

«¿Puedes repetir? »:  
Acculturative Stress among Honduran Immigrants in the Quebec *Classe d'Accueil*

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## ABSTRACT

«¿Puedes repetir? »:

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The purpose of this qualitative study is to develop a greater understanding of Honduran youth's cultural experience upon entering Canada. I have examined the interplay of acculturation, the integration process, and its overall effect on the development of the self and ethnic identity as a newly-arrived immigrant living in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Specifically, this study performs an in-depth analysis of the cultural barriers existent when a youth is first enrolled in a *classe d'accueil* at a French primary or secondary public school.

The *classe d'accueil* is a preparatory class for newly arrived immigrant students who do not speak French and who have lived in Quebec for less than five years. The function of the class is the dominant educational model for immigrant students, placed under scrutiny within the context of this research. An interview-based methodology has been used to consider the experiences of five Honduran immigrant adults between the ages of 25 and 30. These individuals engage individually and confidentially in a discourse on their acculturation process within the context of both the socio-cultural and the educational realms in which they find themselves. Therefore, their new lives in Montreal, Quebec, Canada act as the basis for this thesis project. Indeed, by engaging in a comprehensive analysis of the responses provided by the interviewees, Quebec's unique

and complex socio-linguistic structure becomes rich grounds for understanding the doubled process of acculturation within an alien cultural milieu for these Honduran immigrants. As such, this project delves into establishing the difficulties Honduran immigrant youths face in adapting to the educational realm within the limitations of the *class d'accueil* and the acculturative stress that accompanies it.

For each of the limitations of the *classe d'accueil*, the five participants from this research project experienced instances of acculturative stress that were no doubt directly correlated to their immigration and acculturation process. This study also reveals that these Honduran individuals were unprepared for their immigration and their immersion into a new cultural environment at large. As acculturative stress so commonly occurs throughout the acculturation process it is important that schools address this issue and find ways to alleviate the stressors that are often accompanied with immigration. Therefore, the data from this small study may imply that schools – that is, teachers, counselors, administrators, and even policy makers – should consider the benefits of studying theories of acculturation and acculturative stress. Understanding these theories will allow schools to reinvent the *classe d'accueil* in such a way that it will prioritize the needs of immigrant students, alleviate academic-related acculturative stress, and correct some of its major limitations.

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## DEDICATION

To my parents,  
Clara Corsi and Ermanno Monti

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Overview.....	1
Research Questions.....	2
Personal Relevance.....	2
Methodology and Research Design.....	5
<i>Participants</i> .....	6
<i>Research Design</i> .....	7
<i>Interview Process</i> .....	9
<i>Collection and Analysis of Data</i> .....	11
<i>Limitations</i> .....	12
2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Defining Acculturation.....	14
Acculturative Stress.....	15
<i>Psychological Stress</i> .....	17
<i>Linguistic Factors</i> .....	18
<i>Sociocultural Surroundings</i> .....	19
Quebec Policies.....	20
<i>Historical Background and Present-day Realities</i> .....	20
<i>Interculturalism Policy</i> .....	22
<i>Integration vs. Assimilation</i> .....	24

<i>The Classe d’Accueil Model</i> .....	24
Honduras.....	26
<i>Geographical Setting</i> .....	26
<i>A brief 20<sup>th</sup> Century History</i> .....	27
<i>Political Context: Forever a Developing Nation</i> .....	28
<i>Educational Context</i> .....	32
Summary of Literature Review.....	33
3. CHAPTER THREE: NARRATIVES	
<i>Emilio</i> .....	35
<i>Carlos</i> .....	39
<i>Sophia</i> .....	43
<i>Pablo</i> .....	45
<i>Jose</i> .....	47
4. CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	
Participants.....	50
General Acculturative Stressors.....	53
<i>Readiness and Willingness to Immigrate</i> .....	53
<i>Cultural Changes</i> .....	57
<i>Psychological Stress</i> .....	60
<i>Family Influence</i> .....	61
Acculturative stressors: Academic.....	64
<i>Honduras to Montreal: Academic Variances</i> .....	64
<i>Linguistic Issues</i> .....	68
<i>Peers in and out of the Classe d’Accueil</i> .....	70
<i>Teachers in and out of the Classe d’Accueil</i> .....	72



<i>The Classe d’Accueil</i> .....	76
CONCLUSION	
Discussion.....	80
Implications.....	82
Areas for further study.....	84
REFERENCES.....	85
APPENDICES	
APPENDIX A – Cartographic Map of Honduras.....	92
APPENDIX B – Interview Questions.....	93
APPENDIX C – Consent Form.....	100
APPENDIX D – Concordia Research Project Ethical Clearance.....	102

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I have first provided a brief overview of the context in which this thesis is situated. Next, I have elaborated on the research questions that have guided this present study. Finally, I go on to discuss my personal relevance to the research. That is, I reflect on the rationale behind my embarking on this study.

### ***Overview***

The process of immigrating to a new country is one that is essentially defined by the immigrants' contact with the host culture (McAndrew, 2004). By host culture, I am referring to the pre-established cultural identity that is associated with the people living in a given geographical setting. For those of a younger age, the contact with the host culture happens primarily in an educational context. This is largely because young individuals spend a significant amount of time at school, which in turn becomes one of their primary agents of socialization. The purpose of this thesis is to develop a greater understanding of Honduran youth's experience upon entering a new country. Specifically, I have examined the interplay of acculturation, the integration process, and its overall effect on the development of the self and ethnic identity as an immigrant living in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Essentially, I have considered the cultural barriers when first enrolled in a *classe d'accueil* at a French primary or secondary public school. The *classe d'accueil* is essentially a preparatory class for newly arrived immigrant students who do not speak French and who have lived in Quebec for less than five years (McAndrew, 2004).

In more detail, I have adapted a qualitative approach in order to examine the cultural differences between a given group of Honduran immigrants in Montreal and that

of the dominant Quebec culture. I have done so through a cultural lens with the goal of gaining a greater understanding of the immigrant experience. I have simultaneously examined the ways that theories of acculturation, specifically acculturative stress, provide insight into contemporary educational integration programs in Quebec for Honduran youth.

### ***Research Questions***

The following is the major research question that I wish to address in this thesis. This research project was designed to examine the process of acculturation and the way it may impact the integration of young Hondurans, whether this may be positively or negatively.

- 1) In what ways do theories of acculturation, specifically acculturative stress, provide insight into contemporary educational integration programs in Quebec for Honduran youth?
  - a) What is the major difference between the Honduran school population and educational expectations and those of Quebec?
  - b) Are Honduran youth introduced to Quebec elementary and secondary school requirements? Are these requirements clearly stipulated?
  - c) How do the cultural differences between Quebec culture and the culture of Honduran immigrants affect the attitudes that these students develop towards education? In more specific terms, how do Quebec students' attitudes and Honduran students' attitudes towards school differ?

### ***Personal Relevance***

In a city such as Montreal, this research is relevant and purposeful based primarily on the fact that there is a constant influx of immigrant populations. In fact, in many urban

French public schools, the majority of the student population are immigrants. In terms of research rationale on a more personal level, my experience upon completing my B.Ed. in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) definitely contributed to my interest in the process of acculturation. From my first months working as a substitute teacher for the Commission Scolaire de la Pointe-de-l'Ile, a school board in the East end of Montreal, I have worked closely with immigrant populations, largely of Arabic decent. One thing that marked me when first entering the schools is that the students are prohibited from speaking in their native tongue. That is, even when they are in the schoolyard, hallways, or outside of the classroom, for example, it is considered a violation of school rules to be speaking in Arabic.

This, of course, drew my attention to a major issue. As the students in French public schools are generally of immigrant populations and the majority of teachers are French Canadian, there exists a disconnect between the culture being transmitted in the school (namely, the dominant culture) and the student culture. In other words, there is an issue wherein the student population is not appropriately represented by those officials who run the school. Furthermore, throughout my secondary internship at a school in Montreal North, I also observed different attitudes amongst those students who immigrated and those who were born in Montreal. During after-school remedial, I spoke with two Lebanese students, aged 16 at the time, who had immigrated to Quebec in 2000. As we spoke casually on their immigration experience, these individuals hinted at the fact that gaining a desirable social status in school was quite a challenge, as they were immediately placed in *classe d'accueil* upon their arrival.

In order to gain greater insight, satisfy my personal curiosity, and set my research in motion, I went on to conduct a pilot study with three men who immigrated to Montreal from the Republic of Honduras between the years of 1996 and 1999. This pilot study was conducted at a small café in Laval, North of Montreal in a very relaxed, casual context. I did not bring a set of pre-determined interview questions. Instead, I conducted the pilot study with an open-ended approach: I simply asked these men to describe their immigration process, with a particular focus on their first few years as students in the Quebec education system. Seeing as newly arrived immigrants in Quebec are immediately placed in the *classes d'accueil* or welcome classes, the participants of this pilot study spoke specifically of their experiences in the *classe d'accueil*. These individuals were all men, aged 26, 28, and 29. Two of the individuals entered the Quebec education system at the primary level (grades 3 and 5 respectively), while the other entered at the secondary level (Secondary 3). Throughout the pilot study, these individuals spoke of their past experiences in the *classe d'accueil* quite openly and in abundance, some experiences more positive than others. One point that I believe is particularly important to mention is Emilio (code name), the participant aged 26 years old, is currently a gym teacher at a French public secondary school in Laval, where he teaches students who are currently in the *classe d'accueil*. His input was rather fascinating, as he is now working closely with students who are in the very situation in which he had once found himself upon first immigrating to Montreal. Although the results from this pilot study varied, one common result was that these individuals struggled more on a social level than on an academic one. The three participants spoke of their social oppression and explained that that they often turned to violence in order to

assert themselves within the context of the school. This was also a defence mechanism towards those students from the regular classes who were inclined to label and marginalize the students from the *classe d'accueil*. All three participants, with much disdain, also mentioned the fact that they were not allowed to speak any other language but French in their classroom, what Heller (2001) would refer to as *institutional monolingualism*. Although the placement of newly arrived immigrants in the *classe d'accueil* may have ultimately facilitated their integration on an academic level, these individuals did struggle on a cultural and social level. Moreover, the observations I made throughout my bachelor's degree and the results of the pilot study I conducted lead me to pursue this research on the acculturation process, specifically in the context of the *classe d'accueil*. Immigrant students are educated by teachers who share in the dominant culture, with a curriculum that mirrors the dominant culture, in a language of instruction that is foreign to them. How does this experience affect them?

### ***Methodology and Research Design***

In this section, I provide an overview of the methodology used. Firstly, I discuss the demographic of the participants who took part in this research project. I also go into some detail about the recruitment process and the challenges that accompanied this process. In the second section of this chapter, I provide an overview of my research design and comment on its rationale. I continue by describing the methods I used to collect and analyze the data, with the particular aim of providing both relevant and noteworthy research findings.

### *Participants*

This study consists of 5 participants who emigrated from Honduras and entered the Quebec education system at the primary or secondary level. They are between the ages of 25-35 and immigrated from 7-15. The group includes 4 males and 1 female. It is important to ensure gender differences within the group of participants because this will allow me to explore any differences that may exist across genders in relation to acculturative stress in the *classe d'accueil*.

Due to the pilot study, I had already established a good rapport with three Honduran men who I was introduced to through a close friend. These individuals had already agreed to participate in the thesis project. All communication was done by email or by phone. The participants from the pilot study referred me to other potential recruits. Throughout the earlier stages of my research project, it was challenging to find participants who satisfied the cultural and ethnic restrictions required to participate in the study. Quite often, potential recruits had emigrated at such a young age that it would have been too difficult for them to recall any specific events from their immigration experience or respond to any interview questions. Other times, people who were ideal for the research project – that is, who fit the criteria I was looking for – did not respond or were simply uninterested. This occurred with 4 individuals. Ultimately, I did succeed in finding a group of participants who fit my research criteria. One of the first things I did was ensure that potential participants knew that their information would remain entirely confidential. Participants were given my contact information in the event that they had any questions or concerns.

Once I recruited all the participants, dates and time were set at their convenience. Interviews were conducted at a Tim Horton's in Ville St-Laurent that was conveniently located very close to where all five participants reside. I did my best to ensure that they felt comfortable with the conditions of the study. Participants provided a personal account of their experiences in a naturally occurring context in order to secure the likelihood of collecting the most accurate data.

### *Research Design*

Throughout the interview process, I was able to collect narrative data in the participant's own words. This method allowed me to grasp my participants' experiences in an efficient way as it encourages the participants "to become more reflective on aspects of their lives" (Glesne, 1999, p. 198). The process of examining acculturation requires personal accounts of past experiences within the individual's school and surrounding environments. Furthermore, gathering information regarding the challenges that one is faced with upon entering a new country is a considerably sensitive subject, which I believe requires a one-on-one methodology. According to Glesne, the interview process is a generally positive experience, both for the interviewer and interviewee.

Despite these pros, Glesne outlines the complexity of designing interview questions and states that critical thinking is essential to this process. Glesne elaborates on the subtle but significant difference between presupposing and leading questions, emphasizing that presupposing questions are ideal because they do not overtly suggest a desired outcome. Glesne warns that the leading or advice-question, which provides the participant with a number of potential responses, "elicits possibly more idealized responses" (p.73). This is a part of the interview process that cannot be overlooked as the



potential for idealized responses is a danger and can create a bias in the research. Thus, this was something I constantly reminded myself when preparing my own interview questions.

If we consider the qualitative research design options and eliminate any possibility of constraints (i.e. time, money, etc.) I believe that the life history technique might have been the ideal design option for this study. It would have enabled me to observe the immigration and acculturation processes first hand, and deduce its effects on academic success as it occurs. Of course, it is extremely impractical, which reinforces the choice for the interview approach.

Once I had my final list of participants, I emailed all participants the research topic along with the purpose of the research. Presenting participants with the topic and purpose of my research would allow them to feel more comfortable and at ease. I also let them know that the interview would last no longer than an hour. Prior to the start of each interview, I took some time to go over the consent form and had the participants sign (see Appendix C). I reminded the participants that their confidentiality was guaranteed. I took these precautions in order to ensure that participants knew what to expect and what was expected of them.

The interview for this research project included 25 questions that were based on all existing literature I had considered in my literature review (see Appendix B). These questions were in front of me throughout every interview. The first participant I interviewed (a male), asked if it was possible to look over the interview questions prior to beginning. I had no problem with this. In fact, I felt that it may have alleviated some of the participant's stress. Therefore, for the following interviews, I provided the

participants with the opportunity to do the same. All, except one, took this opportunity. By my second interview, I quickly realized that the interview questions were going to act as more of a guideline than a strict list of questions. In some cases, it was necessary to pose further questions or take a moment to discuss a particular topic or event that the participant seemed to highlight. In this sense, each interview was considerably unique.

### *Interview Process*

As previously mentioned, the questions which made up my interview were based on all existing literature I consulted for the purpose of this research project. These questions were aimed at helping me develop a greater understanding of acculturative stress and how it manifests itself for newly arrived immigrants in the *classe d'accueil*. The interview included both open-ended questions, closed-ended questions, and a few multiple choice questions. These questions required participants to recall experiences related to the immigration process, acculturation, acculturative stress, cultural adaptation, and educational endeavors in general. Furthermore, the questions allowed me to draw some conclusions about the differences between the participants' academic experiences prior to immigrating (in Honduras) and throughout their time in the *classe d'accueil* (in Quebec). Although participants were already informed that their identities would not be disclosed under any circumstances and that their confidentiality was guaranteed, I had not yet established the code name that would be used for transcriptions. Thus, I explained this concept to the participants and allowed them to choose their own code name. Participants were also reminded that they could decline from answering any questions or withdraw from the study altogether up until the final data was collected (February 1<sup>st</sup>). All interviews were digitally recorded and later imported and personally transcribed on my

laptop to facilitate data analysis. The interviews, which all took place at a Tim Horton's café in Ville Saint-Laurent, were 30-45 minutes of ongoing conversation. There were no unexpected interruptions or noise.

Throughout the interviews, I made sure to stay as attentive as possible and maintain eye contact so as to alleviate any stress and make the interview feel like a natural, ongoing conversation. Despite the fact that all interviews were digitally recorded, I did occasionally take some notes. I did this because I sometimes felt that there were certain mannerisms or hesitations worth noting that might have changed my interpretation of events being recounted. I also wanted to be sure that I fully understood the significance of their statements. This is an especially tricky part of transcribing recordings, because peoples' words can easily be misinterpreted in written form. Although the interview questions acted as a solid guideline, I often rephrased questions or asked new ones in order to motivate participants to elaborate on a given point. I also sent each participant a copy of their interview as soon as it was transcribed and translated (prior to February 1<sup>st</sup>), along with a copy of the completed thesis project (initial and final, once completed).

Furthermore, I made sure that participants did not feel pressured throughout the interview. For example, one of my participants, whose interview was a little shorter, would sometimes hesitate after a question and sort of hint that he had nothing more to say. I immediately assured him that if he had nothing more to say, that was okay. I was not looking for forced or elaborated answers if they were not genuine ones. After the interview, this participant did tell me that he was at a loss of words at times and was worried that his answers were inadequate. Once more, I assured him that accuracy of the

data was the most important thing to me as a researcher; therefore, it would have been useless for him to elaborate if he felt there was no additional information to offer. At times, interviewees did seem stressed or flustered, but I tried my best to counter this by maintaining a friendly, relaxed environment.

### *Collection and Analysis of Data*

Throughout the interview period, it was imperative for me to remain organized and be diligent with the data I collected. Digital recordings were transferred and saved to a specific folder in my computer that only I could access with a personal password. Once I began to transcribe the interviews, I assigned a specific folder to each participant, using their code name. Though I was able to recall the real identities linked to each pseudonym, I did write them down in a word document as a precautionary method, again, that only I had access to with a personal password. Within each folder, I compiled a transcript of the interview, brief demographic information, and another document where I highlighted some emerging themes. By the end of the transcription period, I used the emerging themes from each interview as a reference point to begin to draw conclusions, compile narratives for each participant, and construct a findings section.

Identifying common themes amongst the interviews was my first step in analysing the data. Though quite a difficult task, I tried to organize and interpret the data as accurately as possible while identifying a commonality amongst the various experiences recounted. Once patterns were detected, I referred back to the literature to reinforce these themes.

Finally, it was necessary to present the findings in such a way that the perceived conclusions were both logical and useful in the event that further study would result from this research project. Tables were prepared in order to organize some of the major findings. This facilitated the comprehension of the data and also made it easier for me to draw comparisons amongst the five participants. The process of transcribing interviews was quite demanding and stressful, specifically because it was pertinent to remain focussed, unbiased, and true to the data. It was necessary to think critically about perceived meanings and perceived conclusions in order to produce research findings of utmost quality. For the purpose of this study, I had the added pressure of translating various passages from French to English, which was particularly challenging at times. As a researcher, I prioritized the most accurate translation in order to uphold accuracy.

### *Limitations*

A major limitation of this study is the size of the participant sample. Five Hondurans are certainly not enough to accurately represent all Honduran immigrants in Quebec, or even in Montreal. That being said, there was an attempt to create a diverse group – one with gender and age distinctions – in the hopes that these variances would compensate for the small sample size.

Another limitation worth mentioning is the fact that the findings of this research project are based on the past experiences of five individuals. As the data is based on memory, there may be some discrepancies between what actually occurred to the five Hondurans throughout their acculturation and what they shared throughout the interview process. Furthermore, these accounts were quite personal, which means that the researcher may have experienced some difficulty interpreting the data.

Finally, the fact that the data was collected in French and later translated for the purpose of this thesis project is also a limitation to consider. As the interviews contained a number of French expressions, some of the ambiguities of the data may have been lost through the translation process. However, it is important to note that every effort was made to translate in such a way that would fully capture the intended meaning of the data. Translated excerpts were also reviewed by close colleagues and friends, in order to minimize any possibility for errors. I encourage those readers who are bilingual to interpret the French passages, as they come directly from the participants' narratives and are therefore most accurate.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter, which provides a review of the literature, is divided into four major sections. First, I have defined acculturation in the context of the immigrant experience. Next, I have provided an overview of acculturative stress and the factors that deeply impact the intensity at which it occurs. I then go on to shed light on Quebec's history, with particular attention to policy implementation. In the final section, I situate Honduras geographically, historically, politically, and from an educational standpoint.

### ***Defining Acculturation***

Acculturation corresponds to the in-depth process of adapting to new surroundings or taking on a new way of life. Kosic, Kruglanski, Pierro and Mannetti (2004) note that two types of acculturation exist. The first is socio-cultural adaptation, which encompasses inheriting the basic adjustments that are necessary when integrating into any new environment. This may include language proficiency and gaining knowledge of the host culture. The second type of acculturation has to do with the psychological capacity for an individual to adapt to their new surroundings. The second is arguably more closely related to maintaining and embracing a sense of self and developing a state of well-being (Kosic et al., 2004). Acculturation often occurs as part of immigration, that is, upon contact with a foreign culture. Though not inherently a negative process, acculturation can sometimes cause individuals to be faced with acculturative stress. This particular type of stress is directly correlated to the process of immigration and immersion into a new culture.

Upon embarking on any new journey, an individual experiences a certain level of stress or anxiety about the situation, largely because it is unknown. Immigrant students are undoubtedly no different, as the pressures of entering a new academic environment can be daunting (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987). According to Kim (1988), research shows that language and communication barriers stand in the way of a smooth and successful acculturation process. That is, those who experience language barriers are more likely to use negative acculturation strategies and therefore experience more acculturation stress. Similarly, sociocultural integration and lack thereof can also influence acculturative stress.

### *Acculturative Stress*

When the individual struggles through their acculturation, this negatively influences their development of the self. Arguably, this struggle with the acculturation process may also pose problems in terms of academic success, behavioural, and cognitive processes (Kagan & Cohen, 1990). Thus, if linguistic or cultural barriers impede the acculturation process, this may lead to acculturative stress, which is known to have significant psychological impact on an individual and their subsequent development (Johnson & Sandhu, 2007).

According to Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987), the level of acculturative stress that one experiences is correlated with the degree of change that is experienced throughout the acculturation process. Therefore, if we examine the differences between Honduran and Quebec educational and cultural realities, one may gain insight into the degree of change that Honduran youth experience when immigrating to a new province



such as Quebec. The more dissimilar the curriculum, cultural traditions, and general social experience, the more difficult the acculturation process becomes, essentially advancing levels of acculturative stress. Furthermore, there are a number of factors that influence levels of acculturative stress, perhaps most notably the “nature of the host society as being either pluralistic or of assimilationist ideology” (Karilian-Konyalian, 2008, p. 13). In a province such as Quebec, where the term *assimilation* is undoubtedly part of past and present discourse, this fact seems particularly interesting and will be explored in greater depth later on in this chapter.

Research in the sociocultural adjustment of immigrant and international student populations has shown that language proficiency is the greatest indication of a successful integration into the host culture (Olmedo & Padilla, 1978). An individual is considered language proficient when they are able to perform and function in a given language. In other words; an immigrant youth’s ability to master the language of instruction is relative to the individual’s ability to acculturate. This is particularly interesting to note in light of this research project because the *classe d’accueil* is primarily an environment for cultural adaptation and linguistic instruction. In this sense, the *classe d’accueil* model also places an emphasis on language proficiency when it comes to integration. It is also important to consider that an individual’s willingness to learn the language of the host culture may vary depending on past personal experiences. This will be discussed in more detail in an upcoming section, where linguistic issues in relation to acculturative stress will be discussed.

Furthermore, a study conducted on immigrant youths in Spain suggests that these students are often bullied or become bullies themselves due to levels of acculturative

stress (Messinger, Nieri, Villar & Luengo., 2012). This research is especially pertinent in light of my own pilot study, where the participants discussed how the students in the *classe d'accueil* were ostracized and bullied by the rest of the school. Thus, a valid argument is that sociocultural struggles and language barriers may contribute to the development of acculturative stress and the number of sociocultural and psychological struggles that come along with it.

### *Psychological Stress*

Due to the numerous cultural adjustments related to acculturation, immigrant youth may experience psychological stress which may occur in various forms. For example, psychological stress may lead to depression, withdrawal, seclusion, anxiety, and struggles with their overall self-esteem (Berry and Annis, 1974). Exposure to the host culture, trouble with integration and difficulties at school are but some of the factors related to psychological stress. According to Spindler and Hammond (2006), psychological stress can sometimes escalate, leading to aggression, violence, and delinquent behaviour. This occurs as a result of vulnerability, where unruly behaviour acts as a defence mechanism for individuals who do not feel at ease with their immigration process. In these cases, the behaviour is a method of coping with the stress momentarily rather than confronting the stressors that are at the root of the problem.

Another important fact to consider is whether the individual's immigration was voluntary or involuntary. More often than not, immigrant youth are forced to leave their country of origin for reasons of war, economic difficulties, and employment shortages. Other times, an individual's choice to emigrate is fueled by the overall promise of a better

life and is therefore voluntary. According to Berry et al. (1987), an individual who involuntarily immigrates is more likely to experience psychological hardships throughout their acculturation process. This is because these individuals associate negative emotions to their immigration. Over time, Shirikian argues that these negative emotions taint the immigration and integration processes, ultimately rendering them more difficult and impacting psychological well-being (as cited in Karilian-Konyalian, 2008).

### *Linguistic Factors*

From a linguistic perspective, researchers Romero and Roberts (2003) argue that the process of integration is somewhat easier for individuals who are bilingual as compared to those who are monolingual. Research shows that, when it comes to the acculturation process, knowledge of two or more languages is viewed as an advantage. Individuals who have greater linguistic diversity are more likely to have been exposed to various cultures, which is likely to alleviate the culture shock that is associated with immigration to a new country with a foreign language. Furthermore, their knowledge of an additional language may be one that resembles that of the host country, rendering language acquisition simpler.

The level of difficulty related with language acquisition also varies between voluntary and involuntary immigrants. Involuntary immigrants, that is, those who were forced to leave their country of origin, often experience a more complex acculturation process. Their reluctance to emigrate transfers over to any experience they may encounter and negatively impacts said experience. This equally applies to language learning. More often than not, involuntary immigrants will not see the importance of learning the host

language. In fact, some may reject the host language entirely, so as to assert their unwillingness to integrate into society. Contrarily, “voluntary immigrants who have willingly emigrated from their country of origin, with the hope of a better future, show an overall willingness to learn the host language because the cultural and linguistic barriers are seen as surmountable and additive to their ethnic culture” (Karilian-Konyalian, 2008, p. 20). Thus, it seems logical to conclude that there is a direct correlation between acculturation and language acquisition, where a person’s optimism towards their acculturation process will positively impact their learning of a new language and, ultimately, their ability to integrate successfully into the host society.

### *Sociocultural Surroundings*

According to Phinney, Romero, and Huang (2001), it is pertinent that individuals who emigrate from one country to another place a particular focus on nurturing strong social circles. Research shows that social support is the best coping mechanism for acculturative stress, as it provides immigrants with the guidance and emotional support they need (Bledsoe, 2007). For these individuals, strong social circles occur on two levels: maintenance and creation. First, these individuals must strive to maintain a connection with others who have experienced situations that mirror their own. This may occur within the individual’s immediate surroundings (amongst siblings and other family members) or within the classroom (amongst peers). This is essentially the theory behind the *classe d’accueil*, where students who are unfamiliar with the language of instruction are provided with a buffer period to acquire the knowledge they need, but also receive the extra benefit of being in contact with a number of immigrants who have endured similar struggles throughout their own acculturation processes (McAndrew, 2009). This is likely

to reinforce their ethnic identity and sense of self, lessening the culture shock that is often associated with immigration process. By *culture shock*, I am referring to the disorientation, isolation, or rejection felt when immersed in an area associated with major cultural change (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2013). Immigrant youth may also create new social relationships with those individuals of the same ethnicity, which is argued to be a more powerful social circle.

Social integration with same-ethnic peers is likely to reinforce ethnic identity. Furthermore, if these same ethnic peers speak the ethnic language, in-group social interactions are associated with increased language proficiency, which in turn affects ethnic identity. (Phinney et al., 2001, p. 139)

Secondly, students must strive to create new social circles, as peers of varied ethnicity are not only important but influential. This is also likely to reinforce the immigrants' connection with Quebec's French language and culture. A lack of strong social support may ultimately promote acculturative stress and contribute to psychological stressors. According to Karilian-Konyalian, "some of these psychological manifestations of stress include depression, isolation, withdrawal, anxiety as well as aggression, violence, delinquent behaviour and among others, lowered self-esteem" (2008, p. 22).

### ***Quebec Policies***

#### *Historical Background and Present-day Realities*

The underlying framework of Quebec history, particularly within the context of the twentieth-century, is fundamentally defined by its long-standing connection to the Roman Catholic Church (Corbo, 2000). Indeed, it was not until the mid-1960s that the

Catholic Church began to relinquish its control of larger social functions within Quebec society. As Roman Catholicism was the governing force behind Francophone Quebec citizens, and Protestantism was largely the representative religion of Anglophone Quebecers, the divide between the two social groups is founded on both differences between religion and language (Corbo, 2000). With the onset of the Quiet Revolution, Quebec began to conceive of the necessity for secularization, striving to separate the Church from the state for the first time in its history. This led to a decline in the birth rate of the French-speaking population (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2008; Corbo, 2000). Specifically in terms of education, the establishment of the *Ministère de l'Éducation* in 1964 reflected the beginning period of secularized education, removing the control of the Catholic Church. Though the religious differences between Anglo and Franco Quebecers are no longer a major concern, the underlying linguistic issues, and the conflicting disparity between the two linguistic cultures, remain existent throughout the majority of a post-Quiet Revolution Quebec social history. Thus, with the focus shifting away from religion in the 1960s, it is language which took its place as the primary factor in the division between social groups within Quebec from then on.

Quebec has consistently been a place where policies concerning language learning have taken precedence within the political and social spheres of public concern. According to Phinney and Rotheram-Borus' (1987) study of ethnic socialization, Anglophone and French Canadians most likely identify their sense of self in terms of their language. This is especially significant because it demonstrates the value of language in Quebec, its dominance as a foundation for the establishment – and, by extension, the differentiation – of identity between social groups. Today, Quebec

remains officially unilingual in the context of a country that has adopted bilingualism at the federal level since 1971. In doing so, Quebec strives to refrain from ever being reduced to a minority culture dwindling in the face of a larger, continuously-assimilating Canada: “The situation of French-speaking people in Quebec and in Canada is very different from that of Canada’s ethnic minorities, not the least reason for which is that at the federal level, English and French have equal status as the languages of the two founding groups” (Barakett & Cleghorn, 2008, p. 68).

As it is perceived that a loss of linguistic dominance places the Francophone population at risk for assimilation, Quebec adopted the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) in 1977. This legislation ensured that all immigrant populations would be required to attend French public schools, subsequently reinforcing the dominance of the French language. Only those whose parents had been educated in the English public system or who were already enrolled in the English system at the time would be permitted to attend an English public school.

#### *Interculturalism Policy*

Quebec’s steadfast adherence to a unilingual social structure exists as a means of coping with the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity present within the province. Similarly, Quebec adopts its own intercultural policy in response to Canada’s multicultural one, which was also implemented in 1971 (just as the bilingual policy was adopted). It is also a method of reinforcing the Francophone linguistic and cultural dominance within Quebec which is challenged by English Canada’s multiculturalism (Heller, 1999). According to Breton-Carbonneau (2011), multiculturalism in Canada exists as a method of ensuring equality amongst various groups. Quebec, as a province,

has shown resistance towards Canada's multicultural policy since its onset for two major reasons. Firstly, according to critics from Quebec, the policy increases the risk for social fragmentation because it promotes the simple mix of various groups. Secondly, equality for all communities threatens Quebec's majority status and undermines the francophone nation.

Although there is considerable overlap between both policies, Quebec's Interculturalism is a response to the shortcomings of Canada's Multiculturalism (Maxwell, Waddington, McDonough, Cormier, & Schwimmer, 2012). Maxwell et al. explain:

In Multiculturalism, the pursuit of integration and diversity management capitalizes on the promotion and valorization of cultural diversity as a political end in itself. By contrast, interculturalism regards the integration of new citizens as part of a dynamic, open-ended process of transforming a common societal culture through dialogue, mutual understanding, and intercultural contact (p. 432).

In more depth, multiculturalism in Canada relates to the 'mosaic' metaphor, wherein newcomers are welcomed; thus, unity and diversity coexist. Interculturalism, on the other hand, promotes the same unity and diversity, but also maintains and protects a common French language and culture (Allen, 2007).

Though Quebec's intercultural policy has existed since the 1970s, it is not until 1998 that the policy was tangibly applied to the educational system (McAndrew, 2004). According to the Gouvernement du Québec (1998a&b), in order to properly implement and promote interculturalism, teachers must integrate policies that "facilitate the integration of newly arrived immigrants, while concurrently teaching all students about



Quebec's shared values (as cited in Breton-Charbonneau, 2011, p. 13). These policies apply to all classrooms, including the *classe d'accueil*.

### *Integration vs. Assimilation*

At its core, the integration into society for the individual is largely a process of acquisition: new languages, cultures, and dynamics are acquired particularly when the original, home language of an immigrant youth is bolstered by familial and educational infrastructure (Cummins, Bismilla, Chow, Cohen, Giampapa, Leoni, & Sastri, 2005). Indeed, the process of integration into new socio-cultural spheres, as defined by Quebec's Policy Statement on Educational Integration and Intercultural Education (1998a), is generally "a long-term multi-dimensional adaptation process, which is distinct from assimilation, the overall adoption of the host society's culture and fusion with the majority group" (p. 8). Conversely, assimilation is conceived of as being largely a process of loss: the home language and culture of an immigrant child is abandoned and replaced by that which is firmly in place within the new social structure. As a result, the child's identity is conflated and unsettled within the new society, and as such, the child's success in school over an extended period of time becomes deeply challenging and difficult to maintain (Cummins et al., 2005).

### *The Classe d'Accueil Model*

In order to facilitate the arrival of allophone immigrants who did not speak English or French and were not yet prepared to participate in classes alongside Quebecois learners due to their language barriers, the Quebec educational system adapted the *classe d'accueil* system, which entails a preparatory class for newly arrived immigrant students who have lived in Quebec for less than five years (McAndrew, 2004). Naturally, the

*classe d'accueil* is primarily an environment for linguistic instruction. However, students still receive mathematics instruction (in French) and are also registered in general electives offered in the school such as music and art, among others.

Furthermore, there is a certain level of cultural instruction that occurs within the *classe d'accueil*. As Breton-Carbonneau (2011) outlines, “schools are not only sites of cultural production, but also of cultural transmission” (p.18). As a result, the *classe d'accueil* becomes the center of this cultural transmission, where the native culture (culture from the immigrants’ place of origin and the host culture (dominant culture of Quebec) come into contact and essentially set the stage for the integration of the students. Moreover, the curriculum of the *classe d'accueil* is designed so that immigrant students can learn and adapt to the Quebec culture (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). In fact, the system is founded on the premise that ongoing exposure to the French language will undoubtedly facilitate the integration of these immigrant populations. Therefore, the instruction of the French language is used as a vehicle to further Quebec’s interculturalism policy. Allen (2007) adds, “through school policies, programs, and practices as well as laws about the use of French in the wider community of Quebec, new-immigrant youth are strongly encouraged to take up a new identity, one which adopts French as the common language, and to participate in Quebec’s distinct society through that language” (p. 167).

The success or effectiveness of the *classe d'accueil* is still largely debated today. While some argue that the *classe d'accueil* creates the ideal academic setting for newly arrived immigrants who are not yet familiar with the host language, others stipulate that the social stratification of these individuals ultimately hinders their ability to integrate

because they are essentially labeled and set apart early on in their acculturation process. In this sense, Sarkar proposes that students in these classes are marginalized, as they rarely come into contact with their French-speaking peers from the regular program, despite the fact that their interaction with these peers may in fact provide the language exposure they need to successfully acquire the host language (as cited in Breton-Carbonneau, 2011). Another major component to consider when debating the effectiveness of the *classe d'accueil* is the role of the instructor. Although the *classe d'accueil* model is based on guidelines set by the Quebec government, it is without a doubt that one teacher's technique may change the learning environment completely. As Karilian-Konyalian argues, "the attitude of teachers seems to be a key factor towards influencing academic achievement of immigrant students" (2008, p. 19). While some instructors may choose to focus on French language acquisition and treat the students as one homogeneous group of 'immigrants,' others may embrace the cultural and linguistic differences that are unique to the *classe d'accueil*. In doing so, these instructors would be using their students' mother tongues as well as their personal experiences to add a new dynamic to teaching and to perhaps ease their minds throughout what may often be a stressful time.

## ***Honduras***

### ***Geographical Setting***

The Republic of Honduras is bordered by Guatemala to the west, El Salvador to the southwest, Nicaragua to the southeast, the Caribbean Sea to the north (specifically, the Gulf of Honduras), and the Pacific Ocean to the South (see Appendix A, included primarily for the interest of the reader). Honduras' total area, including both land and

water is 112,492 square kilometres with a population of approximately 8.3 million. On an economic level, Honduras is known for their production of minerals, coffee, tropical fruit, sugar cane and the export of clothing to the international market. Despite this economic activity, it still remains one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere and continues to lag behind other Central American countries (Ronderos, 2011).

### *A brief 20<sup>th</sup> Century History*

Honduras gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and officially became known as the Republic of Honduras. Honduras has taken the necessary steps towards transitioning to a democratic nation since 1980, when nearly 85 percent of registered voters elected Roberto Suazo Cordova of the centrist Liberal Party (PL) as their president (Salomón, 2012). The voting into office of the PL meant that the Republic of Honduras was finally breaking away from their long history of military dictatorships. According to Salomón (2012), the Honduran military had implemented an authoritarian reign over the country for nearly 20 years. From 1982 to 1990, Honduras strengthened on a democratic level but continued to struggle with human rights violations and the incessant presence of the military and police. Still, the PL government encouraged modernization and ultimately “offered greater political and ideological diversity” (p. 58). Threatened by the widespread shift towards democracy, the Honduran military organized a coup d’état in 2009 in which they overthrew the liberal government and halted any progress that had been made. This same year, the UNDP declared Honduras as the most violent and tense zone in Latin America. The coup d’état essentially left the Honduran society in ruins, sending the country backward as their attempts toward transitioning to a democratic nation were rendered futile. Corruption ensued, tensions between citizens and their

oppressors rose, and instability resulted. “Today, 32 years after the transition to democracy (and two and a half years after the rupture of that democracy), old and new social conditions coexist across Honduran society, politics, and the military and police” (Salomón, 2012, p. 60).

*Political Context: Forever a Developing Nation*

Honduras and the United States have long shared strong foreign relations, which have led to a considerably solid alliance. In fact, “any important issue to Honduras, external or internal, has dependencies on [their relationship with the U.S.] for resolution” (Ahli, 2010, p. 19). Due to Honduras' ongoing struggles with political and economic instability, the republic continues to depend on the United States for aid and support. Although this aid is seemingly innocent and benevolent, Timms (2010) argues that U.S. support is fueled by ulterior motives, ones that ultimately benefit the U.S. and render Honduras incapable of ever becoming a self-sufficient nation. More specifically, U.S. aid has been used as a tactic to maintain and perpetuate neoliberal policies in Honduras. These neoliberal policies are promoted through the manipulation of some of the republic's major vulnerabilities. These include natural disasters, high levels of poverty, and overall political instability.

Following the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, the U.S. government promised to provide Honduras with disaster relief. For powerful nations such as the U.S., these moments of extreme disaster can provide the opportunity to implement radical changes, whether social or economic. They can also sometimes be seen as an opportunity to accumulate capital (Ahli, 2010). Klein (2007) coined the term *disaster*

*capitalism* to explain this phenomenon, whereby powerful nations use natural disasters to take advantage of developing countries and implement neoliberal policies. She argues that neoliberal policies such as those implemented by the U.S. in Honduras are geared towards enforcing free market policies and maximizing profits. If we refer back to Harvey's definition of neoliberalism, it is evident that the phenomenon of disaster capitalism directly corresponds to the "management and manipulation of crises" aspect of his definition (2007, p. 154).

According to Ahli (2010), the U.S. government exploited the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in order to advance their neoliberal agenda and tighten their grip on Honduras. Firstly, the U.S. recognized that the disaster reconstruction of Honduras could lead them to major profits. Ahli reveals that although the Clinton Administration administered billions of dollars in disaster relief, nearly half of these relief funds were put towards U.S. projects that were already in place prior to Mitch. Therefore, though in the public eye the U.S. was providing pure humanitarian aid, this aid was in fact a means of creating personal gain for the American nation. Similarly, the 2009 coup d'état was another moment of major devastation and chaos for Honduras. The coup led to President Zelaya being overthrown. Interestingly, Ismi (2009) essentially proposes that the U.S. government was entirely aware and involved in the organization of the coup d'état. According to the author, this was done to ensure that Honduras remained dependent on U.S. aid and would not take any steps (as suggested by President Zelaya) that would threaten the interests of U.S. and multinational corporations.

The American government saw the rehabilitation of Honduras as an opportunity to implement radical change, maintaining U.S. interest at heart. One example of this relates to the displacement of the indigenous Lenca people of Celaque National Park, a park located in the West Highlands (Timms, 2011). Although U.S. officials claimed that the involuntary displacement of these indigenous people was due to the disaster caused by Hurricane Mitch, this was not necessarily the case. According to Timms (2011), this relocation “benefited the cheap-labor interests of the agro-export coffee industry” and the “funding interests of environmental conservation organizations” (p. 1375). Thus, these people were coercively displaced, with little concern for what would happen to them as a result. Moreover, the previous examples demonstrate how neoliberal policies are implemented underhandedly and with little consideration of the ensuing consequences. Harvey (2006) also discusses how coercion is extensively used to persuade developing nations to implement neoliberal policies, regardless of the impact this may have on these nations.

The overwhelming levels of poverty experienced in these parts of the world are used as another method to implement neoliberal policies. According to Ruckert (2009), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) further neoliberalize these developing countries. PRSPs are policy tools that are meant to reduce poverty in Latin America. They act as the basis for international aid and poverty relief. Despite claims that PRSPs are designed to empower the poor, they have produced quite the opposite result, which is why Ruckert considers them a failure. A major problem with PRSPs is that they are offered on condition that Latin American countries comply with a number of demands from the U.S., World Bank and the IMF. In Honduras, poverty relief was provided on

condition that teacher salaries would be cut and on the condition that the domains of telecommunication, electricity distribution, and water and sewer management would be privatized (Ruckert, 2009). With various sectors being privatized, poverty levels worsen. The very fact that debt relief is provided on condition of the developing nation's compliance proves that the seemingly benevolent aid provided by the U.S. is founded on questionable motives. Moreover, Harvey (2006) clearly stipulates that the privatization of various sectors is a distinct characteristic of neoliberalism. Thus, it becomes evident that PRSPs and other poverty reduction strategies have provided the U.S. with the opportunity to coerce Honduras into adapting neoliberal policies. Ruckert refers to the term *country ownership* to further explain how powerful nations aim to maintain control of developing nations.

Powerful nations can also exploit the political instability of a nation in order to further impose neoliberal economic and political policies in developing areas. Although not directly related to Honduras, Wisner (2001) discusses the realities of El Salvador post-Mitch, which reveals several commonalities between El Salvador and Honduras. The author sheds light on the "develop=disaster reduction" cliché, whereby neoliberal ideologies lead nations to believe that development is the answer to their troubles (p 266). Because these nations are in such a state of desperation, it is only natural that they are willing to go along with any plan that promises to result in economic stability. This theory essentially reveals the way that developing nations tend to see development as the answer to all their struggles. That is, if a nation is to become developed, its economic, social, and political struggles will no longer be of issue. Furthermore, Wisner (2001) suggests that there are major flaws in the "develop=disaster reduction" cliché, starting



with the fact that *development* must be understood in the context of each individual nation, rather than in a general way. The author's previous point is very representative of neoliberalism as defined by Harvey (2006).

### *Educational Context*

The educational system in Honduras has long been considered one of the weakest in the Americas, having largely lacked any concrete or structured framework until the mid-to-late 1960s. Under the government of Ramon Villeda Morales, who remained in power between 1957 and 1963, national educational reforms were finally established (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 2013). Whereas prior to Morales' reforms only children of wealth and of upper social class were sent to private educational institutions, the creation of a national educational model allowed accessibility to all levels of social classes. The educational system as a whole became, as a result, a more inclusive one, allowing for the creation of a culture which held at its core an understanding of the importance of universal educational standards.

Despite these advancements, the sheer absence of physical schools throughout the nation exists as a primary reason why many children fail to receive a proper education. Naturally, the recent 2009 coup d'état placed an even greater strain on the educational system, which is characterized by a rigid structure that parallels the nation's long history of totalitarian oppression (Altschuler, 2010). Furthermore, costs such as enrollment fees, school uniforms, and transportation further impede the accessibility to the education system.

### *Summary of Literature Review*

Acculturation is an intrinsic part of the immigration process, where an individual's own culture comes into contact with that of the host society. This process occurs on two major levels: a socio-cultural level and a psychological level. Although the process is not intended to be stressful, the sum of various changes tends to place immigrant youth in a particularly complex situation. When the acculturation process becomes more of a challenge, it is accompanied by acculturative stress. Moreover, as acculturation is a case-by-case process, acculturative stressors may vary from one individual to another.

According to existing literature, Quebec has long been a place where politics have impacted education. As a result, it now seems that Quebec has taken the necessary precautions to ensure that the French language and culture are and continue to be of utmost value. Education is the outlet by which this belief is transmitted to the younger generations and to newly arrived immigrant populations. This research study puts into question the interplay of acculturation and acculturative stress within the *classe d'accueil*.

Arguably, learning about the intricacies of acculturative stress and its correlated stressors may provide some insight into the *classe d'accueil* model; its strengths, its shortcomings, its need for improvement. The Honduran people arrive in Canada with their own economic, social, and cultural baggage, as they come from a nation that has seen much strife. As immigrants, they must succumb to an entirely new set of difficulties and challenges. Thus, as much as possible, the education provided to Honduran immigrants (and newly arrived immigrant populations in general) should be one which

strives to facilitate the integration process and alleviate some of the stressors that seem to be inherent to acculturation.

### CHAPTER THREE: NARRATIVES

This chapter includes the personal narratives of the five adults who participated in this research project. Each individual has his or her own assigned section. The aim of this research is to gain further insight on the acculturation process as experienced by a small group of Honduran immigrants. Moreover, this thesis project considers how acculturative stress manifests itself and impacts the experiences of Honduran youth throughout their educational integration. By educational integration, we are referring to the process of entering a new school and adapting to the *classe d'accueil*.

*Emilio*  
*Age 26*

At only 8 years old, Emilio emigrated from Honduras to Montreal, Canada. Initially, he was quite excited about the move. However, as the time to leave approached, Emilio experienced some significant levels of stress, largely because he was leaving much of his family behind; perhaps most importantly, his mother. Emilio recounts :

*...Mais quand le moment est  
arrivé...donc toute la semaine  
avant ou quoi que ce soit, il y a  
un stress qui commence puis  
comme une [...] pas une  
dépression mais comme tu es  
triste de voir comme OK ça  
arrive pour de vrai mais là il faut  
que je parte et [...] je laisse ma  
famille au complet ici [...] et je  
vais aller dans une nouvelle*

*aventure et tu ne sais pas à quoi  
t'attendre.*

...But when the time comes...so the entire week before or whatever, there's a stress that starts up and like a [...] not a depression but you're sad to see that OK it's really going to happen but now you need to leave and [...] I'm leaving my entire family behind [...] and I'm going to start a new adventure and I have no idea what to expect.

Though seemingly a minor detail, it was both him and his brother's first time on a plane,

which added some unwanted stress. Emilio's father, who was already settled in Montreal at that time, paid a close friend to accompany the two boys on their trip. Emilio's mother and the rest of his family were left behind and are still in Honduras today. He has visited several times since his immigration.

Upon his arrival, Emilio had to adjust in various ways, stating that "*tout tout est nouveau [...] c'est comme une autre monde.../everything everything is new [...] it's like a whole other world...*" One major area of adjustment was in terms of the weather conditions. Emilio arrived in January, having never seen snow before. He remembers how traumatized he was by the cold, and how this made him want to return home.

In terms of cultural differences, Emilio lists a number of differences between Honduran and Quebec culture that he was faced with. He explains that religion, food, language, and schooling were all areas of culture that were completely new to him. Emilio adds that in Montreal "*tu es plus libre/you are more free*" to do your own thing, while in Honduras you are constrained by familial severity and expectations.

Emilio joined the Quebec education system at the primary level and spent a year in the *classe d'accueil* before joining the regular program. He went into great depth about his experience in the *classe d'accueil*, recalling that he felt comfortable within the classroom with other immigrant students who did not speak French. However, outside of the classroom, Emilio felt a great deal of segregation. As a newly arrived immigrant in the *classe d'accueil*, he felt he was ostracized by other students in the school. This segregation caused him a great deal of stress.

Emilio critiques the functioning of the *classe d'accueil* for its tendency to isolate the immigrant students from the rest of the school. Due to the fact that the newly arrived

immigrants are placed in a special class, they rarely come into contact with the students from the regular program. Emilio felt that he and his peers were outcast and bullied as a result. In this sense, he felt that the *classe d'accueil* students were like a “*famille/family*” that needed to stick together. Although they were all of different ethnic backgrounds, they were all in a similar process of acculturation. He explains:

*...Quand tu es en accueil, premièrement, tu es déjà à l' écart de tout le monde parce que tu es comme dans une classe à part [...] ton casier est à part [...] tu es quasiment des toilettes à part. Si tu n'es pas avec les gens d'accueil [...] tu n'es pas bien, nulle part d'autre [...] parce que tu te sens jugé [...]*

...When you're in 'welcome classes', first of all, you are already separate from everyone because you are in like a separate class [...] your locker is separate [...] you practically have separate washrooms. If you're not comfortable with the people from 'welcome classes' [...] you can't be comfortable anywhere else [...] because you feel judged [...]

Throughout the interview, it was obvious that Emilio developed some resentment towards the students outside of the *classe d'accueil*. He spoke of how they bullied him and his peers whenever they encountered each other. Emilio believes that the students from the regular classes thought that they were superior to the immigrants. According to Emilio's experiences, their bullying was entirely intentional. Emilio states, speaking as a student from the regular program: “*Ah, on va profiter de cette situation puis on va essayer de le piler [...] de l'écraser [...]*”/Oh, we'll take advantage of the situation and we'll try to squish him [...] to crush him [...]” Emilio also explains that his own efforts, rather than those of the school, allowed him to integrate into Quebec society while maintaining his Honduran identity. The *classe d'accueil* only facilitated his integration on a linguistic level, but not on a cultural one.

According to his experiences, Emilio's teachers were helpful and did have a positive impact on his immigration. However, he distinguishes between having an

immigrant teacher as opposed to having a Quebec-born teacher, arguing that the former is the ideal situation for a newly arrived immigrant because immigrant teachers were “*tendance à nous comprendre*/likely to understand [them].” He felt that his Egyptian teacher tried her best to integrate the students’ cultures into the classroom, which alleviated some of the stress and pressures associated with their educational integration. He also distinguishes between the teachers who taught *accueil* and those who taught in the regular program. Emilio argues that teachers from the regular program often disregarded the *accueil* students and became easily frustrated with them.

Emilio’s feedback pertaining to his experience in the *classe d’accueil* is particularly unique for two reasons. Firstly, he is the only participant in this research project who earned a university degree. This is significant because he explains that the segregation between the immigrants and the francophones persisted in college and in university. He elaborates:

*Évidemment à l’université, en tout cas, dans mon domaine, il y a avait moins d’immigrants [...] donc, on était environ quatre/cinq sur une centaine d’élèves au début. Puis, je me sentais comme si je venais encore à l’accueil [...] parce que comme quoi les immigrants on était tout ensemble, puis là les autres ils avaient comme [...] peur un peu [...]*

Obviously in university, anyway, in my program, there were fewer immigrants [...] so, we were maybe 4 or 5 out of 100 students at the beginning. And, I felt like I was back in the ‘welcome class’ [...] because like the immigrants were all together again, and the others were like [...] scared a little [...]

Secondly, Emilio is now teaching physical education to students from the *classe d’accueil* at a school in a suburb North of Montreal. Working so closely with students that are now in the same situation that he was once in has definitely allowed him to reflect more deeply on his past experiences as a newly arrived immigrant. Based on the data compiled throughout the interview process, I believe it is a sound affirmation to

make that Emilio is somewhat frustrated with the Quebec *classe d'accueil* system. This is because he believes that it does not make the integration process any easier for youth immigrants. In fact, Emilio asserts that he experienced anxiety, depression and even self-esteem issues “*vu que tu sens que la majorité est contre toi*/because you feel that the majority is against you.”

Despite the odds, Emilio claims that he is generally happy with his immigration to Canada because it allowed him to attain a level of education and economic stability that would have been otherwise impossible in Honduras. However, the experience of leaving several family members behind took a significant toll on his identity. Emilio states :

*Oui, t'es satisfait au niveau de l'intégration, mais [...] tu ne peux pas être complètement satisfait parce que [...] une partie de toi n'est pas ici avec toi, donc [...] content de façon professionnel, oui [...] mais au niveau émotionnel tu n'es pas toute là [...] donc, même si tu as réussi ou quoi que ce soit [...]*

Yes, you're satisfied in terms of your integration, but [...] you can never really be completely satisfied because [...] a part of you isn't here with you, so [...] happy on a professional level, yes [...] but on an emotional level you're not all there [...] so, even if you've 'made it' [had success] or whatever [...]

*Carlos*  
*Age 29*

Carlos' departure from Honduras was a decision he was quite enthusiastic about for a number of reasons. Firstly, Carlos believed that a life in Montreal, Canada would provide him with more opportunity for his future endeavors. Secondly, Carlos felt that Honduras was too dangerous and that in the long run, he may have gotten involved in “*les mauvaises affaires*/some bad situations” if he had stayed. Carlos appreciates the security that Canada has to offer and explains that it is no longer possible to walk the



streets of Honduras at night without feeling threatened or at risk. Thus, at the time of his departure, he was happy to emigrate; despite leaving his siblings and parents behind.

At the age of 14, Carlos arrived in Montreal and soon after started working at a local manufacturing company. At this time, he lived with an uncle. Because of his busy work schedule, school did not remain a priority for long. This is something Carlos shares regretfully. Moreover, Carlos' parents were not overly concerned with his academics, either; they placed a greater emphasis on working and economic stability. This further reinforced Carlos' disinterest in school.

Although his parents remained in Honduras, Carlos explains that their presence was felt in Canada, as the rules that applied within their household in Honduras followed him to Montreal. Their severity often interfered with Carlos' ability to integrate on a more social level, as they forbid him from going out with friends, or attending any school organized outings. This caused him a great deal of stress. He explains:

*Quand je voulais sortir avec les amis ou [...] dans les sorties de l'école [...] ils ne me laissent pas aller sans raison. Eux autres c'est juste travailler, travailler [...] le travail, le travail [...] quand j'arrivais de l'école ils ne demandaient pas si il y avait des devoirs à faire. Depuis que j'ai commencé l'école aussi j'ai commencé à travailler...je n'avais pas le temps pour faire mes devoirs [...]*

When I wanted to go out with my friends or [...] on school outings [...] they wouldn't let me go and with no reason. They just wanted me to work and work [...] work, work [...] when I would get home from school they never asked me if I had homework. Ever since I started school I was working [...] I had no time for my homework [...]

At school, it was difficult for Carlos to successfully integrate because of his linguistic issues. He claims that his struggles with the French language still pursue today, and remain just as frustrating as they once were. According to Carlos, his inability to

grasp the French language was the root of many hardships throughout his high school career. On a social level, his inability to speak French fluently led to an involvement in several fights and bustles. Carlos remembers that the students from the regular program would often laugh at him, make fun of him, and ridicule him due to his accent. He states :

*Le monde qui ne te connaissent pas ils  
t'écoutent parler avec les autres en  
espagnol puis [...] ça leur dérange [...] 'Pourquoi il ne parle pas français?'*

People who did not know you would hear you speaking in Spanish with others and [...] it bothers them [...] 'Why isn't he speaking French?'

Carlos elaborates on this point, stating that the situation continued to worsen because the more he was made fun of; the more his self-esteem was affected. As a result, he distanced himself from a possibility of integrating into Quebec culture. Unable to ever properly express himself, Carlos reverted to violence for the remainder of his secondary education whenever he came into contact with students who were not the Latinos from his classroom. A lack of support at home only made this time more difficult. Carlos argues that his rebellious behavior would have been unlikely in Honduras:

*Là-bas ça aurait été différent parce que  
j'avais quelqu'un pour me corriger tout  
le temps...ici j'avais personne... C'est le  
manque de famille...*

Over there [in Honduras] things would have been different because I had someone there to correct me all the time [...] here I didn't have anyone [...] It's the lack of family [...]

Carlos noted that only one of his *accueil* teachers seemed to make a genuine attempt at helping him adjust to his new life in Canada. This teacher was an immigrant as well who spoke Spanish. After class, the teacher would speak to Carlos in Spanish and offer his help or support if ever it was needed. Carlos explains that he helped him not only on an academic level, with projects and homework, but also on a more personal level. This teacher was the sole person who considered Carlos as a unique individual

rather than simply as one of the students in the classroom. Carlos goes on to discuss another teacher he had, a French Canadian woman who insisted that students in the *classe d'accueil* speak French at all times. In this circumstance, Carlos would not speak at all, therefore cutting any chance at participation, interest, or success. Carlos concludes that an immigrant teacher is probably more suitable for the *classe d'accueil* environment because they understand what the students are going through.

It is pertinent to discuss the fact that once Carlos completed a full year in the *classe d'accueil*, he was unable to join the regular program during the remainder of his high school career. Unable to fulfill the necessary grade requirements, Carlos was sent to a *cheminement particulier* class, which is basically a class for those students who fail a level, who are seriously disruptive, or who are generally incapable of following the regular program's rhythm. Carlos resented this fact and explains that his placement in the *cheminement particulier* program only left him further unmotivated. He believes that the schools resort to *cheminement particulier* because they do not know what to do with immigrant students who may need a little extra time beyond the *classe d'accueil*. His lack of motivation was so much so that by the end of his secondary school experience, he had given up on school.

Despite the difficulties he encountered in his Quebec school, Carlos was very clear in his assertion that his academic difficulties were partly his own doing. In fact, Carlos emphasized this many times, stating that although the system made its best efforts, his lack of personal motivation and drive is the major reason for his failure to ever integrate into the regular program and as a result, pursue studies at the college or university levels.

*Sophia*  
*Age 29*

Sophia recalls the specific moment her mother told her that she would be moving to Montreal, Canada to join her father and start a new life. She shares that she was quite upset. She felt that she was too young and “*innocente/innocent*” at 13 years old to move to another country. Sophia’s parents wanted to provide her with as much opportunity as possible, something they felt a life in Honduras could not offer. Thus, she was told the move was “*pour [son] mieux*/for her best.”

Even after some time in Montreal, Sophia still wanted to return to Honduras. In fact, her initial experiences at school only made the situation worse. It was only after a year, when she was placed in the regular program, that Sophia finally began to develop significant friendships and value her life in Montreal. Before then, Sophia’s depiction of the *classe d’accueil* was quite negative. She recounts that she often felt depressed, anxious and unhappy because of the way that the immigrant students were treated by other students in the school. She explains :

*Quand j’essayais de parler français le monde ils riaient [...] C’est pas mal en accueil [...] nous, quand t’es en accueil, dans la classe, tu t’entends bien avec les élèves [...] Mais, les autres secondaires c’est [...] Tu sais, d’autre monde dans le secondaire, il parlait bien le français [...] On était comme [...] « reject » [...] je ne sais pas comment t’expliquer, mais [...]*

When I would try to speak French people would laugh [...] It’s not so bad in the ‘welcome class’ [...] us, when you’re in the ‘welcome class’, in the classroom, you get along with all the students [...] But, with the other levels it’s [...] You know, other people in the school, they spoke French well [...] We were like [...] rejects [...] I don’t know how to explain it, but [...]

Sophia does remember instances where her self-esteem was impacted by the adjustment process, particularly due to her struggles with the French language. Nearly every time she would speak outside of her “sheltered” *classe d’accueil*, she was ridiculed for her accent

or mispronunciation. She recalls some of her more painful memories: “*Même une Latina riait de moi, quelqu’un qui était une fois dans la classe d’accueil...*”/Even a Latina would laugh at me, someone who had once been in the ‘welcome classes’ [...]

Sophia also comments on how Quebec culture was a major focus of the *classe d’accueil*. In other words, the students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds were rarely incorporated into the classroom environment. Instead, her teachers would oblige students to speak in French at all times and discuss issues that were only linked to Quebec popular culture. Sophia states that this is a major downside of the *classe d’accueil* and argues that “*ça serait bon d’avoir tous les cultures*”/it would be nice to have all cultures [incorporated into the classroom].” Despite this, Sophia recalls that she did feel accurately prepared once placed in the regular program. In this sense, she is pleased about her experience in the *classe d’accueil*.

Sophia faced some difficulties with her father as a result of her attempts to integrate into Quebec culture. These were generally related to her social circles. When she finally joined the regular program and did develop friendships with people other than the Latinos from her *classe d’accueil*, her father’s strict rules sometimes interfered with her ability to fully integrate. She elaborates:

*Les parents latinos sont plus sévères  
[...] Moi, j’avais 18 ans puis je n’avais  
pas le droit d’arriver tard...comme, je  
devais être à l’heure. J’avais des amis  
canadiens français que c’était plus  
comme...libéral, relaxe...ils pouvaient  
sortir...*

Latino parents are much more strict [...] I was 18 years old and I still didn’t have the right to get home late [...] like, I had a curfew. I had French Canadian friends that for them it was like [...] liberal, relaxed [...] they could go out [...]

Sophia believes that her father’s rules were a way of sheltering her from the influences of Quebec culture, and perhaps also of helping her maintain her Honduran identity.

Overall, Sophia is content with her immigration to Montreal and understands that life here is “*sécuritaire/safe*” and more economically beneficial. Although her acculturation experience included a number of stressors, she proudly asserts that her life is much better now than it might have been if she had remained in Honduras.

*Pablo*  
*Age 26*

Pablo recognizes how fortunate he was to have moved from Honduras with his entire immediate family, including his mother, father, sister and brother. This is one of his initial assertions. He recalls how many of his friends from the *classe d'accueil* only had one parent living in Montreal, Canada, if any. He also reflects on the fact that his adjustment period may have been much more difficult if it was not for the presence of his family. Moreover, he is relieved to have been so young when he moved to Canada. At 7 years old, Pablo explains that “[il] ne savait pas trop qu’est-ce qui se passait/[he] did not really know what was going on.” He believes that being so young sheltered him from the hardships that often accompany the immigration process.

Despite knowing very little about the country he was moving to, Pablo’s experience adapting to life in Montreal was a generally positive one. When asked what he believed to be the most notable differences between Quebec culture and Honduran culture, Pablo stressed the fact that Honduras is an “*en sous-développement/underdeveloped*” nation, making it difficult for anyone to truly succeed economically.

According to Pablo’s experiences, the most demanding part of his integration into Quebec culture was learning the French language. As a result, his difficulty with the French language caused him a great deal of stress. He elaborates :

*Il fallait que j'apprenne la langue française [...] C'est un peu stressant au début [...] on dirait que tu ne veux même pas apprendre au début [...] Je trouvais ça difficile, tu comprends. La langue [...] c'est un peu plus déprimant à apprendre.*

I needed to learn the French language [...] It's a little stressful at the beginning [...] it's almost as if you don't even want to learn the language at first [...] I found it difficult, you know. The language [...] it's a little depressing to learn.

Despite the odds, Pablo speaks positively of his teachers from the *classe d'accueil*. He

argues that they did a good job of integrating the students' linguistic and cultural

backgrounds into the classroom environment. For example, teachers would organize a

number of activities that allowed students to speak about their countries of origin. In this

sense, he felt that his *classe d'accueil* teachers were "*des professionnels/professionals*"

who "*[ne [pouvaient] pas faire plus que ça/could not have done more than that.*" Pablo

adds that a personal effort must be present as well, as teacher "*ne peuvent pas tout nous*

*apprendre non plus/cannot teach us everything either.*" They were proud to use the

classroom's cultural diversity to their advantage when lesson planning. He attributes this

to the fact that his school was located in a multicultural neighborhood. Thus, diversity

was celebrated within the school.

Over all, Pablo did not encounter any problems with his parents as a result of his attempts to integrate into Quebec culture. In fact, his parents are the ones that taught him about personal efforts and motivated him to take advantage of the opportunity that life in Montreal could offer. Years later, Pablo is content with his immigration and knows his move was for the best. He concludes:

*Je dirais que oui, oui [...] je suis content de mon immigration. Ça m'a permis un peu d'ouvrir les yeux sur...sur les cultures, sur le monde [...] de voir la vie différemment [...] D'où je viens, le Honduras, c'est un pays sous-développé donc [...] je trouve ça m'a montré*

*beaucoup de choses [...] ça m'a permis de voir la vie d'une autre perspective. I can say that yes, yes [...] I am happy with my immigration. It allowed me to open my eyes a little and see [...] the cultures, the world [...] see life differently [...] Where I come from,*

Honduras, it's an under-developed country so [...] I find [being here] has

showed me many things [...] it allowed me to see life from another perspective.

*Jose*  
*Age 29*

At the time that Jose left Honduras to start a new life in Montreal, Canada, he recalls being quite stressed about his departure. He was only 10 years old. The fact that he was leaving his mother behind was a major stressor for him, despite the fact that his brother accompanied him on the trip. His father, who was already settled in Montreal, warned him of the cold temperatures and change of lifestyle. He explains that “[il] n’avait pas hâte/he was not looking forward to it.”

Jose believes that the weather, the food, and the change in clothing are the most prominent differences between Quebec culture and Honduran culture. Other than an initial shock, he claims that these differences did not cause any difficulties for him. However, something – or rather, someone – that was missing from his life in Canada caused him to feel depressed and anxious: his mother and other close relatives. Jose argues that “*détachement de la famille*/family detachment” was and still is one of his greater struggles.

According to Jose’s experiences, it was tricky to establish an “*identité*/identity” at his new school in Montreal. Furthermore, the *classe d’accueil* acted as somewhat of a shelter for him. It was only in that environment that he felt comfortable enough to express himself. He explains :

*J’étais confortable dans la classe d’accueil [...] parce que, tu sais comme...la langue... C’est un gros plus si tu le parles ou si tu comprends [...]*

I was comfortable in the ‘welcome class’ [...] because, you know, like [...] the language [...] It’s a big help if you speak the language or you understand [...]



Another factor that eased him in the *classe d'accueil* was the fact that he felt like an equal amongst all the students because “*ils vivaient un peu la même chose que moi*/they were experiencing the same thing as [him].” Jose’s own struggles with establishing an identity were heavily influenced by his inability to easily acquire the French language. He believes that linguistic issues are what brought the students from the *class d'accueil* together. Unable to properly express themselves, Jose argues that they were a “*famille/family*” that were all “*perdu/lost*,” particularly when they were outside of the classroom. He discusses the way that immigrant students were outcast by the rest of the school. Jose regretfully adds:

*On est traité différemment, oui [...] Même moi je les fais [...] je peux te le dire, au secondaire [...] avec les nouveaux arrivants [...] Je les mettais de côté, genre [...] même si on parlait la même langue [...] ce n'était pas mes amis, ils ne faisaient pas parti de mon cercle d'amis [...]*

We are treated differently, yes [...] Even I did it [...] I can tell you, in high school [...] with the newly arrived students [...] I would ignore them, like [...] even if we spoke the same language [...] they weren't my friends, they weren't part of my circle of friends [...]

As previously mentioned, Jose felt “*confortable/comfortable*” in the *classe d'accueil* for a number of reasons. He believes that his teacher, an Arab lady, played a significant role in this comfort and made her best efforts towards helping students integrate into the school culture. Jose sympathizes with the *classe d'accueil* teachers, as he recognizes that balancing and incorporating the cultures of 20 students must be challenging. Furthermore, Jose deems that the instruction in Honduras is better. He adds that the “*les études sont un peu plus avancé*/the studies are more advanced,” that the discipline is much more effective.

Despite feeling at ease in the *classe d'accueil*, Jose critiques the system for being too sheltering. He puts into question the long-term consequences of setting immigrant youth apart from the regular students. Jose asserts that the *classe d'accueil* drove him further away from a possibility at integrating into Quebec culture because he was always separated from anyone who knew anything about Quebec culture or the French language (other than his teacher). He argues that it might have been more useful to have newly arrived students interact with others from the regular program earlier on, in order to accelerate their integration process and eliminate the risks of bullying. Though he is not quite sure how this hypothesis would work, he strongly believes that the *classe d'accueil* system “*surprotège/overprotects*” the immigrant youth to a fault.

Although he is generally pleased with his immigration to Canada, Jose maintains that it would have been useful to know a bit more about Quebec’s culture prior to emigrating. He adds that parents should be informed, educated and prepared prior to their children’s’ immigration. It is difficult to have parents and children experience their acculturation at the same time. Jose did not encounter any difficulties with his father as a result of his attempts to integrate, but recalls several instances where he was frustrated by his father’s inability to help him throughout his immigration. He could not depend on his father for help with homework, for advice, or for help with the language. As he, his brother and his father were all experiencing the same hardships all at once, he had to fend for himself a great deal of the time.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present the findings from this thesis project and consider them in light of the aforementioned literature review. The interviews and narratives of five immigrants have allowed me to point to some common themes related to the overall immigrant experience and more particularly, the acculturation process and the stress that often accompanies this process. Although each individual has had a unique immigrant experience, their familiar journey in the *classe d'accueil* has aided me in drawing some pertinent conclusions about acculturative stress and how it manifests itself within an educational context in Quebec. In order to provide an accurate analysis of the themes that have surfaced from this research project, this chapter is divided into three major sections. The first provides an overview of the participants, presenting their overall demographics. The two following sections examine the acculturative stressors that were noted in the data; firstly, those stressors that generally relate to the immigration process, and secondly, those that are particularly related to their academic experiences in light of their recent immigration.

### *Participants*

The five participants in this research project all immigrated to Montreal from Honduras between the ages of 7-14. These individuals entered the *classe d'accueil* in their respective local French public school within a maximum of two weeks after having emigrated. Attending an English public school was not an option for them due to Quebec's Bill 101, a language retention policy which obliges new immigrant populations to attend French public schools. Table 1 (see page 52) sums up the overall demographics

of the five participants. All the participants left Honduras in search of a better life. Security and economic stability were the most commonly mentioned factors of the ‘better life’ they were hoping to achieve. Two participants (Sophia and Carlos) immigrated to Montreal at the times of their adolescence, ages 13 and 14 respectively. The remaining three participants (Pablo, Emilio and Jose) emigrated from Honduras in their childhood, ages 7, 8, and 10 respectively. This is an important fact to consider, as the age at immigration is a subtlety that may create variances in the data, specifically if we are discussing personal emotions and attitudes. Moreover, while four participants were reluctant but excited about their immigration to Canada, one participant (Sophia) truly resisted and opposed her emigration. She did not see the value in moving to Montreal, Canada. All the participants remained in the *classe d’accueil* for one year except one (Emilio), who remained in the *classe d’accueil* for two years. Notably, Emilio is also the only participants who pursued post-secondary studies and ultimately obtained a Bachelor’s degree in teaching physical education at l’Université de Montréal.

It is evident that the five Hondurans who participated in this research project experienced acculturation; their attitudes, norms, values, and even behaviours changed as a result of their contact with Canadian culture (Kosic et al., 2004). Throughout this contact, the five participants managed to maintain their Honduran identity and culture while simultaneously adopting a Canadian one. Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok refer to this phenomenon of maintaining one’s own culture while adopting the host culture as *integration* (as cited in Lee, 2008). According to Berry et al., *integration* is arguably the most favourable acculturative strategy, as it points to a unique balance between the

**Table 1:** *Demographics of Honduran participants*

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Age at Immigration</i>	<i>Reason for Immigration</i>	<i>Number of Years in the Classe d'Accueil</i>	<i>Level Upon Entering Regular Program</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Highest Degree</i>
<b><i>Emilio</i></b>	26	8 years old	Better life	2 years	Primary, Grade 3	Single	University Bachelor's Degree
<b><i>Carlos</i></b>	29	14 years old	Better life	1 year	N/A – Secondary, <i>cheminement particulier</i>	Single	Secondary Diploma
<b><i>Sophia</i></b>	29	13 years old	Better life	1 year	Secondary, Level 3	Single	Secondary Diploma
<b><i>Pablo</i></b>	26	7 years old	Better life	1 year	Primary, Grade 2	Single	Secondary Diploma
<b><i>Jose</i></b>	29	10 years old	Better life	1 year	Primary, Grade 5	Single	Secondary Diploma

culture of origin and the host culture that may facilitate the overall acculturation process. *Integration* is also favored by Canadian immigration policies, which shows that Canada is welcoming of various cultures that can enrich its society (Tonks and Paranjpe, 1999). Any facilitation is helpful, as research shows that the multitude of changes that appear during the acculturation period may cause a person to feel stressed. Acculturative stress, as it is now known, occurs as a result of cumulative stressors that appear in various areas of the immigrants' lives. Whether it is within a familial context, on an academic level, or simply through an interaction of social cultures, these stressors have a significant impact on the individuals involved. In the subsequent sections, I will discuss some of the thematic acculturative stressors that surfaced directly out of the data that was collected for this research project. In so doing, I aim to ultimately show how acculturative stress influences the leading contemporary educational integration program in Quebec that we have come to know as the *classe d'accueil*.

### ***General Acculturative Stressors***

The following includes a discussion of general acculturative stressors as experienced by the five foreign-born participants in this study (non-academic). Table 2 (see page 54) provides an overview of these stressors.

#### ***Readiness and Willingness to Migrate***

According to the cases in question, there were three overall factors that impacted the participants' readiness and willingness to migrate. Firstly, it is important to consider how much information the individuals were provided with about their destination prior to having left their country of origin. According to Lee (2008), an individual who gains information about their future place of residence will experience an

**Table 2:** *General Acculturative Stressors (non-academic)*

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Readiness and Willingness to Immigrate</i>	<i>Cultural Changes Experienced</i>	<i>Psychological Stress (Present vs. Absent)</i>	<i>Psychological Stress (Type)</i>	<i>Family Presence</i>	<i>Family Influence</i>
<b><i>Emilio</i></b>	Reluctant	Population, Ways of thinking, Food, Religion	Present	Anxiety/Depression, Identity	√: Brother & Father	Absence of Parental Role
<b><i>Carlos</i></b>	Reluctant	Population, Food	Present	Anxiety/Depression, Aggressive behaviour	X: No immediate family member	Rules/Severity
<b><i>Sophia</i></b>	Opposed	Population, Ways of thinking, Food, Religion	Present	Anxiety/Depression	√: Father	Rules/Severity
<b><i>Pablo</i></b>	Accepting	Population, Ways of thinking, Food	Present (Slight)	Anxiety/Depression	√ : All immediate family members	-
<b><i>Jose</i></b>	Reluctant	Population, Food	Present	Anxiety/Depression, Identity	√: Brother & Father	-

easier acculturation process because it will allow them the opportunity to prepare for what the changes with which they will soon be faced. Thus, the more information these individuals are provided with, the easier it will be for them to adapt. If we consider the participants in this study, all the participants gained considerably minimal insight on Montreal, Canada. In fact, if they were given any information, Emilio shares that this information was primarily about the cold weather awaiting them:

Emilio : *Non [...] Honnêtement, du Canada, je savais absolument rien [...] je pense qu'on peut-être je savais qui faisait froid [...] qu'il y avait de la neige [...] mais à part ça [...] aucunement, non.*

No [...] Honestly, of Canada, I didn't know a thing [...] I think that maybe I knew that it was cold [...] that there was snow [...] but other than that [...] nothing, no.

Of course, this limited the participants' abilities to prepare themselves for their journey in Montreal and arguably added an additional struggle for them as all was so new to them.

Jose notes that the whole immigration ordeal happened so fast, it would have been impossible to prepare, even with additional knowledge of Montreal. Jose remembers how the school enrolment occurred just as quickly. He and his brother began school within ten days of arriving in Canada. He explains:

Jose : *Ça ce passe trop vite [...] On est arrivé ici [...] deux semaines après qu'on est arrivé ici on était déjà à l'école [...] Ça a prit une semaine et demie pour nous inscrire puis on était déjà à l'école [...]*

It happens so fast [...] We arrived here [...] two weeks after we arrived here we were already in school [...] It took a week and a half to enroll us and then off we went to school [...]

This is true of all five participants, who were all immersed into a new school setting within a maximum of two weeks after having arrived. Thus, none of them had the



opportunity to adjust to their new surroundings prior to attending a new school, an experience that undoubtedly contributed to their acculturative stress.

Secondly, an individual's degree of acculturative stress is directly influenced by whether the individual moved accompanied by immediate family members. The presence of immediate family members when departing from the country of origin acts as a buffer or social support system for the individual, alleviating some of the stresses that are tied to this event and affecting the individual's readiness to immigrate (Bledsoe, 2007). Jose emigrated from Honduras accompanied by one sibling. He and his brother joined their father, who had already been established in Montreal, and left their mother behind. Sophia, who was least willing to emigrate, traveled only with a family friend but joined her father who was also already in Montreal. Emilio traveled with a friend of his father's and joined his father once he arrived in Montreal. Carlos also traveled with a family friend, but was not joined by any immediate family members. Instead, he lived with an uncle. Still today, all his immediate family members remain in Honduras. Pablo, however, is the only individual who emigrated from Honduras with his entire immediate family. Interestingly, he is the participant who displayed the most minor evidence of acculturative stress and seemed the most accepting, prepared, and willing to immigrate. Thus, it seems plausible to conclude that the presence of close family members acts as a coping mechanism throughout the acculturation process.

Thirdly, age is another factor that must be considered when discussing the participants' readiness and willingness to immigrate. According to Tonks and Paranjpe (1999), immigrants who arrive at an older age are more likely to endure more acculturative stress. This group of Honduran-born immigrants did not necessarily

represent a reality of this hypothesis. Carlos emigrated at 14 and was therefore the oldest amongst this population when he arrived. While he did experience instances of acculturative stress, I am reluctant to state that he endured the most, as the research suggests he might. In fact, age did not seem to be correlated with the levels of acculturative stress experienced. However, the research shows that Pablo, who emigrated youngest at 7, seemed to recount the least amount of acculturative stress, which may add some value to the argument proposed by Tonks and Paranjpe. Of course, it is necessary to mention that levels of acculturative stress are difficult to decipher; that is, it is tricky to compare whether one individual experienced more acculturative stress than another because each experience is so unique.

### *Cultural Changes*

According to Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987), the level of acculturative stress that one experiences is correlated with the degree of change that is experienced throughout acculturation. The more radical the change, the more acculturative stress is expected. This degree of change depends heavily on the differences between the original culture and the host culture. When these cultures do not resemble each other it becomes difficult for individuals to find some aspect of commonality in their experience. Entering an area that is largely unknown, the situation can easily become both daunting and shocking. All five participants in this study arrived from Honduras, a country where there is very minimal cultural diversity within its population. Thus, in Canada, and specifically in Montreal, where a mosaic of cultural diversity is celebrated, a diversified population is something that particularly stood out to the participants of this study. Sophia states that “*tu vois d’autre monde, d’autres cultures [...] c’est comme [...] tu ne vois pas ça à ton*

*pays, tout le monde parle espagnol [...] tout le monde est hondurien*/you see other people, other cultures [...] it's like [...] you don't see that in your country, every one speaks Spanish there [...] everyone is Honduran [...]" Pablo seemed to agree with Sophia, adding:

Pablo: *Le monde est différent aussi par rapport à [...] il y a beaucoup d'ethnies ici, c'est plus [...] beaucoup de cultures en une culture [...] mais là-bas c'est juste une culture, tout le monde parle la même langue [...]*

The people are different also in terms of [...] there are a lot of ethnicities here, it's more [...] a lot of cultures in one culture [...] but there it's just one culture, everyone speaks the same language [...]

Sophia and Emilio also mentioned a disparity in the overall way of thinking, stating that the Quebec culture is more "*libre*/free" and "*libéral*, liberal" as compared to Honduras.

Although a number of cultural variances were noted throughout the interviews, food and religion are two factors that seemed to reoccur in the data. If we consider Berry et al.'s (1987) research on acculturative stress, a new nutritional state constitutes a *biological change* while a change in religion constitutes a *cultural change*. This group of Honduran immigrants expressed that it is not only the types of food enjoyed that are different, but the way in which they are enjoyed. Several participants discussed the fact that frequenting restaurants, specifically the fast-food type, is nearly nonexistent in their country of origin. Of course, the food itself is unlike their own, as expressed by some of the participants:

Jose: *Je dirais [...] par rapport à [...] la nourriture [...] On ne mange pas les mêmes choses, on n'a pas les mêmes goûts [...]*

I would say [...] in terms of [...] the food [...] We don't eat the same thing, we don't have the same taste [...]

Emilio: *C'est sur qu'au niveau de la nourriture [...] c'est totalement différent! Nous on ne mange pas juste du jambon, (rire) [...]*

I would say in terms of the food [...] it's completely different! We don't just eat ham, (laughs) [...]

Sophia: *La nourriture [...] oh! (rire) [...] C'est très différent [...]*

The food [...] oh! (laughs) [...] It's very different [...]

According to some participants, there seemed to be a significant shift in the importance of religion as compared to Honduras. Emilio explains that it was as though once they arrived in Canada, a lot of what they were taught was dismissed or undermined due to the cultural differences that existed here:

Emilio: *...mais aussi l'aspect religieux. En Honduras, les gens sont quand même assez religieux [...] donc, on allait à l'église [...] mais ici c'est vraiment [...] tu es libre à toi-même [...] puis [...] si ça te tente tu y vas [...] puis vu que je n'avais pas de pression au niveau de [...] non seulement de ma famille, de mon père - je ne sentais pas de pression de lui [...] mais de personne d'autre [...] donc je me sentais pas obliger d'aller à l'église [...] donc, j'y allais pas [...] parce que c'est comme devenu un choix [...] mais là-bas [...] ben, si on allait pas quand on était jeune, c'est pas normale [...] on y allais [...] puis ici, c'est plus difficile [...] même si on voulait y aller, on dirait que on n'a pas trouvé une place vraiment pour y aller [...] donc, à ce niveau là, la religion [...] c'est sûr que c'est comme une grande différence [...]*

...but also the religious aspect. In Honduras, people are pretty religious [...] so, we went to church [...] but here it's really [...] you're free to do what you want [...] and [...] if you want to go you can [...] and seeing as though I didn't have any pressure [...] not only from my family, from my father - I didn't feel any pressure from him [...] but from nobody else either [...] so I didn't feel obliged to go to church [...] so, I wouldn't go [...] because suddenly it became a choice [...] but over there [...] well, if you didn't go when you were young, that wasn't normal [...] we would go [...] and here, it's more difficult [...] even if we wanted to go, it's as if we couldn't really find a place to go [...] so, on that level, religion [...] it's definitely a huge difference [...]

Of course, it is critical to mention that language was the most commonly cited area of struggle in relation to cultural change. Linguistic changes and issues will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section.

## *Psychological Stress*

Instances of psychological stress were definitely noted throughout Sophia, Emilio, Pablo, Carlos, and Jose's acculturation. Of course, acculturation is an extremely personal journey, one that is dependent on a number of factors. Thus, not all individuals experienced their psychological stress in the same way or to the same degree. In her research, Shirikian identifies 9 manifestations of psychological stress: aggressive behaviour, anxiety/depression, attention problems, delinquent behaviour, identity problems, social problems, somatic problems, thought problems and withdrawal (as cited in Karilian-Konyalian, 2008). While no examples of attention problems, delinquent behaviour, somatic problems or thought problems were noted, other areas of psychological stress were found.

All participants reported feeling anxious or depressed at some point throughout their acculturation (although Pablo's experience of anxiety and depression was quite minimal). Notably, their depression and anxiety was mainly a result of struggles with language. Carlos' depression occurred early on in his immigration, as he was frustrated by the fact that he could not understand what others around him were saying. To add to this frustration, his teacher would oblige the students to speak French and only French in the classroom. Jose's anxiety was particularly heightened outside the *classe d'accueil*, where he felt vulnerable and alone due to his inability to communicate, thus also representing an example of withdrawal. Sophia recalls feeling depressed when others would laugh at her attempts to speak French. Once she had a solid French vocabulary, her accent still remained an object of discrimination. Emilio also experienced discrimination which continued right up until university. Accordingly, Shirikian argues that

discrimination increases the risk for psychological stress in young individuals (as cited in Karilian-Konyalian, 2008). Emilio goes on to state that being an immigrant is a label with its own implications: he recalls frequently being treated as a lesser, in and out of school.

Jose and Emilio remember struggling with their identity in a similar way. Both individuals recall the absence of family as the major cause of their identity crises. This confirms Beiser's (1988) research, which states that separation from the family may lead to additional stress. Jose adds that an inability to understand and express oneself equally impacts a person's identity:

Jose: *Quand tu comprends absolument rien [...] tu es vraiment comme nulle part [...] tu as aucune identification [...]*

*[in reference to linguistic struggles]* When you don't understand a thing [...] you're really nowhere [...] you have no identity [...]

Carlos represents the only example of aggression within the data. His aggressive behaviour resulted from his inability to communicate properly. At first, Carlos states that he would fight with others "*juste comme ça*/just like that (for no apparent reason)." However, with further questioning, Carlos eventually admits that his aggressive behaviour was a defence mechanism and a method of protecting his "*réputation*/reputation," as his self-esteem was greatly hindered by students outside of the *classe d'accueil* who would ridicule him.

### *Family Influence*

Family plays a vital role in an immigrant's acculturation process. According to McAndrew (2004), maintaining strong support systems with individuals who have experienced similar situations is a key coping mechanism for immigrant youth. When young individuals emigrate from their country of origin, it is favorable that they find a

strong social circle within their family. However, for a number of reasons, family accompaniment was not a luxury that all five participants in this study enjoyed. As previously mentioned, Pablo was the only participant to have emigrated with all of his immediate family members. According to the data, he is also the participant who underwent the slightest amounts of anxiety and depression. This confirms the fact that family separation is a significant stressor – and therefore that family assembly lessens stress (Beiser, 1988).

The attitudes of family members towards immigration, whether it is siblings or parents, also influence an individual's acculturation. At times, immigrant youth may experience difficulties with their parents as a result of their attempts to integrate or as a result of clashing cultural ideologies. The severity of Honduran parents seemed to be a reoccurring fact in the data, as participants mentioned how strict Honduran parents are as compared to French Canadian parents. Sophia offers an example:

Sophia: *Moi, j'avais des problèmes avec mon père parce que quand je rentrais à l'école j'avais de la difficulté à parler français puis lui il me forçait [...] Je ne voulais rien savoir [...] je voulais quitter [...]*

I had problems with my father because when I would go to school I had difficulty speaking French and he would force me [...] I didn't want to know a thing [...] I wanted to leave [...]

Sophia and Carlos (whose parents remained in Honduras) elaborated on the fact that their parents were reluctant to allow them to participate in social events in and outside of school. In these cases, both participants felt like outcasts within their peer groups as a result of their parents' rules.

Emilio claims that the absence of a parental role was especially troublesome for him. Although his father was physically in Montreal, economic demands meant that he

needed to work strenuous hours. This meant that he was rarely available for his sons throughout their acculturation. Emilio explains his father's demanding schedule meant that he needed to take responsibility for himself and grow up at a faster pace:

Emilio: *C'est la situation [...] OK il faut que je me lève, faut que je me fasse mon dîner, faut si [...] Mais [...] c'est des affaires que tu n'es pas supposé de faire à cet âge là [...] normalement [...] mais vu que mon père devait travailler et nous on devait étudier [...] donc, on devait vraiment se débrouiller tout seul [...] donc, c'est plus ça qui a crée un choc. En même temps, il faut que tu sois indépendant à un très jeune âge [...] c'est ça les difficultés.*

It's the situation [...] OK I need to get up, I need to prepare my lunch, I need to [...] But [...] these are things that you aren't supposed to do usually at that age [...] normally [...] but seeing as my father had to work and we had to study [...] so, we really had to fend for ourselves [...]

He is thankful to have had his brother with him however, who simultaneously experienced his own acculturation. The two brothers also attended the same *classe d'accueil*, which surely acted as additional support.



### *Acculturative Stressors: Academic*

The following outlines the acculturative stressors as experienced by the five participants in school and in the *classe d'accueil*. Table 3 (see page 65) provides an overview of these stressors.

#### *Honduras to Montreal: Academic Variances*

To add to the acculturative stress already in play, Pablo, Carlos, Sophia, Jose and Emilio were rushed into various schools on the island soon after their arrival. As previously mentioned, within a week or two of being in Montreal, the five Hondurans were already placed in their respective *classe d'accueil*. While attending school was in fact a priority, the parents of these individuals had no alternative but to send their children to school so soon, as they began working right away and could not take care of them throughout the day. Starting at a new school acted as an additional stressor, specifically because the participants knew nothing about the functioning of schools in Montreal as compared to Honduras. In this sense, everything about Quebec schooling and the *classe d'accueil* was new. According to Hovey (2000), unfamiliarity with a new environment can increase the risk for depression amongst immigrant youth.

Throughout their interviews, the five participants commented on the differences between the schools and general academia in Honduras and Montreal. Notably, the participants' accounts consisted primarily of remarks on the level of education provided and the disciplinary measures used. Here are some examples of their feedback:

Carlos: *Les différents cours [...] ici tu changes de cours, tu changes de professeurs [...] là-bas tu restais avec le même tout le temps [...] C'est sûrement plus sévère là-bas...ils [...] (fait signe de frapper, rire) [...] Ils [les enseignants honduriens] avaient une façon de nous faire comprendre [...] Ici c'est rien, un jour de suspension (rire) [...]*

**Table 3: Acculturative Stressors (academic)**

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Academic Variances</i>	<i>Linguistic Issues (French)</i>	<i>Experience with Peers inside the Classe d'Accueil</i>	<i>Experience with Peers outside the Classe d'Accueil</i>	<i>Experience with Teachers inside the Classe d'Accueil</i>	<i>Experience with Teachers outside the Classe d'Accueil</i>	<i>Impression of the Classe d'Accueil</i>
<b>Emilio</b>	More strict in Honduras	Problematic – discriminated against	No problem	Outsider feeling, discriminated against	More positive with immigrant teacher vs. Quebec teacher	Problematic – right up until university	Room for improvement
<b>Carlos</b>	More strict in Honduras, Course changes	Problematic – discriminated against, led to violence	No problem	Outsider feeling, discriminated against (led to violence)	More positive with immigrant teacher vs. Quebec teacher	-	Room for improvement
<b>Sophia</b>	More strict in Honduras, Believes education is better in Montreal	Problematic – discriminated against, led to self-esteem issues	No problem	Outsider feeling, discriminated against (led to self-esteem issues)	Positive	-	Room for improvement
<b>Pablo</b>	More strict in Honduras, Believes education is better in Montreal	Problematic – led to depression/anxiety	No problem	No problem	Positive (immigrant teacher)	-	Room for improvement
<b>Jose</b>	More strict in Honduras, Believes education is better in Honduras	Problematic	No problem	Outsider feeling	More positive with immigrant teacher vs. Quebec teacher	-	Room for improvement

The different classes [...] here you change class, you change teacher [...] there you stayed with the same teacher all the time [...] It's definitely more strict over there [...] they [...] (does movement as to hit someone, laughs) [...] They [Honduran teachers] had a way of making us understand [...] Here there's barely anything, one day of suspension (laughs) [...]

Sophia: *Ben, moi je trouve qu'ici c'est plus élevé l'éducation [...] C'est plus sévère là-bas [...]*

Well, I think that the education is better here [...] It's very strict over there [...]

Emilio: *Ben, là-bas c'était beaucoup plus sévère [...] dans le sens que t'arrive à l'école [...] je pense c'est tout les lundis [...] on se mettait en rang, un peu comme à l'armée, puis les enseignants, la direction circulaient...puis ils regardaient vraiment si tu étais propre, si t'avais pris ta douche, si tu étais bien coiffé, si tes ongles étaient bien propre et coupé, ils n'acceptaient pas les filles non plus avec les ongles peints, c'était intolérable [...] il fallait que ton pantalon soit bien droit et repasser, ainsi que ta chemise. Si jamais il y avait quoi que ce soit qui n'était pas conforme aux règlements, ils te renvoyaient chez toi. Quand moi j'étais en Honduras, on les [...] les enseignants pouvaient encore frapper les élèves avec une règle, le mètre qu'on utilise ici en mathématique [...]*

Well, over there it's much more strict [...] in the sense that you get to school [...] I think it's every Monday [...] we would get in line, kind of like in the army, and the teachers, the principal would walk around [...] and they would look to see if you were clean, if you had taken a shower, if your hair was well placed, if your nails were cut and cleaned, they wouldn't accept girls with their nails painted, it was unacceptable [...] your pants had to be straight and ironed, your shirt as well. If ever there was a problem with anything that did not meet the rules and requirements, you would be sent home. When I was in Honduras, they would [...] the teachers could still hit the students with a ruler, the meter stick we use here for math [...]

Pablo : *C'est sûr ici c'est un peu plus développé. Ils [les enseignants à Montréal] ont un peu plus de techniques pour enseigner aussi [...]*

Of course, here we are much more developed. They [teachers in Montreal] have more teaching techniques as well [...]

Some aspects of Jose's views on schooling in Honduras as compared to Montreal did not correspond with the other participants. Instead, he believes that the education in Honduras is of greater quality:

Jose : *Ben [...] l'enseignement est meilleur chez nous [en Honduras]. On apprend plus [...] disons que, tu sais comme, c'est toujours le même groupe, on change jamais de classe [...] c'est le prof qui venait en classe [...] Aussi, les études sont un peu plus avancé par à ça [...] en tout cas, c'est comme ça que je vois ça [...] c'est parce que c'est plus... on voit beaucoup plus la culture international. Ils [les enseignants] son plus sévère qu'ici [...] la discipline est différente [...]*

Well [...] the pedagogy is better back home [in Honduras]. We learn more [...] let's say, you know like, it's always the same group, we don't ever change class [...] it's the teacher who comes in the classroom [...] Also, the subject matter is a little more advanced [...] anyway, that's how I see it [...] it's because it's more [...] you see more of an international culture. They [the teachers] are more strict than here [...] the discipline is different [...]

Thus, Jose offers a more critical view and seems to downplay the educational system in Montreal. As researcher and interviewer, Jose's claim that education in Honduras offers insight into "international culture" was of great interest to me. Arguably, Jose is confirming Allen (2007) and Breton-Carbonneau's (2011) claims about the cultural instruction that occurs within the *classe d'accueil*. While education in Honduras offers a broader scope on international or world cultures, Jose seems to imply that the *classe d'accueil* (or simply education in Quebec) focuses primarily on a national or even specifically provincial culture. Although the literature does not comment on this specifically, it would be interesting to examine which scope of knowledge (international culture or national/provincial culture) is best suited for immigrant students. While national/provincial culture may aid in adaptation, international culture might be more relatable and ultimately more useful for an immigrant's particular experience. Although it

is difficult to determine how much Jose's claims are grounded in reality, they are nevertheless pertinent and thought-provoking.

### *Linguistic Issues*

It is without a doubt that linguistic issues represented the greatest troubles for the five Hondurans who participated in this research project. In all accounts related to cultural struggles, difficulties with adaptation, hardships at school, and cases of depression or anxiety, linguistic issues were often cited as a primary cause. According to Karilian-Konyalian (2008), an individual who is optimistic about their acculturation process will have an easier and more enjoyable time learning the host language because they are simply more open to the idea. However, in the case of the five participants in this study, even those who were more optimistic about their immigration (Pablo, for example) had a difficulty with the language. Overall, each individual had their own trouble as a result of their struggle with the French language.

For Sophia, linguistic issues greatly impacted her self-esteem as she was constantly ridiculed for her inability to speak French fluently. Sophia was the only involuntary immigrant in the group. To add to her original opposition, she explains that the instances of being ridiculed eventually turned her off from wanting to learn the language altogether. When asked to provide some hypothetical advice to a new Honduran student during their period of adaptation in Montreal, Sophia shares how she came to a point where she had stopped caring about learning the language:

Sophia: *Moi, mon erreur c'est que [...] moi, je m'en fouettais carrément d'apprendre le français [...] J'écoutais toujours la télévision en espagnol [...] donc, je lui conseillerais d'écouter la télévision en français [...] de lire plus [...]*

My mistake was [...] I, I didn't care at all about learning French [...] I would always watch television in Spanish [...] so, I would advise him to watch TV in French [...] to read more [...]

Emilio adds to Sophia's claims, stating that a person's lack of fluency or the presence of a subtle accent was enough of a reason to be made fun of by students from the regular program. These students would abuse their vulnerabilities:

Emilio: *Mais du moment que [...] qu'il y a avait la récréation, ou le dîner, ou quoi que ce soit [...] même si c'était des gens qui peut-être étaient en accueil avant, auparavant [...] donc, peut-être il y a deux ou trois ans [...] que eux-mêmes ils étaient en accueil [...] ils avaient tendance aussi à se moquer de nous...justement parce qu'ils disent [...] «OK, lui il vient juste d'arriver [...] oh, il parle pas bien [...] »*

But from the moment that [...] that it was recess, or lunch break, or whatever [...] even if these were people who maybe were in the 'welcome class' before [...] so, maybe two or three years prior [...] that they themselves were in a 'welcome class' [...] they had a tendency to make fun of us [...] I guess because they say [...] "OK, he just got here [...] oh, he doesn't speak well [...]"

Carlos, Pablo and Jose also discussed the added pressure of having to learn the French language throughout their acculturation processes. For Carlos, his inability to properly express himself was frustrating and ultimately contributed to his tendency to revert to violence. If we refer back to Spindler and Hammond (2006), Carlos' behavior is telling of a situation where psychological stress escalates, so much so that aggression and violence result. Jose felt lost when unable to speak fluently. He explains that it is for this reason that he only felt comfortable and safe within the *classe d'accueil*, where other students were experiencing the same difficulties with the language of instruction. Pablo shared that the task of learning a new language seems so daunting; it is almost as though the fear of failure impedes an individual's ability and motivation to learn. He adds that his own journey learning the French language nearly became depressing at times.

However, once he learned the language sufficiently, Pablo admits that daily tasks and life in general became much simpler. Despite the odds they faced, the five individuals persevered and ultimately reached a level of comfort and ease with the language. Today, these Hondurans are all fluently bilingual, while some are even trilingual.

#### *Peers in and out of the Classe d'Accueil*

According to the data collected from this research project, it is necessary to distinguish between peers in and out of the *classe d'accueil*, as both impacted the five participants differently. In general, those from the *classe d'accueil* facilitated their acculturation, while those from the regular program did not. For example, when asked if her peers had a positive impact on her immigration experience, Sophia abruptly replies:

Sophia: *Ceux dans la classe [classe d'accueil], oui [...] mais les autres, non.*

Those in the class [welcome class], yes [...] but the others, no.

All five Hondurans spoke positively of their encounters with peers within the *classe d'accueil*. The presence of other immigrants who were facing the same issues as them was both comforting and reassuring. In some cases, the participants shared a special bond with students from the *classe d'accueil*, one that meant that they would look out for each other, defend each other and encourage each other. Phinney, Romero, Nava and Huang (2001) argue that same-ethnic peers or peers who speak the same language are likely to positively impact acculturation. Emilio proudly shared how the students in his *classe d'accueil* resembled a tight-knit community:

Emilio: *[in reference to the classe d'accueil students] Dans le fond, c'est comme on devient [...] comme une famille [...] puis même si [...] peu importe la difficulté que tel personne va avoir, on va tout le monde essayer de le faire ensemble [...]*

*[in reference to the classe d'accueil students]* In a way, it's like we become [...] like a family [...] and even if [...] no matter what problem a person might face, we would all get together and try to help [...]

Sophia, Jose and Carlos added that the *classe d'accueil* was one of the only places where they did not feel judged. Consequently, it was stepping outside of the *classe d'accueil* that presented a more challenging reality.

Of the five participants in this study, only one (Pablo) did not recount any issues with peers from outside the *classe d'accueil* (from the regular program). As previously mentioned, it is interesting to note that Pablo is the participant who immigrated to Montreal at the youngest age, only 7 years old. Arguably, emigrating from Honduras at such a young age may have influenced Pablo's perception of his social adaptation. The remaining participants all remembered instances of being ostracized, ridiculed, and discriminated against simply because they were part of the newly arrived immigrants in the *classe d'accueil*.

In some cases, extended periods of discrimination led to instances of hostility, whereby some of the participants began to resent the students from the regular program:

Carlos: *[in reference to developing feelings of resentment towards students from the regular program]* Souvent [...] à chaque jour [...] Il faut que tu te protèges [...] sinon, tout le monde va se moquer de toi [...]

*[in reference to developing feelings of resentment towards students from the regular program]* Often [...] every day [...] You have to protect yourself [...] if not, everyone will ridicule you [...]

Emilio: *[in reference to developing feelings of resentment towards students from the regular program]* Oui...même au CÉGEP...c'est drôle à dire parce que...tu sens une mauvaise ambiance...tu sens que quand tu vas lui [non-immigrant] parler il te parle différent [...] mais quand une autre personne lui parle il est super content [...] mais quand toi tu vas la voir tu vois déjà que ça façon de parler change [...] mais tu ne comprends pas la raison [...]



*[in reference to developing feelings of resentment towards students from the regular program]* Yes [...] even in college [...] it's funny to say because [...] you feel a negative environment [...] you feel that when you want to speak to him [non-immigrant] he answers differently [...] but when another person speaks to him he is super happy [...] but when you go up to him his manner of speaking changes [...] but you understand why [...]

Emilio and Jose both mentioned the fact that students who were formerly in the *classe d'accueil* and were now in the regular program would sometimes go on to bully the newly arrived immigrants. In fact, Jose admitted to having intimidated some of the students from the *classe d'accueil* once he was in high school. This confirms the research of Messinger, Nieri, Villar and Luengo (2012), who suggest that immigrant youth are likely to be bullied or to even become bullies themselves.

On a more positive note, it is important to recognize that social interactions with peers, whether positive or negative, are extremely necessary. These interactions allow for relationships and friendships to be made, which can alleviate acculturative stress. Indeed, it is only when Sophia made friends that she began to appreciate her life in Montreal:

Sophia: *Ça n'allait pas bien jusqu'à temps que j'ai connu des amis puis...ils m'ont aide un peu [...] puis, c'est là que j'ai commencé à dire [...] que je dois accepter ma situation [...]*

It wasn't going well until I made some friends and [...] they helped me a little [...] so, that's when I started to say [...] that I need to accept my situation [...]

### *Teachers in and out of the Classe d'Accueil*

The task of the *classe d'accueil* teacher is one that is particularly demanding. According to the Gouvernement du Québec (1998a&b), teachers must promote Quebec's interculturalism by implementing policies that facilitate integration while simultaneously teaching students about Quebec culture (as cited in Breton-Charbonneau, 2011). Of

course, this must be done while concurrently meeting the requirements of the MELS, respecting deadlines, and essentially teaching the *classe d'accueil* students an entirely new language. Thus, it is necessary to admit that their duty is both large in scope and quite challenging.

In general, the *classe d'accueil* teachers made an effort to teach the five newly arrived immigrants in a way that would make them feel comfortable and that was also enjoyable. In some cases, efforts were also made to reunite the students on the basis of their cultural differences. According to Nieto (2002), teachers must adopt a positive attitude towards the cultural identity of their students and try to make them understand that integration into a host culture does not mean that one must abandon his or her own way of life. The following are examples of some more helpful activities:

Sophia: *On faisait des activités pour nous apprendre le français, on mettait même de la musique [...] Je me rappelle toujours d'une vieille chanson [...] [rire] [...] 'Le main sur le sable, les pieds dans l'eau...' [chante]*

They would organize activities to teach us the French language, we would sometimes play music [...] I still remember an old song [...] [laughs] [...] *'Le main sur le sable, les pieds dans l'eau...' [sings]*

Emilio: *Il y a beaucoup d'activités pour réunir tout le monde de la classe d'accueil. Ils faisaient souvent des repas [...] donc, chacun on amenait un repas traditionnel de nos pays [...] c'est sûr qui fallait que tu présentes ton pays à un moment donné, quels sports ils pratiquent [...]*

There were many activities organized to unite everyone in the 'welcome classes'. They would prepare meals [...] so, everyone would bring a traditional meal from their country [...] surely you had to present your country to the class at some point, what sports you play [...]

For one reason or another, all five participants in this study spoke more positively about *classe d'accueil* teachers who were also immigrants themselves as opposed to those who were French Canadian. According to their experiences, French Canadian teachers

demonstrated little sensibility towards their students. Their class content was less relatable, as little efforts were made to incorporate the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds into the teaching and school environment. Here are some of the accounts provided in light of this finding:

Carlos : *Après la classe mon professeur qui était français et portugais (un immigrant) [...] après la classe on parlait en espagnol [...] il me demandait à propos de ma famille [...] ça faisait du bien [...] Mais avec l'autre professeure, non [...] elle était noire, née ici [...] elle était sévère [...] Elle disait: 'Tu parles tout le temps en français!' [...] Je me sentais plus à l'aise avec l'homme [...]*

After class my teacher who was French and Portuguese (an immigrant) [...] after class we would speak in Spanish [...] he would ask me about my family [...] it felt good [...] But the other teacher, no [...] she was 'black', born here [...] she was strict [...] She would say: 'You must always speak in French!' [...] I felt much more comfortable with the male teacher [...]

Jose : *Notre enseignante en accueil quand je suis arrivé était aussi immigrante...c'était une arabe [...] dans ce temps là [...] Mais, disons qu'elle était différente [...] elle savait comment nous rapprocher.*

Our 'welcome class' teacher when I arrived was also an immigrant...she was Arab [...] at that time [...] But, in a way she was different [...] she knew how to approach us.

Pablo : *Ma professeure était immigrante, une égyptienne [...] je dirais qu'elle a bien compris notre situation [...]*

They [the teachers] would organize several activities [...] they would place us together, we would speak about our respective cultures [...] we were integrated slowly this way [...] My teacher was an immigrant, an Egyptian [...] I would say she understood our situation well [...]

Emilio: *Je dirais quand c'était un enseignant immigrant, je trouve c'est plus facile pour moi. On dirait qu'ils avaient plus tendance à nous comprendre...peut-être parce qu'eux-mêmes ils ont vécu ça dans [...] je ne sais pas [...] dans leur enseignement [...] ou dans leur vie, peu importe [...] Mais, je me sentais que [...] je me sentais plus à l'aise à leur dire quoi que ce soit [...] si j'avais besoin d'aide ou quoi que ce soit je pouvais leur...je n'étais gêné d'aller les voir [...] Mais quand c'est un Québécois [...] ben, tu avais comme [...] peur [...] est-ce qu'ils vont dire quelque*

*chose [...] est-ce qu'ils vont vouloir aider [...] Donc, je trouve c'était plus facile pour moi quand c'était un enseignant immigrant.*

I would say when it's an immigrant teacher; I find that it's easier for me. It's as if they are more likely to understand us [...] maybe it's because they themselves have experienced the same thing [...] I don't know [...] in their teaching [...] or in their life, whatever [...] But, I always felt that [...] I felt more comfortable about telling them something [...] if I needed help or whatever I could [...] I wasn't shy to go and see them [...] But when it was a 'Québécois' [...] well, you were like [...] scared [...] are they going to say something [...] will they be willing to help [...] So, I find that it was much easier for me when it was an immigrant teacher.

To sum up, these accounts confirm that teachers need to be aware of the cultural variances within the classroom, particularly because this will allow them to create more significant links with their students. This seems to explain why these Hondurans were able to develop more meaningful relationships with the *classe d'accueil* teachers who were immigrants themselves.

Just as there is a distinction to be made between peers from in and out of the *classe d'accueil*, a similar distinction must be made between teachers from the *classe d'accueil* as opposed to those who teach the regular program. Emilio is quite adamant about this point, as he felt that teachers from the regular program constantly set the *classe d'accueil* students aside:

Emilio : *Au contraire, même les autres enseignants des fois...ils n'aiment pas ça les élèves d'accueil parce qu'ils disent [...] 'Ben là, tu sais [...] je leur parle [...] ils me regardent, puis ils ont l'air d'être dans la lune!'*

On the contrary, even the other teachers sometimes [...] they dislike the 'welcome class' students because they say [...] 'Come on, you know [...] I speak to them [...] they look at me, and they seem like they're in the moon!'

Emilio explains that this is a phenomenon he still observes today within his own workplace. He feels that many of the teachers from the regular program become easily

frustrated with immigrant students because they neglect to understand and consider their individual realities. This is something he shared with much disdain. As a teacher of immigrant students today who was once in the very same situation, Emilio makes sure to extend any advice, help or support he can to newly arrived students. He strives to understand their unique situations and to create meaningful relationships with all of his students.

### *The Classe d'Accueil*

Although the five Hondurans who participated in this research project clearly acknowledged the benefits of having been in the *classe d'accueil*, all the participants seemed to agree that there is something lacking from the *classe d'accueil* model. In other words, there is still room for improvement. While the participants did learn the basis of the French language in the *classe d'accueil*, they argue that there is much more learning and development that should take place in these types of classrooms. Jose begins by critiquing this model because it marginalizes its students, isolating them from the very society these individuals are attempting to integrate into. When asked if his experience in the *classe d'accueil* helped him integrate into Quebec society, Jose had this to say:

Jose : *Non, pas vraiment [...] parce que [...] on était complètement des pays différents, il n'y a pas de Québécois dans la classe [...] Il y avait aucun Québécois, même notre enseignant [...] Tout est à part [...] les élèves d'accueil sont isolés [...] Ils sont toujours séparés [...]*

No, not really [...] because [...] we were all from different countries, there weren't any 'Québécois' in the classroom [...] There weren't any Québécois, even the teacher [...] Everything is set apart [...] the students from the 'welcome classes' are isolated [...] They are always separated [...]

This confirms Sarkar's argument which claims that students in the *classe d'accueil* are isolated and seldom come into contact with French-speaking peers from the regular

program, despite the fact that their interaction with these peers may in fact provide the language exposure they need to successfully acquire the host language (as cited in Breton-Carbonneau, 2011). Emilio, perhaps most adamantly agrees with this, which is surely no thanks to the fact that he is now teaching in an environment where his own memories and past experiences are repeating themselves:

Emilio : *Ben, d'un côté, c'est sûr que ça [la classe d'accueil] m'a aidé parce que...autrement, je ne vois pas comment j'aurai appris la langue [...] mais [...] il y a quand même un gros travail à faire au niveau des classes d'accueil parce que [...] ce n'est pas assez [...] ce n'est pas assez de travail [...] qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire de plus je ne sais pas, mais [...] tu sais, on te met là-dedans, puis [...] 'OK, apprends la langue, apprends la langue [...] vite, vite, vite' [...] puis après ça [...] OK, on se débarrasse de toi [...] Puis là [...] tu t'arranges [...] tout seul, quasiment [...] puis là tu as comme [...] plein de matières, plein d'informations [...] En deux ans, en général, on n'arrive pas à comprendre une langue parfaitement, alors [...] Je disais que oui, ça m'a aidé à [...] à faire le minimum. Mais est-ce que ça m'a préparé pour plus que ça? Je ne pense pas. Donc, après ça, c'est vraiment toi-même qui dois travailler pour aller plus loin.*

Well, in one way, it [the 'welcome class] definitely helped me because [...] otherwise, I don't know how I could have learned the language [...] but [...] there still a lot of work that needs to be done in terms of the 'welcome classes' because [...] it's not enough [...] you know, they throw you in there, and [...] 'OK, learn the language, learn the language [...] hurry, hurry, hurry' [...] and after that.... OK, they get rid of you [...] And after [...] you fend for yourself [...] alone, pretty much [...] and then you have, like [...] a bunch of subjects, a bunch of information [...] In two years, in general, you don't manage to learn a language perfectly, so [...] I would say yes, it helped me [...] to do the minimum. But did it prepare me for more than that? I don't think so. So, after that, it's really you who needs to work hard to and reach your goals.

Thus, according to these experiences, if we consider areas other than language instruction, the *classe d'accueil* is lacking and is not as preparatory as it should be. The following are some accounts of ideas that might help improve the reality of the *classe d'accueil*:

Sophia : *Ça doit [être amélioré], oui [...] mais c'est dur de dire quoi [...] Il me manque l'idée [...] Faire une visite dans une classe régulière, peut-être [...]*

It must [be improved], yes [...] but it's hard to say what [...] I have no ideas [...] Visit the regular classes, maybe [...]

Pablo: *Peut-être avoir un élève qui est déjà dans une classe régulière [...] de l'accompagner dans certains cours [...] dans le sens que [...] lui [l'immigrant], s'il ne se sent pas bien mettons pour demander quoi que ce soit [...] il va être capable d'aller voir l'élève accompagnateur [...] il va poser la question à lui [...] Puis, même quand il est sorti de la classe d'accueil [...] que quelqu'un puisse l'aider en dehors des enseignants [...] qui l'accompagne et qui est responsable dans le fond pour lui [...]*

Maybe have a student who is already in the regular program [...] have the student accompany the immigrant in his classes [...] in the sense that [...] the student [immigrant], if he doesn't feel comfortable asking a question, for example [...] he can always go and see this student from the regular program [...] ask him the question [...] And, even when the immigrant student has left the 'welcome class' [...] someone should help him apart from the teacher [...] someone to accompany him and who is responsible for him, in a way [...]

A final would be to provide immigrant families, that is, parents and their children, additional information about what is expected of them once enrolled:

Jose : *Peut-être connaître un peu plus [...] de la culture ou par rapport à comment ça ce passe [...] avant de venir au pays. En fait, ce qui arrive dans nos cas c'est [...] ils nous amènent ici puis c'est imposé...*

Maybe know a little more [...] about the culture or in relation to how everything works [...] before coming to the country. Actually, what happens in our case it's [...] they bring us and it's forced on us [...]

Naturally, the notion of feeling utterly unprepared for any new experience is one that is bound to have a number of negative repercussions. Some preparatory measures may go a long way in aiding the immigrant populations who are forced to adapt within a limited timeframe.

The following chapter provides an overall discussion of the research findings from this study of five Honduran immigrants. The limitations of this study and possible areas for further research will also be presented.



## CONCLUSION

### *Discussion*

The experiences of five Honduran immigrants have provided considerable insight on acculturation, acculturative stress, and perhaps more significantly, the way that these interlocking theories influence the Quebec *classes d'accueil*. It is important to recall that the *classe d'accueil* model is “a transitory experience for the students” which “provide[s] a transitional and possibly interstitial space for immigrant students making the shift from their previous lives to their new ones” (Breton-Carbonneau, 2011, p. 77).

It is the accounts of Pablo, Jose, Sophia, Emilio and Carlos’ ‘new’ lives in Montreal, Quebec, Canada that are the basis for this thesis project. In what follows, I briefly discuss some of the major findings of this research. Subsequently, the implications of these overall findings will be considered.

Firstly, the participants openly acknowledged the fact that in some cases, the *classe d'accueil* endorsed a language ‘regime’, whereby students were obligated to speak French and only French. This, for some of the participants, was a problematic reality. Whether this linguistic obligation is a consequence of Quebec’s ongoing struggle to protect and maintain its native language is yet to be confirmed. However, it is impossible to deny the role that Quebec’s political climate may have played in this recurring trend.

If we consider the literature on this fact, Delpit (2006) argues that the imposition of one language in the classroom is a disservice to students. This is because it renders the *classe d'accueil* an area of constraint, which may ultimately alienate newly arrived immigrants, contradicting Quebec’s intercultural policy.

Findings also reveal that teachers (specifically those who were Québécois) lacked sensitivity towards the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students. The five participants distinguished between those teachers who showed concern towards other countries and cultures and those who were indifferent towards the diversity in their classroom. In my opinion, this is an important area for action.

Dixon (2002) confirms that teachers who do not actively incorporate their students' cultures into their pedagogy inadvertently seem to care less about their students. When immigrant students notice that their *classe d'accueil* teachers show little interest in their identities, cultures, and values, they too lose their drive as learners. This is because "teacher-attitudes and expectations affect student aspirations, performance, self-perception and behaviour" (Banks, 1968, p. 294). Teachers are in constant contact with their *classe d'accueil* students and therefore cannot ignore the role they play in their lives.

Yet another limitation of the *classe d'accueil* model is its tendency to shelter and segregate newly arrived immigrant students from others in the school, which often leads to discrimination, bullying and intimidation. Nearly all of the five Hondurans who participated in this research project shared accounts of discrimination at some point throughout their acculturation. Karilian-Konyalian (2008) asserts that marginalization is a significant precursor of acculturative stress. Notably, several Hondurans from this study underwent instances of depression, anxiety, or issues of self-esteem which tainted their attempts to integrate into the host society.

This study also reveals that these Honduran individuals were unprepared for their immigration. Providing immigrant populations – both parents and children – with

additional information prior to their arrival in a new country may be considerably helpful. Unfamiliarity with a new environment can increase stress levels, as anything that is unknown is often quite off-putting (Hovey, 2000).

### ***Implications***

The evidence from this study shows that the *classe d'accueil*, as Quebec's major educational integration program, has considerable room for improvement. Although Quebec's interculturalism policy clearly stipulates that public education in Quebec is to be inclusive, especially with respect to newly arrived immigrants, the data from this study shows otherwise. If this study is telling of a widespread truth, *classes d'accueil* all over the province must be re-evaluated. As with any educational program, it is vital to continually examine and re-evaluate its effectiveness in order to ensure that students are optimally served.

It is my belief that research on acculturation and acculturative stress provides an outlet through which the *classe d'accueil* model may be advanced. Theories of acculturation, specifically acculturative stress, not only provide insight into the shortcomings of the *classe d'accueil* but also demonstrate how the model can be made superior. Thus, this thesis essentially proposes that it is possible to improve educational integration programs in Quebec by studying and understanding the types of acculturative stressors that impact immigrant youth throughout their acculturation.

For each of the aforementioned limitations of the *classe d'accueil*, the five participants from this research project experienced instances of acculturative stress that were no doubt correlated with each limitation. As acculturative stress so commonly

occurs throughout the acculturation process, it is important that schools address this issue and find ways to alleviate the stressors that are often accompanied with immigration.

Therefore, the data from this small study may imply that schools – that is, teachers, counsellors, administrators, and even policy makers – should consider the benefits of studying theories of acculturation and acculturative stress. Understanding these theories will allow schools to reinvent the *classe d'accueil* in such a way that it will: 1) prioritize the needs of immigrant students, 2) alleviate academic-related acculturative stress, and 3) correct some of its major limitations.

Of course, it is important to consider that the reinvention of the *classe d'accueil* is an enormous task which must occur on various levels. In her research, Karilian-Konyalian (2008) proposes that it “is only partly the responsibility of teachers to alleviate their stress” and “administrators must persist towards incorporating not only teaching methods that can help the immigrants adapt easily with minimum stress, but also culturally sensitive student counselling services should be available” (2008, p. 113).

Although it is important to propose alternatives to the *classe d'accueil* model in light of these findings, the fact remains that it would be quite difficult to propose any alternatives that would be realistically considered or applied given the philosophy and political climate in Quebec at this time. Despite this truth, the *classe d'accueil* can be improved by: avoiding a rigid language ‘regime,’ celebrating the various linguistic and cultural backgrounds within the classroom, integrating the *classe d'accueil* students in with the students from the regular program, providing the newly arrived immigrants with information in their native tongue concerning the Quebec education system and more specifically, the *classe d'accueil*, and perhaps even openly discussing the students’

stressors and struggles in the classroom. To reiterate, the idea is to study acculturation and acculturative stress in order to anticipate, prevent and minimize the stressors that commonly occur amongst immigrants.

### ***Areas for Further Study***

Only one (Emilio) of the five Hondurans who participated in this research project pursued post-secondary studies. Life beyond the *classe d'accueil* is a topic that I did not address, as it is beyond the scope of this research project. It may be interesting to determine whether a lack of post-secondary education is a trend amongst Honduran immigrants in Montreal and if so, subsequently explore the reasons for which this trend persists.

Furthermore, while research on *classe d'accueil* teachers does exist to some extent, it may be interesting to discuss the difference between Quebecois *classe d'accueil* teachers and immigrant *classe d'accueil* teachers in more depth. A more profound study of these two types of teachers may shed light on which pedagogical practices are most effective when working with immigrant youth.

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## APPENDIX A

### *Cartographic Map of Honduras*



## APPENDIX B

### **Interview Questions** ***Questions d'entrevue***

Interview Date, Time & Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Date de l'entrevue, l'heure et l'endroit*

Code name of interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Nom de code de la personne interrogée*

Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Âge*

Highest Degree Attained: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Niveau de scolarité atteint*

Job Status: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Statut d'emploi*

Age at Immigration: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Âge lors de l'immigration*

### **Background Questions:** ***Questions sur l'origine culturelle:***

- 1) What level of schooling did you first attend when you immigrated to Montreal?

*Quel était votre niveau d'étude lorsque vous avez commencé vos études à Montréal immédiatement après votre immigration?*

- 2) Describe your emotions towards immigrating prior to leaving your country.

*Offrez une description de vos sentiments envers votre immigration avant d'avoir quitté votre pays d'origine.*

- 3) What were your experiences during the process of settling in Montreal?

*Quelles ont été vos expériences d'ajustement lors de votre arrivée au Canada?*

- 4) Please indicate which of the following statements applies best to you:

*Indiquez laquelle des assertions suivantes s'applique le plus à vous :*

- a) I hold on to my Honduran identity and refuse to be considered or to adopt the Canadian identity and culture.

*Je m'assure de conserver mon identité hondurienne et je refuse de me considérer Canadien/Canadienne ou d'adopter l'identité canadienne et sa culture.*

- b) I have let go of my Honduran identity and culture and have adopted the Canadian identity and Culture.

*Je me suis séparé de mon identité et de ma culture hondurienne et j'ai adopté l'identité et la culture canadienne.*

- c) I have simultaneously kept my identity as a Honduran and held on to my culture as well as integrating to adapt to the Canadian culture.

*Je me suis intégré et adapté à la culture canadienne tout en conservant mon identité hondurienne.*

- d) I am not interested in holding on to my Honduran culture and identity, nor adopting the Canadian culture and identity.

*J'ai aucun intérêt de conserver ma culture et mon identité hondurienne ni d'adopter la culture et l'identité canadienne.*

- e) Other - please elaborate.

*Autre – veuillez spécifier*

- 5) What would you say are the most notable differences between Quebec culture and Honduran culture? Did these differences cause any difficulties for you?

*Que diriez-vous sont les différences les plus importantes entre la culture québécoise et la culture hondurienne? Ces différences vous ont-elles causées des difficultés lors de votre immigration?*

**Questions in relation to Acculturative Stress:**

***Questions par rapport au stress acculturatif:***

- 6) Do you remember ever feeling depressed/anxious or unhappy as a result of your moving to Canada? Please elaborate.

*Pouvez-vous vous rappeler d'un moment où vous vous êtes senti déprimé/anxieux(euse) ou malheureux(euse) envers votre immigration au Canada? Veuillez élaborer.*

- 7) Did attending school ever make you feel depressed/anxious or unhappy? Please elaborate.

*Est-ce que votre présence à l'école vous a déjà fait sentir déprimé/anxieux(euse) ou malheureux(euse)? Veuillez élaborer.*

- 8) Did you experience any culture-related difficulties in school/with peers/ or in other situations, upon your immigration to Canada?

*Avez-vous éprouvé des difficultés liées à la culture à l'école/avec vos camarades de classe/dans d'autres situations lors de votre immigration au Canada?*

- 9) Did you ever experience any difficulties with your parents or immediate family as a result of your attempts to integrate? Please specify. If yes, do these difficulties continue today? If not how did they get resolved?

*Avez-vous éprouvé des difficultés avec vos parents ou votre famille immédiate à la suite de vos tentatives d'intégration? Veuillez spécifier. Si oui, ces difficultés se poursuivent-elles encore aujourd'hui? Sinon, comment se sont-elles résolues?*

#### **School-Related Questions:**

##### ***Questions par rapport à l'école :***

- 10) Were you provided with any information about Quebec schooling/expectations prior to immigrating? Please specify.

*Aviez-vous reçu de l'information sur le système scolaire du Québec avant d'avoir immigré au Canada? Veuillez spécifier.*

- 11) What were some major differences that you noted between the functioning of schooling in Quebec as compared to Honduras?

*Quelles ont été les différences majeures que vous avez notées entre le fonctionnement de la scolarité au Québec par rapport au Honduras?*

- 12) When you first started at a new school, did you feel any differences between yourself and your peers? If so, what kind of differences did you feel? How long did you feel this way? How were those differences resolved?

*Lorsque vous avez commencé à une nouvelle école, avez-vous ressenti des différences entre vous et vos pairs? Si oui, quel genre de différences avez-vous ressenties? Combien de temps vous êtes-vous senti de cette façon? Comment ces différences ont-elles été résolues?*

- 13) Do you remember ever having any social difficulties fitting in with your school peers? (French Canadian, Other immigrants?). Any self-esteem issues? If yes, please specify.



*Avez-vous eu des difficultés à vous intégrer avec vos camarades d'école dans un contexte social? (Canadiens-français, autres immigrants?). Avez-vous ressenti un manque d'estime de soi ? Si oui, veuillez spécifier.*

- 14) Do you feel that your teachers/peers had a positive impact on your immigration process?

*Diriez-vous que vos enseignants et vos pairs ont eu un impact positif sur votre expérience d'immigration?*

- 15) How did your teachers or peers help with your cultural struggles, if any?

*Comment vos enseignants et vos pairs vous ont-ils aidés dans vos épreuves liées à la culture?*

- 16) Did you ever develop feelings of resentment towards your peers or other students within the school?

*Avez-vous déjà ressenti des sentiments de ressentiment à l'égard de vos pairs ou d'autres élèves au sein de l'école?*

**Questions Related to the *Classe d'Accueil*:**

***Questions liées à la classe d'accueil:***

- 17) Were you provided with any information about the *classe d'accueil* prior to entering your new school? How long did you remain in the *classe d'accueil*?

*Avez-vous obtenu des informations concernant la classe d'accueil avant d'assister à votre nouvelle école? Combien de temps êtes-vous demeuré dans la classe d'accueil?*

- 18) The following is a definition of the *classe d'accueil* that serves as a basis for my research project:

The *classe d'accueil* is essentially a preparatory class for newly arrived immigrant students who do not speak French and who have lived in Quebec for less than five years (McAndrew, 2004).

*Ce qui suit est une définition de la classe d'accueil qui sert de base pour mon projet de recherche:*

*La classe d'accueil est essentiellement une classe préparatoire pour les élèves primo-arrivants qui ne parlent pas le français et qui ont vécu au Québec depuis moins de cinq ans (McAndrew, 2004).*

Do you feel that you were accurately prepared for your future academic endeavors once you left the *classe d'accueil* and joined the regular program?

*Estimez-vous que vous avez été préparé de façon convenable pour vos projets futurs universitaires une fois que vous avez quitté la classe d'accueil et que vous avez rejoint le programme régulier?*

- 19) Do you feel that the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds were incorporated into the *classe d'accueil* teaching and classroom environment? If yes, how so? If not, do you think they should be?

*Estimez-vous que les origines linguistiques et culturelles des élèves aient été intégrées dans l'enseignement et l'environnement de classe de la classe d'accueil? Si oui, comment? Si non, pensez-vous qu'elles devraient l'être?*

- 20) In general, do you feeling that your experience in the *classe d'accueil* helped you integrate into Quebec society?

*En général, avez-vous l'impression que votre expérience dans la classe d'accueil vous a aidé à vous intégrer dans la société québécoise?*

**Concluding Questions:**  
***Questions de conclusion :***

- 21) Are you satisfied with your immigration to Canada? Please specify. Why or why not?

*Êtes-vous satisfait de votre immigration au Canada? Veuillez préciser. Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas ?*

- 22) Were there any efforts by teachers or the school to make you feel welcome or to alleviate stress if any was present?

*Y a-t-il eu des efforts déployés par vos enseignants ou votre école pour vous faire sentir le/la bienvenu ou pour atténuer le stress associé à votre arrivé?*

- 23) In general, what would have helped you during your adjustment period? To make it easier and smoother to integrate to the new school and new life in Montreal?

*En général, y a-t-il quelque chose qui vous aurait aidé pendant votre période d'adaptation? Quelque chose qui aurait facilité votre intégration à la nouvelle école et une nouvelle vie à Montréal?*

- 24) What advice would you give teachers who are teaching Honduran students in the *classe d'accueil*?

*Quels conseils donneriez-vous aux enseignants qui enseignent les étudiants honduriens dans la classe d'accueil?*

25) What advice would you give to a new immigrant Honduran student during their period of adaptation in Montreal? In school, outside of school, after graduation from High School?

*Quels conseils donneriez-vous à un nouvel étudiant hondurien immigrant au cours de leur période d'adaptation à Montréal? À l'école, en dehors de l'école, après l'obtention du diplôme d'études secondaires?*

- Having read the purpose of my thesis and my research question, would you have any additional information to share that will help us better understand the acculturation process of new Honduran immigrants in the *classe d'accueil*?
- *Après avoir lu le but de ma thèse et ma question de recherche, auriez-vous des informations supplémentaires qui nous aideraient à mieux comprendre le processus d'acculturation des nouveaux immigrants honduriens dans la classe d'accueil?*

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Thank you for your time and for the information and experiences you have shared today. It is greatly appreciated. Please note that you can contact me if you have any other questions or if you would like to add more information.

*Merci pour votre temps et pour l'information et les expériences que vous avez partagé aujourd'hui. Il est grandement appréciée. S'il vous plaît noter que vous pouvez me contacter si vous avez des questions ou si vous souhaitez ajouter plus d'informations.*

You have my coordinates as well as the coordinates of my advisor on your copy of the Informed Consent Form.

*Vous avez mes coordonnées ainsi que les coordonnées de mon conseiller sur votre copie du formulaire de consentement éclairé.*

Would you like to receive a typed transcript of this interview to check on my good understanding of your responses? If yes, how do you want to receive the transcript? (Check the option which is best for you.)

*Souhaitez-vous recevoir une transcription de cette entrevue pour vérifier ma bonne compréhension de vos réponses? Si oui, comment voulez-vous recevoir la transcription? (Cochez l'option qui vous convient le mieux.)*

By e-mail/Par courriel ☐

E-mail/ Courriel:

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In person/En personne ☐

By regular mail ☐

Mailing address/Adresse postale:

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## APPENDIX C

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN «¿Puedes repetir? »: **Acculturative Stress among Honduran Immigrants in the Quebec *Classe d'Accueil***

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a research project being conducted by Jessica Juli Monti of M.A. Educational Studies of Concordia University under the supervision of Dr. Joyce Barakett of the Department of Education of Concordia University.

#### **A. PURPOSE**

A word from the principal investigator, Jessica Juli Monti:

This project is a requirement for the completion of my M.A. degree in Educational Studies program at Concordia University.

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a greater understanding of Honduran youth's cultural experience upon entering a new country. In more depth, I propose to examine the interplay of the acculturation, the integration process and its overall effect on the development of the self and ethnic identity as an immigrant living in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

#### **B. PROCEDURES**

Upon agreeing to participate, I agree to a period of questioning in interview form where the researcher will ask me specific questions concerning the experience of immigrating to Canada and my second language learning process. The interview will be face to face, will be recorded and later transcribed by the researcher and used for the purpose of writing the thesis project. The interview process may last anywhere from one hour to two hours maximum. I will only be obliged to meet with the principal investigator one time.

#### **C. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

*Risks:* I understand that I may experience some level of discomfort throughout the period of questioning as I will have to speak and describe my past experiences as a student and newly arrived immigrant in a Quebec classroom. I understand that I may choose to not answer any questions, or withdraw from the study until the data collection period has ended (March 1).

*Benefits:* I understand that this study will contribute to the understanding of the cultural adaptation of Honduran youth immigrants. The conclusions drawn from this study may serve as an overall contribution towards understanding the educational structures that exist within the context of Quebec.

## D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

### Individual responses will remain:

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation up until the time that the final data has been collected (March 1) without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity).
- I understand that the data from this study may be published but names will remain confidential.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print)

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SIGNATURE

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If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator:

Jessica J. Monti  
M.A. Candidate – M.A. Educational Studies  
[jess\\_monti@hotmail.com](mailto:jess_monti@hotmail.com)  
Tel: 514-839-6288

Name of Advisor:  
Doctor Joyce Barakett  
Concordia University  
Professor: M.A. Educational Studies  
[jbarakett@education.concordia.ca](mailto:jbarakett@education.concordia.ca)  
Tel: 514-848-2424, Ext. 2002  
Office: LB-549-7

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 [ethics@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:ethics@alcor.concordia.ca)

APPENDIX D



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY  
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

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Name of Applicant: Jessica J. Monti

Department: Faculty of Arts and Science \ Education

Agency: N/A

Title of Project: <Puedes repetir?> Acculturative Stress among Honduran Immigrants in the Quebec Classe d'Accueil

Certification Number: 30002267

Valid From: November 5, 2013 to: November 4, 2014

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Dr. James Pfaus.

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Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee