by American immigration. When he arrived in Canada, he found that his rucksack had been lost on the bus.

Crossing the Border

And so Frederico found himself at the beginning of a new life, with his few possessions — most of his books, clothes, and shoes — gone. All he had was a twenty-dollar bill, a couple of books and the clothes he was wearing. After he crossed the border, he had to wait for about eight hours to get processed at the Lacolle Checkpoint (about 60 km south of Montréal) by agents of the

CBSA. He was hungry, tired, and felt deeply alone. He received various forms to fill out and was then sent to the Montréal YMCA where he was housed in a room shared with other migrants. There, he had three meals a day, a place to stay, a new language to learn, and above all, a lot of time. Federico used to stroll Montréal streets for hours, as he recalls:

> I didn't choose to jump into this river, I just went with the flow. It's the first thing you do here, go with the flow. They tell you to study French, so I studied French.

He felt quite alone at the time and frequently phoned his family using calling cards to tell them what he was experiencing. Federico was the first person in his family to migrate, though his grandfather and several family members had travelled to the U.S. and Europe as tourists. However, he was the first in his family to travel as a refugee and it was hard for them to comprehend his new situation. He says,

> It's very difficult to explain to someone who hasn't seen snow what it's like, you try to make comparisons, but you never manage to explain it, it's something you have to experience.
> *Es muy difícil explicarle a alguien que no ha visto la nieve como es la nieve, se hace es a punta de comparaciones, pero nunca lo logra uno explicar, es algo que uno tiene que vivir para contarlo.*

The Division of Refugee Protection (RPD) sent written notice of its decision to accept Federico's request for asylum. He received an account of the grounds for this determination; the RPD also sent a copy to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Every day for about nine months, Federico checked his mail waiting for this letter. He finished immersion training in French, and soon after that, he applied to university. He was accepted at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQÀM), and requested financial aid from the Québec government through its loan and grant programs.

Federico graduated from UQÀM, with a degree in sociology. He lives with his wife (they met at university and she is not from Colombia) and children in Montréal. He sustains his

transnational family connections primarily via the use of telecommunications and sends remittances whenever he can. His mother and sisters send him gifts and food with people travelling to Canada and have visited him in Montréal.

Honouring Your Mother and Father: A Duty to Provide

Examining Colombian migrants' and their close relatives' experiences allows us to see the connections, obligations, and numerous frustrations that are found in transnational families. Some themes appear to be more relevant for certain families; for instance, the increased responsibility expected of offspring and the hopes invested in them which easily give rise to feelings of duty on the part of the adult children. A recurrent theme among younger respondents was a sense of duty towards their parents; in other words, caring and keeping in touch is not only desirable, but also represents a set of commitments that they feel obliged to honour.

For example, Federico was not able to complete his undergraduate degree because it was impossible for his parents to pay for his education. He had difficulty finding a job as a teenager in the late '90s when the neoliberal policies implemented earlier in the decade caused a major financial crisis. As his family had other urgent needs that shifted their financial priorities a, Federico stepped up to the challenge of parenting his younger sisters, his father having left when he was a young boy. He felt culturally compelled to provide for his family, yet was unable to get an education or find a job, Federico's emigration initially arose from a heightened feeling of duty towards his family. While in the United States, he sent a small sum of money every month and called whenever he could to keep his family abreast of his situation. Ironically, forced migration as a refugee allowed him to fulfill his duty to provide. Although he could not offer his family financial stability, he provided his mother with an easier situation, in his words, "When I left it was one less mouth to feed."

José Luis and Elaine's Family Story

Food and places: coffees with José Luis, quiche and coffee with his mother at a Concordia University cafeteria. Additional interviews via Skype, strolls and encounters by chance on the street and on the metro.

José Luis was 6 years old at in 1999, a time of economic crisis, as mentioned earlier. His parents were both out of work. Moreover, his father was a member of the union[129] at the bank where he worked as a cashier. José, who now has lived in North America for 18 years, left Colombia with his family (father, mother and older brother). The night before their departure, they stayed at his aunt's place. Everything was packed and everyone was crying, but he did not know where they were going or why; he was told they were going on a vacation. At around 3:00 am he asked his mother, "Are we going now?" "No, no, no" his mother answered, "not yet". A couple of hours later they went to the airport; he was very tired, so he improvised a pillow out of a pile of luggage and tried to sleep.

The first days in the United States were very hard for José Luis. He cannot forget their host, a bad-tempered woman from Colombia who could not stand noise or children, he says. His parents scrambled to find a place to live, jobs, schools, English as a Second Language courses, food, beds, everything needed to start anew. Meanwhile, they wanted the boys to behave like little adults: "Don't play and don't make any noise!" his parents told them. José Luis remembers that he realized that they were not going back to Colombia and that it was not a vacation when his parents asked him constantly not to play. He would look at pictures of his cousins and cry. When he asked his mother about them, and she yelled, "Stop looking at pictures because it will make you feel sad."

His childhood was interrupted; José Luis remembers that he did not feel like a boy anymore. He no longer played or felt carefree, such that he developed high levels of anxiety and felt frightened when going to school, especially because he changed schools so often. "I am in my early twenties and have changed schools 10 times in my life," he said. José Luis had a visceral reaction

[129] Colombia has for several decades been the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. Every year numerous union leaders, union activists and union members are assassinated. Over 3,000 trade unionists have been murdered since the mid-1970s and nobody has been brought to justice in the vast majority of the cases. Justice for Colombia (JFC). (2016). Focus: Trade Union Rights in Colombia. *International Union Rights, 23* (1), 16–28. doi:10.14213/inteuniorigh.23.1.0016) accessed January 2017.

to these changes, vomiting every Monday. He was deeply afraid of not understanding English and not being able to make friends. Moreover, his parents fought a lot and he could not sleep listening to their arguments and worrying about them separating. The levels of anxiety he experienced were too heavy for him. He says, "I was afraid of being afraid, it was a never-ending cycle, you know?"

Migrating as Children

The stories of those who migrated as children are especially important as they illustrate the challenges of being a child migrant, regardless of legal status. Children live often in precarious housing and feel discriminated against at school; moreover, they are told half-truths and must meet the strict demands of their parents. For instance, they are typically often told to speak well in Spanish, and are sometimes made fun of by adults when they pronounce incorrectly or when they conjugate verbs poorly, although no one is teaching them to speak, write or even read properly. By listening, children are expected to learn. Moreover, children are forbidden from speaking in English or French at home among siblings, even if communication is easier in those languages. Moreover, children are sometimes asked to act as translators in difficult circumstances, such as when crossing the border. Older siblings are often expected to fill in as parents when the need arises and to behave as adults. For example, José Luis remembers his father telling him to be a man, "*Sea varón mijo*!" resulting in emotional distress and visceral embodied reactions as described earlier. Jose Luis was dealing with mental health issues, and his father's advice to be a man validated wisespread and archaic attitudes some Colombians hold about masculinity.

While José felt upset for not being able to act like a grown man while still a child, his father's demand shows how migration can affect the family as a whole, and how children must assume early on responsibilities that may be harmful to them but beneficial for the family. José Luis was reprimanded for not being able to adapt quickly to new schools and for his expression of distress, sadness, anger and fear as manifested by episodes of vomiting, in particular on Mondays.

As a child migrant, he was unaware of his illegal status for some time. Nonetheless, he expressed his emotional distress and his parents did not know how to help him navigate it. Though Elaine deeply regrets not being able to help him, even when she recognized that her son needed help, she could not provide it. In Canada, José Luis received professional assistance at school from a psychologist who saved his life, as he put it. For his family, everything that had happened to them was unfortunate, but somehow normal; yet José Luis had high levels of anxiety. It was only when José Luis could express all the emotions and distress attached to his migratory journey that he started finding ways to manage his anxiety.

Since he only lived in Colombia until he was 6 years old, José Luis may not have internalized the "emotion rules" that boys there are expected to follow. He was expected not to cry, not to complain, not to express any anguish or pain, and most importantly he was not to vomit or express emotional distress at school or after crossing the border illegally. José Luis's deviant embodied emotions challenged his parents' ideas about acceptable behaviour.
José Luis emotional distress illuminates the plight of migrants caught between an imagined future and a very inadequate present. José Luis shows compassion towards his parents when he says that he understands that his father did not know any better.

When I asked him about his life project, he said:

> For my future, I want to become a citizen for sure. But I really want to help children and perhaps to have a family and children, to teach them values, and have a peaceful life, not just money. Yes, we need money, but it is not happiness. I want peace and a stable family. I may go somewhere else, I don't know, but if I do, I do not want to do that to my children. I would rather they live in only one place. And I don't want them to feel what I did living in three countries.

Conceptually, a life-project refers to:

> the conception, intention and practice of seeing one's life in terms of certain directionality, velocity and destination, [having a life-project] serves as a source of self-control- the possession being instrumental in one's continuing capability to be responsible for interpretations made, relations entered into and actions taken. (Rapport 2003: 7)

In that sense, bearing in mind the multiple macroeconomic, social and political constraints (such as the 2008 financial crisis) that Jose Luis and his fmaily faced, their hope for a better future allow them, nonetheless, a certain degree of agency. Agency that highlights the importance of the domestic, and the intimate sphere of family as a modest space for migrants to fulfill their life projects.

2008 Financial Crisis

A few years went by and Jose Luis and his family remained in the United States illegally. Unlike his mother and father, he did not realize what their legal situation was for a long time. Elaine and her husband were able to get work in the informal sector. Elaine found work as an accountant for a cleaning company and the parents finally were able to provide some financial stability to their children, or so they thought. The family had moved to a suburban home, bought during the real state bubble, right before the financial crisis of 2008 in the U.S. At the time, Jose Luis was a young teenager and managed to deal with his anxiety and fear. Having learned to speak English and living in the same address for a while helped, he believes.

Later, though, when he was in high school, he became acutely conscious of his illegal status. His older sibling was unable to obtain a driving licence like other young men his age, and so he drove with a false licence. He was eventually stopped by a law enforcement official; although he was not immediately deported, he had to go to court. This event pushed Jose's family to decide to seek a feasible alternative to their predicament. Fearing deportation, they migrated once again. A couple of weeks later, the entire family moved to Canada, selling all their

possessions, and putting the rest in the back of a car. Jose Luis and his brother expected to apply for the DREAM Act, but did not qualify, because they were too young. A friend of a friend had information on how to get across the border illegally. The cost for showing them the route was $2,000 per person.

Crossing the Border Illegally

One morning in December, they arrived at the Canada-U.S. border as planned, but the person who was supposed to show them the route to cross the border was not there, so they kept driving. Silence reigned. When they stopped at a gas station, they saw a police officer; and they were frightened. “We were sweating bullets”, José Luis recalls. They were not detained by the authorities, as this was a chance occurence, but for them, this was an unexpected event in their journey. They kept on driving, and suddenly José Luis’ brother saw signs in kilometres, not in miles, and he said: “Guys, this is Canada! We are in Canada.”

When they reached their destination, José Luis got out of the car, once again confronting a whole new world. He had no idea where he was or why he was there; he felt restless and anxious, and threw up., “It hit me hard (*me dio duro*).” It was even worse than when they arrived in the United States, he said, “because then I was a kid and I was doing what I was told, but when I got to Canada, I was a teenager.” His parents tried to make him feel better by suggesting that he “take it as a vacation”. “I was like, ‘okay’, but it was not a holiday.”

José Luis started to get very anxious. Again, he was trembling and felt sick. His father told him to be a man: “What’s wrong, *mijo*? What’s the matter with you”? And thus José Luis concealed his anxiety and fear for a while, until one day in a drugstore he could not take it any longer. He had an anxiety attack and he started crying uncontrollably and told his mother that he needed help. His mother later said that she was very ashamed of not having been there for him at the time he needed it most. Jose Luis finally visited a psychologist at school who helped him to learn to relax and breathe. He said he has kept in touch with his psychologist and that she saved his life.

The boy is now a grown man, a person who is capable of reflecting on the past and of understanding the hardships his family went through. He sees now that his mother was sad too, even depressed, although she did her best to play with her children whenever she could.

Crisis Care, Multiple Compromises to Transnational Family

José Luis' mother, Elaine, took care of her family as best she could; although she lived in a precarious situation, she supported her transnational family as well. In her experience, the duty to her parents arose at an unlikely time. Her father had begun to work when he was ten years old and had been a construction worker for most of his life. One day he declared that he had had enough and decided to retire prematurely and be supported by his children. Elaine's mother was a homemaker, and as Elaine said, not entirely by choice. At the moment of her father's early retirement, Elaine was earning a modest income in the U.S. and had a young family of her own to support. However, she felt a duty to help her siblings contribute to her father's early retirement.

Elaine and her siblings took on the responsibility of providing for her parents. When she spoke with me, she expressed anger and silent, embodied silent discontent, a nostalgic frustration with the way things turned out. She sat with heavy shoulders staring at her coffee spooning it away for a few seconds, and then looked up with resignation. In taking care of her transnational family, she had insufficient time and resources for her own family, as revealed by her son's experiences. I talked to Elaine for about a year, before I was able to interview her sons. José Luis, the younger son, shared the difficulties he faced related to his uncertain legal status and his migration journey.

In this case, a sense of duty is felt by different family members in the intersubjective relational space of a transnational family. In turn, the lived experiences of José Luis exemplify how migrant children grow up too quickly, becoming caretakers, interpreters, and even psychologists. José Luis recognizes his own mother's grief and depression:

> I saw my mother, I don't know. . . maybe it's now that I realize that she was very upset, depressed. But she was always very special with us, she played with us,

> you know? And I think that being together is what made us stronger to go on during that situation we lived through, you know, and yes, she yelled at me when I looked at pictures (of his cousins). But I do not blame her because, well, it was also her family, her father, her mother, her siblings and nephews and now I realize that it was not her fault, she was also very much in pain.

Despite the difficulties experienced as a newly arrived undocumented migrants in the United States, Elaine found the strength to play with her children, and so it was in those small spaces of time that she could offer her family a sense of well-being. Throughout the years, Elaine sustained her transnational family by practising crisis and routine care; she called the family in Colombia every weekend to find out how things were going. She also called for birthdays, Christmas, baptisms and marriages, practising ritual care through the technologies she had at her disposal. For a long time, Elaine did not have access to Skype, Facebook, or even e-mail, so phone cards allowed her to keep in touch.

Crisis Care: Long Distance Decisions, Guilt and Nostalgia

Elaine was usually part of transnational family decision-making processes, possibly in large part due to the fact that her parents and sister lived in her apartment. However, sometimes she was informed of decisions after the fact, rather than being asked for her opinion. For example, her older brother once wanted a place to stay for a few months and her sister did not consult her but rather informed her that he had moved in:

> Elaine, listen Manuel is staying with us for a couple of months, what do you say, is that okay?

It is during crisis events, however, that we see various challenges that migrants face and the fault lines that manifest when time and distance do not coincide. During crisis events, guilt and nostalgia are the catalysts for trips home, when the legal status of the migrants permits it. However, what occurs when the return visits are not possible? When time becomes the greatest distance between two places? What happens when insurmountable limitations separate families,

when Skype and Facebook do not allow families to be there during serious illnesses or for funerals or births? Elaine, for instance, had a precarious legal status for 15 years, initially as an undocumented migrant in the U.S. and later as an asylum seeker in Canada. During these years she had lost a favourite aunt to old age and a cousin to violence. Recently, her father died. She also missed the births of her nephews and nieces:

> I was saying (nostalgic tone), those are the moments when I hate being far from my family, when my aunt died, my poor mother wanted to be with all of us supporting her, and I could not be there when her sister died. A nephew also died, he was probably killed by paramilitaries, and it was hard for my mother and I wanted to be with my aunt because she was my favourite. Well, I could not and I feel sorry I could not be there when she died nor when my nephews were born either.

Elaine could not travel home to Colombia during critical periods for her family; that is, she was unable to practice co-presence. Instead, she sustained her parents and a sister by letting them live in an apartment she owned in Colombia. She did not send gifts; once she sent pictures but they were lost in the mail.

> I did not send gifts, I helped my mother and my dad by sending them money each month, and I also called them every week.

Clandestine Invisibility

Elaine's father was in poor health for a long while, and after obtaining her permanent residency, she wanted to visit her family. However, she was not yet a citizen and did not want to jeopardize the process of becoming Canadian.[130] As permanent residents, former Colombian refugees are

[130] Former asylum seekers become recognized as refugees in a hiring that determines that their claim is valid. Once people become refugees they do no longer need a work permit or a study permit and they have access to the health care system. However, refugees can lose their status if they travel to the country

warned at the permanent residency appointment against travelling to Colombia and from using, obtaining, or renewing a Colombian passport. Nevertheless, Elaine and her family decided to take a clandestine route to reach Colombia without having her passport stamped at the border and her citizenship jeopardized. They went to Ecuador and reached Colombian soil by land. This was a touchy topic for Elaine; she was hesitant about sharing the circumstances and the details of this trip. She said that after becoming a citizen she would feel comfortable talking about it, but at the time of the interview, she was still a permanent resident. Fear has been a big part of Elaine and her family's life. She describes the experience of a precarious legal status when she said:

> In the United States, we were nonexistent, I had gotten a good job, we had bought a house but we were illegal. It was is as if we did not exist, and we had no papers.

As undocumented migrants, being invisible meant safety. Existing and being visible would have attracted unwanted attention and the possibility of being detained. Elaine and her family, for example, drove at night or early in the morning to avoid being caught, at work they did not make a fusss if they had an accident, and they consciously erased and withdrew themselves from existing, even by minimizing underlying health conditions that were simply left untreated, such as José Louis' severe anxiety attacks.

Elaine's presence and persona evoke the bodily practice of invisibility: she speaks softly, she considers herself to be an introvert, she fades easily among other people and her silences communicate a lot more than her words. It is when undocumented migrants are on the move that they are caught, as happened with her son who was stopped by a policeman when he went above the speed limit. He had become visible, and was supposed to go to the court where he would be obliged to reveal his and his family's illegality, thus ensuring a deportation order to go back to Colombia.

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where they claim they were being persecuted (even if conditions changed) or if they use a Colombian passport, which indicates the person accepts protection from the Colombian government, such changes were brought by reforms under the Conservative Party government of Stephen Harper.

As Elaine told me,

> The idea was to stay there (in the U.S.), there was no going back. We hoped to be legal perhaps with the amnesty, with the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM) act for students, but that happened a long time after. A friend of mine did it, but he is not legal. He has a work permit and he can study, but he is not a resident and cannot leave the country. The idea was to stay there; where I worked they appreciated me a lot, they knew I was illegal and they wanted to process my work permit but they had a cleaning company and seventy % of the employees had no papers and so for them, it was a lot of trouble. If they were investigated, they had to pay penalties and so it did not happen, but the idea was always to stay there to grow roots there, but it was not possible.

Elaine and her husband were responsible not only for supporting the family financially and assuring its well-being, but they also had to deal with a factor that was very much out of their control: their legal status and that of their children. This caused great anxiety for both of them. Their precarious status, where the need to remain invisible, was reflected in the ways they sustained transnational connections with their families.

Even if transnational caregiving is available to migrants in Canada to some degree through communication technologies, some cannot travel, given their legal status. These migrants continue to experience a lack of mobility; even Colombians with permanent residency may face obstacles to travel as I will briefly illustrate through the story of Mariela Jimenez. Nonetheless, a strong sense of duty, persistent nostalgia, or misplaced guilt can influence the decision-making process of Colombian migrants, who may choose to risk the stability of legality for an ambivalent and clandestine encounter with their families.

Monica and Renato: Marriage as Migration Strategy

Legal Status: applied as skilled workers to become permanent residents, now Canadian citizens.

Food shared: cookies and coffee; rice, chicken and potatoes with onions and tomatoes at my home, tamales at their home.

Monica and Renato came to Canada as permanent residents in 2010. Renato started thinking about migrating to Canada in 2007. They both finished a bachelor's degree and met at University. Renato had a well-paid job, and had invested in real state. However, he hated his job, finding it tedious, unfulfilling and unrelated to his actual area of expertise. One day, a colleague from work quit her job and told him that she and her husband were going to Canada as skilled workers. Renato was shocked because this person had a very well-paid job; however his colleague also migrated to further her education.

Renato comes from a typical nuclear family constituted by a mother, a father and a sister. Monica also comes from a typical nuclear family, parents and one brother and an extended family network. His grandparents were *campesinos*, peasants. His extended family was affected by unfortunate events, including accidents and drug addiction. After his grandmother died, the family became scattered. He remembers being very aggressive with his sister and that his parents had a troubled relationship. Renato had to assume multiple responsibilities, including taking a paternal role. His father drank heavily and was absent most of the time. Yet it was not his role to assume, he says in retrospect. His sister migrated to Australia through an international student program, and then to the United States, to join a boyfriend she had met in Australia and who lived in the States.

Monica's upbringing was quite different; she enjoyed family reunions every weekend at her grandparents' home, she had excellent relationships with her cousins, aunts, and uncles, and her family was well-off financially. She loved her life and her profession, and her job was stimulating if not well-paid. Monica had no motivation to migrate; everyday violence was acceptable and normal to her., she said she was only robbed twice at gun-point, and she says it was her fault for "giving papaya" (*dar papaya*) (giving thieves a chance to steal by not being vigilant, for example for forgetting to not use a cell phone on public transportation, or wearing jewelry). Renato, in contrast, was desperate. He could not stand his job or his troubled family

relations, he said: “At work, I accepted a promotion out of fear, but could not foresee any progress, and I just felt stuck for seven long years”.

When his colleague told him about Canada, he was excited and convinced Monica accompany him to a presentation about the possibilities for skilled workers in Canada. ACanada Representations is a private company that offers advice and services to Colombians who want to migrate to Canada. Monica and Renato paid a $1,500 fee for the services of ACanada Representations. The company filled out their applications for visas, sent the documents to an embassy in Mexico and offered them a few months of French language courses. During the first conference, many prospective migrants listen to an eloquent speech about Canada and see pristine pictures of Canadian landscapes. Monica and Renato were captivated by the beautiful Canadian scenery, the excellent quality of life, and the unending possibilities that seemed to be waiting on the other side. Three months later, they decided to begin applying as skilled workers and to marry at a courthouse, in part because they could obtain more points as a couple, which guaranteed higher rates of success for their application.

Colombians who migrate as skilled workers generally choose Québec because the migration process is shorter and less demanding than for other Canadian provinces, where it is “longer, a lot more demanding and more expensive” according to Renato. Monica wanted to travel to England to study but her nuclear and extended family was against her leaving. Her parents reluctantly accepted her decision to migrate. Nonetheless, they proposed to cover the costs for a religious wedding, and Renato’s parents were also willing to contribute. Monica and Renato accepted, and thus their migration gained their parents’ seal of approval.

Once in Canada Monica and Renato missed their families terribly, communicated with them daily and often travelled to see them. After a few years, Monica and Renato divorced. Monica often travels to Colombia to visit her family. They both live in Québec, Renato in Saint-Jerome with his new partner, who is from Québec, whereas Monica still lives in Montréal and would like to move to Vancouver and eventually go to England to study. They both came as qualified professionals but worked cleaning houses, offices and schools in the informal sector. They enjoyed the mobility provided by their legal status as permanent residents and successfully

sustained transnational family ties through telecommunication technologies and travel technologies.

Routine Care, Confused Roles

Renato continued to feel responsible for taking the role of father in his household. He said:

> I wanted to take that role, but it was not mine. My father had a bohemian life, let's put it that way, he used to leave us and we didn't know where he was. I have always thought that he had another family.

It was very hard for Renato to leave Colombia, to begin the process of becoming a permanent resident, even as an adult who was no longer living at his parents' home,

> The only thing that kept me doubting was the fear, an absolute fear of leaving them alone because their relationship is bad. My mother was the heart of the family; she endured and took the reins of the house, the family's finances she paid for our education, doctors, and so I was afraid of leaving her alone, because my sister was not at home either. There was so much conflict, and fighting (silence), lack of respect, and I was in the middle all the time, imagine! A boy stopping fights between my old man and my mother.

The dynamics of Renato's household had an impact on his initial decisions; the sense of obligation he had since childhood became fear, even panic, at the thought of not being able to assure the survival of his parents' relationship. He had a strong sense of duty towards his parents' marriage. Once he settled in Montréal, Renato kept in touch with his parents via Skype, phone calls and e-mail. He kept counselling his parents at a distance and sustained his transnational family by visiting his sister in the United States and going back to Colombia for Christmas to visit his parents, and also to check on his assets (mainly an apartment, which he rented through an apartment rental company).

Monica and Renato's families are practising Catholics. They exercised a degree of influence by proposing going-away parties within the framework of a ritual in the Catholic Church. Monica's parents insisted that to begin a new life, the young couple must be blessed and socially recognized as legitimate; living together while unmarried is considered shameful for some middle-class Colombians. The wedding offered an opportunity for a family gathering, speculations about future grandchildren and more rites of passage: baptisms, first communions, confirmations. Monica and Renato also practiced ritual care by going back to Colombia for marriages, effectively sustaining family ties by co-presence, and by setting the scene for future connections in a lively family life that endures despite distance and years of separations.

Colombians who hold legal status in Canada as skilled workers keep a foothold in their country of birth, and remain engaged in webs of reciprocity, and obligation. Renato and Monica have sent letters of invitation to their parents and other family members to visit them in Canada; in exchange family members in Colombia take care of pension plan payments, health and dental plans, collecting rent and other investments.

Keeping in touch with family members does not emanate only from a desire to care, to maintain intimacy and proximity with loved ones and a sense of family unity or connection despite the distance. I noticed that Renato and Monica's efforts to care and keep in touch with family involve complex dynamics interlinked in a network of commitments, expectations, responsibilities, personal interests, and religious and cultural understandings of duty.

In some informants' accounts, caring is associated with obligation and multiple sacrifices or concessions. As I listened to the research participants, my understanding of what the transnational family is for some Colombians began to change. The idea of family and home as a sanctuary from a chaotic world, the image of innocent harmony, began to seem too simplistic as other facets of the unfinished business of sustaining a transnational family were revealed. I came to see that there are many things left unspoken and many well-kept secrets, though perhaps an underlying need to keep up appearances plays a role in the way my informants imagine or describe their families. A rushed wedding prior migration was not a rare scenario among my

participants, nor was a post migration separation and divorce. Weddings are encouraged by middle-class parents who want to enforce tradition, as well as maintain social status.

Pablo, Maria and Andres's Long Vacation

Legal Status: applied as skilled workers to become permanent residents, now Canadian citizens. *Food shared: Corn bread [arepas] and chocolate with cheese at my home, ribs and mashed potato salad at my home, coffee at Jean Talon market at their home, and Vasconia bakery.*

This family came to Montréal in 2009. The process of applying for permanent residency took them two years. In 2007, Maria and Pablo had a four-year-old son but they still lived separately with their parents, as they could not afford a place to live together while living in Colombia. Although Pablo found odd jobs after he finished his bachelor's degree, Maria could not afford to finish her degree, nor could her single mother help her with her son or with paying for her studies. Pablo comes from a better-off nuclear family, a mother, a father and a brother. Maria's family consists of her mother and her younger sister. They both had large extended families and counted on the support of many aunts, cousins, uncles and grandparents.

Pablo has family in Australia, Spain and the United States and Maria had a cousin that had emigrated a refugee to Canada. They explored the possibility of going to Australia and decided to come to Canada as skilled workers because Maria had a close relationship with her cousin. The talks offered by ACanada representations are very popular in big cities in Colombia. This family started the process with ACanada in 2007. Their application for a visa took about two years to be processed and cost them around $10,000 in total. ACanada Representations helped them fill out forms, and prepared them for the interview with the consul. The couple sent their documents to the Canadian embassy in Mexico and waited for a year to hear back from the Canadian government.

They underwent medical exams and left their former lives to begin a new life offering better job prospects and the opportunity for Maria to finish her degree. The decision to migrate was made with their families, who fully supported them. Pablo and Maria married in a civil ceremony; being married increased their chance to obtain more points and to ensure a successful application for permanent residency in Canada. Pablo and Maria had to demonstrate that they lived together

even if they did not. They started to stay over at each other's homes and changed addresses to ensure the credibility of their application.

In 2009, Pablo's and Maria's parents insisted on a Catholic marriage, "one last big party to send us off as a real family into the world" said Maria. Pablo and Maria conceded that the church wedding was mostly a way to please the parents, who did not want them to leave as an unmarried couple in religious terms. In 2009, their son Andres did not go to school for 6 months. Maria said: "there was no point in paying fees for a full school year that he was never going to finish, right?"

Andres was not going to school like other boys his age.[131] Bored and lonely, he often asked his parents what was going on. Because there was little certainty about the success of their application, Andres parents' told Andres that he did not need to go to school because they were going to take a long vacation. When the passports arrived with their visas, Maria and Pablo knew that their application for skilled workers' status was successful and told Andres that they were going to live in Canada permanently. Andres remembers that he was shocked and very sad to severe relationships with his family and friends. At the same time, he was excited about going somewhere new.

Once in Canada, Andres was expected to learn French quickly and to do well in school. The family's economic situation was not ideal, since Pablo and Maria only had enough to live on for three months. After three months, skilled workers are allowed to apply for social assistance. Maria and Pablo started taking French as a Second Language (FSL) courses and received social assistance. They also worked in the informal sector cleaning and making pizza deliveries. Maria

[131] According to official data of the Education Ministry, there are approximately 1.5 million children and teenagers between the ages of 5 and 16 years of age who are outside the school system. "Según datos oficiales del Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2017) hay aproximadamente 1.5 millones de niños, niñas y adolescentes entre los 5 y los 16 años por fuera del sistema escolar" Accessed 29 april 2019: https://unicef.org.co/noticias/unicef-lanza-la-campana-derechos-invisibles-una-iniciativa-que-invita-tomar-accion

pursued a bachelor's degree, and Pablo a university certificate. They keep in touch with their families via communication technologies and visit Colombia during Christmas. Pablo's parents have come on visits to Montréal but they would like Pablo and Maria to come back to Colombia where they say: *no pasa nada*, "Nothing is happening here". Andres, 10 years old at the time of my fieldwork, had learned French, and was doing well in school. He loves being in Canada and does not want to go back to Colombia. Pablo works at a call centre, as he was not able to find a job in his field, and Maria works for a community centre in Montréal.

Maria and Pablo are open to moving to other provinces if they find stable job opportunities elsewhere. However, Andres wants to live in Montréal because he does not want to change schools or homes again. The family has moved six times since arriving in Montréal in 2009.

Diana, Manuel and Tomas's Story: Family Support for a Life Project

Legal status: applied as skilled workers to become permanent residents, now Canadian citizens
Foods shared: coffee and cake at Colombian cafeterias, hot chocolate and bread at my home, rice and beans at their place.

Diana has a cousin who came with his family to Granby, Québec, as refugees in 2004. Her family lived in a rural zone in Colombia. She has ten aunts and uncles from her mother's side and twelve aunts and uncles from her father's side living in the department of Boyacá and in Bogotá. For many years she thought about coming to Canada. She had wanted to find a job and stay in Colombia, but her situation became increasingly difficult. Her partner was a contract employee and unfortunately, he could not find any work either. Amidst this difficult economic situation, she also faced difficulties at home: her father's health deteriorated and he died. It was then that Diana began to seriously consider the idea of going elsewhere. At the time, a friend invited her to attend a meeting at ACanada.

At the meeting she received information with all the costs involved in the consulting services offered by ACanada, the forms to be filled out, the language courses offered and other services such as preparation for the interview with the consul. She saw beautiful pictures of breathtaking

Canadian scenery, and heard about life in Canada. In particular, she remembers that those talking about Canada said that there were only 34,000,000 million people in Canada and that the government of Canada wishes to bring millions of migrants to populate the country. After the presentation she went home, and her mother asked her how the meeting went; she said it was fabulous, but that migrating was too expensive. Her mother saw ACanada documents and costs, and asked Diana "Do you want to go?" "Of course, *pues claro!*!" Whereupon her mother declared that she would give her the money, Diana was surprised and confused. Her mother did not work, yet she was offering her life savings, money she had put aside little by little over a lifetime.

Superstitions and Half-truths

Now Diana had to convince Manuel. She told him that in Canada he would be able to study and they could offer Tomas a better life. Tomas was six years old when his parents began the process in 2006. Diana showed him pictures of Canada and started telling him how beautiful it was there. On New Year's Eve, Colombians perform superstitious rituals: one is to walk around a block with empty luggage, which is meant to ensure that the person will travel in the coming year. On December 31, 2008, Diana knew they were going to Canada, but her son did not know and so she asked him where he wanted to travel next year. Since they had previously talked about Canada, Tomas said, "Well, Mom, to Canada! And Las Vegas" (he meant La Vega, Colombia, a small town they visited often), and so they took the empty luggage and ran around the block.

Time went by and Tomas was ready to start school in February. A day before classes began he asked his mother what was going on with his uniforms and the list of supplies, and she said "Tomas I have a surprise for you, we are going to Canada!" Tomas was surprised and angry at the same time, he could not believe it. Diana and Manuel had kept quiet about the process for a long time. Only Diana's mother and a younger half-sister knew. Diana and Manuel got married at a courthouse when applying for residency, to gain points and increase the chances of their application being accepted.

Diana says that plans you share with others before they are permanent can become spoiled. And so they kept the whole process a secret. If it did not work, it did not matter, since nobody knew. She remembers that she had planned a trip to Spain before she met Manuel. Diana has a cousin who left her daughter in Colombia and went to work there. But then she had Tomas and her cousin was no longer offering to help her migrate to Spain. Diana also has a cousin in the United States who had left a child behind to be able to work; both children stayed with their maternal grandmothers. She told Diana to go to the U.S., and to get married to get papers. However, she advised her to go alone. Diana also took care of her cousin's son; one day, this boy said to her, tearfully, "Auntie, don't ever leave Tomas alone."

Diana and Manuel went to ACanada and received support to fill out the application forms. They also took French courses and prepared for the interview with the consul. At ACanada other prospective migrants shared information about their applications, and they learned by heart the answers to the questions that would be asked by the consul during the interview. They knew the character and personality of the consuls and prepared beforehand for every possible question. The day before the interview, Diana had gastritis; she felt very sick and could not sleep. Manuel slept well but during the interview, he mixed up words, did not know what to say, and even cried when they were told, "Welcome to Canada!" Once in Montréal, Diana did a master's degree in geography at l'Université de Montréal and worked as a teaching assistant. Diana and Manuel separated approximately 7 years after arrival, and eventually divorced Tomas faces some difficulties reconciling his identity and his cultural background; not being born in Montréal he considers himself a Colombian, but having lived much longer in Québec than in Colombia, he considers himself Québécois.

Routine Care through Travel and Communication Technologies

Diana and Manuel were able to maintain open channels of communication via travel technologies and communication technologies. They migrated at time when Facebook, Skype and other Internet applications contributed to sustaining transnational connections. They also kept in touch with their families and supported the visa applications of other family members by providing letters of invitation. Diana's mother and younger sister came to visit them in

Montréal. Diana and Manuel went to Colombia to visit their grandparents and celebrate Tomas' first communion with the whole family. Colombian migrants whose legal status allows for greater mobility benefit from the democratization of air transport. The wide range of choice of destinations and the relatively low cost of travel offer Colombians many opportunities for family reunification, especially during family crises.

For many Colombian migrants, the family is the locus of important life-changing decisions that sometimes involve abrupt changes, sacrifices, even abuses; it structures experiences, emotions and plans for the future; it shapes the past and influences the present. Regardless of their legal status, Colombian transnational migrants practice routine care virtually via the communication technologies and social media. As I conducted interviews at people's homes, I observed that virtual lunches with family in other countries are part of the daily routine for many participants. I met family members living in Colombia, Spain, Ecuador, the United States, Italy, Australia, and the United Kingdom through Skype.

Furthermore, when Diana's mother and sister visited in Montréal, they all started watching soap operas online (at the time they were watching: Las Muñecas de la Mafia, La Suegra, Hasta que la Plata nos Separe, Sábados Felices, En los Tacones de Eva, La Nocturna). After they left, they all continued watching these soap operas and discussing the endings, keeping channels of communication open and sharing similar experiences over distance.

Colombian migrants keep an interest in Colombian current events by reading Colombian newspapers (*El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*)[132] online and listening to Colombian radio stations

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[132] The British weekly *The Economist*, report on Colombia in 2001 shows that since l930 Colombian governments have been led by one or other of a handful of families. The Lopez, Lleras and Pastrana families have each had two governments. These families act like dynasties sharing between themselves the principal means of power. For example, the daily *El Tiempo*, which has the biggest circulation and national influence, belongs to the family of ex-president Juan Manuel Santos, son of former President Eduardo Santos. El Espectador, the second most important newspaper, is the property of the

(Caracol Radio, RCN, Tropicana), which allows them to continue sharing similar interests with their relatives and having lively discussions with them. Diana and Manuel shared their everyday life with family abroad by communicating viaWhatsApp, Facebook and so on with their families. They were also able to practice ritual care virtually for special events such as birthdays and anniversaries by sending e-mails, messages, posting birthday greetings on Facebook, and communicating via Face Time or Skype. Someties they sent gifts or money as a proxy for their physical presence. Moreover, Diana and Manuel found odd jobs and saved enough money to bring family members to visit them in Canada. Diana asked her mother to bring her food, books, and other objects she missed, such as pictures or a blanket that her father had given her. Cherished objects and gifts of food are a very important element in the maintenance of relationships for many Colombians. I will explore this further in Chapter 8.

Modus Operandi: Attack the Family (Bernardo's Story)

Legal Status: (GAR's) Former Government-Assisted Refugee now Canadian citizen
Food shared: coffees at the Université de Montréal cafeteria, Tajin and coffee at his home, crepes and hot chocolate with cheese at my home.

At 12 years of age, Bernardo came to Canada with 21 members of his extended family. His parents, Estrella and Manuel, were human rights lawyers and even though they left overnight, Bernardo feels that the decision was in the making for over ten years. His parents were very reluctant to abandon their cause and wanted to stay and fight the good fight. Their lives were often endangered; they had bodyguards at all times and had lived through several attempts on their lives. He remembers once getting in the car with his brother, mother and bodyguards when a gunman — a *sicario* — ambushed the car and opened fire. Bernardo remembers huddling close to his brother under his mother's arms. They made it to his school without being harmed. After this incident, he and his brother could not go to the park, only to school.

Santodomingo group, it is led by Carlos Lleras de la Fuente, son of ex-president Carlos Lleras Restrepo. https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2008/05/22/an-icon-reborn, Accessed 21st August 2020.

The paramilitaries and the F.A.R.C. threatened the parents often, because they were members of the political party *Union Patriotica* and human rights activists. But the key moment when his parents felt they had to take action was the election of Alvaro Uribe Velez as president in August 2002. Bernardo's parents immediately went to a non-governmental organization, La Minga, and since "the modus operandi of groups outside the law is the same, to attack the family" as Bernardo explained, his family migrated immediately thereafter; including his mother's extended family to whom they were very close.

The first night they stayed at a Hilton hotel and after that, at a Best Western Hotel for a month until they settled in apartments. They started to become acquainted with their surroundings and Bernardo was enrolled in school. There he felt he was the victim of silent racism. His relationship with his younger brother was not very good; as young adults, they did not speak to each other. His aunts asked him why they were not closer, why he did not call his brother more often. He answered, *"*You fight all the time, you should take a look at yourself in the mirror first," and told them that they were not in a position to intervene. In 2008 his grandmother could no longer bear the winter and the difficulty of communicating in a foreign language, and so she went back to Colombia with three aunts, "the old maids, *las solteronas*", says Bernardo.

Bernardo travelled to Peru in 2008 to do volunteer work. This experience led him to develop a social conscience about the situation of people in Latin America and he decided to embrace this part of his upbringing. He stopped trying so hard to be Québécois and embraced both identities, feeling nowadays, that he has two homes to come back to: he is Latin American and Québécois as well. In 2010, he travelled to Paraguay with a group sponsored by his Cégep and Solidaridad Québec and began to understand his parents' ideals more and more. He talked with his parents by phone and expressed his anger about the injustices he witnessed, to which his parents' answer telling him to calm down, that they do understand.

In Canada, his parents worked at cleaning jobs and packing food at IGA; they felt empty and utterly useless. And even when they enrolled in French courses, they could not learn as much as they wanted. His mother was depressed most of the time, despite having joined an NGO for six months to work for human rights. Eventually, his parents decided to return to Colombia, one at

the time. His father went back in 2010, and his mother followed in 2012. Bernardo and his brother still lived in Canada as of 2015. His brother was living in Hull and Bernardo in Montréal; he was finishing a master's degree and wanted to go back to Colombia to work, live and fight for human rights.

Defying Fear, Fighting for Peace for All

Bernado and his family migrated in an emergency situation. Even if it seemed sudden, his parents had long known that they would have to migrate and had been developing their plans for a long time. They delayed leaving and continued their work, even though they faced high levels of insecurity and their children were exposed to violence daily. They assumed the risks involved in being human rights lawyers in Colombia.[133] As mentioned, both lawyers returned to Colombia. Over time, Bernardo became attuned to his parents' thirst for social justice, and it became his life project, travelling to Latin America as a Canadian citizen. He returned to Colombia and now works with an NGO that searches for "leg breakers", i.e., landmines that remain all over the Colombian Territory especially in the mountains.

This transnational family exercised agency, even if in very limited ways. They lived a precarious life in Colombia, a life filled with daily insecurities, threats and violence. Moreover, the government did not offer adequate protection.[134] Guided by a life project, ideals, and hopes for

[133] They assumed the risks involved in being human rights lawyers in Colombia

[134] "Colombia's governmental protection programme for human rights defenders is the world's oldest and most expensive. Yet almost 20 years from its inception, both international and national civil society has highlighted a range of failures, including corruption, staffing shortages, a lack of coordination and a narrow range of protective measures which ignore the political factors behind the risks. All this leaves defenders of human rights as exposed as ever. The weaknesses of the National Protection Unit are exacerbated by an absence of preventative policies and practices and the almost total impunity for crimes against defenders". http://www.ishr.ch/news/lasting-peace-colombia-only-if-defenders-and-communities-are-consulted-and-protected, Accessed 23 November 2017.

the future, Bernardo's parents decided to fight for human rights, risking their lives for many years. Bernardo's mother, Estrella explains:

> Working closely with indigenous populations[135] has helped me understand society as a tapestry resulting from the work of many artisans weaving together threads for the common good. I could not exist in this desolation and chaos by trying to save myself, my partner or my children. Perhaps that is why we took so many risks. I envisioned a different country for my children, for my friends, for all the communities in Colombia, a better world for everybody, not just for Bernardo and Manuel and Hernan.

Estrella and her husband developed their life project according to their ideas of well-being. For them it meant putting themselves on the line for a different Colombia for generations to come. This family was not interested in only staying in touch with relatives. Rather, every member of this nuclear family had a broader notion of what constituted a family, and more importantly, they worked for the well-being of a larger group, the well-being of a community.

Long Distance Intimacy

I was entrusted with many other stories, besides the six I have just presented. For example, that of Mariela Jimenez highlights the difficulties experienced by skilled workers who are permanent residents. Mariela went to France in 2005 to work as an au pair for three years. She went back to Colombia following a breakup and started applying for permanent residency to migrate to

[135] Indigenous communities are evicted from their land by palm oil industries, and water is rerouted away from *campesino* communities to large-scale hydroelectric energy production, and genetically modified crops are planted on community land without local consent.
http://www.ishr.ch/news/lasting-peace-colombia-only-if-defenders-and-communities-are-consulted-and-protected, Accessed 23 November 2018

Canada in 2008. Her application was processed quickly, and after a year she was able to come to Québec.

The fact that she spoke French and had sojourned in France helped her application to be processed faster than usual. However, she faced a family crisis just as she was due to leave. Her father was sick, her mother asked her to stay, and to postpone the trip indefinitely. Mariela's oldest brother, who lived in New York, went to Colombia to talk to her mother to convince her to let Mariela go despite her father's health issues. Mariela was able to leave with her mother's permission and blessing. During the first three months in Québec, she was unable to travel; she had to wait to receive her permanent residency.

A short while after she left Colombia, her father died but Mariela could not go back for the funeral. Instead, she told me tearfully, she went swimming for hours and cried, and swam and cried some more, and that is where I met her, in the changing rooms at a sports centre. I asked her to participate in my study and she came to my home a while afterward. I made sandwiches for both of us. During our first encounter, she told me about her difficulties while going through that family crisis.

At that moment, I was able to suspend habitual thinking, because I previously assumed that permanent residents enjoyed privileges that refugees could not, such as greater mobility, less uncertainty about their applications, and prior acquired language skills. Yet the lines of a legal status started to appear fluid for me. I realized the arbitrary nature of a legal status and how it impacted the mobility of migrants and their emotional lives. Even if Mariela would eventually be able to travel as a permanent resident, a waiting period for a legal document affected her and her family in a very significant way. Her last conversation with her father took place via Skype.

Migrants keep in touch, they say goodbye, I love you, get better, I wish I was there, through communication technologies, yet time continues to be the greatest and most insurmountable distance between two places, between two people. It took Mariela three months to obtain the document she needed to cross the geographical distance separating her from her family and to practice co-presence during a crisis in the life course of the family. Mariela has a sister living in

Spain and a brother living in New York; she sponsored her husband, the boyfriend who broke her heart while she lived in Paris. Later they rekindled their relationship online, and she went back to Colombia to get married with her mother's and extended family's blessing.

Getting to know Mariela as a friend allowed me to see how intimacy at a sexual level is maintained across distance. Transnational sex is part of the every day for transnational couples, not only through texts, chats or e-mails do couples exchange sexual pleasure, but also with an array of long-distance sex toys (Lovense Lush, Vibeease, Kiiroo, We-Vibe 4 plus). These wearable toys allow one partner to use an app and to stimulate the other through Wi-Fi signals that simulate touch. Kiiroo, for example, allows for the sharing of video and audio and it syncs up the movement and vibrations of one toy with the movement of the other partner such that it simulates an in-person experience.

New technologies alter how relationships in the distance are managed and maintained. Although long-distance sex-toys offer a venue for couples to mimic co-presence, it becomes clear that basic human needs such as sexual contact cannot be replaced or sustained over distance for long periods, and that toys and Apps cannot substitute co-presence and in-person experiences.

Regardless of their legal status, Colombian migrants experience the long distances imposed by legal apparatuses, which affects both the perception and the reality of time. For many of them, the journey begins in Colombia after careful preparation of applications, French courses, interviews with consuls, health checks and the hope to find a job opportunity corresponding to a particular skill set. For others, it begins at the airport or a border when they cross by land, when they no longer have access to their passports and when they search for the knowledge about how to circulate through the enormous amount of bureaucratic procedures facing them and look for all they need to begin a new life (bus pass, beds, tables, clothing, social aid, forms, second language courses, schools and so on).

For Government-Sponsored Refugees the migration journey begins suddenly. They are guided through the unknown, they stay at hotels, receive help to find an apartment along with financial assistance, as was described by Bernardo. However, their journey is usually marked by high

levels of urgency; the help they receive as they settle is vital and offers time to come to terms with the trauma and the sudden uprooting they go through.

Conclusion

Family plays an important role in Colombian migrants' journeys. Once they settle in Québec, Colombians keep in touch and care at a distance by practising ritual, routine and crisis care as needed over the life course of their transnational families. They also sustain their relationships by using travel and communication technologies, although their legal status has a significant impact on their ability to practice co-presence during family crises. Regardless of their legal status, all Colombian migrants face great difficulties when time and distance do not coincide: to surmount the separation they keep in touch mainly by using communication technologies at their disposal. Meanwhile, they work at fulfilling their life projects of sustaining their families and homes. In Chapter 8 I will explore how home is imagined and experienced by these transnational migrants.

CHAPTER 8: Places we call Home: Embodied Homemaking Practices

Where can I free myself of the homeland in my body?

(Darwish, 2003: 15)

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the concept of home, which can be understood as a set of routine actions and interactions, embodied practices that offer a sense of belonging to a known social universe (Rapport and Overing, 2000). I look at the emotions associated with the making of home in a deterritorialized world along with the theme of nostalgia (Phillips 1985; Starobinski and Kemp 1966; Hutcheon 2000; Baldassar, 2007; Seremetakis 1994), an emotion that lies at the epicentre of many migrants' everyday lives. Nostalgia motivates return trips, purchases, plans, and even eating practices. In particular, I explore the embodied aspect of food consumption and argue that given that eating has multisensory qualities, it evokes a multifaceted experience of place (Law, 2001), recreating "sensory landscapes of home" (Seremetakis, 1994).

I also explore how health practices are chosen and experienced, whereby the body itself is made a home, to be taken care of in a particular way. In sum I show how Colombians remake their homes in virtual environments and other places, by sharing meals via Skype, by buying, cooking and preparing ethnic meals, and attending to the body and the spirit in specific ways known to them. I do this to highlight belonging (home) and connection (family ties).

What is Home for People on the Move?

Home is an elusive and complex concept. Some social scientists have understood home as a stable physical space and place that amounts to an "embryonic community" where territory and time were structured functionally, economically, aesthetically and morally (Douglas 1991: 289). Homes began by bringing space under control and thus giving domestic life physical orientations; i.e., directions of existence (Douglas, 1991: 290). Transnationalism (Glick Schiller *et al.* 1994) and globalization have influenced researchers to move away from prior notions of fixed socio-cultural units of analysis, recognizing that migrants and mobile people have multiple attachments and ways of being at home in the world.

As a concept, home can refer to a concrete space (a house, the objects within) where domestic practices, such as cleaning, cooking, and washing recreate a familiar environment. The experience of home and family includes the sensory particulars of everyday life. At the same time, home as an emotional experience evokes feelings, often a sense of belonging. In what follows, I will explore the memories, emotions, representations, affective imaginings, and more generally, the creative and fluid character of transnational migrants' attachments to their real and imagined homes and families. Homes, as a material space and as a locus of feeling keep family ties at the centre of transnational processes (Ong, 2008).

Sociologist George Simmel said that "home may be said to provide a 'unique synthesis': an aspect of life and at the same time a special way of forming, reflecting and interrelating the totality of life" (Simmel, 1984:93–94). In a global era, this conception of home is still relevant in that it encompasses the interconnectedness and multifaceted life experiences transnational migrants go through daily. Home for a transnational migrant with multiple residences, identities and loyalties has to encompass in one way or another "the totality of life". John Berger had suggested that

> For a world of travellers — labour migrants, exiles and refugees — home comes to be located in a routine set of practices, in a repetition of habitual social interactions, in styles of dress and address, in memories and myths, in stories carried around in one's head, in the ritual of a regularly used personal name.

> People are more at home nowadays, in short, in words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat. (1984: 64)

Homes change and are continuously in the making (Ahmed et al., 2003; Walsh, 2006; Rapport and Dawson, 1998). They can be "mythic places of desire" (Brah, 1996: 193) or a political arena in which the local, national and transnational converge (Ahmed et al. 2003; Massey, 1994). Homes can be imagined, sensed and experienced in memory. However, as Jackson et al. (2004:6-7) observe, "We must not let elite ideology of transnationalism blind us to the practical and emotional importance of attachment to and in place," because place-making in a larger sense, is one of the most basic cultural activities humans engage in, a crucial component to the shaping of lived experiences, and to the structuring of space and time.

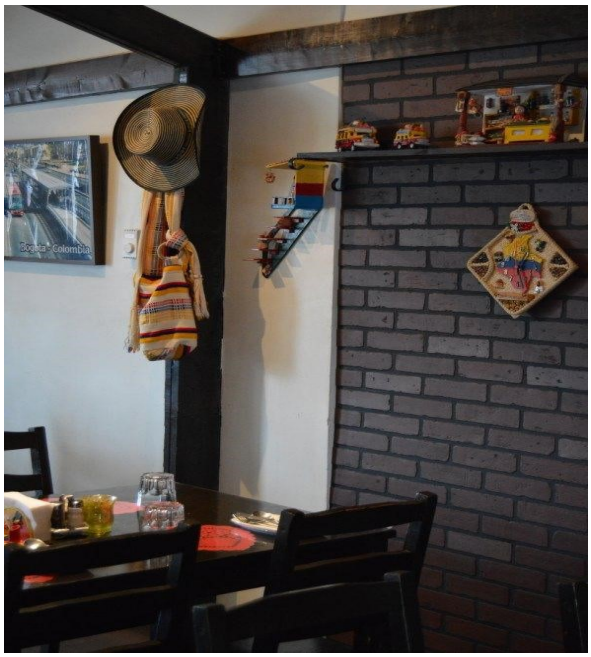
Place making is an activity that informs our relationship with the environment allowing us to locate meaningfully in the places with which we interact (Casey, 1996; Riaño-Alcalá, 2006). Therefore, it is important to focus on both the material and the immaterial ways in which migrants recreate their homes in ways that can sustain their transnational families. The growing literature on home and the social experience of homemaking and migration covers a vast array of disciplines and methodological approaches as previously discussed in Chapter. 1 (p.22). In particular, participants in my research forged connections through transnational objects.

Objects Forging Transnational Connections

> "The desert is a dead landscape for many Europeans, but an exciting place for aborigines. The link between imagination and place is no trivial matter. The existential question, where do I belong?" is addressed to the imagination.
> Eugene Walter, 1988: 204).

Colombians establish their homes in Montréal by adorning their physical surroundings with the objects they were able to bring when they migrated. These are often used to evoke memories

and serve the nostalgic migrant's desire to exist and inhabit another place, an imaginary space where family members once lived together simultaneously.



For example, participants decorate their homes with colourful ceramics, such as chivas. These are ceramic figures representing real-life rural transport used mostly by peasants to transport animals or produce to the market. Chivas are also used for processions and parties and are popular among tourists in Colombia. [136]

Transnational ties are maintained by migrants through special personal objects. "Such inanimate objects animate the practices, imagining and emotionality of transnational family life" (Baldassar, 2007). Such objects include photos, letters, cards, memorabilia, and gifts and are important largely because of their tangibility — they can be felt sensorially, thus evoking a concrete and a particular memory of a longed-for person, a location or a time. Objects represent, or more specifically, stand-in for a felt absence (Svašek, 2012).

[136]http://www.artesaniaselzaque.com.co/index.php/en/onlinestore/view/productdetails/virtuemart_product_id/68/virtuemart_category_id/8/lang/en-GB

Couples who marry before migrating receive money and gifts to furnish their new homes: women are given pans and cooking utensils, bed sheets, and so on, perhaps as a not-very-subtle reminder of their new wifely role. They are also given pictures and religious memorabilia to decorate their homes with. Through these objects and images, absent members insert themselves into the new household, sustaining and ensuring transnational family connections. Another way that Colombians sustain and make a home is by keeping up to date with the news from Colombia, and maintaining an atmosphere that recreated their prior home experiences. When I interviewed families at their homes, they often left the TV or the radio on to catch the news from Colombia, even if it meant we had a hard time communicating.

While visiting my participants the most common object found in their homes were family pictures often displayed in a special place designated as a household altar. These altars do not seem to have religious significance, unless there are pictures of deceased family members along small religious figurines of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph or Jesus. Such objects animate the practices, imaginings and emotionality of transnational family life. Thus, when looking at the emotions displayed towards food and objects that evoke longing, I actively focused on what they were experiencing: whether they were crying, smiling, looking worried, not just on what was being said. In particular, photographs evoke a strong sense of nostalgia for the times that were shared with family.

Since transnational families do not dwell in a shared living space, they find ways to share a common space-time. Colombian migrants create new homes where time and distance can coincide. Virtual spaces, such as Internet chat spaces on Facebook, WhatsApp and Skype facilitate the practice of routine and everyday care. However, crises and even sexual connections highlight the limitations of these virtual homes. Nonetheless, relationships to family members living abroad are mainly sustained through communication and information technologies that

> engendrent de nouvelles façons d'exister dans le monde, en créant un imaginaire cosmopolite et de nouveaux habitus transnationaux. Les migrants élaborent de la sorte des biographies déterritorialisées, étant à même d'agir à distance en temps

> réel. Simultanément, ils continuent à s'identifier à leur culture d'origine, tout en habitant le monde. (Nedelcu, 2009: 13)

According to Appadurai, deterritorialization is one of the central forces of the modern world; what the author calls "imagined landscapes" (1996) are actually ways of being in the world. For many Colombian migrants participating in this research, virtual homes became a set of regular activities and interactions across distance, rather than a particular place. These virtual homes allowed me to perceive transnational migration as embodied practices happening in a local context. Eating was an embodied practice that intimately connected my participants to their families and that evokes high doses of nostalgia. In the following section, I explore migration and nostalgia, and after that will look at nostalgia and food practices.

Migration and Nostalgia

> *Era todavía demasiado joven para saber que la memoria del corazón elimina los malos recuerdos y magnifica los buenos, y que gracias a ese artificio logramos sobrellevar el pasado. Pero cuando volvió a ver desde la baranda del barco el promontorio blanco del barrio colonial, los gallinazos inmóviles sobre los tejados, las ropas de pobres tendidas a secar en los balcones, sólo entonces comprendió hasta qué punto había sido una víctima fácil de las trampas caritativas de la nostalgia.*
>
> *(Gabriel Garcia Marquez, p. 61) El amor en los tiempos del cólera.*

> He was still too young to know that the heart's memory eliminates the bad and magnifies the good, and that thanks to this artifice we manage to endure the burden of the past. But when he stood at the railing of the ship and saw the white promontory of the colonial district again, the motionless buzzards on the roofs, the washing of the poor hung out to dry on the balconies, only then did he understand to what extent he had been an easy victim to the charitable deceptions of nostalgia.
>
> Gabriel García Márquez, Love in the Time of Cholera (1985).

Nostalgia and longing are emotions intimately related to homemaking practices. Nostalgia could be observed through the use and treatment of certain objects by Colombian migrants that tended to evoke connections to family and home. For example, there are some Colombians who keep a prosperity tray, a wooden box that includes bags of different grains (rice, lentils, beans) which promise wealth, good health, love and a long life. It is a gift offered to the family members who leave to wish for "good harvests" in their new homes in Canada.

In particular, Colombian migrants manifested nostalgia for their families and homes of the past through their desire for typical food. Nostalgia, I noticed, is embodied and attached to flavours, aromas, sounds, sights and tactile interactions with food, which bring powerful memories attached to families, childhoods, and homes. I will focus on homemaking and nostalgia as manifested in eating practices and food consumption. I will begin by exploring more generally diverse disciplinary approaches to understanding nostalgia and then turn to anthropological approaches to the relationship between nostalgia and food. I explore nostalgia as one of the causes of home*sickness*, and food and other eating practices as the medicine that cures the pain and longing by recreating the sensory landscape of a lost home for my participants.

Nostalgia as Sickness

In Old Norse, the phrase used to describe nostalgia can be translated literally as food for the journey. The word nostalgia comes from the Greek words nostos “to return home” and algos “pain”. Nostalgia is a relatively new word, coined in 1688 by Johannes Hofer, a 19-year-old Swiss student who wrote a thesis in medicine on Heimwehe or “homesickness”. At the time it was thought to be a sickness characterized by a debilitating longing for one’s motherland, “a constant rumination about it, melancholia, insomnia, weight loss, anxiety, heart palpitations, stupor, fever, and lack of appetite and thirst” (De Brigard, 2018: 1).

This medical condition of nostalgia offered a cure: to return home, or to hope for the day one could return. In the 17th and 18th centuries, nostalgia became a disease, a physical disorder of

the imagination (Starobinski and Kemp, 1996), a profound longing to go back home, *un mal du pays*, as it was known. In the 20th century, nostalgia attracted the interest of psychiatrists, and came to be viewed as a psychological rather than a physical than condition: “It went from being a *curable* medical illness to an *incurable* condition of the spirit or psyche” (Hutcheon, 2000: 194 [italic emphasis in the original]).

What made this transition possible—from being curable to incurable—was a shift from the spatial to the temporal. Nostalgia was no longer simply a yearning to return home. In 1798, Kant noted that people who returned home were disappointed; they did not want to return to a *place*, but to a *time*, a time of youth. “Time unlike space cannot be returned to, ever, time is irreversible. And nostalgia then becomes the reaction to that sad fact” (Hutcheon, 2000: 194).” As one critic succinctly described this shift, Odysseus longed for home; Proust was in search of lost time (Phillips, 1985: 65). Nostalgia is thus not only an aspect within migrants’ imaginative and emotional inner life, but also an aspect within migrants’ memories, one that is treated through food consumption.

The power of this emotion or imaginative disorder comes in part from its structural doubling-up of two different times, an inadequate present and an idealized past (Hutcheon, 2000). Many Colombian transnational migrants yearn to return to their homes and to experience life once again as they remember it. Indeed, an idealized past, particularly as remembered by participants from a country ravaged by war, suggests that some Colombian migrants face difficulties adjusting to their present surroundings. For migrants and for people in general, there is one everyday embodied practice that revivies memories, ideas and imaginings about home and times when life was better: eating.

During the fieldwork, perceiving and understanding the everyday seemed easier when practising the everyday. Therefore, eating became an essential point of departure for observing nostalgia as it was being lived and to establish rapport with research participants, not just as Colombians with a shared cultural background or common past experience of a particular legal status, but as hungry people.

Nostalgia and Disappointment

It has been documented that negative everyday experiences, such as feelings of loneliness, lack of social connections, feelings of meaninglessness, boredom and even cold winters may trigger nostalgia (De Brigard, 2018). Garcia Marquez' character, Juvenal Urbino' illustrates all this; he is a migrant reminiscing about his Caribbean home enhanced by the rosy colours of an idealized nostalgic past. Juvenal is a doctor studying in Paris and upon his return he is utterly disappointed.

Some of the participants had returned to visit their transnational families, and from this they understood that they could not travel back to their past. This was a painful realization for many of them. However, another desire emerged for them, the hope of recreating the past in the present. They no longer want to travel back in time to a past situation. However, their nostalgic desire remains intact that they now direct to another impossibility, the desire to recreate the past in the present. Some Colombian migrants do not want to start a new life; rather, they remain firmly attached to their former lives, especially if their former lives were filled with multiple accomplishments. I often heard Colombians saying things like, "In Colombia I was …, I had… I studied for x number of years, and here I am not…, and I do not have …, and my education is useless." Many Colombians wish to uproot their former lives and replant them in a new place, and food becomes a vehicle for doing so.

Migration, Nostalgia and Food

Nostalgia and food is a recurrent theme in studies of diasporas (Sutton 2000, 2001; Lee 2000, Couniham, 2004), expatriates, exiles and other mobile populations. Anthropological studies of food and memory (Stoller, 1989; Sutton, 2001) highlight a sensory landscape of embodied memories experienced through food. Sutton (2000, 2001) notes that food triggers memories in important ways and that certain foods have the power to evoke emotional and physical recollections. Such involuntary memories, can trigger nostalgic recollections. In Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* the author eats a madeleine dipped in tea, and he involuntarily goes back in time.

Pleasant emotional embodied memories are triggered by food and tend to structure eating habits (Seremetakis, 1994). Migrants often experience food and meals as a way to counteract the nostalgia they feel for their past, for their homes. Moreover, since eating has multisensory qualities, food consumption evokes a multifaceted experience of place (Law, 2001) of home. Eating as an everyday practice, explains Swidler (2001: 74 -75), is "notable for its automatic, un-thought character". For migrants, food can be a medicine to cure homesickness, or a way to nourish it, etiher way it allows them to recreate the "sensory landscape of home" (Seremetakis, 1994) in new settings, to relive the past in the present.

For the Colombian migrants I met, food was the most tangible link to their origins, homes and families; the "umbilical cord to a home place". As Rosales (2009) explains,

> Food involves a primary need and pleasure, it constitutes an immediate reality. Eating serves not only to maintain the biological machinery of the body but also to make concrete one of the specific modes of relation between a person and the world, thus forming one of the fundamental landmarks in space-time. (De Certeau, 1998: 183)

Migration and Homesickness : Remembrance through Consumption

Nostalgia can be understood as an emotion that sometimes results from disenchantment with the present. It may take the form of an imaginative disorder triggered by difficulties in accepting or adapting to the present, bringing migrants to long for emotional and sensory landscapes of the past by evoking what is familiar. Nostalgia can also be understood as a form of longing for times, places, objects that connote something never experienced before what Appadurai (1996), calls "armchair nostalgia" or anemoia, nostalgia for a time one never knew.

Appadurai (1996: 78) speaks of how "the merchandiser supplies the lubricant of nostalgia." This is certainly true of migrants, especially to young migrants, those of the second generation. Participants in this research often frequented restaurants, bakeries and supermarkets catering to Colombians seeking typical food (see Appendix E for a complete list of restaurants). In fact, merchandisers advertise their capacity to evoke memories of home and family through food consumption (see Vasconia bakery advertising below). Moreover, Colombian parents insist on feeding their children as they were fed, transmitting values, traditions, memories and continuity with older generations even though all these are embedded in fear.

For example, as I walked with a Colombian mother[137] and our children, we were discussing feeding schedules and she told me how she still fed her child at random times, not at the same time every day according to a routine as mothers are routinely informed is the best practice by the nurses at local community health clinics (Centres locaux de services communautaires, CLSCs). When I asked her why, she explained:

> He has to be prepared for everything, to be a warrior. Besides, ***you never know***. . .

[137] This mother came to Canada as an international student, and as many other Colombians who migrated for reasons not directly linked to the armed conflict, she said that she was not affected by it.

> *Él tiene que estar preparado para todo, tiene que ser guerrerito, además* ***uno nunca sabe***

"*Uno nunca sabe*" or "you never know" expresses an impalpable urge to visualize, imagine and presuppose that the worst can happen at any given moment, and at the same time the need to prevent, plan for and counteract it. One needs to be prepared for the worst, always. In this case, feeding patterns for children transmit learned behaviours and traditions of people facing daily an undeclared civil war.

Young participants in this research, those who travelled to Canada as children, may have fewer associations with homely food and practices since they had less time to experience and to participate in family life in Colombia. Nonetheless, a degree of familiarity with certain foods evokes nostalgia for them. For José Luis for example, a buñuelo (fritter) that his teacher gave him during a school trip when he lived in the U.S., made him feel at home.

> My first teacher was Colombian, and that was good because for me it was someone from my homeland, and I understood her, we shared the same sayings. One day we had a field trip and she brought me a fritter — un buñuelo — and since I was a little Colombian, she brought me one.

Younger participants, and children seemed to have a greater need to maintain a connection to the past by preserving eating practices and particular food items. They were very proud to bring homemade meals to school, instead of eating food from the vending machines or fast food. Colombian migrants also express nostalgia for family parties and celebrations in the past, which always involved sharing food. This left unforgettable smells, flavours, images, and textures in their sensory memories. Usually, such memories are associated with better times in people's imaginations and remembrances of the past. The armchair nostalgia that Appadurai (1996) suggests exists in late-capitalist consumerism, can be epitomized by an entire economy of homesickness, triggered by nostalgic propaganda and ethnic products. For example, international sales increase in October and November to satisfy Colombians' demand for nostalgic products, such as flour (to make arepas, empanadas and tamales), arequipe, cookies,

brownies, Chocoramos, Ponque Felicidades, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages used to make typical dishes during the December holidays. Traditional confectionery is distributed to 103 countries (identified markets include Germany, France, Morocco, Italy, Honk Kong, Spain, Chile, Panama, the United States, Canada, Australia, England, Mexico, Japan). [138] And international sales between January and October 2019, brought in profit $168,3 million USD, according to the National Statistical Department (DANE) and Flavia Santoro, president of ProColombia.[139]

Many Colombians in Montréal actively search for ethnic products and find typical ethnic restaurants and bakeries not only to satisfy hunger but also to recreate a sensory experience of home, a feeling of belonging in the sense of having the necessary knowledge about particular foods and ways to consume them. For example, Vasconia, in the area of Montréal, is a very popular bakery among Colombians. It offers all kinds of baked goods that Colombians from different regions grew up eating, such as almojabanas (cheese buns), empanadas, tamales, mantecadas (small sponge cakes), galletas (cookies), pan de bono (cheese bread), buñuelos. Most of these are made with cassava or corn flour and often lots of cheese.

Colombians seem comfortable navigating a known territory. Interactions at Colombian bakeries are carried out in Spanish. People ask for la ñapa (ñapa comes from yapa, the Quechua word for gift) a common interaction that denotes a little intimacy, a gift that the baker tucks in the bag to show generosity and entice the client to come back. Moreover, embodied practices of eating are accompanied by a certain dose of nostalgia for times past. Colombians said, for example, when tasting cookies that they had eaten when they were children, how much it reminded them of a certain celebration or a time in their lives.

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[138] La nostalgia dispara exportaciones de productos típicos en diciembre, See : https://www.portafolio.co/economia/la-nostalgia-dispara-exportaciones-de-productos-tipicos-en-diciembre-536820, Accessed Nov 10, 2020

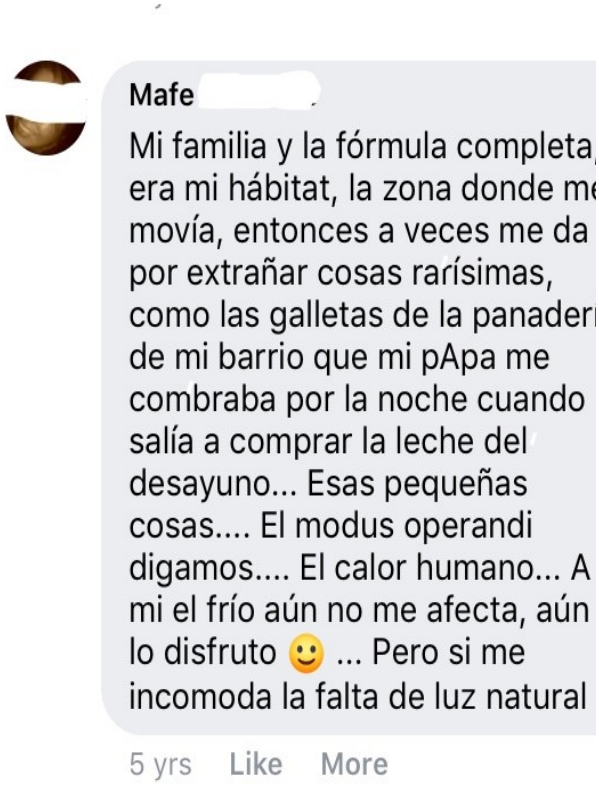
[139] ProColombia's is a government agency of the Executive Branch of the government of Colombia in charge of promoting non-traditional exports.

For example, the *Antojitos* bakery makes an explicit association between flavours and memories. I found an advertisement (see below) on a Facebook community of about 15,000 members, *Solidaridad Colombiana* in Montréal, includes members of diverse Latin American origins. I posted a series of questions in this group about what migrants missed the most. Within an hour I received one hundred answers and they were mostly about food and family. Mafé (see Facebook post below) wrote that she misses the cookies that her dad brought from the bakery every night after work.

Flavours & Memories — *Antojitos* "Cravings" Colombian Bakery

Togetherness with your dad, mother, siblings and friends makes us stronger and happier. Merry Christmas from Vasconia Bakery and Restaurant.

This is an ad from Vasconia bakery highlighting family ties, the underlying message seems to be that family ties can be strengthened through sharing food, in particular Christmas treats.



Solidaridad Colombiana is a Facebook Group for Colombians, although other Latin Americans can participate.

Mafe answers one of my questions about what they miss the most about Colombia, saying:

"My family and the area where I lived, sometimes I miss very odd things such as the cookies from the neighbourhood' bakery where my dad used to buy milk for the next day, for breakfast … little things, the modus operandi, let's say, the human warmth … the cold does not affect me, yet and I even enjoy it, but the lack of natural light bothers me."

In Montréal there are many Colombian restaurants, markets, and even Latin American bookstores (see Appendix E). However, and to my surprise, even though ethnic products can be found at different markets in Montréal and many Latin American restaurants and stores, Colombians who travel to Colombia still bring back coffee, chocolates (Chocolatinas Jet), arequipe (a caramel spread also known as dulce de leche), cakes, cookies and books in Spanish. Also, Colombians living in Montréal ask those who visit them to bring food directly from Colombia. Regardless of the possibility of finding the same food locally, what mattered is that it was brought or sent especially for a loved one, food that was given as a gift, a material token to sustain transnational affective ties.

Colombians acknowledge that consuming Colombian food leads them to recreate the past in the present, even if momentarily. They feel that the consumption of ethnic meals keeps them closer to their homeland, childhood and past experience, establishing continuity between a rosy idealized past to a sometimes inadequate and harsh present. Nostalgia was an emotion expressed in long silent pauses, sighs escaping slowly and with difficulty from deep within the chest. I noticed that direct questions did not elicit answers linked to the emotional state of the person I was interacting with, yet their bodies did because, in Roland Barthe's (1977: 54) words, "Ce que cache mon langage, mon corps le dit. Mon corps est un enfant entêté, mon langage est un adulte très civilisé. »

Colombian migrants spend considerable time making food choices, comparing the smell, texture and flavour of foods. For example, a young couple I interviewed noticed that organic bananas, milk, eggs and meat tasted as food used to taste when they lived in Colombia. They started trying organic food, despite the price and their precarious financial situation as an unemployed nurse and chemical engineer, in the hope of offering better food to their two-year-old son.

Many Colombian families I interviewed continue to eat as they used to before migrating; i.e., a diet heavily based on carbohydrates — rice, potatoes, corn, cassava (yucca root), and plantains — accompanied by generous portions of meats, poultry and fish seasoned with chopped onions, tomatoes and garlic. Initially, when I visited people for lunch, the cooking aromas did not strike me as anything remarkable, and I did not think to categorize the food I was offered as "ethnic"

or uniquely associated with Colombians. Yet while visiting some Italian friends, who focus heavily on the pleasures derived from food sharing, I noticed the particular ways in which Colombians engage in this practice. Colombians appear to be recreating their ethnic belonging to their home regions with the associated feelings of familiarity and security in consuming special foods, and cooking styles (including the use of certain handcrafted utensils, such as wooden spoons). Cultural eating practices among Colombians seem to purposefully induce nostalgia. Thus, nostalgic practices and foods seem to blend a here (host country) and a there (the homeland). While eating, Colombian migrants frequently compare an idealised past with an inadequate present. For example, informants shared emotional memories of buying fresh produce daily in Colombia, whereas in Canada they must buy processed foods.

I began to perceive the many subtle ways in which Colombians carry on with their traditions, and at the same time reconstitute their sense of home by recreating the smells, flavours, sounds and textures that surround food consumption. These, in turn, create a set of routine practices where habitual actions and interactions that organize time and space are repeated, giving the family its "directions of existence" (Douglas, 1991: 290), a sense of home. When I visited Colombians at their homes while we communicated with their relatives in Colombia via Skype or Facetime, eating together created rapport and a table became more than a table since, as De Certeau noted,

> The table is a social machinery as complicated as it is effective: it makes one talk, one lays everything on the table to confess what one wanted to keep quiet, one gets "grilled" by a skillful neighbour, one yields to a momentary excitement, to a fit of vanity, to the velvet smoothness of a red wine, and one hears oneself tell all about what one had sworn the day before to hide from everyone. The table is a place of pleasure; this is an ancient discovery, but it holds on to its truth and its secret, because eating is always much more than just eating. (De Certeau, 1998: 197)

Since participants often had set times to have lunch or dinner together by Internet, I was able to participate in this routine care practice, an everyday action that contributed to these families'

sense of connection despite the distance. Face-to-face interactions with Colombian migrants also created an important degree of intimacy that momentarily created spaces of solidarity between us. An embodied attention to everyday practices, such as basic biological needs to eat, walk, or talk, allowed Colombians to reveal their emotional state in words or in action. By suspending habitual thinking and feeling capacities, such as overcoming high levels of distrust, fear, feelings of alienation, distance and estrangement from other Colombians. I was able to explore Colombians' relationships with their families abroad, their ways of being and of practising distant care.

Caring for the Body

> And make us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of.
> Shakespeare, Hamlet ACT 3. Scene I [140]

One practice that exemplifies the attraction of the familiar relates to health care. It surprised me that many Colombian migrants, despite speaking French or English, seek out doctors and dentists who speak Spanish. Furthermore, they have a preference for Colombian health practitioners. Colombian migrants commonly perceive Colombians doctors, and especially, dentists, as offering a greater level of care and dedication than others. Moreover, the high cost of dental procedures in Canada often leads migrants to plan a vacation to see their families in Colombia and at the same time, seek more affordable dental procedures.

Moreover, many Colombians keep contributing to their Colombian health plans, whether through a public health insurance company or with a private company. A reform to the Public health system in 1991 recognized health care as a basic human right. Since then, in the climate of neoliberal reforms, private companies offer a great variety of services paired with sophisticated technology at relatively low to moderate costs. Colombian migrants continue to

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[140] http://www.proseproductionsink.com/1102_hamlet_guttenber_1604.pdf, Accessed on Dec 13 2018

contribute to their health coverage plans back in Colombia in case an emergency arises, and in case it proves to be more affordable to travel and receive treatment there rather than in Canada.

In addition, during return trips, some of the participants started thinking about arranging funeral rites and body disposition by seeking information on funeral homes that offer repatriation services. Although not common, the sudden death of a friend, and in particular the sudden and often tragic death of a member of the Facebook online community (Solidaridad Colombiana) prompts some participants to begin planning for the possibility of dying abroad. Those who felt strongly drawn to their burial taking place in Colombia contemplates new ways of preserving their traditional ritual practices while adapting to the host country's practises surrounding death and mourning. Especially, for the administrative, financial, and legal issues involved in the repatriation of remains, which often pose serious challenges to mourning families.

However, some trips were motivated by a desire to undergo plastic surgery. Affordable procedures and cultural values associated with stereotypical beauty canons motivate some Colombians to travel to undergo cosmetic procedures. In particular, women's body ideals shifted during the narcotrafic era, when drug lords' desires dictated the voluptuous shape that allowed women from disadvantaged backgrounds to escape poverty by altering their bodies. For example, in Medellin and Cali, the two most important cities for the drug trade and the development of drug cartels in Colombia, it became customary for young girls to receive breast augmentation surgery as a gift for their fifteenth birthday.[141]

[141] An important number of Narco Soap Operas, books and even songs sustain stereotypes of an idealized, voluptuous, and highly sexualized female body.
Narco Novelas, Narco Soap Operas such *as Sin Tetas no hay Paraíso* (No Tits, no Paradise) and *Muñecas de la Mafia* (Mafia dolls) show the cultural importance given in some regions to a voluptuous female body https://biblioteca.org.ar/libros/150829.pdf (Accessed, 20 April, 2019).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the concept of "home", as a set of embodied practices that offers a sense of belonging. I also explored nostalgia, which is at the epicentre of many migrants' everyday lives. Nostalgia motivates return trips, purchases, plans, and even eating practices. In particular, I explored food consumption as embodied social practice, noting that since eating has multisensory qualities, it evokes a multifaceted experience of place, eating recreates and evokes "sensory landscapes of home" (Seremetakis, 1994). Finally, I explored how health practices are chosen and experienced, whereby the body itself is made a home, to be taken care of in a particular way. I also discussed how Colombians maintain a foothold in Colombia by contributing to their health and pension plans and by planning for the repatriation of their remains.

I show how Colombians remake their homes in virtual environments and other places by sharing meals via the Internet with their families and by buying, cooking, preparing and sharing typical Colombian food. Sharing common interests such as watching the same Soap Opera or reading the same Colombian daily newspapers, and by attending to the body and to their spiritual lives in particular ways known to them nurtures as sense of belonging in their homes and connecting to their transnational families.

Conclusion: Migration as an Emotional and Relational Experience

In this thesis, I explored the multi-faceted nature of the armed conflict in Colombia to contextualize Colombian migration by focusing on the ways that the migrants re-establish, virtually, the intimacy of their homes and the emotions they experience while caring for their transnational families. I emphasize the embodied dimension of their experience in a post-migration context, paying special attention to the phenomenological world of the mundane, the familiar and the immediate.

Colombians in Québec provide a particularly interesting case study not only because they have diverse immigration statuses in Canada, but they also have varying socio-economic backgrounds, education levels, political and ideological leanings, ethnic and religious differences as well as a marked regionalism (i.e., the distinctive local nature of a given region in people' perceptions and their ethnic auto-identification with their native territories: the Caribbean coast, the Pacific coast, the Andes mountain range, the grasslands and the Amazon rainforest). This translates to very different levels of access to mobility, technology, and the resources needed to sustain a transnational family or to build a community in the host country.

Colombian migrants are atypical, to some degree. Despite sharing a common origin, history, and language they face significant challenges in building a community and tend to emphazise the importance of family relations over community. It was important to acknowledge from the beginning of my research that Colombians are a deeply fragmented group scattered across Montréal with limited capacity for a establishing a long-lasting community based on their common national origin. Accordingly, I decided to focus on smaller social groups and on spaces that are centred on the social institution of family, and on the domestic arena of their homes. However, the atomization brought by the armed conflict upon Colombians has penetrated and fragmented many families and homes. My study focuses on the body as a place of culture, and examines embodied experiences and emotions as well.

Emotions – Migration as a Relational Process

An emphasis on the body and on the ambivalent emotions of Colombian migrants highlights the ever-changing processes and complex realities of migration. It also brings the migrants themselves to the centre of my inquiry which looks at how migration is embedded in personal biography, in the maintenance of long-distance relationships, in embodied sensations, memories and emotions and in Colombians' seemingly mundane experiences, contingencies, and dilemmas that end up weighing heavily on their lives.

Immigrants, refugees, students and skilled workers are often affected negatively by legislation and policy in areas related to citizenship and immigration, such as the denial of visas and limited quotas for family reunification visas; moreover, travel insurance increases significantly as a person ages. They are also affected by workplace relations including leave entitlements; and formal or informal resources where access depends on personal economic resources (Baldassar, 2007). Nevertheless, many migrants return to their families and country of origin whenever possible to care for ailing parents, to attend funerals, births, or for marriages. As I have shown throughout this thesis, Colombian migrants make these choices, in part, for emotional reasons and with the well-being of their families in mind.

Apprehending migration through relationships and shared emotive experiences allowed me to understand the personal motivations, decision-making processes and individual idiosyncrasies involved in transnational movement. Also, a focus on the emotional lives of families helped me better appreciate certain macrosocial phenomena as they affects the family as a whole. For example, illegality is a deeply embodied reality and suffering is relational among all the members of a transnational family. The strain of being undocumented, like the strain of not being able to travel while waiting for a work or a study permit, or a permanent residency card, is lived within the intersubjective space of the family. Migration does not only concern a parent or a child as individuals, but rather it is a process experienced in an intimate way by the whole family. In approaching migration as a relational phenomenon and exploring the family as an

inter-subjective space, and as a structure of experiences, not only as an institution, I concentrated on stories of intimate experiences of home life extending across national boundaries, and have sought to provide a narrative that emphasizes migrants' agency as well as the salient role played by family ties.

Migrants' relationships with their families over time and at a distance, allow us to trace how global processes penetrate the domestic sphere and the every day, becoming embodied, interiorized and materialized in people's ways of being in the world. Transnational migrants participate in the family life course through communication and travel technologies and an ongoing exchange of emotional support that sustains a sense of familyhood across borders. Colombian migrants participating in this research acknowledged how they rely on communication technologies to reformulate virtual and deterritorialized homes which allows them to exchange certain types of care.

Routine and ritual care (Baldassar, 2007) are sustained for the most part by daily exchanges in chat rooms in which families "dwell", if only temporarily. News, updates, sex, lunch, pictures showing a person seeing snow for the first time, or posing with red-leaved trees, even transnational quarrels are shared daily by transnational families in their in-the-making virtual spaces, in their for-now-homes. However, in times of crisis or key changes in the life course of the family, the limits of such technologies become evident, and the need for physical co-presence arises. This exemplifies the extent to which caring transnationally is hard emotional work.

Family-Based Life Projects

Documenting the process of the affective dimension of migration from a qualitative perspective-through experience-centred and phenomenological approaches that take into account the migrant's position and point of view, brings to light the centrality of agency in the elaboration of a life-project. Most of the Colombian participants' life projects aim to ensure the continued well-being of their transnational families by means of particular homemaking experiences and practices. For example, through food consumption, by contributing to Colombian health and

pension plans, visiting and keeping a foothold in Colombia, and particularly by investing in real estate there. Owning property in Colombia leaves open the possibility of return if the need arises or if nostalgia becomes intolerable to the point of changing the life projects that inspired migrants to leave their country in the first place.

Colombians' trasnational migrants' life projects, like everyone else's, are open to improvisation, changes, failures, delays and sometimes drastic and unexpected events or circumstances. I argue that it is in the everyday and within the domestic and intimate sphere of family life and homemaking practices that migrants take action and assume the responsibility for giving direction to their lives. Thus, learning about the life projects of participants offered a privileged position that allowed me to perceive and to understand people's ongoing projects, dreams, and ideas about the future, highlighting manifestations of creativity, sense-making and a certain level of agency from migrants. In other words, despite the constraints that macroeconomic, as well as social and political systems impose on people, we can see the importance migrants as the creators of their future and the significance of the domestic and personal sphere of their households and their families for fulfilling their life projects.

I rooted my research on anthropological concepts of home, which allowed me to explore an observable place and concrete practices, including how migrants stay in touch with their families. In particular, I focused on nostalgia, an emotion that plays a crucial role in the imagination and the alternative futures migrants see themselves living when projecting their lives into the future by ruminating into their past. This approach allows a rich and nuanced understanding of the experiences and embodied reality of migration, as well as insight into the personal motivations, and decision-making processes involved in the transnational movement of Colombians.

Field Sites as Places for the Imagination

In studying the migration of Colombians, I took into consideration the possibilities offered by communication and travel technologies to sustain a transnational family. A field space-time was co-constructed and reimagined with the research participants, taking into consideration the non-contiguous nature of migrants' homes and home-making practices. My field site, consequently, was not fixed, but rather remained flexible and open to the interconnection that travel and communication technologies offered Colombian migrants.

The hallmark of anthropology and classic Malinowskian archetype of fieldwork, based on prolonged participant observation in a relatively small, geographically delineated place, (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992) did not apply to my study. For this research, I cannot attest to the importance of "being there", or of "going away." As a contemporary ethnographer, the question I pondered was, if as an ethnographer, I am in a way at "home", then what constitutes the "field"?

My autobiography does not encompass "going away" for a long time to live and learn from Colombians ways of life. And yet, even if I share a common origin, history, and language with other Colombians, I did not perceive the field to be known or familiar. In part, this was because I was unaware of the atomization of the society in which I grew up, and of the sources of unthought-of fears, distrust, suspicions and the general malaise I experienced when approaching other Colombians. Nor did I understand my own family dynamics within the backdrop of the armed conflict, which I found were strikingly different from those that many other Colombians seemed to experience with their families.

Therefore, as a Canadian anthropologist born in Colombia studying Colombians in Montréal, I am also a beginner who seeks to understand previously unthought-of-categories and unseen systems of meaning. However, unlike my previous research projects aimed at understanding violence and the aftermath of the armed conflict, where I remained firmly detached, for this research, I was willing and able to partake in the experiences that other Colombians seemed to

be having, experiences that I had previously rejected, since I was alienated from my own culture, even my own family and deeply disenchanted with the armed conflict and with how it affected Colombians and their families. The field, therefore, did not comprise a static, fixed or rigid remote space in my anthropological imagination; rather, it needed to be questioned and reconstituted as often as people found new ways to imagine their place in the world, for "the link between imagination and place is no trivial matter. The existential question, 'where do I belong?' is addressed to the imagination" (Walter, 1988: 204).

My field was the reflection of Colombians'virtual meeting spaces and for-now-homes. It encompassed intimate relations with family members and the narrative communities they constitute that are situated in very different, temporal, unbounded places. In studying the migration of Colombians, I took into consideration the possibilities offered by communication and travel technologies to sustain a transnational family. Therefore, a field space-time was co-constructed and re-imagined, taking into consideration the non-contiguous nature of migrants' homes and home-making practices, because in a world of infinite interconnections and overlapping contexts, the ethnographic field does not simply exist, awaiting discovery. It has to be laboriously constructed, prised apart from all the other possibilities for contextualization to which its constituent relationships and connections could also be referred (Amit, 2000: 6).

The interconnectedness and mobile lives that Colombians experience could not be understood through classical fieldwork in local sites that correspond to cultural wholes. Immigrants, refugees, diasporas, tourists, travelers, international students, transnational workers have multifaceted life experiences across multiple locations, virtual or otherwise. Moreover, they physically inhabit a place, and yet belong to different social networks than those who are geographically close by. Those networks most of the time, constitute communities of close, interpersonal relations, where moral values, social relations and cultural identities are continuously constructed and reconstructed through stories (Olwig 2007).

Further Avenues

Unfortunately, I did not explore in depth two other issues causing division among Colombians, the significance of religious affiliations and of sexual orientation and gender identity. In Colombia, gay sex was decriminalised in 1981; gay Colombians can marry and adopt children. However, decriminalization of homosexuality did not amount to abolition of penalties but a reduced it to the level of a misdemeanor o (Nagle, 2012). There is a high level of resistance in various sectors of society, including among political and economic actors, the legislative and judicial bodies, as well as civil servants and Catholic social conservatives who disapprove of same-sex marriage and adoption by same-sex couples. It was only in 2007 that the Constitutional Court issued a ruling in favour of same sex-couples, recognizing property and inheritance rights. This law (based on Law 54 of 1990) recognized civil unions and LGBTs' right to inherited property (Nagle, 2012).

My research allowed me to glimpse the importance that the internet and telecommunications have for Colombia's lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender individuals (LGBT's). A few participants confided that they were able to form digital support networks to express freely their sexuality, and to come out as LGBT to family members from a safe distance via virtual social networks. I think it is important to focus on the lived experiences and emotions of LGBTs who faced daily physical abuse and emotional anguish in a highly homophobic patriarchal society that criminalizes and demonizes homosexual conduct.

Colombian Migration: a Relational Process Embedded in the Intersubjective Space of Family and the Body

I have examined migration as a relational process deeply rooted in the intersubjective space of the family (Horton, 2009) and in the body, understanding the body as an existential ground of culture (Csordas, 1990) constituted through social interaction and everyday practices. I have looked at people's dreams and ideas about the future, as well as how migrants exercise agency whereby they become — to some degree — the actors of their own destiny. I showed how,

despite multiple constraints, Colombians have the capacity to imagine and to formulate their own life projects. They do so even within the macrosocial structures that seem to impede such plans from being brought to fruition. My research affirms that family is at the epicentre of Colombian migrants' life-changing decisions; it justifies abrupt changes, sacrifices, uses and abuses; it structures experiences, emotions and plans for the future; it shapes the past and influences the present; it is a structure of experiences deeply infused in religious (mostly Catholic) teachings, systems of obligation, and expectations.

Methodologically, I favored an experiential/phenomenological approach and focused on embodiment, people's emotions, and aspirations which led me to explore the phenomenological world of the immediate, and the mundane: eating, walking, hoping, dreaming of a home, and a future, decorating with transnational objects, receiving gifts, sending Facebook updates, holding a family chat on WhatsApp, caring and praying, watching soap operas and other everyday activities in a transnational's' family life.

I conclude that an emphasis on the emotions of the transnational family can highlight the importance that families, home-making practices, and life projects have in migration processes. Migrants may move as a result of particular situations, not solely for economic or political reasons; migrants may move out of love, anger, hope, sadness, despair and also serendipity, existential stagnation, or to exercise their human capacity to transcend. Thus, an ethnography based on the emotions experienced by migrants for their families, their lives and their homes aims at capitalizing on "the political value of ethnography in humanizing stereotypes" (Agar, 1980: 11). Further research is necessary to explore the multiple emotional attachments of migrants to their homelands, to places of transit and finally to their new places of residence, since, if we want to understand the social, economic, political and experiential complexities of human mobility and belonging, it is necessary to include a focus on emotions.

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APPENDIX A — Canadian and Québec Immigration Policies: A Timeline

Year	Events and Policies
1867	Canadian Confederation: British colonies were united.
1869	*Canada's first immigration Ac*t. This Act reflects an "open door" policy to encourage the settlement of the Western provinces, and the growth of Canada's economy. However, the immigration of Black Americans is discouraged.
1885	*Chinese Immigration Act* establishes a head tax of $50 on Chinese migrants to deter migration from China and Asia in general. In 1903 it increases to $500.
1906	The Immigration Act enacts restrictions on undesirable migrants. Grounds for deportation included insanity, disease, being handicapped, being jailed or hospitalized for two years or more. Entry was denied to epileptics, the insane, individuals with impairments of sight, speech and hearing, those with contagious diseases, as well as the destitute, impoverished and anyone likely to become a public charge. For two years after arrival in Canada, undesirable migrants could be deported by the authorities.
1907	The Japanese government agrees to limit the emigration of Japanese to Canada to 400 per year.
1908	The Continuous Journey Regulation, an amendment to the *Immigration Act*, prohibits the landing of any immigrant who did not come to Canada by a continuous journey from the country where they were natives or citizens. (In practice, this regulation primarily affected immigrants from India and Japan since the main immigration routes from those countries did not offer direct passage to Canada.) A border inspection service is created on the U.S. - Canada border.
1910	The Immigration Act gives the government discretionary power to regulate migration. Section 38 allows the government to prohibit the entry of migrants whose race is deemed unsuited to the climate of Canada.
1910–1911	First Caribbean Domestic Scheme. 100 Guadeloupian women come to Québec.
1914	The Naturalization Act creates strict requirements for becoming a citizen, including good moral character.
1915–1919	Limited migration during the World War I and further restrictions due to fear of communism and enemy aliens.

1923	The Chinese Immigration Act almost cuts off the immigration of Chinese to Canada until 1947.
1926	Introduction of the concept of family sponsorship to promote family reunification.
1946	Post-war immigration controls remain tight, while pressure increases for a more open immigration policy. The selection of refugees is guided by economic considerations, ethnic prejudices (Jews are routinely rejected), and political bias (left-wing or communists are labelled undesirables). The *Canadian citizenship Act* is adopted, creating a separate Canadian citizenship, distinct from British.
1947	Beginnings of the Displaced Persons (DP) movement. Italo-Canadians are no longer considered enemy aliens, leading to a period of significant Italian migration. The Chinese Immigration Act is repealed. Legal residents, not only citizens, are granted the right to sponsor spouses, fiancées, and unmarried children.
1950	The Department of Citizenship and Immigration is formed.
1951	The Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is adopted; Canada does sing the Convention until 1969 because the RCMP fears that it would restrict Canada's ability to deport refugees on security grounds.
1952	The Immigration Act grants the government the power to refuse admission on the grounds of nationality, ethnic group, peculiar customs, habits, and modes of life, probable inability to become assimilated. Homosexuals, drug addicts, and drug traffickers are added to the prohibited categories.
1967	The point system is incorporated into immigration regulations. The race category is abolished.
1968	Québec creates Le Ministère de l'Immigration du Québec, with a goal of recruiting more French and French-speaking immigrants. Canada welcomes 11,000 refugees from the communist regime in Czechoslovakia.
1969	Canada signs the Geneva Convention, set up in 1951, guaranteeing protection for refugees.
1971	The government of Canada introduces an official multiculturalism policy for Canada, recognizing the plurality of ethnocultural groups in Canada.
1973	Overthrow of Allende's government in Chile. By 1975, 1,188 refugees from Chile arrive in Canada.
1979–1980	60,000 refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia are resettled in Canada. In Québec, the Cullen—Couture Agreement is reached in (1979). (See "Québec Immigration Policies" below).
1971—1991	Five agreements are signed between the governments of Canada and Québec giving the province greater autonomy to manage migration. Dual citizenship (Canadian and other) is permitted as of 1977.

1987	Bill C-55 is tabled. The bill revises the refugee determination system, creating the Immigration Refugee Board (IRB).
1988	The Canadian Multiculturalism Act reinforces and expands the policy of 1971.
1991	Canada—Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens comes into effect on April 1st, giving Québec sole responsibility for the selection of independent immigrants and the administration of all settlement services in the province.
1993	Amendments to the Immigration Regulations cancel the sponsorship of assisted relatives, and reduces the points awarded to them, making it more difficult for family members outside the nuclear family to migrate to Canada.
1994	Announcement by the government of Canada of lowered immigration levels and shift away from family reunification.
1995	As part of the federal budget, the government imposes the Right of Landing Fee (known as the head tax). The fee of $975 applies to all adults, including refugees, who become permanent residents. In 2000, the government rescinds the fee for refugees, but maintains it for immigrants.
1999	5,000 Kosovar refugees from Macedonia come to Canada. Four ship carrying illegal Chinese migrants are seized by the Canadian navy in Nootka Sound.
2002	New regulations for the selection system for Skilled Workers take effect, including changes to the system of points (100 points are based on the following factors—age, education, work experience, language ability, and adaptability)
2004	Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) between Canada and the U. S.
2008	Canada tightens its immigration policies to focus on economic class immigrants (i.e., immigrants who have the skills and abilities to contribute to Canada's economy) and migrants to fill short-term labour market needs.
2009	Amendments are passed to deal with a group of residents known as the "lost Canadians"; people who were never granted Canadian citizenship.
2010	A Thai cargo ship arrives with 500 Tamil refugees on board to BC, Victoria. The MV Sun Sea is intercepted by Canadian military vessels.
2011	*Beyond the Border Declaration,* the USA—Canada Action Plan "outlines joint priorities to strengthen shared security and improve the legitimate flow of people, goods, and services across our borders". This action plan "sets out joint priorities for achieving that vision within the four areas of cooperation identified in the Beyond the Border Declaration: addressing threats early; trade facilitation, economic growth and jobs; cross-border law enforcement; and critical infrastructure and cyber-security."

2014	The Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act is passed, the first significant alteration to the Act since 1977. It deals with the issue of terrorism and clarifies the definition of residence in Canada, as well as streamlining the citizenship process. Applications for citizenship that were approved by citizenship judges are now under the jurisdiction of government departmental officers. Lastly, the Act expands considerably the criteria for revoking citizenship.
2015—2016	In response to the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the Middle East, the Government committed to resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees by February 29, 2016. Between November and December 2015, the Department resettled over 6,000 refugees to Canada and surpassed its commitment to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by February 29, 2016.

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APPENDIX B — Grid for participant observations | perceptions

Family: ****
Date: ****
Place: **

		Emotions expressed Joy, nostalgia, sadness, fear, trust, anger, love, shame.	**Level** High Medium Low	**Ways emotions are expressed** Words Body Practice Imagination	**Other perceptions**
Sensing of place. Home or household?					
Actors- Family members present-absent					
Single acts people do					
Event—quotidian special: Cook, listen to music, look at pictures.					
Time—ritual—care—routine					
Goals—related to life project					
Smells, sounds, tactile stimulus, sight, taste. Food and objects.					
Proxemics—distance kept in relation to other family members present or not. Do people touch the screen as if touching a loved one?					
Behaviours—Body language Silences—Speech patterns					

APPENDIX C — Interview Guide

These guiding themes and interviews aimed at keeping the study within a reasonable time frame. Not all questions were asked to participants, I made sure I asked the appropriate set of questions to Colombian migrants, taking into account their particular legal status—

Chronology and Details of Personal Migrations (Semi-structured interviews)

Theme: life project

When was the first time that you moved a long distance? From where to where?

How old were you?

Did you move with other people?

What led you to pick the place that you chose to move to?

What other moves have you made, particularly the most recent one?

Most recently, how long did it take you to make the decision to move?

Did you move with other people?

Are you happy or sad that you made the move?

Emotions migrants might experience (Participant observation)

Theme: life project, family ties, emotions

Do you see setbacks as opportunities for growth?

Do you feel optimistic about the future, the possibilities to reunite with family, create a home in Québec, and fulfill your life project?

Have you found social support in your community?

Since Colombians have been labelled as "happy people" do you tend to feel happy or unhappy under adverse circumstances?[142]

Decisions to relocate through family networks (participant observation at home—virtual spaces)

Theme: life project (Questions to be asked mindfully, particularly to refugees and GARs)

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[142] Colombia was the happiest country in the world by the end of 2012, a survey finds. See: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/07/colombia-happiest-country-in-the-world-in-2012-survey-finds_n_2426667.html

How much advice did you take from family when deciding to move countries?
What has inspired you to relocate from one country to another? What were your hopes before moving? What did you leave behind?
How much does work or education figures into your decisions to relocate? Have you ever moved somewhere in order to study, or have you ever decided to study somewhere in order to have an easier time moving there?
How much are you willing to move for someone you love? Have you ever moved in order to stay with a person that you were dating or married to? Would you do it again if a similar situation happened in the future?
How much were you willing to move to break away from your family? Have you ever moved to distance from your family?

E-motions of the transnational family. (Participant observation at home—virtual spaces)
Theme: "Keeping in Touch" (Ritual-Care-Routine)
Who do you consider is your family? Do friends count as family?
For what kinds of occasions do you take the time and money to visit family?
When you visit family, what kinds of things do you do? How long would be an ideal visit?
How often are you in touch with other family members in different countries? By phone, email, Facebook, Whatsapp, regular mail?
Do you send your family pictures? Money? Presents? Do you have a say in family-related matters if you do so? Why or why not?
How much do you think other family members know about what you are doing in Canada? Do you share your frustrations when you face difficulties to find a job in your area of expertise? Do you hide certain events or drawbacks to protect them, failed relationships, for example?
Do they know about how you live and feel here in Québec? Do they know about what you do at work and what plans you have for the future?

Connections to "home" (In-depth interviews at home—virtual spaces)
Theme: home-household making practices: food, objects, music.
Do you feel at home or not where you live presently? Is it a home or a household for you?
Where do you feel most at home?

Where do you most like to live? Why?

Is there one "home" for your family? Where do you imagine it lies? Why?

Does food bring you closer to what you felt when at home? If so, what food makes you feel at home? Where do you buy it? How do you prepare it? (Ritual occasions?)

If they do not live in Colombia: Why do you not live in Colombia? What things would have to happen to persuade you to move to Colombia again?

Objects: What objects remind you of your past home. Do pictures bring you closer to those you love? When homesick, what do you touch? See? Smell? Taste? Hear?

If they live in Colombia: Why do you think so many of your family members live outside of Colombia? Do you ever have to answer yourself why you live in Colombia? Is it something you feel you have to defend? How long do you foresee living in Colombia? (Questions to be asked via Skype, Facebook. Whatsapp to family members living in Colombia)

What music do you hear? Do you share it with your family here in Québec? Your children? Or not?

Ideas about the future (In-depth interviews at home— virtual spaces)

Theme: life projects, homemaking, family ties e-motions.

Do you feel "settled?" Do you ever dream about "settling down?" If you're not settled now, where do you think you might eventually feel settled?

If you don't have kids, do you ever dream of having any? Where would you like to be living when you have kids? Why? Would your decisions to move be different with kids than without? What languages would you like them to speak?

If you have kids, where would you like them to grow up, if anywhere in particular?

Would you ever send your children away to school? If so, where to and why? If not, why?

Where would you want to retire if you could? Where do you think you will retire eventually?

APPENDIX D— Summary — Life Stories

Note on composite portraits. On one occasion where identification of a research participant could be possible due to their biographic information, I draw on personal details from similar individuals in order to cloak their identity within a composite portrait. This is done without changing the material relevant for analysis.

Federico Lorca: 40-year-old in 2019, born in Choachí, Cundinamarca. He lived in a single-parent household with his mother and two sisters. He studied anthropology at the National University, where he participated actively in political gatherings and demonstrations, until he and his family were threatened by infiltrated guerrillas who wanted to recruit him. He migrated to the States in 1999 to help the financial situation in his household, and to be able to save some money to finish his studies. Upon his return and after studying for a few semesters, the situation worsened. He stayed for a few months with extended family members that lived in the region. He did not receive protection from the government. He decided to migrate a second time for good. He lived in New York, and learned about the possibility to ask for refugee protection, he had an expired visa and after September 11 the situation worsened for migrants in the States, he knew of a lawyer in Vermont who helped migrants to cross legally the La Colle border. Nowadays, Federico lives in Montréal with his partner and their children.

José Luis is 26 years old, and Elaine 56 years old in 2019. They are from Cali, and they are atheist, and belong to a family of four, Antonio (father and husband) and Martin (brother and son). Elaine was very interested in sharing her story, more so than the rest of her family. A year after conversing with Elaine, (from 2013 to 2014) she asked José Luis to meet me after class, just for a coffee. She granted me access to her family.

Elaine and her family arrived to the U.S. in 1999 at 36 years old, and Jose Luis at 6 years old. Elaine's husband was an employee in a bank, and he was part of the union. They did not disclose

too many details about their legal status, and they asked me not to inquire about it, since they were processing their Canadian citizenship, they were afraid and reassured when I said that I understood, that I also claimed refugee status, and did not feel at ease talking about it either. They migrated in 1999 to Chicago, and often moved, which impacted José Luis and his brother, who became aware of their illegality as teenagers. Martin had a false driver's licence, and he was stopped by an officer and had to go to court, which prompted their migration to Canada. They were hoping the DREAM act would allow them to become legal, but it did not. They risked going to Colombia in 2014 through Ecuador, so as to not have their passports stamped and their citizenship jeopardized. Elaine just said she had to see her parents and family.

Monica (36) and Renato (38) are from Bogotá, they are in their 30's as of 2019, and came to Canada in 2010. They married weeks before migrating, and spent a week in New York before coming to Canada, to celebrate their honey moon. Monica and Renato met at university, and their families supported their decision to migrate. During fieldwork and in our interviews about the future, their life projects did not coincide. Their shared life project was based around the skilled worker program, they made significant efforts to make it happen, by studying French, applying for visas, saving money and even marrying, (to some degree) which gives points and ensures a successful application. However, after approximately a year of being in Canada they separated, and later divorced. Monica pursued higher education, and Renato changed his profession.

Maria is a 40 years old, Pablo 45 years old, and Andres is16 years old in 2019. They applied as skilled workers, and processed their application with ACanada. Maria comes from a single parent family, and has a sister and Pablo belongs to a nuclear family. Maria could not finish her studies in Colombia, and so her husband was the main applicant in the process to obtain permanent residency. They both come from extended families, and received support to migrate, in the form of gifts and financial help, they also married before migrating. Once in Canada, Maria finished her education, and Pablo finished a certificate, applying to loans and bursaries. They have traveled to Colombia to visit family.

Diana 41 years old, Manuel 44 years old, Tomas 19 years in 2019.

They arrived to Canada in 2009.

Diana and Manuel met at University, and before she could finish her last semester she was pregnant with Tomas. Diana's family is from Boyacá, and Manuel's family is from Villavicencio. Diana and Manuel did not have the means to apply for permanent residency. Diana attended one of the many talks offered in Bogotá by ACanada and the government of Québec to invite Colombians to migrate, work and live in the province. Her mother invested her life savings to help her, and her family to apply as skilled workers. Diana and Manuel married in a civil ceremony that they kept secret from their extended family, many of their decisions were influenced by superstitions. They separated and divorced. Diana finished a Master's degree at Université de Montréal.

Bernardo Martinez, 29 years old in 2019. Bernardo's family migrated to Canada in 2002. Bernardo travelled with members of his extended family, and nuclear family. His parents are human rights lawyers who foresaw the need to leave Colombia, and who avoided doing so for about ten years. He was 12 years old when he came to Canada and remembers he was given a banana, juice and a sandwich, and how much those innocuous foods remind him of his arrival.

He is a Canadian citizen and travelled to Peru (2008) and Paraguay (2010) as a volunteer, he said he understood at the time, his parent's commitment to protect human rights. He returned to Colombia, and works with an NGO that searches for landmines.

APPENDIX E — A State University in the Republic of Colombia

The National University of Colombia is infiltrated by leftist guerrillas who openly spread their ideology through pamphlets, workshops, graffiti and violent demonstrations. The everyday at this university is filled with student demonstrations,[143] "explosive potatoes" (handmade bombs), and activities intended to combat social injustice.

As Federico participated more and more in public demonstrations, meetings and initiatives to counteract social injustice, his involvement eventually reached a point of no return. He was threatened and obliged to join as a militant. Instead, Federico took into account that his family was in danger, as targeting families is the modus operandi of armed groups in Colombia to terrorize and obtain compliance, and he migrated. First, locally by visiting and staying with his

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[143] A Student who participated in protests at a State University died while making hand bombs. « Estudiante que murió en la Universidad Nacional fabricaba papas bomba » Accessed 9 Jan 2019 https://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-13152647

extended family and by changing his routines and routes around Bogotá, and eventually he had to leave after being assaulted.

Federico was labelled a leftist student militant in Colombia, became an illegal alien in the United States and then a Colombian refugee claimant in Canada. He transcends imposed statuses and moves through national borders, ideologies, and historical events; reaching his destinations with or without a passport and with or without money (both which represent important macro structural limitations). Federico's idea of the future was rooted in his family's survival.

He reached his destination, yet he lost his baggage and kept only a few books. Once he crossed the border into Canada, Federico began his journey as a refugee claimant at the YMCA. He had nothing, no money, family, or friends, only a fragile legal status that could be revoked at a hiring by the IRB. He that he had plenty of time, and so he walked,

> I had a lot of time to walk, I walked everywhere in Montréal.
> *Tenía mucho tiempo y caminaba, camine por todos lados en Montréal*

He discovered that not having papers, money, an education, or a job also offered him a lot of time. Federico finished his education at UQÀM knowing full well that it was not a way towards finding a job. In his case, migration offered a possibility to live in peace.

APPENDIX F — Colombians in Montréal

This is a list of Colombian restaurants, markets, bakeries, food delivery services, dance schools and dance groups, and musicians in Montréal.

Colombian Restaurants, Markets and bakeries in Montréal, Laval and Longueuil

Tardes Caleñas

3366, boul. Grande Allée Saint-Hubert Longueuil. Offers typical Colombian food.

Saveur Colombienne

3535 Autoroute (A440) Jean- Noël-Lavoie, Laval. A family restaurant (caterer) based on the Matron's recipes of the Maldonado family. The children carry on their heritage by offering typical Colombian food for events, parties, and celebrations and also offer delivery of meals.[144]

Marché des Amériques

*222 Curé-Labelle, Laval***.** Grocery store offering Colombian and Latin American products such as drinks, sweets, canned goods, bakery, accessories, technology, money transfers, and money orders.

Food Delivery Services in Montréal

Produits Calientitos

Offers typical baked goods and pastries. "*Ofrecemos variedad y sabores que te recordarán la tradición de nuestra tierra*". We offer a variety of flavourrs that will remind you the tradition of our land.

[144] I include brief sections found in some businesses' websites to highlight the importance given to family, food, and emotions, which I explored in chapter 8.

Délice Unique

Offers baked goods, pastries, and cakes made for special occasions. This site offers people living in Colombia and elsewhere in the world the possibility to send a cake or a special dish to a loved one living in Montréal to celebrate a birthday or anniversary. The owners of Délice Unique state on their website *estamos felices de celebrar el amor a distancia, unimos corazones, apoyamos emociones, exaltamos sentimientos todo al mejor estilo de Délice Unique, ofrecemos una gastronomía socio-afectiva*". We are happy to celebrate love from a distance, we unite hearts, we support emotions, and we exalt feelings all in the best style of Délice Unique. We offer a socio-affective gastronomy.

Quesuditas Delice Colombien

Offers typical arepas, traditional grilled, fried, or baked cornmeal cakes, made of ground maize dough and cheese.

Bienvenue Sumercé

Offers typical Colombian food.

El Corrientazo colombiano

Offer everyday typical Colombian lunches.

Restaurants, coffee shops, bakeries

Tostadito Café

5412 Rue Jean-Talon. Bakery and Coffee Shop.

Rincón Colombiano

780 Est Jean Talon. Offers typical Colombian food.

Café Platon

4521A Av du Parc. Coffee shop offering Colombian fast food.

Marche Fu-Tai

6700, Côte-des-Neiges. Asian grocery store offers a variety of ethnic products including a fairly large amount of Colombian items for cooking and body care and food staples.

Sabor Latino

6955, rue St-Hubert. Colombian, Mexican, Salvadorian food.

Oui mango

1500 Atwater Ave Little Burgundy, Plaza Alexis-Nihon.

Mango snack and dessert stand that serves Colombian-inspired mango cups traditionally known as mango biche eaten with salt and lime. In Montréal mango cups are served with Tajin seasoning, honey, salt, spicy sauce, condensed milk, and even maple syrup, they also offer tropical juices, smoothies and shakes.

Cuba Paisa

102, boul. St-Laurent. Offers Cuban and Colombian food.

Pachamama

7245, rue St-Hubert Villeray. Offers Peruvian and Colombian food.

Chez Tina Gourmet

1121 Belanger Coin Christophe-Colomb. Offers typical Colombian food.

Antojitos Colombianos

5412 Jean-Talon E -Saint-Léonard. Offers Colombian baked goods.

Epicerie Ricuras Colombianas

5250 Rue Jean-Talon E Saint-Léonard. Offer typical Colombian food.

Dance Schools

Ballet Raíces de Colombia

3680 Jeanne-Mance St. The Ballet Raíces de Colombia (BRDC) was founded in 2001 to create an entity in Montréal to disseminate Colombian culture and traditions through dance. An original idea of Carlos Reyes a former dancer and co-founder of the Folkloric Ballet of Antioquia (BFDA), he is also a Colombian designer and choreographer. Reyes studied dance in Medellin, Colombia, and New York and has accompanied BFDA on international tours.[145] In 2005 the Ballet created a school dance to train new dancers who will promote Colombian folklore and contribute to the multicultural character of Canada.

Comparsa Colombia Montréal

7100 St-Hubert #204. Folkloric dance group inspired by the three ethnic influences (indigenous, African, and European) of the Carnival of Barranquilla.

Tribu Kumbé

Studios in Côte-des-Neiges and Berri— UQAM. Based in Montréal and active since 2017, Tribu Kumbé is a collective whose mission is to create pieces rooted in the essence of traditional Colombian dances and contemporary expressions.

Tondøa

Dance Company offers folklore workshops in Montréal's parks through dance, music, and the visual arts while exploring various rhythms and cultures to connect and disseminate Colombian folklore.

Saoco School Dance

9, rue Sainte-Catherine Est, 2e étage. Cali style salsa courses.

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[145] Ballet Raíces de Colombia webpage
https://brdc2020.wixsite.com/brdc/a-propos, Accessed 25 June, 2020

Sensación latina Dance School

7064 Rue St-Hubert. Cali style salsa courses.

La Clave, Salsa Colombienne

4625 avenue du parc. Cali style salsa courses.

Coco Carnaval

Coco Carnaval is a professional Latin dance troupe that mixes several types of Latin dances: bachata, salsa, meringue, all the costumes come from Colombia and are made by artisans and high-fashion designers. They are available for Barranquilla Carnival animations, Afro-Colombian, and urban dance workshops.

Collectivo Salsa descalza

Founded by Carmen Ruiz and Juan Sebastian Mejia en el 2009. This is a collective movement inspired by Afro-Colombian traditions free dancing workshops and presentations in the streets of Montréal.[146]

Musicians

José Armando Torres known as Joé Armando is a Colombian musician and composer.

[146] Salsa Descalza Manifest, the founders of this collective make a political statement in this document, see https://www.yumpu.com/es/document/read/14444740/manifiesto-pdf-salsa-descalza, accessed 8 July, 2020.

Source: mémoires des montréalaises

Born in Bogotá Joé Armando came to perform at Expo 67 with his orchestra Colombia Cumbia, (the shows took place at the Pavillon de la Jeunesse de La Ronde, located on Île Sainte-Hélène). The agreement for the band's appearance at Expo 67 included a tour of Québec, since then Joé Armando is recognized in the artistic community as one of the major figures of popular Hispano-Afro-Caribbean music and jazz. In 1986, Joé Armando shared the stage with Tito Puente at Montréal Spectrum. He participated in 1998 in the Franco Folies and was invited to participate in the International Jazz Festival in 2000. He is one of the main attractions of the Festival International des Rythmes du Monde de Saguenay. Joé Armando has received numerous awards, prizes, and trophies. In 2016, he received the Grammy Latin Award for being the pioneer of salsa and Latin jazz in Canada.[147]

[147] Mémoires des Montréalaises https://ville.Montréal.qc.ca/memoiresdesMontréalais/joe-armando-genie-du-jazz-et-de-la-musique-hispano-afro-caribeenne-populaire. Accessed 6 July, 2020.

Ramon Chicharron

Born in Medellin, Ramon is a multi-instrumentalist singer-songwriter. His danceable compositions are inspired by a desire to live a simpler life, a world without borders, and the difficulties one encounters when pursuing a dream. He worked on the album "Pescador de sueños", fisherman of dreams which to express the blending of identities between urban and rural, tradition and modernism, dream and reality.[148]

Gypsy Kumbia Orchestra (GKO)

Founded in 2011 by a Colombian couple (from Cali, Valle del Cauca) who met in Montréal in the early 2000s, Carmen Ruiz and Juan Sebastian Mejia, (they also founded Salsa Descalza). GKO is formed by a group of 15 musicians who mix Caribbean rhythms (Afro-Colombian percussions) with Balkan music (the brass melodies of the Roman peoples of Eastern Europe), jazz, and traditional Québécoise folklore. GKO is a political project, says Carmen Ruiz, it promotes a joyful and colorful revolution to foster inclusion and diversity. They have played at La Sala Rossa (4848 St Laurent Blvd) and in different festivals in Québec, Canada, Cuba, Colombia, France, Austria, and the Chec Republic.[149]

Bumaranga

Founded by Juan Sebastian Quiros in 2011. This group of 7 musicians (5 from Colombia, 1 from Ontario, and 1 from Mexico) mixes Afro-Colombian music, Cumbia, the Puya, the Tambora and the Mapalé. They work to disseminate and preserve Afro-Colombian music in Canada.[150]

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[148] https://en.ramonchicharron.com/

[149] Interview with Carmen Ruiz 31 May 2020 Radio Canada with Michel Labrecque. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/premiere/emissions/desautels-le-dimanche/segments/chronique/177199/gypsy-kumbia-orchestra-une-rencontre-culturelle-improbable-et-festive-michel-labrecque, Accessed, 5 July 2020.

[150] Interview with Juan Sebastian Quiros for Radio Canada by Pablo Gomez in 2013. https://www.rcinet.ca/es/2013/08/14/bumaranga-afrocolombiana/, accessed July 4 2020.

Mango Zound

Band, music fusion of Colombian rhythms: vallenato, cumbia, pop, rock, salsa, and folklore.

GaïTambo

A folk group, Gaitambo was created to share the beauty of Colombian *Restaurants, Markets and bakeries in Laval and Longueuil.*

Religious Groups and congregations

Notre-Dame-de-Guadalupe Basilica

(1969 Ontario St E) for ceremonies in Spanish such as Christmas celebrations; this Basilica is the centre of the city's Latin American Catholic Mission.

Saint Joseph's Oratory

(3800 Queen Mary Rd) where Latin Americans including seasonal workers attend a Spanish service on Sundays at 3:00 pm.

The Church of Saint Michel

(8961 12e Avenue)

Sainte-Thérèse-d'Avila

(1410 Rue Bélanger)

Saint-Gilbert

(5420 Rue des Angevins)

Saint-Arsène

(1015 Rue Bélanger)

Notre-Dame-du-Bel-Amour

(7055, avenue Jean-Bourdon) host masses for Spanish speakers. Activities are organized by half a dozen Hispanic Catholic fraternities and brotherhoods, including those of Señor de los Milagros, San Martin de Porres, Santa Rosa de Lima, San Judas Tadeo, and Divino Salvador del Mundo.

The Church of God Ministry of Jesus Christ International, Iglesia de Dios Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional (IDMJI)

(9890 St Laurent Blvd, Montréal) founded and launched in 1972 as a Christian Church by María Luisa Piraquive, a Colombian woman born in the municipality of Chipatá, department of Santander in Colombia. Maria Luisa Piraquive is the only woman in the world to lead a church of Colombian origin.

Most Hispanic evangelical Christians frequent

Iglesia Nueva Vida

(200 Rue du Parc Industrielle, Longueuil), an extension of the Église de la Nouvelle Vie Church in the city of Longueuil and the Greater Montréal.

Hispanic evangelical Christians are associated with the Association Chrétienne pour la Francophonie and with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

The Iglesia Pentecostal Unida en Montréal

(2209 Avenue Charland), Protestant Christian movement that emphasizes personal experiences of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit.