'CAN'T IMAGINE BEING WITHOUT FRIENDS':

HOW CENTRAL AMERICAN MALE YOUTH IN TORONTO SEEK TO BELONG

MORGAN B. POTEET

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

DECEMBER 2011

Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Canada

Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with peer relations and schooling outcomes of Central American male youth in Toronto. The study seeks to explore how Central American male youth--including those who came to Canada as children and those who were born in Canada to immigrant parents--develop friendship and schooling strategies to overcome marginalization, gain a sense of belonging, and achieve a range of other goals they set for themselves. The study also seeks to understand why the participants in this study do not always overcome marginalization, sometimes encounter difficulties in gaining a sense of belonging in peer and school contexts, and achieve less than they feel they are capable of. The research, based on in-depth interviews with a small sample of 18 participants, is qualitative and exploratory, seeking to advance hypotheses and build theory in an area where little is known. The literature that is available on the topic suggests that marginalized immigrant and ethnic minority youth often get locked into conflictive patterns of association with other minority and non-minority youth and underachieve in school. Previous research also suggests that strong ethnic and counter-culture identities and low school achievement are causally linked to each other. While these widely observed patterns are also found in the present study, they are not the only patterns, nor are they the dominant patterns among youths who complete or plan to complete high school. A key finding is that strategies and patterns of belonging among peers and in school change significantly over the course of high school. In addition, strong friendship

with others of similar ethnicity and background patterns do not necessarily preclude a

broader range of friendships, nor a desire to do well in school. These findings open new

hypotheses and perspectives on variation across individuals and over time among

minority youth as they navigate peer relations and schooling. The key question for future

studies is whether the patterns observed are unique to Central American male youth in

Toronto, or whether they also apply to other ethnic minority youth, females as well as

males, and youth in other cities and countries where inter-ethnic relations and school

environments may be quite different.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to the participants in the study and to the community members who introduced me to them. Their contributions made the present study possible and contributed beyond the research itself to my personal appreciation of them as remarkable and generous individuals. A special thank you goes to Luis Carrillos and Duberlis Ramos at the Hispanic Development Council in Toronto for their interest in this study and for their exceptional generosity in taking time from their busy schedules to contribute in various ways to the research. I am indebted to Luis in particular for introducing me to individuals who took part in the research, and to other members of the community who provided access to further participants. Other members of the Latin American community in Toronto that helped to support my research include Eusebio Garcia, Eduardo Garay, Victoria Mata, and Rodrigo Goller. I warmly thank them all. Among my academic advisors, my Supervisor, Alan B. Simmons deserves a special note of appreciation for his creative and constructive contributions to the development of my research questions, data collection procedures, and steps in analysis and writing up the findings. Many thanks as well go to Malcolm Blincow and Joseph Mensah who, as valued members of my supervisory committee, contributed insightful suggestions and critical observations on my research throughout the several years in which it was undertaken. Among the many other faculty at York to whom I owe a debt of gratitude I would like to mention in particular Katherine Bischoping, who served on my supervisory committee in an early

Table of Contents

x

Chapter 1: Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to add to current understanding of incorporation and achievement among young immigrants and the children of recently arrived immigrants. Achievement is understood to be a broad concept including aspirations in various spheres of life. Young immigrants and the second-generation children of recently arrived immigrants like other youths have many goals. Some are immediate, tangible and personal, such as establishing friendships that will provide meaningful support and strategic advantages on a daily basis. Others are more long-term, abstract and impersonal, such as graduating from high school, proceeding through post-secondary education and/or obtaining employment. Achievement is further understood as relational in that aspirations are mediated through interaction with others, as youths explore what they believe to be possible in relation to what they desire to achieve. Incorporation, like achievement, is understood in this study as a relational process in which the societal expectations for immigrant and second-generation youths in schooling and elsewhere are negotiated in relation to the expectations that youths have for themselves. Isajiw (1997: 81) defines social incorporation as "... a process through which a social unit is included in a larger social unit as an integral part of it," as an open-ended process that goes beyond the assumption of linearity in assimilation theory, and implies instead "interdependence" and "reciprocity" between minority and majority groups. While all youths struggle to

achieve and balance a range of diverse goals, immigrant and second-generation youths from ethnic minority communities face a greater struggle due to additional challenges of identity formation and gaining a sense of belonging within a dominant culture, both of which can be viewed as aspects of the incorporation process. The logic of assimilation leads to the assumption that marginalized minority youth get locked into conflictive patterns of peer relations, and that this is linked to barriers in school resulting in poor schooling outcomes. While linear assimilation has been largely discredited (Portes et al 2008), structural accounts of immigrant incorporation that do not take adequate account of variations and social change reinforce an understanding of incorporation in dichotomous terms, as either a success or failure, rather than a complex process. This thesis argues, by contrast, that patterns of peer relations and schooling for marginalized minority youth are characterized by a high degree of variation and change over time, and that subjectivity and peer relations influence such changes and resulting outcomes for belonging and achievement. Isajiw's (1997: 82) definition of the dimensions of social incorporation into "structure, culture and identity" provides a starting point for understanding a longer-term and more open-ended process in which the meaning of incorporation is not fixed. The greater difficulty experienced by male immigrant and second generation ethnic minority youths in gaining a sense of belonging among peers arises in part from the fact that they are not only maturing and developing skills over time, but they are also dislocated from an earlier culture, or in the case of second-generation youth their parents' dislocation carries over to them to some degree. In

addition, to varying degrees they are seeking to adapt to a new society. In some cases, however, such as for the immigrant and second-generation Central American male youths examined in this dissertation, adaptation is further complicated by processes of marginalization that restrict access to opportunities in school and elsewhere. This dissertation seeks to add to understanding of both marginalization and their efforts to resist marginalization.

Hispanic Latin American youth living in Toronto are one of the many relatively large populations of immigrant and second-generation youth in this city. Their experiences are diverse. They or their parents come from many countries. Immigrant experiences of Central Americans from El Salvador and Guatemala are distinct in that they came to Canada primarily as refugees followed by some additional family members in a relatively short period of time. Refugee and refugee-led flows from Central American countries, at the time of their migration, were experiencing a mix of civil wars, dictatorship, human rights abuses, and related social-economic disintegration. Consequently, they came with a number of complex personal, social and economic issues, and with relatively low levels of education, but with high hopes for their children's education and future in Canada. Immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala are also distinct from each other in ways that influence educational background, political views, family support and aspirations among their dislocated populations in Canada. These background issues become keys to understanding particular struggles experienced by different Latin American populations in relation to the mix of challenges and opportunities found in Canada. This dissertation

seeks to add to the existing literature in two ways: firstly, by documenting the specific case under examination; and secondly by developing new insights and hypotheses on the importance of peer relations for sense of belonging, identity, schooling and achievement within the Canadian reception context.

A few additional notes on terminology are important. The dissertation takes note of important differences in background and experience among the participants, such as the fact that some came to Canada as young or very young children while others were born in Canada to immigrant or refugee parents. This raises a number of terminological issues. Firstly, those born in Canada are not immigrants, and to refer to them as immigrants misrepresents them. Secondly, while those who arrive in Canada as very young children are technically immigrants, their experiences resemble more closely those born in Canada, rather than immigrants. The literature often distinguishes between first and second-generation immigrants (Portes et al 2001, Rajiva 2006, Reitz et al 2004), and in some cases 1.5 generation to refer to those who are in-between first and second generation in terms of age at arrival and experience (Plaza 2006). In this dissertation, generational difference is recorded for the participants and referred to periodically as a reminder, but for better flow the participants are frequently referred to as a group as "Central American male youth." In other cases they are referred to as Salvadorian or Guatemalan male youth. It should be understood that this choice of terminology is to reflect the importance of their shared backgrounds (and sometimes experiences) as Salvadorians, Guatemalans, and collectively as Central Americans, including shared

4

experiences in Canada, and not to deny the variations in family migration histories, positioning, and identities among the participants and others in Toronto who can trace their ancestry to the Central American region.

This chapter provides an overview of the main issues addressed in the thesis as a whole. It begins in a first section by identifying the main questions addressed and how these reflect both gaps and opportunities in the current research literature. It then proceeds in a second section to outline the approach taken, including the main research challenges encountered and how I sought to resolve them. The third section provides a preliminary view of the main findings and their limitations. The chapter concludes with a short summary of how the subsequent chapters are organized and what readers can expect to find in each one.

Main Issues

The dissertation contributes to two main gaps in the existing literature on immigrant youth incorporation and also seeks to make a contribution to methodology for research among marginalized youth populations. One main gap addressed is the lack of in-depth research into incorporation for the case of Central American origin male youths in Canada. The dissertation addresses this by exploring key aspects of incorporation for Central American youths such as belonging, identity formation, schooling and achievement. The research makes related contributions to wider literature focused on incorporation and achievement of immigrant and second-generation youths from

5

different ethnic backgrounds in Canada, and on corresponding processes particularly

among Hispanic Latin American youths in other reception contexts such as the United

States. The second gap addressed concerns theory on the relationship between achieving

a sense of belonging and achieving academically in school. Research on schooling has

tended to prioritize academic achievement, without adequately considering how youth

define achievement and what they aspire to. Despite a wide critique of the deficit

discourse approach to youth achievement across different disciplines, existing studies

continue to be haunted by the belief that when youths do not engage academically,

someone or something has failed, if not individual students, then families, teachers,

schools, or society as a whole. Furthermore, examinations of wider systemic patterns of

youth achievement and underachievement continue to assume that despite problems in

schooling, academic achievement is unquestionably positive. Even when other

achievement goals that youths have are explored, they tend to take a back seat to

academic achievement, rather than being analyzed on equal terms. This study sought to

address this issue by taking youth subjectivity as the point of entry into closer

examination of incorporation and achievement. The research identified new theoretical

questions based on youth subjectivities and explored these inter-subjectively. Broadly

speaking, the study sought to explore Central American male youths' experiences in

schooling and their views of achievement in order to identify questions that could be

further explored inter-subjectively with them. The rationale for this wide focus is that

through such a comprehensive exploration, undiscovered aspects of the incorporation

process of particular relevance to the participants in the study are more likely to emerge. The relevance of peer relations for sense of belonging and achievement emerged as a significant theme early in the research. As this corresponded to a significant theoretical gap in the literature on incorporation, particularly for relatively marginalized youth populations such as Central American males in migrant reception contexts, it forms a central basis of the substantive analysis and contribution to theory. Finally, the dissertation makes a contribution to research methodology, by adapting grounded theory methods within an exploratory research framework. This allowed for greater participation consistent with the emphasis on lived experience and youth subjectivities.

The dissertation raises a number of questions about the incorporation process for Central American youths in Canada with wider theoretical implications for the reception contexts of other immigrant groups. The research began from a general interest in the experiences of Central American male youths in Toronto schools, among friends and in relation to family. The review of literature suggests that the three dimensions of schools, friends and family are all significant for incorporation of immigrant and second-generation youths in Canada and other reception contexts. I conclude this based on the fact that there is ample evidence of the separate relevance of all three factors, particularly in contexts such as the United States where more research is available. I was further convinced of the relevance of all three factors, given that there was little agreement on the relative importance of these three potential influences on incorporation. I was least convinced, however, by the analysis of the relevance of peer groups particularly among

ethnic minority youths. There exists a critique of the tendency to view peer groups among ethnic minority male youths as problematic for schooling in particular, a tendency I agree is unwarranted, but insufficient analysis of the precise relevance of peers for schooling and wider achievement within reception contexts. This led me to enter the field with a particular interest in peer relations for incorporation. After completing some initial data collection and analysis, I settled on three main research questions and a number of additional questions of interest that were further refined in subsequent stages of the study. The three main questions I began with were:

1. How do immigrant and second-generation youths define achievement?
2. What is the relationship between identity formation and achievement for them?
3. To what do immigrant and second-generation youth aspire?

Three additional questions that emerged from review of literature and initial data collection were:

1. Why do marginalized immigrant and second-generation youths often maintain favorable values towards education, while at the same time opposing schooling?
2. How does the hidden curriculum in schools pose disproportionate risk for ethnic minority youths particularly among males?[1]
3. How do youth experiences in schooling and perceptions of peers and teachers in school inform various strategies of achievement?

My initial thinking was that understanding how immigrant and second generation youths perceive contexts of incorporation such as schooling, and how they define achievement within such contexts, would help to answer these questions, thereby providing a better

---

[1] Question 1 is informed by Valenzuela (1999), and question 2 by Raby (2005). These works are explored in more depth in Chapter 3.

overall understanding of their incorporation process. The objectives of the study

remained the same, that is to better understand the wider intergenerational context of

incorporation for the case of Central Americans in Canada and contribute to wider theory

in this area, and to bring youth subjectivities into the dialogue on incorporation by

considering their experiences, viewpoints, and strategies. However, the main question

shifted significantly in the initial stages of data collection and analysis. The shift

occurred in the direction of how schooling achievement and belonging interact with peer

relations and engagement in school to create complex identity, social relations and

schooling outcomes. In short, I became less focused on perceptions of achievement, and

more focused on the dualities and at times conflicting objectives that participants were

faced with in belonging with peers and at school.

Approach

The research was guided by the goal of exploring the context and process of Central

American youth immigration to Canada and filling in gaps in theory of immigrant youth

incorporation. The research approach was designed to first document the specificity of

incorporation for Central American male youths in Toronto, and then to develop

questions and hypotheses about significant aspects of their incorporation process in

Canada. This was meant to achieve the wider objective of the dissertation to better

understand incorporation for the specific case under study, thereby contributing

hypotheses to a number of wider issues. The approach was shaped by insights from

previous studies, including: literature on the migration process of Central Americans, including the events that led up to migration and Canada's evolving relationship with Central American countries during postwar reconstruction; current literature on incorporation among immigrant youths in Canada and elsewhere; previous research I carried out in Toronto among Hispanic Latin American youths, and through initial consultation with the Central American community in Toronto.

Central Americans migrated to Canada under conditions of duress. The migration process, including the stories told to children about the conflicts in Central America and refugee flight to Canada, form an important part of collective memory. The situation that Central Americans face in Canada forms part of an ongoing struggle, because they lack resources and face discrimination in school, work and in mainstream society overall. Research I carried out in 2001 among marginalized Hispanic Latin American youths in Toronto highlighted a number of issues requiring more focused attention. Two of these issues, achievement and schooling, became the focus in this dissertation. My previous research also suggested that the specificity of Central American experiences tended to be lost within the wider Hispanic Latin American community. The dissertation's focus was further guided by a gap in the literature regarding immigrant youth accounts of a range of issues, including schooling and transitions to work. This lack of representation of immigrant youth subjectivities in literature of schooling and school to work transitions in Canada (Wilkinson 2008) extended to second-generation youths as well. I thought this lack of representation of youth accounts was particularly significant for marginalized

ethnic minority youths such as immigrant and second generation Central Americans. Community consultation confirmed the importance of specificity for Central American immigration and incorporation in Canada, and within this the particular troubles faced by male youths. Consultations also reinforced the importance of education for Central Americans in Canada. In fact, education was invariably viewed as the primary reason for migration and the means to a better life that would and could only be realized by the next generation.

The lack of in-depth research on Central American youth immigration in Canada and my interest in youth subjectivities for incorporation led to a qualitative exploratory focus. The collective histories of Central American immigrants and their ongoing struggles to establish communities in the Canadian context inform the complex aspirations of Central American youths. A qualitative exploratory framework held promise in terms of accessing the experiences, views and strategies of response of this marginalized group (Central American male youths) due to built-in principles of flexibility and openness. I thought it crucial to explore the lived experience of Central American youths, including those who immigrated as young children and those born in Canada to Central American immigrant parents, in order to approach the specificity of incorporation for them, in contrast to their parents and to immigrants from other countries. I also felt that it would be an advantage to focus on male youths' experiences of incorporation so as to add greater specificity to the findings. Gender specificity was also an advantage in that it provided a shared basis of collective identity between researcher and participants. A

qualitative in-depth study provided important advantages for filling in the range of gaps outlined above. Such an approach further supported inquiry into specific aspects of incorporation of particular relevance for youths such as their relations with peers, without losing sight of wider contexts of influence such as schooling, and the relevance of both for achievement in Canada.

Issues of access and questionnaire design presented both challenges and opportunities with respect to research with this population. The collective histories of struggle among Central Americans present challenges in carrying out research with this population, particularly for researchers such as me who are not Central American. The main challenges were gaining trust in the community, followed by gaining trust among specific participants. Gaining trust in the community was important for the initial community consultations required to ground the research with respect to substantive focus and design. It was also important for establishing a network of key informants that were required to access participants. Given the difficulty of gaining access based on age, ethnic and status differences between researcher and participants, and corresponding challenges for inter-subjective analysis, a number of methodological modifications and some innovations were employed. The research maintained an exploratory emphasis throughout by allowing participants to lead discussion, and by reference to a flexible and yet comprehensive interview schedule, while also identifying, following up, clarifying and confirming emerging themes and hypotheses within each interview and in subsequent interviews. This departure from a more structured set of questions was based

on an assessment of early interviews. Richest data were obtained in these early interviews from a conversation style of interviewing, and by following up on themes raised by youths. The use of a comprehensive interview schedule was important to ensure coverage of main topics of interest. Consultation with informed outsiders in early stages of data collection and analysis helped to identify key questions and to refine the comprehensive list of questions. The flexible interviewing approach represented a tradeoff between a more structured data collection process with more certainty regarding a limited set of themes, and a deeper exploration of lived experience and wider range of themes. The decision to adopt a more exploratory approach was guided by the intent to maintain substantive focus on youth subjectivities. This modification of grounded theory was further informed by Charmaz's (2003) constructivist adaptation of grounded theory, specifically the importance of retaining narrative elements of lived experience. My approach steered a path in between these two approaches to grounded theory by eliciting youth narratives of a range of broad themes, and then by identifying and following up on themes with them during the interview. As data collection progressed, common themes could be more easily identified allowing for a smoother inter-subjective process. In striving for a dual insider-outsider position, I eventually realized that not being a full member in the community allowed a particular kind of access to some themes, such as the relevance of diverse peer relations, just as it limited access to other themes, such as a shared understanding of culture.

13

The approach to analysis involved adapting grounded theory and combining it with other qualitative techniques in order to address ongoing issues in qualitative inquiry. Grounded theory techniques of analysis such as open, axial and selective coding were employed (Strauss et al 1998), combined with adaptations to analysis consistent with the overall design outlined above. Modifications to analysis were intended to achieve a closer synthesis of data collection and analysis. I explored themes and distinctions with participants by employing a technique of "analytical bracketing" (Gubrium et al 2003), in order to maintain focus on youth subjectivities. Analytical bracketing involves switching focus back and forth between "how" and "what" questions. Analytical bracketing is consistent with constant comparison of categories and properties in grounded research, since such comparisons become useful in identifying how individual subjects constitute themselves within wider contexts of influence. I balanced the closer exploration of themes within the research setting by also grounding insights with informed outsiders. The adaptation of grounded theory was intended to retain important narrative elements in the early stages of analysis, and then to subject the emerging theoretical framework to a rigorous thematic analysis to confirm findings. A number of additional steps were necessary to distinguish the main themes exhausted through interviewing from additional themes of interest requiring further study. More systematic quantifying of variables and categories followed the preliminary analysis of a wide range of themes to confirm and refine the emerging hypotheses. Finally, revisiting initial general themes in comparison to more specific themes that emerged in the course of research further clarified an

emerging theoretical framework. Final comparison of specific findings with the literature allowed for clarification, confirmation and extension of existing theories, versus potential contradictions between findings and the literature, and entirely new findings and insights.

Preview of Findings

The findings are focused on the centrality of youth culture and age for achievement among Central American male youths in Toronto. Participants were concerned primarily with status, identity and sense of belonging among peers in school. Their accounts can be usefully captured in terms of processes involved in expanding youth networks, and building and drawing on social capital among peers inside and outside of school. The negotiation of peer relations among participants was part of a wider process of negotiation among family, peers, school and self. The focus of the dissertation is negotiation between youth culture and school culture within the wider incorporation context.

The Central American male youths in the study focus their goals and day-to-day achievement in part on establishing supportive peer relations. This is particularly important for youths struggling with identity formation and marginalization within the wider incorporation context. Participants emphasize widespread and yet selective peer engagement in school. The goal for most participants is to have many friends, the better to avoid isolation and resulting consequences, such as becoming a victim of bullying and the potential for complete marginalization from school culture. Building status among

15

peers is important, particularly for ethnic minority male youths because they are at greater risk of being stigmatized as "underachievers," stereotyped as potentially violent and criminal, and marginalized from mainstream youth culture. For this reason, participants avoid exclusive ethnic-based friendship groups, if possible, because these tend to be associated with stigmatization and negative stereotypes. The size of school and specific school culture conditions the range of options available to Central American male youths for peer engagement. In addition to avoiding exclusive friendship groups, participants are heavily invested in constructing identity in relation to peers in order to gain a sense of belonging in school and in the wider society. Participants further balance identity formation in relation to a range of concrete short and long-term achievements. Common strategies involve context-specific peer engagement, compartmentalization among different friendship groups and the expansion of multicultural friendship groups.

Efforts to achieve longer-term goals related to success in schooling are also addressed on a daily basis through interactions with teachers and parents. I focused mainly on perceptions of teachers and student-teacher interactions among participants to be consistent with the emphasis in the dissertation on negotiating youth culture in relation to school culture. Participants emphasize strategic academic engagement with the ultimate goal of school completion. The most common strategy of academic engagement related by participants is to strive for a middle position, avoiding labels of "underachiever" and "overachiever." A middle position in academic engagement is most importantly in relation to behavior and demonstrated attitudes toward schoolwork, teachers and school

in general. Low to moderate academic achievement was a common outcome pattern particularly in the middle to late years of high school. A related outcome pattern mentioned by participants was declining academic performance over the course of high school, due in part to the increasing demands of peer engagement and the intense period of identity formation that may be complicated by additional challenges of incorporation.

According to participants, actual schooling outcomes depend on how well they are able to balance peer and academic engagement. They are aware that the options for combined peer and academic engagement are heavily conditioned by schooling contexts. Central American male youths, like other youths from immigrant families, are in a privileged position to comment on the relevance of the school context. One reason for this is because the value system at home is often quite different from the one they encounter at school, giving them a comparative frame of reference to draw on. An even more convincing reason to trust the accounts of schools provided by participants in this study is that many have changed schools and neighborhoods, providing them with a direct comparative frame of reference rooted in experience. The problem facing Central American male youths - and undoubtedly other racialized, "at risk" and already marginalized ethnic minority male youths - is that peer engagement is both more important for their schooling and more risky for them. The twin goals of achieving a sense of belonging and achieving academically clash for these youths in the institutional context of school. The relationship between peer engagement and academic engagement for them is paradoxical. They need friends for protection and in order to avoid complete

isolation, but expectations among peers to oppose schooling carries more serious consequences for them. In addition to this, they cannot engage fully academically because this would jeopardize their relations with peers. The immediate goal in school for many participants is simply to be a "normal" youth. This yearning to belong is balanced by them in relation to an equally, or perhaps even more important, long-term goal to complete school. Participants devise a number of common and yet innovative strategies to address this problem. One notable strategy for peer engagement involves seeking out and avoiding trouble in careful measure to build status and expand networks among peers, while maintaining a middle position academically in school. One notable academic strategy is to balance low to moderate engagement with a high level of engagement in isolated courses taught by exceptional teachers. This selective academic engagement is further linked to the long-term goal of school completion and aspirations for higher education and transition to work

Organization of Chapters

The dissertation contains a background chapter, a review of literature, a chapter on research design, three substantive analysis chapters and a concluding chapter. The background chapter (Chapter 2) provides an overview of Central American migration to Canada and implications for incorporation. Topics covered in the background chapter include the events that led to migration, the wider international response to the refugee crisis in the Central American region with focus on Canada, the aftermath of civil

conflicts, and ongoing links between Canada and specific Central American countries. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 3) reviews a wider body of literature on immigrant incorporation in Canada and other reception contexts, with emphasis on youth, education and achievement. The following chapter on research approach (Chapter 4) raises a number of issues for qualitative inquiry, and details the specific methods chosen for the analysis. The first substantive chapter (Chapter 5) analyzes the interplay between peer and academic engagement for the participants in the study, including unique strategies and related patterns of achievement in the Canadian context. The second substantive chapter (Chapter 6) analyzes the significance of peer relations, identity and achievement for participants. The final substantive chapter (Chapter 7) analyzes schooling and achievement, with emphasis on perceptions of teachers, student-teacher relations and school context in relation to academic achievement, school completion, and other aspirations. The concluding chapter provides an overview of the findings and their relevance to existing literature and theory, outlines the main contributions and limitations of the dissertation, and suggests topics for further study.

Chapter 2: Central American Conflicts, Refugee Flight, and Settlement

While the United States and Canada were both important reception countries for Central Americans fleeing political violence, acceptance and incorporation of refugees in the two countries differed in important ways. The United States polarized over the issue of the Central American refugee crisis, with official government policies and conservative segments of society taking a restrictive approach to Salvadorian and Guatemalan refugee claimants, while accepting many more Nicaraguan refugee claimants. The resulting pattern of settlement in the United States for Salvadorians and Guatemalans fleeing political violence was one of largely undocumented status, extensive social networks and ethnic and home village solidarity. By contrast, during the height of conflicts in Central America, Canada expanded policies and programs to accommodate Salvadorian and Guatemalan refugees. Even in the late 1980s when Canada began to roll back the provisions extended to Central American refugees, acceptance rates for Central Americans remained high. The result was a primarily documented flow of migrants with official refugee status and access to settlement aid. However, community formation among Central Americans and therefore incorporation may be more difficult in Canada for a number of reasons. The lack of chain migration and particularly for first generation Guatemalans, political differences, may have inhibited ethnic solidarity. Discrimination and other barriers for Central American

newcomers in Canada further complicated incorporation. In the contemporary global context Canadian immigration and refugee policies have become more selective. This has meant that gaining entry to Canada has become more difficult for Central Americans in the wake of the peace process. Countries in Central America continue to face social, economic and political problems, discouraging return migration. The combination of these developments, both historical and contemporary, has implications for incorporation among the children of first generation Central American immigrants and refugees in Canada, the topic of this dissertation.

The troubling history of the Central American region from Spanish conquest to the present day is in large part a result of broad forces of colonization, nation building, and more recently, advanced globalization. This chapter examines how these forces have influenced contemporary Latin American international migration, refugee flight and patterns of settlement. The review is divided into five sections. The first section examines similarities and differences between Central American countries leading up to the escalation of regional civil conflicts and massive refugee displacements in the late twentieth century. The second section examines refugee-led migration and migrant incorporation within Central America during the height of conflicts in the region from the 1970s to the 1990s. The third section expands the analysis of migration of Guatemalans and Salvadorians to Mexico, Canada and the United States. The final two sections examine the United States and Canada as reception countries for Central American refugees and migrants. Unless otherwise noted, the analysis presented below is

based on four primary sources: Booth and Walker (1993) for the political economic

analysis; North (1997; 1990) on conflicts and related patterns of migration; Garcia (2006)

on contemporary refugee flows from the region; and Simmons (2010; 2004; 1999) on

immigration in Canada.

History of the Central American Region

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, indigenous communities in Central America were

chiefdoms engaged in labor-intensive agriculture. Spanish conquest and colonization in

the sixteenth century led to rapid depopulation of indigenous peoples as a result of

slavery and exposure to disease, and a dramatic shift of economic and political relations

to a pattern of externally oriented and elite-controlled dependency. Booth et al (1993:18)

refer to this as a process of "dependent underdevelopment." Social relations were altered,

as the Spaniards placed themselves at the top of the existing hierarchy, transforming it

into a racially stratified social system with the Spanish at the top, indigenous people at

the bottom, and eventually Meztizo (mixed Spanish and Indigenous) in an intermediate

position. During colonization, production shifted to the extraction of resources such as

gold, silver, timber and cattle products for export, with surviving indigenous peoples

supplying the labor under deplorable conditions. As in other parts of the world, European

colonization also involved an attempt to erase indigenous cultures and values by

imposing new beliefs, practices and language, with varying degrees of success.

In the early nineteenth century, Central America experienced a relatively easy

transition to independence from Spain. The region followed Mexico's example in

seeking independence. Initially part of Mexico, one year later the region then formed the

Central America Republic in 1823 (Booth et al 1993:20). Only fifteen years later the

federation splintered because of inequalities in power and rivalries between the

"provinces" forming this Republic. An ideological split between the emerging Liberal

and Conservative parties exacerbated rivalries (Booth et al 1993). Gross social

inequalities and imbalances in power that had developed during the colonial period

persisted after independence. Starting in the mid-nineteenth century liberal modernizers

further concentrated landownership, displaced peasants and polarized society as they

extended the system of debt peonage (North 1990: 58). In what has been dubbed the

"Second Conquest" the external orientation of Central American countries became

further entrenched in the international trading system (North 1990:57). Leadership

eventually passed from Conservatives who ruled through authoritarian, centralized

government to Liberals who ruled through growth of the export economy and military

repression. Bottinelli et al (1990:6) characterize the role of the newly emerging armed

forces as the balance between "the old order of large land owners and the new sector of

incipient home-grown industry aligned with foreign capital and representing a

modernizing trend in agricultural development."

The dominant external power in Central America passed from the United Kingdom to

the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century (Booth et al 1993: 23). With

some important variations between countries, the region contributed to industrialization abroad by supplying low-cost raw materials and cheap agricultural exports. The new elite in Central America profited from control of productive lands and a highly exploitable labor force of peasant/indigenous peoples. The elites spent much of their wealth on imported manufactured goods Local industry was weak and developed slowly. An emerging military class established by the elite to facilitate the process of expropriation crushed frequent peasant/indigenous resistance movements (North 1990: 58-59). The United States and the international system to some extent had a vested interest and were therefore implicated in the repressive institutions that had been established in Central America.

It was not until the great depression in the 1930's that the instability in Central America created by the replacement of staple-production with export commodities came to a head. Unfortunately, adopted strategies of export diversification, import substitution industrialization and promotion of intra-regional trade that followed were not accompanied by reduction in social inequality in most of Central America (Castillo 1996: 139, North 1990: 62). A pattern of "distorted development" emerged in most of Central America as extremely high economic growth rates were achieved amid further dispossession of the peasantry, unemployment and underemployment, and rising levels of poverty and severe malnutrition (North 1990: 29-30). In sum, the economic policies of industrialization adopted after the Great Depression to address the instability of reliance on one or two export commodities eventually backfired by increasing the international

24

dependency of Central American countries. The process led to an escalating debt crisis

during the worldwide economic recession of the early 1980s. The social conflicts in

Central America from the mid to late-twentieth century emerged then out of a

combination of domestic and international factors, as increasingly organized opposition

movements were matched by increasingly systematic and violent tactics of repression,

frequently supported and financed from outside the region, most notably by private

economic interests based in the United States and by the US government.

Important differences between contemporary Central American countries can be

traced back to notable exceptions in the formative period of conquest and colonization

(Booth et al 1993: 17). In Costa Rica, very few indigenous peoples survived Spanish

colonization. Paradoxically, the subsequent under-population combined with

geographical isolation and economic insignificance allowed for the eventual

development of relatively egalitarian social relations and lack of violent conflict

characteristic of the rest of Central America (Booth et al 1993:19). Similarly,

geographical isolation and less exploitable agricultural conditions initially prevented

Honduras from developing an export economy. When banana production for export was

introduced in previously largely uninhabited regions of the country it did not require

widespread displacement of indigenous peoples (Booth et al 1993:47). In another

paradoxical twist, Honduras, the poorest Central American country, was spared the

greater scale of violent conflict and displacement that characterized Guatemala,

Nicaragua and El Salvador. Yet, this was a relative difference, with Honduras remaining

through the period of civil wars from the 1970s to the 1990s as a nation characterized by

enormous inequality, the political marginalization of workers and peasants, and ongoing

violence associated with repression.

As in Nicaragua and El Salvador, from the mid-nineteenth century on, the Liberal

leadership in Guatemala promoted "modernization" through foreign investment and

further concentration of landownership for cultivation of coffee, and later bananas, for

export (Booth et al 1993:41). In Guatemala, large numbers of indigenous peoples and

communities survived the transition to Spanish rule. The indigenous peoples provided

labor, as many were forced off their traditional land and then coerced into the debt-

peonage system through the use of "vagrancy" laws (Booth et al 1993). Foreign

investment allowed for the expansion of infrastructure such as the rail link to the Atlantic

coast, but in the process transferred ownership of many key public utilities and major

industries into foreign hands such as the United Fruit Company (Booth et al 1993). This

allowed for rapid economic development in Guatemala, but it left the country highly

vulnerable to boom and bust cycles and dependent on outside interests.

Guatemala developed the most rapidly during the colonial period, and then again

during independence ruled by a series of military dictatorships. Guatemala also sustained

by far the longest period of civil war in Central America in the twentieth century.

Immediately preceding the thirty-six year civil war, however, there was a decade of

widespread reform and middle-class aspirations for democratization in Guatemala (Booth

et al 1993:42). Unfortunately, as agrarian reform in particular threatened United States

economic interests and labor mobilization was perceived as both an economic and an ideological threat, the United States administration responded with destabilization tactics by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) resulting in an abrupt reversal of this historical opening in Guatemalan history (North 1990: 63-4). Tragically, successful economic development of Guatemala strengthened inequality and polarized the country politically between reformists and conservative factions (Booth et al 1993:44). The main victims of the escalating repression and political violence that resulted were innocent civilians, the majority indigenous campesinos (subsistence cultivators).

The escalation of violence during the Guatemalan civil war (1960-1996) has been characterized by North (1990:65-6) not as a gradual increase in conflict but as a series of "cycles of rebellion and state terror" following the political opening ending in 1954. There is also evidence of sharp differences in treatment by gender (Nolin Hanlon et al 2000). For instance, men were four times as likely to be executed, tortured, forcibly "disappeared," or detained, while 99 percent of the victims of sexual violation were women (275). However, during the peak of repression and political violence men, women and children all became victims of massacres (Nolin Hanlon et al 2000:278). In addition to gender dimensions, the violence in Guatemala can also be broken down by ethnicity and by state and non-state actors. Data from the United Nations-sponsored Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH) released in 1999 indicated that victims of War in Guatemala were 83 percent Maya and 17 percent Ladino (mixed Spanish Indigenous heritage), and that state forces were responsible for 93 percent of human

rights violations and acts of violence, versus only 3 percent committed by the Guerrillas

(Nolin Hanlon et al 2000: 273). Militarization included the forcible enrolment of

approximately 900,000 men and boys, many of indigenous origin, into civil defense

patrols (deRivero 2001:8, Garcia 2006:27). An indication of the extent of corruption and

political violence in Guatemala is given by estimates of those murdered and

"disappeared." There is a consensus that over 200,000 Guatemalans died by either being

executed or forcibly "disappeared" between about 1960 and 1996 (deRivero 2001, Nolin

2004). The rapid escalation of repression and violence in Guatemala resulted in the

internal displacement of about 750,000 people and an additional 250,000 fled the country

entirely (Garcia 2006:29). Some of those captured while on the move or repatriated

before the official peace accords had been finalized, were resettled in heavily guarded

and regulated "model villages" and subjected to government policies of "indoctrination

and cultural annihilation" (Garcia 2006:28).

Nicaragua is similar to Guatemala in a number of ways, with abundant natural

resources and arable land, massive social inequality, a history of external involvement

economically and politically, and related internal conflicts. Nicaragua also differs

significantly from Guatemala and the rest of Central America both historically and in the

contemporary period. External economic control and the peonage system were

established relatively late during the period of Liberal "modernization" in the late

nineteenth century rather than during colonization (Booth et al 1993:33). The potential

for a transisthmian waterway in the early period and later a relatively successful

revolution led by the Sandinistas in the late 1970's and early 1980's also distinguish Nicaragua from its Central American neighbors. Some contemporary differences between Guatemala and Nicaragua can be traced back to early colonization, such as early depopulation from disease and the export of slaves in Nicaragua reducing the labor supply for agricultural development and opening up land in Nicaragua for smallholder peasants (Booth et al 1993:18). This pattern changed dramatically in the nineteenth century when peasant and surviving indigenous farmers were displaced by the emerging coffee industry (Booth et al 1993:33). As in other Central American countries, the main victims of internal power struggles and outside interference were the dispossessed peasants who were forced into peonage. Over a century later, in a recurring pattern in Central American conflicts, once again it was the peasants that suffered the most as the CIA-backed counter-revolutionary forces (or Contras) targeted schools, health facilities and agrarian reform farms to undermine the gains made by the Sandinistas (North 1990:72). The death toll of the Contra War has been estimated at 50,000, with 300,000 homeless, and over half a million people that left the country entirely (Garcia 2006:20).

The civil war in El Salvador is similar to that of Guatemala and Nicaragua, particularly in terms of the roots of conflict, the heavy influence of the United States in escalating such conflict and the resulting massive scale of violence and human rights abuses, but also differs in important ways. In both Nicaragua and El Salvador, longstanding historical grievances over land and access to resources, worsened by a development model that increased inequality in an already highly stratified society, led to

escalating cycles of popular mobilization and reform, followed by repression and further concentration of wealth (Booth et al 1993). One of the main differences between the two countries is due in part to the timing and nature of external intervention. Specifically, the United States became heavily invested in destabilizing the Sandinista government in Nicaragua by supporting the Contras, while it did the reverse in El Salvador by heavily investing in propping up the government. The strong role of the Catholic Church, relatively dense population and smaller land mass also help to define the specificity of conflict in El Salvador.

The impact of the civil war in El Salvador, as in Guatemala, is hard to capture in a short review. In El Salvador, the highest levels of violence were from 1980 to 1982, with an estimate of over 42,000 deaths, the great majority of which were caused by actions of the army and army-sanctioned death squads. Evidence of extremely high and rising levels of repression can be found in the government's own records from an average of 864 murders per year in the mid 1960s up to 1,837 per year by 1977 (Booth et al 1993:103,96). The scale of state repression measured in number of deaths was reduced by over half in each of the years 1983 (5,826) and 1984 (2,206). The main objective of repression at this time according to Bottinelli et al (1990:7) was to "delegitimize and undercut" the opposition, "to isolate it from its social base." The nature of repression in El Salvador involved extreme levels of human rights abuses, including: frequent searches and arbitrary arrest, kidnapping and detainment; torture; intimidation of the population at multiple levels including leaving the bodies and body-parts of victims in public places;

and impunity of the police and military for these and other violations (Booth et al 1993: 97-8). As in Guatemala and Nicaragua, the impact included widespread trauma as a result of civilians being targeted directly. Those targeted in El Salvador between 1980 and 1984 were mostly peasants (67.9%), but also included large numbers of workers and employees (18.8%), students (7.2%), and smaller numbers of professionals (Booth et al 1993:184). Rising unemployment and underemployment in the 1970s and associated drops in the standard of living for the poor in El Salvador fueled conflict. Tragically, when the war was over, it was business as usual in many ways with the majority poor sharing very few of the benefits, and shouldering the losses of ongoing economic relations with the United States under a neoliberal model. Estimates of displacement as a result of civil war in El Salvador include over half a million internally displaced, and well over one million refugees, more than one in six of the total population, who had fled abroad.

The above review illustrates the importance of land, labor, natural resources and increasingly, capital in each Central American conflict. Also illustrated are notable differences in how an array of social actors struggled to control access to natural resources and land and then to benefit from modernizing processes of urbanization and industrialization in each country. With the exception of Costa Rica, this has been primarily a struggle between a small but powerful elite class and a majority poor (Booth et al 1993: 13). The excessive brutality of the conflicts in Central America during the mid to late twentieth century are best understood as arising out of a particularly lethal

31

convergence of internal and international developments. The Central American Common Market (CACM) represented an attempt by the region's elite class to compete internationally. Impressive economic growth rates held forth the promise of modernization but the benefits of such growth did not "trickle down" to the poor. To the contrary, the opposite occurred as inequality and class conflict increased at the same time as sporadic political openings allowed for popular mobilization with broad-based support (North 1990). Booth et al (1993:15) argue that rapid escalation of conflicts in the 1970s and 1980s in Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, all countries with long histories of massive inequality and frequent revolts, were due to novel changes in "relative deprivation." The periods of most severe violence and human rights abuses in those countries were a result of desperate attempts to hold onto power, or to reclaim power in the case of Nicaragua, in the face of global economic crises and related internal social changes that could not be stopped. Unfortunately, most of the social reforms that were proposed to be part of the outcomes of peace accords have not come about. Tragically, the persistence of many of the same social issues that led to civil war and forced many to leave their countries entirely, continue to exert pressure for emigration, and have discouraged the return of Central American refugees. This is the background to the analysis which follows in the next section concerning why some Central American countries became primarily sending countries for refugees while others became receiving countries.

Central American Intra-Regional Migration and Incorporation Patterns

Conflict in Central America is linked to important changes in population, labor supply, migration and settlement. The concentration of landownership for export production created a surplus of labor, first in rural areas and subsequently among the growing urban working class. Between the 1960s and the 1980s the population in Central America almost doubled, but the industrial boom during this time was insufficient to absorb the growing labor supply (Booth et al 1993: 25-7). The recession of the 1970s and 1980s in Central America put increased pressure on migrant labor strategies, with internal and intra-regional increases. While changes in patterns of migration were documented, including demographic changes signaling that these migration flows were largely conflict-induced (O'Dogherty 1989), legitimate asylum seekers were routinely denied entry to many countries on the basis that they were economic migrants and not political refugees (Booth et al 1993). While migration was usually motivated by a combination of political and economic factors, political violence and instability greatly increased pressures to migrate. Those who moved to escape violence typically migrated without adequate preparation. From an international perspective, it was preferable to settle refugees in neighboring countries if possible because it was believed that this would facilitate repatriation (Garcia 2006:35). Honduras and Costa Rica thus played a key role in providing places for resettlement, but with important differences, as will be noted below.

Historical differences between Honduras and the rest of Central America predisposed it to be primarily a migrant-receiving country rather than a source of international migrants. Honduras was a popular destination in particular for migrants from El Salvador with smaller but significant numbers from Nicaragua. El Salvador had a long history of cross-border migration due to its large population in relation to its small land mass, with over 350,000 Salvadorians who settled in Honduras alone to work on the banana or emerging coffee plantations by the late 1960s (Garcia 2006:30). Such traditional labor migration networks were subsequently used and expanded by refugees during periods of political repression. The flow of migration from El Salvador to Honduras was reversed starting in 1967 and by 1969, 240,000 Salvadorians had been deported. Honduras closed the border entirely to Salvadorians following a short but brutal conflict termed the "soccer war" in the same year between Honduras and El Salvador (Garcia 2006:30-1) in which an additional 60,000 or more Salvadorians were expelled (North 1990:74). This contributed greatly to the escalation of conflict in El Salvador and increased the risk involved in further migration from El Salvador to Honduras.

While countries like Canada rely on immigration, poor countries like Honduras face additional economic, social and political challenges in accommodating migrants. These challenges were increased in Honduras and elsewhere in Central America when pressures for migration due to political repression combined with economic crisis. For some of the Salvadorians and Guatemalans who remained in Honduras or came later, the situation was not much better than the one they had left. Honduras heavily restricted access of

external agencies to refugees who had crossed into that nation (Garcia 2006:36).

Salvadorians fleeing their country faced hostile armed forces from both sides of the

border with Honduras, where they were largely confined to camps, and for the most part

remained in an undocumented status (Garcia 2006:37). This treatment was a result of a

combination of factors including: longstanding historical resentment towards

Salvadorians because of the additional pressure their presence placed on land and jobs;

the intensification of pressure for land, jobs and services because of the worldwide

economic crisis; but, perhaps most significantly, because the presence of refugees from

El Salvador was perceived as a threat to national security (Basok 1990, Garcia 2006,

North 1990). A combination of socioeconomic factors and geopolitics also provide the

most convincing explanation as to why Nicaraguans received better treatment in

Honduras than did Salvadorians or Guatemalans (Garcia 2006:37, North 1990:142).

Substantial increases in migration from Nicaragua to Honduras began in the mid- to late

1970s as a result of the escalating conflict leading up to the ousting of the Somoza

regime in 1979, at which time many of these migrants returned (Garcia 2006:34). By

1986 a second wave of some 43,000 Nicaraguans found themselves in Honduras

primarily as a result of the Contra war (North 1990:142). This second wave of migrants

differed from the first. While the pre-Sandinista migrants were displaced peasants turned

migrant workers (North 1990:68) and then a wider cross-section of the population fleeing

the increased repression of the crumbling Somoza regime, many of those that migrated in

the early 1980s were disaffected groups under the Sandinista leadership. Most notable

among them were over 16,000 indigenous migrants to Honduras that had been physically

relocated or otherwise alienated by reconstruction policies within Nicaragua (North

1990:143). The second wave also included Contras and their families who were provided

with sanctuary (Booth et al 1993:50) and freedom of movement in Honduras, and were

left alone by the Honduran security forces (North 1990:147).

This above described inconsistency between the treatment of Nicaraguans and

Salvadorians in Honduras is almost certainly due to the ideological influence of the

United States. United States support of the Contras, including the use of Honduras as a

military base to destabilize the Sandinista government, compelled Honduran authorities

to favor Nicaraguans who opposed the Sandinista leadership. Even simply accepting

refugees from Nicaragua implicitly supported efforts to discredit the Sandinistas. By

contrast Salvadorians who fled their country were stigmatized as subversive and their

presence was viewed as potentially destabilizing by Honduran authorities.

Costa Rica also became an important migrant receiving country in the Central

American region particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s with both similarities and

differences compared to the role played by Honduras. In terms of similarities, Costa Rica

avoided widespread internal conflict and repression to an even greater degree than

Honduras. Costa Rica was also subject to pressure from the United States to allow Contra

forces access to the Nicaraguan border. There were more numerous differences however,

such as lack of militarization in Costa Rica, along with its relatively high literacy, low

mortality and successful land reform, all due to a large degree to the country's social

democratic political system (Booth et al 1993:120). Rural labour shortages in Costa Rica dating back to the nineteenth century attracted migrants from other Central American countries. As in Honduras, migrants followed established routes to Costa Rica and drew on the support of migrant networks for seasonal and temporary employment (Garcia 2006:30). A large influx of Nicaraguans arrived in 1979, fleeing repression by the crumbling Somoza regime. This forced Costa Rica to clarify its refugee determination system, which subsequently imposed a heavy restriction on the entry of Salvadorian refugees (Basok 1990:728). An estimated 15,000 Salvadorian refugees managed to gain entry by 1983, but restriction of visas imposed in that year actually reversed the flow of documented Salvadorians reducing their numbers to just over 6,000 by 1986 (Basok 1990:727). During the 1980s a greater but unknown number of Salvadorians remained undocumented in Costa Rica (Garcia 2006:39). The difficulties faced by Salvadorians in obtaining legal status and the restrictions placed on those that were recognized prompted many to take advantage of work opportunities and accept the risks of undocumented status. As in Honduras, the treatment of Nicaraguan refugees in Costa Rica contrasted sharply with the treatment of Salvadorians. Nicaraguans were much more numerous with as many as 250,000 undocumented and 30,000 documented refugees in the country by 1989 (Basok 1990:727). In the early 1980s when Salvadorians were being progressively blocked from entering Costa Rica, Nicaraguans were allowed into the country with ease. The inconsistency was due to the influence the United States wielded in generating opposition to the Sandinista Government (North 1990:148). As Ramirez (1989:6-7)

argues, Costa Rican refugee policy was "indirectly connected to the ideology of foreign policy" and "ambiguous in its implementation." Migrant decision making about whether to claim refugee status was often strategic, and between 1982 and 1987 Costa Rica accepted virtually all Nicaraguans. Ramirez (1989:19) argues that while Nicaraguans had little trouble gaining entry to Costa Rica during this time, they experienced difficulty with integration.

International humanitarian organizations recognized the plight of Salvadorians and attempted to fill this need by providing assistance to them within Costa Rica (Basok 1990:734-5). Internationally funded aid programs for Salvadorians were welcomed in Costa Rica because they helped reduce the cost to the state and the potential for conflict with native workers. In another paradoxical twist, while state authorities targeted Salvadorians rather than Nicaraguans for harassment and deportation, the general public was more sympathetic to Salvadorians than Nicaraguans (Basok 1990:743). Intolerance towards the large number of undocumented Nicaraguans grew, because they were perceived as a threat economically and socially. Significant reduction of refugee flows in Central America, however, ultimately relied on changes in refugee producing nations. Consistent with migration research and theory, when legal channels for migration are reduced this simply drives migrants underground and increases risks for them rather than significantly reducing flows, although changes in policies and enforcement can have an effect on destination countries if alternatives are available. In the case of El Salvador, the small size of the country, relatively large population and restricted access to Honduras

and Costa Rica resulted in massive flows north through Guatemala to Mexico, the United

States and Canada in a relatively short period of time, explored further below. As the

peace process unfolded migration flows slowed and efforts at more widespread

repatriation were initiated.

While Honduras and Costa Rica were the primary reception countries in Central

America during the refugee crisis of the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, in reality

patterns of migration were more complex than this involving considerable internal

displacement, third country migrations, return and transnational migration. Many

refugees also fled to Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, that were simultaneously

refugee-producing nations (Garcia 2006:39). Most of these refugees remained

undocumented and like refugees in Honduras and Costa Rica, it is likely that many

planned to return to their homelands. Paradoxically, in Guatemala--where the UNHCR

had been barred from participating in relief efforts during the 1980s--upwards of 145,000

Nicaraguan and 70,000 Salvadorian refugees were resident (Garcia 2006:39).

Predictably, Nicaragua under the Sandinistas had the most liberal refugee policies,

highest rate of acceptance and most generous settlement provisions, while in El Salvador

the Salvadorian Catholic Church and NGOs provided help to nearly as many

undocumented refugees, roughly 7,000 and 6,000 respectively (Garcia 2006:39-40). The

much larger number of refugees in Guatemala versus Nicaragua and El Salvador by the

end of the 1980s is explained mostly by geography, since it bordered Mexico. Mexico

served as both a "country of first asylum" (Garcia 2006:44) for many migrants trying to

exit the region altogether and a third country for many migrants who would keep moving north to the United States or Canada. Rough estimates of the number of refugees and internally displaced as a result of conflicts in Central America between 1974 and 1996 give an idea of this northward migration. Garcia (2006:1) estimates that over 1 million people were internally displaced, while over two million fled to Mexico, Canada and the United States. By the end of the 1980s as many as half a million people were internally displaced in El Salvador alone (North 1990:131), while as many as 800,000 refugees who fled from conflict zones were in neighboring Central American countries (Garcia 2006:40). Most migrants were undocumented; for instance, only 10 percent of the estimated 800,000 Central American refugees in the region in 1989 were documented (Garcia 2006).

Return migration within Central America did not take place in any significant way until peace accords were signed. Salvadorian refugees began to repatriate from Honduras as early as 1981 given the insecurity and persecution they faced in camps (North 1990:137). However, in the case of El Salvador and also in Guatemala, explored further below, early repatriations met with limited success. In the context of ongoing civil conflict and state repression, returning Salvadorians in the early 1980s received little assistance and lived in conditions of insecurity (North 1990:138). After all, many Salvadorians were still fleeing the country to escape violence and insecurity. By contrast, as early as 1983 the Sandinista government started a process of reconciliation with indigenous groups reducing the number of emigrants and, by 1988, many had returned

from Honduras and Costa Rica (North 1990:144-5). Despite the fact that the Sandinista government had initiated the most serious efforts at accommodating returning refugees and internally displaced, and by the end of 1988 had the highest rate of repatriation in Central America (North 1990:145), reconciliation has been particularly difficult for a number of reasons. For example, the Rio San Juan area near the Costa Rica border has been plagued by ongoing disputes over land, including tension and conflicts between subsistence farming and natural conservation efforts, and grinding poverty made worse by structural adjustment policies introduced by the Chamorro government and then subsequently expanded (Nygren 2003:381). Solutions to these practical difficulties are hindered by the fractured historical memory of the war, particularly evident in the divisions in experience and recollection between Sandinista and Contra supporters. Repatriation has met with limited success and many return migrants continue to live in conditions of poverty and insecurity in Nicaragua. There continues to be considerable seasonal migration for agricultural work in Costa Rica and migration to various urban centers. However, the material advantages gained from remittances have to be weighed against family separation and the loss of labor power, which falls on those left behind (Nygren 2003:382).

In the late 1980s some successful mass repatriations of Salvadorians from Honduras took place and many more internally displaced Salvadorians attempted to return to their homes or establish new ones (North 1990:138-41). More full-scale repatriations however did not occur until ceasefires had been achieved and basic rights were guaranteed as part

of the peace process (Garcia 2006:43). Before long over 100,000 Salvadorians and
Nicaraguans had returned to their homeland from Costa Rica and Honduras followed by
mass repatriations of Guatemalans from Mexico, explored further below (Garcia
2006:80-81). However, even after the 1992 peace accords neoliberal policies in Central
America have prevented reduction of poverty, inequality, unemployment and resulting
rural migration to cities in Central America, Mexico and North America. Ripton
(2006:102-3) argues that the opening of El Salvador to free trade within a neoliberal
model has not lead to positive development, but rather the integration of international
migrants into the global economy in a way that generates dependency on remittances and
further migration.

Migration and migrant incorporation in Central America were influenced by the scale
and timing of conflicts, development strategies, foreign and immigration policies
(especially refugee policies), international humanitarian concerns, and individual and
family strategies of survival. Refugees from different countries were constructed
differently depending on the social context of the receiving society. Honduran and Costa
Rican authorities constructed Salvadorian refugees as subversives and potential agents of
destabilization, and restricted their access. Nicaraguan refugees were by contrast
constructed as victims of Sandinista totalitarianism and were granted entry initially. This
situation greatly complicated the delivery of humanitarian assistance and drove many
Salvadorian migrants underground. Reluctance of these countries to accept migrants
grew because the influx of large numbers of undocumented migrants coincided with a

period of global economic recession and forced restructuring of developing countries. However, migration and incorporation are not simply effects but have also played a role in the social changes that are taking place in Central America. Central American countries recognized that in order to address the refugee crisis they needed both the support of the international community and a certain degree of independence from it, especially from the United States, resulting in the Esquipulas II accords and subsequent peace process. Many of those who did not return to their homelands likely moved north to Mexico, the United States and Canada. Some refugees were integrated into neighboring Central American countries. Repatriation within Central America has been extremely important and yet also highly problematic because divisions created and exacerbated during the civil conflicts are combined with worsening poverty as a result of globalization and the associated problems of unemployment, inequality, and land misuse. In the wake of the peace process and further incorporation of Central America into the global economic system, migration has taken on a central role with important contradictions explored further below.

Mexico as a Reception and Third Country for Migration

The massive northward migration of Central Americans, which began in the late 1970s, has played an important role in transforming relations between Central America, Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Mexico received large numbers of undocumented refugees from El Salvador in particular, as well as both documented and

undocumented refugees from Guatemala. Salvadorians and Guatemalans received different forms of aid, were constructed differently and had different paths of incorporation in Mexico. The United States in turn received massive numbers of Central Americans, many of whom came via Mexico. The rates of acceptance for Nicaraguans were much higher initially than for Salvadorians or Guatemalans, although still somewhat lower than for Eastern Europeans at the time. The majority of Salvadorians and Guatemalans in the United States were therefore undocumented and constructed as economic migrants. Canada provided an important alternative to the United States, with very high acceptance rates for Central American refugees. Because of the long distance and lack of previous migrant networks, the flows to Canada were modest by comparison. In the aftermath of civil war Central American migration has become more integral to the North American economy, but there is much debate over whether the benefits of migration outweigh the costs for migrants or the countries that they originate from.

During the height of conflicts in the Central American region, the ratio of documented to undocumented migrants in different national contexts hinged on foreign policy considerations and related constructions of migrants as legitimate political refugees or economic migrants. The levels of acceptance and construction of different Central American migrants therefore heavily impacted incorporation. The community development and ongoing incorporation of Central Americans in these three countries has been increasingly conditioned by the wider international focus on security. This wider security focus penetrates important institutions such as schools thereby

circumscribing the incorporation of Central American youth and leading to creative responses both from within Central American communities and from individual youth as they navigate peer groups, family expectations, and authority figures in schools and elsewhere. The issues raised in this chapter hinge on the degree to which migrants and their children are agents of their own histories as they respond to structural forces that exceed the local contexts in which they trace their lives. Greater understanding of these issues can therefore be usefully informed by the experiences and views of migrants and their children and help to expose, critique, and challenge the structural constraints they face.

Despite having the longest sustained period of civil war in Central America and spikes of repression and violence comparable if not worse than El Salvador and Nicaragua, Guatemala served as an important third country for migration to Mexico and further north to the United States and Canada. Garcia (2006:167) argues that Mexico in turn has been burdened with the task of border control of northward migration for the whole of North America both because of its geographical location and its evolving role in the North American region and globally. During the refugee crisis, Central Americans settled in Mexico near the border with Guatemala in camps or integrated in small villages and also in other regions of the country, especially urban areas with the largest number not surprisingly in Mexico City. Important differences have been noted between Central Americans in the border region and Mexico City based on country of origin, time of arrival, and other related differences indicating important shifts in migration and

incorporation, although accurate estimates are difficult to obtain because the majority of

migrants are undocumented. The massive presence of Central Americans in Mexico City

in particular is due to ongoing migration from the region, but also in part because of

increasingly restrictive immigration and refugee policies in Canada and the United States

(Garcia 2006; O'Dogherty 1989:63). Migration and incorporation of Central Americans

in Mexico are not simply effects of ongoing political and economic conditions in Central

America, but also integral aspects of social change in Mexico both because of the

changes that the presence of large numbers of Central Americans contribute to, and

because of the important roles that Central American migrant workers, professionals and

families play in local, national, regional and global contexts.

Guatemalans have had a long history of migration to Mexico (Garcia 2006:45). Prior

to the escalation of conflict in Guatemala in the 1980s, the border with Mexico was

porous as indigenous and ladino Guatemalans crossed into Mexico to work and trade,

maintaining and forming lasting relations with indigenous and meztizo Mexicans (Garcia

2006:48). Until 1824 Chiapas was Guatemalan territory and the subsequent ties that

persisted across the new border supplied Mexican growers with an abundant supply of

agricultural workers. This exploitable labor force was especially important to the

expansion of the region's agricultural industry in the 1960s, bringing an estimated 20,000

to 100,000 Guatemalan seasonal workers each year (Garcia 2006:44). Mexican

authorities sometimes deported Guatemalans in response to shifts in the economy and

public opinion, but overall their presence was tolerated because of the important role they played in economic development.

In 1980 Guatemalan refugees fleeing the counterinsurgency campaign settled in camps near the Guatemalan border. These refugees were Maya and ladino campesinos who made use of established migration routes and social networks in order to gain entry to the country and, if possible, to access support systems and find jobs (Garcia 2006:45). There is a general consensus among human rights groups that the number of displaced in Guatemala during the 1980s probably reached 1 million (de Rivero 2001; North 1990). Those internally displaced were either settled in "model villages" established by the Guatemalan military, fled to the slums of Guatemala City, or fled the country entirely (North 1990:149). The number of those seeking refuge outside the country was at least 150,000 (de Rivero 2001:8) but may have been as high as 350,000, with the majority settling in Mexico and the United States (North 1990:148-9). These migrants were not simply individuals in search of jobs but rather a "communal migration" made up of "the surviving members of families and communities" (Garcia 2006:47) from a small number of towns and villages (O'Dogherty 1989:24). The migrants were very young on average, with 63 percent under the age of twenty (Garcia 2006:45), and came with a variety of needs as a result of the violence and displacement they had witnessed and experienced in Guatemala.

Mexico was in a unique legal position with respect to its commitment to the Guatemalan refugees because while it had not signed the UN convention and protocol

and was therefore not compelled to offer asylum, Mexico had signed the 1969 American

Convention on Human Rights, which recognized the principle of non-refoulement.

Mexico had a long history of accommodating the displaced; however, this was the first

time that it was dealing with both a large displaced population and from a bordering

country, which greatly complicated its response (Garcia 2006:44, North 1990: 150).

Initially a polarization developed within the Mexican government between the newly

established Mexican Committee for Refugee Assistance (COMAR) and the Migratory

Services branch, the former taking a generous position towards the refugees and the latter

a hard-line position (Garcia 2006:49). The result was a set of contradictory policies and

actions. For instance by 1984 COMAR managed to grant entry to 46,000 refugees who

were registered and housed in ninety-two camps in Chiapas (Garcia 2006:51). In 1981 it

agreed to allow the UNHCR to assist refugees within the country, and the UNHCR

subsequently helped a small number of refugees voluntarily relocate to Canada and

Australia during the 1980s. The UNHCR also provided significant aid to refugees in the

camps, although the precarious status of the UNHCR in Mexico prevented it from

criticizing the policies and actions of the government, including the corruption of

Mexican authorities, the deportation of 2,000 refugees from Mexico in 1981, and a

further 3,500 in 1982 (Garcia 2006:49). Conditions in the camps were poor and refugees

were restricted in their movement and from engaging in wage labor. When they did work

they were generally poorly paid and treated (Garcia 2006:53). There was also a lack of

security for refugees in the camps. The Guatemalan military crossed into Mexico to

terrorize refugees in the camps, and there was evidence that the Mexican military was assisting them. Deportations continued, as did the repression of Guatemalan refugees in Mexico. In 1990 Mexico was the first country to adopt the definition of a refugee offered by the Cartagena Declaration, in particular the inclusion of those fleeing a climate of "generalized violence," but contained stiffer sentences for those who helped undocumented immigrants and so excluded the massive population of undocumented immigrants already in the country (Garcia 2006:77).

The Mexican government tried to conceal its repression of Guatemalan and other refugees and legitimize deportations by arguing that most refugees were actually economic migrants. O'Dogherty (1989:64) argues that the preoccupation with motives for migration as either economic or political among these migrants obscured the dynamics of the migration process. Refugees were actually constructed as politically or economically motivated depending on the government's agenda, resulting in contradictory policies and practices. Chiapas was central to Mexico's plan for long-term development, while the majority of residents in the region were poor (Garcia 2006:54-5). Wealthy ranchers in the south feared that continued flows of refugees into the region threatened their control of the land, although this did not prevent them from exploiting their labor. The Mexican government was also determined to protect the interests of large corporations that profited from continued exploitation of resources in Chiapas. Refugees were thus constructed both as a burden economically, but as in refugee receiving countries in Central America, even more importantly as a threat to stability. This

construction of Guatemalan refugees in particular as subversives was largely in response to foreign policy considerations and also served to deflect attention from the government's exploitation of the people and land in Chiapas.

Salvadorian migrants entered Mexico initially by plane between 1979 and 1982 using tourist visas. After the government tightened the visa requirements in 1983, the majority of Salvadorians entered Mexico by land via Guatemala (Garcia 2006:66). By 1984 an estimated 500,000 Salvadorians were believed to be in Mexico, 40 percent of whom were on their way further north and 40,000 of whom were in Mexico City, while only 3,500 were granted asylum (Garcia 2006:66-8). O'Dogherty (1989:19-21) suggests that the arrival of a significant number of Central American migrant women and dependents in Mexico City over the 1980s demonstrated a clear shift in the nature of migration; for instance, an estimated 29 percent of Central American migrants during this time were 15 years of age or under. O'Dogherty notes that migration was still selective, favoring those with higher average education. Salvadorians could avoid detection by Mexican authorities better in urban settings and many found work in the service industry (Garcia 2006:67). Mexico did not pursue an active policy of detention and deportation of Salvadorians initially, but neither did Mexico accommodate the refugees beyond cautiously allowing NGOs to operate, particularly in large urban centers (Garcia 2006:68). Until the late 1980s undocumented Salvadorians who were apprehended in Mexico were simply deported to Guatemalan border towns making their reentry likely. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, visa requirements for Central Americans were

tightened and deportations increased from 14,000 in 1988 to 85,000 in 1989 and 126,000

in 1990 (Garcia 2006:69). Mexico's increasingly restrictive policies for asylum drove

migrants further underground and made them more vulnerable (O'Dogherty 1989:65). In

the early 1990s some 150,000 undocumented Guatemalans and 500,000 Salvadorians

were believed to be living and working in both rural and urban settings in Mexico

(Garcia 2006:65). These numbers do not capture the full extent of refugee flows,

however, because Mexico was an important third country for migrants who moved on to

other destinations.

Efforts at incorporation of Central American refugees in Mexico often contradicted

government policies that emphasized restricted access, temporary accommodation and

eventual repatriation. A greater number of Guatemalans avoided the camps and

government aid of any kind, taking their chances as undocumented immigrants. While

Salvadorians sought refuge in the anonymity of urban environments, the majority of

Guatemalans relied on the generosity of local residents and NGOs in the border region of

Chiapas, in particular the Dioceses of San Cristobal de las Casas and its Comite Cristiano

de Solidaridad (CCS) led by bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia (Garcia 2006:69-73). Initially,

the majority of Guatemalan refugees and those that aided them also viewed their stay in

Mexico as a temporary measure until conditions in their homeland improved, but as

conditions for refugees in Guatemala deteriorated more effort was devoted to durable

solutions. NGOs played key roles in challenging state discourses about Central American

refugees, transporting and hiding refugees from repressive state authorities and speaking

out against human rights abuses committed against them by the state (Garcia 2006:70-3). As a result, aid workers were increasingly accused of aiding "subversives," particularly in the state of Chiapas, and became targets of repression.

There was widespread consensus from those at opposite ends of the spectrum that repatriation was desirable for all concerned, but much disagreement about timing and conditions of repatriation. The Guatemalan government had tried as early as 1983 to repatriate Guatemalans living in Mexico, but these efforts failed because they were viewed by refugees as obvious attempts to cut off the escape route for insurgents and others fleeing state repression (North 1990:151). At the other end of the spectrum were Guatemalan refugees who had always envisioned their return once conditions had improved in their homeland. This was illustrated by the return of some 6,000 Guatemalans as early as 1986 when they were forced by the Mexican government to choose between relocating further inland or repatriating to Guatemala (Garcia 2006:79). NGOs generally discouraged Guatemalans from returning during the 1980s and the UNHCR maintained a neutral position in order not to jeopardize its precarious status in Guatemala. It was not until 1993 that the first well-organized repatriation of Guatemalans took place with 2,480 returns and by 1996 some 36,000 had returned (Garcia 2006:81-2). Over half of the Guatemalans in Mexico by this time were born in Mexico, and as expected, repatriation was lower for those who had relocated farther from the border in Quintana Roo and Campeche. Some 14,000 documented Guatemalans chose not to return for a variety of reasons, including: fear of ongoing violence in Guatemala; employment

and other economic concerns; and intermarriage with Mexicans (Garcia 2006:82-3; North et al 1999).

Mexico was an important reception and third country for Central American migration, particularly for Guatemalans and Salvadorians during the 1980s. Guatemala served historically as an important source of agricultural labor supply to Chiapas, but following the counterinsurgency campaigns and displacement of Guatemalans in the early 1980s, Guatemalan migrants were both politicized and defined narrowly as economic migrants to justify restricting access for them to Mexico. At the same time, Guatemala became an important third country for other Central Americans fleeing violence and repression, Salvadorians in particular. This resulted in a massive undocumented population of Central Americans in Mexico and an ongoing flow of refugees migrating further north under conditions of increased risk. Under international pressure, Mexico was forced to address issues of human rights abuse of refugees at the same time as it was forced to tighten up control over undocumented migrants in response to pressure from the United States. As a result of these two conflicting objectives, options for legal incorporation of a limited number of Central American migrants in Mexico emerged along with increased "national security" measures that increased risks and narrowed options for the majority of Central American migrants. By the year 2000, only 25,000 Central Americans had regularized their status in Mexico (Garcia 2006:83). Since 2001, increased control of Central American migration into and through Mexico reduces possibilities for migrant

transnationalism, cutting migrants off from their families and further threatening those already dependent on remittances.

The United States as a Reception Country

Migration of Central Americans to the United States is not new; however, the conditions detailed above changed the nature of this migration and the response of the United States as a reception country. The context for reception in the United States became increasingly restrictive following the worldwide economic recession. The portrayal of Salvadorian migration in particular as economically motivated diverted attention from the protection of United States interests in Central America, since to recognize them en masse as legitimate refugees would implicitly condemn the repressive regimes that were being supported by the United States (Garcia 2006:90). In fact, as elsewhere Salvadorians were constructed both as economic migrants and as political subversives in order to deny them refugee status. Predictably, Nicaraguan migrants had nominally better access to the United States initially, although still significantly lower than Eastern European migrants to the United States. Overall, Central American migrants in the 1980s and 1990s faced serious barriers to incorporation in the United States. But given ongoing instability, inequality, insecurity and widespread poverty in Central America, repatriation from the United States following the peace process has been limited. More commonly Central American migrants and their children in the United States have combined efforts at incorporation with transnationalism, although the

increased emphasis on national security in the United States puts up additional barriers

not only for continued migration, but also for existing Central American communities in

the United States.

Since the nineteenth century Central Americans from a range of social classes have

migrated to industrial centers in the United States such as San Francisco, Los Angeles,

New York City and Washington. Permanent and cyclical migration patterns dating back

to the 1880s were particularly important for El Salvador (Landolt et al 1999:290). The

first arrivals were Central American elites linked to the coffee industry and industrial

laborers who were drawn by labor shortages in the United States, followed in the

twentieth century by urban middle class migrants (Rodriguez 2005:21). The 1965

Immigration Act opened the door to migrants from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin

America who had previously been largely excluded from entering the country. An

immigration boom resulted, including the entry of some 100,000 Central American

migrants, many of who were skilled laborers (Garcia 2006:85, Rodriguez 2005:21).

When the civil conflicts in Central America reached a head with massive displacements,

the United States began to look for new ways to reduce immigration, particularly of those

who might strain social services or need assistance of any kind. This resulted in the

Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) passed in 1986. This did not halt the

immigration of Central American refugees in the 1980s and 1990s but rather drove them

underground and increased risks for them. Many accepted the risks given the greater

stability and economic opportunities in the United States in comparison to the conditions they were fleeing from.

Estimating the number of Central Americans in the United States at the height of conflict in Central America is difficult given that most were undocumented. Garcia (2006:85) estimates that by 1987 over 1 million Salvadorians, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans were in the United States. Salvadorians made up about half of all Central Americans in the United States, while Guatemalans were the least numerous because of their relations with residents in Chiapas and related options for legalizing their status in Mexico (Garcia 2006:85). Central American migrants entering the United States during this time differed in important ways from previous Latin American migrants, from Mexico and Puerto Rico for instance. They were coming primarily from rural areas that had been devastated by war, with little education or technological skills, and had a variety of health issues as a consequence of violence and displacement (Leslie et al 1989:316). Despite their needs, the great majority was not eligible for refugee status so they could not access government services and aid, and worked primarily in the service industry without documentation, exposing them to exploitation (Leslie et al 1989:316-7).

The UNHCR recommended in 1981 that all Salvadorians who left their country as of 1980 be recognized as refugees, but the United States government restricted access particularly to Salvadorians and Guatemalans, arguing that they were labor migrants rather than politically motivated refugees (Garcia 2006:88-9). This is a common stance taken by host governments who have signed the United Nations Convention and Protocol

but do not want to accept a particular flow of refugees, involving both a tightening of border control and a refusal to recognize refugee claimants (Basok 1990:724). Undocumented Salvadorians who were discovered in the United States were detained, their civil liberties denied by Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) officials, and were systematically deported putting them at even greater risk (Garcia 2006:91). In 1986 the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) increased border patrols while offering amnesty to undocumented migrants who had entered prior to 1982, allowing 277,642 Central Americans to legalize their status, 60 percent of whom were Salvadorians (Garcia 2006:91). This was an attempt to gain control of much larger refugee flows, illustrated by the fact that between 1983 and 1990 less than 3 percent of Salvadorians and Guatemalans applying for refugee status were recognized (Garcia 2006:89). North (1990: 151-2) argues that the restrictive policies reflected an attempt to conceal systematic violation of human rights in Central America by treating foreign policy and refugee policy as separate. For some time now the distinction between economically and politically motivated migration has been criticized as "artificial" (Basok 1990:723) and it is generally accepted that the two motivations tend not to be mutually exclusive (Lundquist et al 2005) and are in most cases "interdependent" (Leslie et al 1989:320). Lundquist et al (2005) however did find evidence of a direct relationship between increases in Contra war activity backed by the United States and increases in migration. Other consistent findings linking increases in migration to political conflict are demographic changes in migrant populations, namely that newer waves of migrants

were more communal and that those with more capital were more likely to travel farther from their homelands (Lundquist et al 2005, O'Dougherty 1989). While increases in migration were directly linked to the civil conflicts in Central America, this did not remove economic necessity, cited by a sample of Central Americans as their greatest concern in the United States (Leslie et al 1989:322).

In contrast to official immigration policies and practices that restricted access and increased risks for Central American migrants, there was a significant and vocal movement in the United States that supported refugees by offering them sanctuary and aid and arguing against government policies that criminalized them and denied them civil rights. This movement was important in Central Americans' efforts at incorporation and eventually their efforts to maintain contact with their homelands. Casa Oscar Romero, established in Texas near the Mexico border in 1981 was only one of many sites that emerged across the United States to provide protection and aid to Central American refugees throughout the 1980s (Garcia 2006:97). The protection of refugees was both driven and simultaneously complicated by the fact that refugee advocacy in the United States was closely linked to criticism of United States military involvement in the Central American region. This created divisions within the sanctuary movement and also drew the attention of immigration authorities, putting sanctuary workers at risk and putting refugees at even greater risk. Immigration officers harassed sanctuary workers and collaborated with Central American governments in their efforts to infiltrate refugee advocacy networks (Garcia 2006:94). A series of legal battles ensued throughout the

1980s. Sanctuary workers were also instrumental in transporting refugees to Canada where refugee policies were more favorable (Garcia 2006:100). While a comparatively small number of refugees were provided with sanctuary, the movement was significant in raising awareness of the plight of refugees, leading to important legislation for Salvadorians in particular. During the 1980s the United States government denied Salvadorians access to "extended voluntary departure" (EVD) and INS officials actually stepped up detention and deportation of Salvadorians, driving most of them underground (Garcia 2006:90). Following a number of lawsuits, however, in 1990 Salvadorians were eligible for "temporary protected status" (TPS) and then in 1992 when this expired they became eligible for Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), which was extended until 1996 at which time they were eligible for a new refugee hearing (Garcia 2006:111-112). Guatemalans were also eligible for the improved asylum adjudication process established in 1991, but they lacked important mechanisms such as TPS and DED that allowed Salvadorians to better negotiate the refugee determination system. In contrast, Nicaraguans, who had been accepted en masse in the early 1980s with an asylum approval rate of 25 percent and access to EVD, were subsequently faced with policies that flip-flopped, so that when the door was open applications and approval rates were high, and when it closed undocumented migration shot up (Garcia 2006:115-6). Overall, Central Americans who had been in the United States for a number of years had better chances of regularizing their status, so that the bulk of migration from Central America following the peace process continued to be undocumented (Landolt et al 1999).

The timing and composition of particular migrant streams from Central America and the convergence with changing contexts in the United States and globally resulted in both similarities and differences in reception and incorporation among Salvadorians, Guatemalans and Nicaraguans. Despite some improvements in policy, the official government response to the sanctuary movement was inflexibility, and when increased public pressure finally forced changes, the policy changes were contradictory. Policy makers constructed Central American refugees as both economic migrants and political subversives by capitalizing on the lack of specific knowledge among the general public regarding the conflicts in Central America. The key debate in the United States and elsewhere was whether those fleeing a climate of "generalized violence" rather than being targeted directly should be recognized as refugees. Initially many refugees viewed themselves and were viewed by others as temporary migrants, but relatively few repatriated due to ongoing poverty, inequality and insecurity in their countries of origin. Immigration enforcement at the border and within the country was increased while at the same time providing amnesty and mechanisms to some refugees who had been in the country for a length of time to legalize their status. This encouraged further undocumented migration thereby satisfying labor needs of the country for economic expansion, while at the same time making scapegoats of refugees and denying the majority of them important citizenship rights. Undocumented Central Americans in particular faced exploitation in employment, limited access to services, and other barriers to incorporation. Immigration of Latin Americans in the United States remains high in

the 21st century, but fertility is overtaking immigration (Tienda et al 2006:2). Changes in incorporation for Latin Americans in the United States are best understood in the context of wider historical changes in urban industrial societies such as the expansion of the service industry, increase in the value of education and the higher skill levels needed to succeed in the labor market, as well as aging societies (Tienda et al 2006:3). Canada shares similarities with, but also differs significantly from, the United States as a reception country for Central American migrants. This is explored next.

Canada as a Reception Country

Immigration occupies a central place in Canadian history and nation building in particular. The Canadian response to the Central American refugee crisis of the 1980s was unique in comparison to the other reception countries explored above, but also shares similarities and like these countries was heavily influenced by wider international and global contexts. Most Central American migrants who arrived in Canada had come via Mexico and/or the United States (Garcia 2006:119). Fewer Central Americans who had the means came to Canada directly by airplane. It was more difficult and more costly for migrants from Central America to reach Canada in the 1980s and informal networks of support were less established than in Mexico or the United States. However, Canada was not implicated in the Central American conflicts in the way the United States was and so acceptance rates for Central Americans were much higher. Canadian foreign policy was more critical of government repression in Central America and refugee

policies were adapted to accommodate Central Americans fleeing state repression, but

not surprisingly the Canadian government was largely silent on the role of the United

States in the region (Garcia 2006). Like Mexico, Canada advocated less interference in

Central American internal affairs, but policies in both countries were eventually brought

in line with that of the United States, which included a greater emphasis on national

security and greater exclusion of refugee claimants from the region. In addition to efforts

to discourage refugee claimants from Central America, Canadian immigration policy

began to make it more difficult for Central Americans to move to Canada as workers and

family members of previous immigrants from the region.

In the latter half of the twentieth century Canada phased in changes to immigration

policy that gave preference to those with human capital and removed restrictions based

on ethnic and racial origin (Simmons 1999). Canadian immigration policies have been

widely criticized as self-serving because they promote immigration primarily to fill labor

shortages. In the contemporary period contradictions between humanitarianism and

nation building, and most recently "national security," have increased. The policy of

multiculturalism adopted by the state in the 1970s in recognition of multiple and sizable

ethnic group affiliations in Canada has been widely criticized for failing to remove

barriers to incorporation, particularly among racialized minority groups.

While immigration has been perhaps more central to nation building in Canada than

any other country in the world, Canada's image as a humanitarian nation only emerged in

the 1970s and refugee policies have been subsequently scaled back since the mid-1980s.

The acceptance of refugees in Canada was initially a response to displacements as a result of the Cold War, in particular 186,000 Western Europeans received during the 1950s and 1960s (North 1990:157) who made important contributions to Canada's expanding economy. Despite the insistence of government officials that immigration would benefit all Canadians, public opinion was divided over immigration, and immigrants and refugees were the first to be blamed when the economy took a dip at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s (Knowles 1997). The convergence of two factors in 1962 led to a historic shift in immigration policy. First, Canada was competing to attract skilled workers, while at the same time losing part of its skilled workforce to the United States (Simmons 2010). Second, Canada needed to remove explicit racial discrimination from immigration policy to bring it in line with the role that it was defining for itself in the international arena (Knowles 1997:152). The evolution of refugee policies was therefore part of a historic shift in international migration patterns. Whereas previously the bulk of voluntary international migration among industrialized countries was self-contained, that is from Europe to North America and back and forth across the United States – Canada border, policy changes in the 1960s in Canada and the United States set in motion increasing migration from Asian, African, Latin American and Middle Eastern countries. The acceptance of 17,000 Chilean refugees in 1973 marked this shift in migration with respect to the Latin American region, but also marked an ideological shift because Chileans were fleeing a right-wing regime (North 1990:157).

The official refugee class was formalized in the 1976 Immigration Act, distinguishing

refugees from three other classes also created by the act: family; assisted relatives; and

independents (Garcia 2006:121). The act formalized changes discussed above that had

already been put into practice and recognized Canada's legal obligations to refugees,

providing immigration officials with specific criteria for determining refugee status and

providing refugees with options for appealing decisions (Knowles 1997:170). The act

went beyond the acceptance of "Convention refugees," by including designated classes

of those living in "refugee like" conditions, a separate "humanitarian" category to

respond to specific international crises, as well as an inland determination system (Garcia

2006:122-3). There were a number of ways in which immigration and refugee policies

continued to be selective on the basis of country of origin, despite the establishment of

neutral criteria for assessing status. The designated classes provision for instance was

based on world regions, one of which was Latin America, with specific quotas that were

adjusted annually (Garcia 2006:123). The distribution of immigration offices and

consulates abroad varied widely; for instance there was an embassy in Costa Rica, but

none in Nicaragua, Guatemala or El Salvador during the height of conflicts in the region

(Garcia 2006:129). Finally, despite the new criteria for assessing claims, there was still a

degree of individual subjectivity in the final acceptance or rejection of a claim, guided by

wider discourses about "desirability" and "adaptability." In sum, it was the expanded

options for obtaining legal status in Canada more than anything else that brought modest

numbers of Central American asylum seekers to Canada initially, despite the long

distance, lack of cohesive Central American origin communities in Canada, and ongoing degree of uncertainty regarding the outcome of individual claims.

Canadian advocacy networks for Central American refugees condemned the repressive regimes in Central America and pressured the Canadian government to accept more refugees. Early arrivals from Central America tapped into and expanded existing Latin American advocacy networks established by Chilean political exiles in the 1970s (Garcia 2006:146). The Canadian government responded to the pressure created by these political exiles and their allies among NGOs, the sanctuary movement and trade unions in Canada by: increasing the refugee quota for Latin America from 1,000 in 1981 to 2,500 in 1984; sending delegates to Central America to facilitate the migration of political prisoners; offering visas to Salvadorians facing deportation in the United States; facilitating the immigration of Salvadorians and Guatemalans from Costa Rica and Mexico; and establishing a moratorium on deportations for those who were already in Canada (Garcia 2006:129,146). An inland determination process was established and refugees from Central America were given work permits for one year and had access to social services on arrival to Canada (Garcia 2006:123, North 1990:159). The number of Central Americans who migrated to Canada during the 1980s was modest in comparison to migration to neighboring Central American countries, Mexico and the United States. By 1987, there were; 22,283 documented Salvadorians in Canada, 11,251 of whom were Salvadorian refugees that arrived in the last five years; 7,700 Guatemalans and 7,081 Nicaraguans most of whom had also arrived in this five year period and; 4,444 family

members of Central American refugees (Garcia 2006:130). By 1991 the number of

Salvadorians in Canada rose to 28,295 (Carranza 2007). Despite these modest numbers,

Canada represented an important option for Central Americans who were denied legal

status in countries of first asylum, some facing deportation to contexts in which their

lives would be at high risk or facing barriers to incorporation in reception countries that

were simply too difficult to overcome. Certainly social class played a selective role in

migration to Canada, and so only relatively small numbers of Central Americans had the

means to travel directly to Canada.

Canadian foreign policies toward Central America differed in important ways from

those of the United States and these differences were reflected in the early 1980s in

Canadian refugee policies and practices. Contradictions emerged thereafter between

Canadian refugee policies and foreign policies as Canada became more entwined

economically in Central America, and politically more influenced by United States

foreign policy towards the region. The Trudeau government established important

international development institutions and expanded trade and investment in Central

America in the 1960s and 1970s (Garcia 2006:125). In contrast to the United States, the

Canadian government maintained trade relations with Nicaragua following the Sandinista

victory. Government aid to Nicaragua was also higher than aid to other Central American

countries for the 1980s overall and Canadian NGOs also made significant contributions

to development (North 1990). The Canadian government suspended aid to leaders in

Guatemala and El Salvador in the early 1980s in response to political instability and the

high incidence of human rights violations by the state in those countries (North 1990:99-102). Canada also played a significant role in relief efforts channeled through the UNHCR and other NGOs and in the Contadora peace process throughout the 1980s (Garcia 2006:128). However, the independence of Canadian foreign policies toward Central America by some accounts was over before it began, as the Canadian government avoided any significant criticism of United States foreign policies that contradicted their own, and then reinstituted aid packages to El Salvador in 1984 and Guatemala in 1987, without reliable evidence of fair elections or the cessation of human rights abuses in these countries (North 1990:99-102). Similarly, as the number of Central American asylum seekers arriving in Canada increased dramatically in the mid-1980s, Canada followed suit with the United States by tightening up its refugee determination system and retracting important measures such as automatic access to social services, temporary work permits and the moratorium on deportations (Garcia 2006:131).

Refugee policies in Canada evolved in response to changes in Central America, Mexico and the United States from the 1980s onward. Following the significant opening up of refugee policies in the early 1980s, this opening was rolled back abruptly at first in 1987, and then gradually thereafter. As discussed above, the conflicts in Central America did not ultimately result in any radical transformation of the structural conditions in the region. Pressures for migration in Central America continued throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s even as the peace process unfolded. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) passed in the United States in 1986 tightened up the border with Mexico and

targeted undocumented workers within the country, many of who fled to Canada (Garcia 2006:130). At the same time Mexico, partly in response to pressure from the United States, was tightening up its southern border, increasing deportation of Salvadorians and pressuring Guatemalan refugees to repatriate. In 1987 the Canadian government responded to the increase in Central American asylum seekers by canceling special programs for them and introducing new legislation that could be used to deny them entry, deport them, and restrict their incorporation into Canadian society (North 1990:159). The reversal in policy orientation coincided with the transfer of power from the Liberal to the Conservative party in 1984. The increase in refugee claims was constructed as a "national emergency" and the solutions proposed through Bill C-55 and Bill C-84 were to tighten the border and increase the power of immigration officials to deport and detain asylum seekers they deemed a security risk (Garcia 206:135-6, North 1990:159). Despite these changes, acceptance rates in Canada for Central American refugees remained high largely because of stiff resistance from refugee advocates (Garcia 2006:138). Controversial sections of the new legislation were not introduced until much later, such as the "safe third country" agreement with the United States, which came into effect in 2004. In retrospect, these policy changes were representative of a more gradual and lasting shift in attitude towards refugees and immigrants in Canada and elsewhere. Public opinion in Canada regarding refugees during the 1990s became increasingly unsympathetic. A combination of local and global factors seem to have contributed to intolerance towards refugees in Canadian society; lack of solutions to the global refugee

crisis; the expansion of United States hegemony and the "war on terror;" the increasing cost of living; and the manipulation of the public by governments and the media around issues of national security and public safety. The acceptance rate for refuges in Canada declined from a high of 89 percent in the late 1980s to a low of 44 percent by the end of the 1990s (Garcia 2006: 138,154). This does not capture the full picture, however, because refugee and foreign policies focus increasingly on interdiction and the related preference for selecting refugees from abroad.

Central Americans in Canada are part of a larger population of Latin American immigrants that began to arrive after 1971, and their children born in Canada (Simmons 2004). The majority of immigrants in Canada from Central America are from Guatemala and El Salvador. According to Landolt (2008), of the estimated 68,000 Salvadorians in Canada, 38,000 came as refugees and the remainder as family class or independent immigrants. Nearly sixteen thousand (15,912) Guatemalans arrived in Canada between 1980 and 1999, 59 percent of who were refugees and a further 28 percent were sponsored immigrants (Nolin 2004:275). Nolin (2004:277) argues that in contrast to the primarily rural origin of Guatemalan migrants in the United States, the majority of Guatemalan refugees and immigrants in Canada came from urban contexts in Guatemala. Of the 13,680 Guatemalan permanent residents in Canada, 4,015 settled in Montreal, 3,525 in Toronto and 1,360 in Vancouver, but due to confidentiality, obtaining accurate census numbers for Guatemalans outside these major Canadian cities is impossible (Nolin 2004:277). Once the political conflicts were officially resolved in these countries, flows

dropped dramatically. While exact numbers are not available, children born to Salvadorian and Guatemalan immigrants in Canada are clearly a significant portion of population growth among Central Americans in Canada. Determination of population sizes is of course further complicated by inter-marriage between different Central American groups, between Central Americans and other Latin Americans and between Central Americans and non-Latin Americans.

Landolt (2007) argues that a key defining feature of the Salvadorian population in Canada is that they came legally in contrast to the Salvadorian population in the United States, where upwards of half are undocumented. Central American migrants came primarily as refugees fleeing state repression and violence in their countries and for this reason they generally did not arrive with the education, technical skills and proficiency in English and/or French typical of economic immigrants (Simmons 2004), although there are important differences between the two groups. For instance, 24 percent of all Guatemalans who became permanent residents in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s were college and university students suggesting that Canada served as an important destination for Guatemalan intellectuals fleeing repression (Nolin 2004:275). In addition to the acceptance of Guatemalan civilians fleeing repression, Canada accepted both opposition group members as well as individuals from among the Guatemalan government, police and military, greatly complicating ethnic community formation in Canada (Nolin 2004:278). Both Guatemalans and Salvadorians have relatively dispersed settlement patterns in Canada and neither organize themselves significantly on the basis of home

village loyalties, but in contrast to Guatemalans, Salvadorians in Canada have managed to build a degree of community solidarity around the circumstances of their flight and their identity as Salvadorians in Canada (Landolt 2008:60). Rather than a pattern of close social networks based on home village association characteristic of Central American communities in the United States, refugees from Central and South America organize around progressive politics in urban contexts such as Toronto (Goldring et al 2006). Despite their many contributions to various community organizations and projects, Central Americans in Canada experience lower wage rates and higher poverty rates than both immigrants overall and Latin Americans overall, something they share with their counterparts in the United States (Landolt 2008, Nolin 2004:276-7).

Incorporation of Central Americans in Canada encompasses many dimensions, some of which are common to many ethnic minority groups and others that differ for Central Americans. Central American male youth seem to be particularly vulnerable to discourses that construct ethnic minority male youth as outsiders and potential criminals. Central American male youth are coming of age in Canada in a context of heightened fears of "terrorism" and "youth gang violence" and the perceived need for ever-increasing security measures. Raby (2005) argues that increased security measures in urban contexts such as the Safe Schools Act in Toronto are involved in the construction of a delinquent other based on age. Furthermore, school rules are importantly linked to gender and race through a homogenizing discourse that subjects racial minority youth to uneven disciplinary measures through zero tolerance policies (Raby 2005:85). Gaining a

sense of belonging may be complicated for ethnic minority youth in Canada because they are viewed as in need of "fitting in" to the mainstream. Rajiva (2006) identifies this as a conflict between "becoming" and "belonging" among South Asian girls in the Canadian context. Central American male youth may be particularly vulnerable to the interaction of these twin discourses that construct minority male youth as both threats to themselves and to other youth in schools.

Discussion

The roots of conflict in Central America in the late twentieth century date back to the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century (Booth et al 1993, Castillo 1996). The complexity of the historical links between these two periods of rapid social change can be illustrated by highlighting both the commonalities as well as the significant differences in development between Central American countries. Colonization established a pattern of externally oriented and elite controlled dependency and associated hierarchical social relations linked to the dispossession and subjugation of indigenous peoples in the southern cone. Following independence, nation building processes continued to expand inequality under the guise of "modernization," but the international role of Central American countries in industrialization as primarily suppliers of raw materials and cheap agricultural products prevented diversification of the domestic economy.

Cycles of rebellion and repression in Central America escalated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Ongoing peasant/indigenous resistance and polarization between the conservative landed elite and liberal reformists resulted in militarization of the region, particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century. Renewed efforts during the post-WWII period to industrialize the Central American region increased vulnerability to the world market and led to a series of boom and bust cycles that greatly exacerbated social inequality and conflict in the region. High growth rates were achieved through massive foreign investment and militarization, resulting in increased inequality and popular resistance. Finally, population growth and social conflict in Central America resulted in quantitative and qualitative changes in migration.

The patterns of refugee migration and settlement that were spawned by the recent conflicts and civil wars in Central America made use of long-existing regional patterns of labor migration but also established new internal and international flows that were primarily humanitarian in nature. The increase in scale of refugee flows during this time increased international awareness of the nature of the conflicts in Central America from the ground up, influencing significant changes in international humanitarian responses that often conflicted with evolving state policies regarding immigrants and refugees. The ongoing migration and incorporation of Central Americans in countries of settlement is therefore influenced by development initiatives, foreign and immigration policy, humanitarian concerns, and individual and family strategies of survival. This array of influences factors into the way in which Central Americans are legally defined by the

state, their access to the country and paths of incorporation once they have entered, and their ability to shape their incorporation.

The countries of Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador best illustrate the deep contradictions of economic growth, foreign involvement, social inequality and social conflict that have plagued development in Central America. Refugees initially fled from these countries into neighboring Central American countries and Mexico following the escalation of violent state repression in Guatemala and El Salvador and counterinsurgency in Nicaragua. Honduras and Costa Rica by default received many of the refugees. Mexico accommodated a large number of Guatemalans in camps, and absorbed many more Central American refugees as undocumented workers. The United States in turn received many undocumented Salvadorians and Guatemalans and offered asylum to a larger percentage of Nicaraguan claimants. Despite relatively generous refugee policies, Canada received modest numbers of Central Americans. Reception countries struggled to respond to the refugee crisis in ways that would protect their own national interests, not alienate the United States, and satisfy the international community. The response of the United States to the Central American refugees was heavily shaped by its historical and ongoing interests in Central America and conflicting interests from within the country, and included a vocal movement of those who advocated on behalf of the refugees.

There are important differences between Central American migrants based on the historical specificity of the origin country, circumstances of refugee flight, and related

composition and development of communities in the contemporary context. These differences are also shaped by the differential treatment of migrants and their children in national, local and institutional contexts of incorporation. In Central America, the wider context of the Cold War and United States involvement in domestic conflict shaped the construction of Nicaraguan, Guatemalan and Salvadorian migrants in neighboring Central American countries in very specific ways. Similarly, Guatemalan migrants received different official and unofficial recognition in Mexico in comparison to other Central American refugees. The social construction of different immigrant and refugee groups in national contexts is, however, neither simplistic nor static, but rather often contradictory and changes over time. The example of Salvadorians versus Nicaraguans in Costa Rica illustrates this point. Perceptions of the ability of a country to absorb immigrants are also importantly shaped by dominant discourses that change over time.

In contrast to the United States, acceptance rates for Guatemalan and Salvadorian refugee claimants in Canada during the height of conflicts were high. Programs in Canada were also initially expanded to accommodate Salvadorian and Guatemalan refugees. The result was a primarily documented flow of migrants with official refugee status and access to settlement aid. However, community formation among Central Americans paradoxically may have been more difficult, namely because the lack of chain migration and, particularly for Guatemalans, political differences that may have inhibited ethnic solidarity. Barriers experienced by the first generation of Central American refugees in Canada have contributed to the struggles their Canadian-born children face in

Canada, as evident in their lower than average academic achievement. At the same time, the strong commitment of Salvadorian and Guatemalan parents to seeing their children succeed in Canada may provide the children with resources and a purpose. This must be balanced against the situation they encounter in schools and particularly among peers, to be explored in subsequent chapters.

This chapter frames migration and incorporation of Central Americans in contemporary Canadian society in broad historical, national, transnational, and global contexts in order to set the stage for the review of literature on the incorporation of Central American youth in the United States and Canada in the next chapter. The review of Central American history emphasizes social inequality in economic and political terms, and individual and collective struggles for social justice within wider social changes. Inequalities in access to productive resources in Central America are rooted in colonization and nation building, and framed by wider social changes involved in industrialization, modernization and globalization. Rapid social changes in the contemporary period call for a re-examination of understandings of migration and incorporation particularly at the community level, at the level of the family, for particular social groups based on age, gender, generation and national origin, and at the level of institutions such as schools. The incorporation of Central American male youth in Toronto schools is guided by the interplay between national and global processes, but also significantly at the community level through the actions of individuals and social groups as they navigate social relations in institutional contexts. Further study is needed

along these various social dimensions in order to begin to understand the relationship of

Central American male youth to their families, their peers, and schools in the context of

their incorporation into Canadian society.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature

The goal of this literature review is to identify gaps in theorization of Latin American schooling experience and achievement and to identify more clearly how a study of the factors that shape schooling outcomes for Latin American youth in Toronto can contribute hypotheses and new theory. In reviewing previous studies, particular attention will be given to the conceptual frameworks they draw upon and support. A major challenge to the review is that the literature relevant to the topic is extensive and found in several disciplines: sociology, anthropology, cultural geography, social psychology, social work, family studies, and education, principally. It is not possible to cover everything. Nor is it appropriate to focus only on one discipline. The solution, while imperfect, is to focus on major perspectives, some of which cut across or are employed by several disciplines, and on more widely cited studies in relation to these perspectives. As most of the literature concerns findings from the United States, the smaller number of relevant Canadian studies is examined in greater detail.

The main conclusions from the review can be usefully signaled at the outset. Firstly, the literature points to the importance of broad structural factors in explaining poor schooling outcomes for Latin American youth. The structural factors are found as overlapping clusters of circumstances and forces that together generate "marginalization" in society and at school. The forces include: racialization and various forms of

stereotyping; poverty and related lack of supports; dislocation and losses related to often traumatic family migration histories; alienation and lack of identification in schools due to lack of course content and structures that reflect cultural, family and personal histories; and peer group influences generating separate sub-cultures that are negative toward schooling or that otherwise distract youth from school. These findings form the core of both US and Canadian studies.

Secondly, as useful as the above findings are for understanding the challenges ethnic minority youth face, they are weak with respect to identifying contextual and personal variation in circumstances that lead some ethnic minority youth to do relatively well or very well, while others follow documented patterns characterized by low achievement and early school leaving. Some studies point to the role of gender, parental factors, and individual differences in peer-relations and relationships to teachers in promoting positive outcomes. A number of studies also point to the importance of belonging and social-cultural identity as factors linked to schooling outcomes. Research covering these factors in both the United States and Canada is particularly helpful in identifying the frontiers of current theory and some of the gaps to be addressed in this and future studies.

The chapter is organized into two main sections. The first section considers the structural marginalization factors and the associated frameworks and related hypotheses that are widely supported by studies in various fields of Latin American and Latino/Hispanic background youth in the United States and Canada. The second section covers various frameworks and studies on specific themes related to variability in

outcomes among minority youth. Particular attention is given to variation in experiences leading to a sense of "belonging" in school, and to related peer-friendship patterns and social-cultural identity formation patterns.

Marginalization Research

There is a wide body of literature that analyzes marginalization of Latino/Hispanic youth in the United States within structural frameworks of understanding. Support for structural approaches to the study of marginalization of Latino/Hispanic youths in the United States can be found in a variety of areas. This work straddles fields of global migration (Sassen 2001) and immigrant incorporation (Portes et al 1993; Portes 1995) with particular emphasis on education and employment outcomes of immigrants and the children of immigrants (Abrego 2006, Feliciano et al 2005, Lopez 2002, Portes et al 2001, Tienda et al 2006, Valenzuela 1999). Much of this work also addresses issues of racialization, gender and class differences and a range of additional social and emotional issues that are significant with respect to marginalization of Latino youths in the United States. This section begins with a review of these studies, and then turns to corresponding Canadian literature that frames incorporation primarily in terms of marginalization and related structural constraints.

There is widespread agreement that current reception of immigrants in the United States and elsewhere differs considerably from previous times as a result of significant economic changes following WWII and continuing in the contemporary global context

(Sassen 2001). Deindustrialization in core nations of the global economy and the emergence of global cities are key determinants of casualization and informalization of labor markets. Sassen (2001: 291) argues further that, "what are perceived as backward sectors of the economy ... may well represent a downgrading of work connected to the dynamics of growth in leading sectors of the economy" (Sassen 2001: 291). The fastest growth of jobs is in the service industry, and these jobs are occupied disproportionately by vulnerable groups, most notably women and immigrants (both women and men), but also by other vulnerable groups, such as youth, racialized minorities, refugees, migrant workers and undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, immigrants, refugees and other vulnerable groups in the United States often find that they remain stuck in these and other low paid and insecure jobs, with little prospects for upward mobility (Portes et al 1993).

Related to various changes in the economy mentioned above, the present global context is associated with a different set of migration flows than those that occurred postwar. In contrast to the immigration flows from primarily European countries that rose and fell in response to fluctuations in the economy from early nation building up to the 1960's, from this point onward immigrants have come increasingly from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and eventually the Middle East. While there is still some debate about the longer-term inter-generational implications of this shift in source countries for immigrants (Alba and Nee 2003), there is consensus that the incorporation process for immigrants has changed considerably as a result of this shift. Portes et al

(1993: 83) provide a useful framework for understanding this process in terms of "modes of incorporation," consisting of "the complex formed by the policies of the host government; the values and prejudices of the receiving society; and the characteristics of the coethnic community." Key differences highlighted in this framework are the influence that ethnicity and racialization have on incorporation, influences that were less significant for earlier flows of migrants because of their cultural proximity to receiving populations.

The main argument advanced by Portes in the above mentioned and other works is that immigrants today, and indeed all those non-European immigrants that have arrived since the 1960s, are subject to a process of Segmented Assimilation. The Segmented Assimilation theory holds that immigrants follow one of a limited number of paths in the process of adaptation and incorporation. This departs significantly from the long-assumed linear model of assimilation in the United States that viewed incorporation as a relatively straightforward replacement of culture of origin with the culture of reception. According to Portes (1995) this is only one of three main paths, and it is largely out of reach for many ethnic minority immigrants and their children, especially those who are subject to racialization in the United States context. Subsequent work by Portes et al (2001) and a host of other studies in the United States has examined in greater detail the implications of these findings for the descendants of first-generation immigrants, and youth in particular as this is such an important formative time in the life course. The most disturbing finding is a second path of "downward assimilation," a situation in which

newer arrivals are eventually drawn into an "adversarial subculture" in major U.S. cities

because of their exposure to native-born minorities in marginal communities, paired with

lack of opportunities, and being subjected to a wider mainstream context of prejudice

(Portes et al 1993:83). A third path involves "rapid economic advancement with

deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity" (Portes

et al 1993). This body of work by Portes and many related studies in the United States

are based on the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) carried out between

1991 and 2006, examined in more detail below.

Much of the research that has examined incorporation patterns for immigrant and

racialized youth in the United States has, not surprisingly, focused on education and

schooling. Portes et al (2001: 203), for instance, refer to schools as "agencies of

acculturation" and emphasize the role that schools play in facilitating interaction between

immigrant and native-born youth. They stress further that unlike their parents for whom

status in the United States is determined primarily by employment, academic

achievement is the determining factor for the position that the children of immigrants

will later occupy in the status hierarchy (Portes et al 2001: 234). Consistent with the

theory of Segmented Assimilation, Portes et al (2001) explain educational outcomes of

immigrant and subsequent generations of youth in relation to different forms of

acculturation. They come to the conclusion that while second generation youth have

certain advantages over recently arrived immigrants, such as better language proficiency

in English and understanding of mainstream cultural norms, they are also at greater risk

of losing interest in school and drive to succeed academically, a pattern referred to as "dissonant acculturation" (Portes et al 2001: 239). This is significant because it directly challenges the assumption of linear assimilation: that as immigrants and their children born in the United States gradually acculturated they would join mainstream society and receive all the benefits of full substantive membership in the nation. While the Segmented Assimilation theory, particularly in its latest iterations (Portes et al 2008), provides a useful tool for understanding at a broad structural level how some immigrants in the United States fall victim to downward assimilation while others are able to avoid this unfortunate outcome, there remains more to explain about the various responses and outcomes among immigrant and ethnic minority youth, explored in greater depth in the next section on variable outcomes.

Hispanic youth are identified as the most disadvantaged group in the United States in terms of education (Portes 2001: 258). This study and others suggest a range of disadvantages facing Hispanic youth that result in an accumulated disadvantage in education over time. For instance, Schneider et al (2006: 181) argue that Hispanic youth face barriers to educational opportunity initially as a result of family background, such that parents pass on disadvantages of lower literacy and others. Once in school, these disadvantages interact with structural disadvantages in school in terms of institutional practices, and problematic relations with teachers and guidance counselors. For instance, Schneider et al (2006: 192) point to teacher bias as a potential self-fulfilling prophecy, such that lower expectations of Hispanic students leads to lower academic achievement.

Structural or systemic disadvantages are also present when Hispanic students are not assessed properly, and particularly when they are placed in classes that are below their level of ability (Schneider et al 2006: 199). These problematic schooling practices and relations with teachers lead to disproportionate disengagement from school among Hispanic students. The analysis done by Schneider et al (2006) is based on a review of available studies, census data and data from the United States Department of Education, and so has high validity. Valenzuela (1999) argues that Hispanic students reject schooling, even while maintaining strong values in favor of education. In this formulation, a structural disadvantage is introduced because schools and Hispanic students are operating according to a different understanding of what it means to care about school. Her study was a qualitative one in which she interacted with students and teachers and took part in school activities over a number of years. She argued that while students in the Houston area high school where she did her research operated from an expressive understanding of caring, the school imposed an instrumental, or "aesthetic" understanding of caring about school. She concludes that the students and teachers at this high school are ultimately victims of a system that "structurally neglects Latino youth" (Valenzuela 1999: 70). Finally, many of these institutional problems coincide with even broader structural issues, such that Hispanic students in the United States are more likely than other youth to live in poor neighborhoods, and therefore end up going to large schools where developing a sense of attachment and belonging is problematic, and where school resources are in short supply (Schneider et al 2006).

Another key dimension of adaptation for immigrant and racialized youth is employment, and in particular the factors that may influence transitions from school to various types of work. In some sense this is an extension of arguments reviewed above about how disadvantages are cumulative, such that experiences in kindergarten, elementary and middle school have an impact on rates of school completion, higher education and types of employment. The analysis of employment outcomes for disadvantaged youth in the United States often draws on a life course approach that prioritizes transitional moments of a schooling trajectory beginning with the transition to middle and high school, various contingencies that influence the pursuit of higher education, and eventual transition to work. For instance, Lopez (2002) argues that for the second- generation Dominican, West Indian and Haitian youth in her study of schooling in New York City, cumulative race and gender experiences were central to their evolving view of schooling and transition to work. Lopez (2002) carried out in-depth interviews with 66 participants, including 31 young women and 35 young men. She found that while the women in the study were fairly optimistic about such issues, the men were ambivalent (Lopez 2002). Feliciano et al (2005), also using data from the CILS mentioned above, concur that there is a gender gap in education taking place in particular among disadvantaged second-generation youth in the United States. However, they qualify this within a larger context whereby greater overall success among women in education is still not translating into greater success in the labor market with respect to men (Feliciano et al 2005: 1090). They also distinguish the effects that subjective

86

expectations can have as achievement ambitions, from expectations as realistic assessments of achievement (Feliciano et al 2005: 1088). Their analysis showed that "early behavioral troubles in school, which are often ways of displaying masculinity, were strongly associated with downward educational trajectories for young males, but had no effect on females" (Feliciano et al 2005: 1112). These studies suggest that Segmented Assimilation is gendered, and that this is a process that begins early in school and tends toward reduced prospects for employment for racialized male youth in particular.

Finally, there are other variables in the large body of literature on the adaptation and incorporation of racialized minority youth in the United States that are important to consider. One that is particularly significant here is the issue of immigration status, as will be further highlighted in the contrasting Canadian context explored below. Two broad issues of immigration status are important to mention here: refugees, and those without any formal legal status, or undocumented immigrants. Refugees arrive in the United States with a range of issues, often having experienced a difficult journey and suffering from trauma. Many refugees lack education, employment skills and resources. As a result of these issues, refugees tend to be dependent on government assistance and therefore lack agency. Zhou (2001) examined the effects of refugee status on the children of Vietnamese refugees in San Diego using the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey (CILS). The CILS collected survey data on adaptation for second generation immigrant youth in the United States. Data was collected from 5262 youths in grades 8

and 9 in Florida and California, and then repeated three years later with 81.5 percent of the original sample, and a third time ten years later with 46 percent of the original sample (Portes et al 2008A). Zhou (2001) found that the strain of acculturation experienced by parents was passed on to their children, and that children faced additional issues such as role reversal. Refugee status may therefore increase the risk and severity of "cultural dissonance," but Zhou's analysis also suggests that it may also provide a means of motivation and a basis for identity (Zhou 2001: 195-6). Zhou's overall framework remains primarily a structural one as the extremes of strong family ties and motivation to succeed paired with strong negative influences from other disadvantaged peers is viewed as somewhat of a dichotomy and a source of conflict, rather than as a range of variable influences and outcomes.

Notwithstanding the important disadvantages facing refugees, Abrego (2006) and others suggest that overall the most vulnerable immigrants in the United States are those that lack any legal status at all. While estimates are difficult to obtain, many Guatemalan, Salvadorian and Mexican immigrants in the United States are undocumented (Abrego 2006: 215). Undocumented immigrants usually have few resources, little access to benefits and protections, and face criminalization in the United States. Increasingly restrictive immigration policies and border control has made the situation for undocumented immigrants worse because it makes it harder to leave and re-enter, cutting them off from family back home and increasing risks and costs for them (Portes 2009). Many Latin American origin immigrant children share risk factors regardless of whether

they are documented or undocumented, such as low socioeconomic status, inadequate housing, unsafe neighborhoods, and unsafe and poorly funded schools (Abrego 2006: 218-9). However, lack of legal status creates additional risks. Abrego (2006: 219-20) shows that undocumented immigrants can be prevented from attending college because they would have to pay higher international rates for tuition, and usually cannot obtain the kind of employment that would allow them to afford the higher fees. Even with some opportunities to overcome these barriers, Abrego (2006) found that undocumented immigrant youth often became disengaged in school when they learned of the barriers they would be facing after graduation. This study, based on ethnographic data in the form of participant observation and in-depth interview data from 24 Latino youths carried out in Los Angeles in 2001, illustrates how undocumented immigrant youth are structurally disadvantaged by their lack of legal status (Abrego 2006: 217). In sum, the experience of marginalization among immigrant and second-generation youth in the United States is differentiated according to a wide array of factors, including country of origin, gender, social class, experience of racialization, immigration status, and others not explored here, such as family structure. A number of issues arise from the literature in the United States on immigrant and second-generation incorporation, and could use further comparative study with other contexts. These include: the degree to which these various factors condition adaptation and incorporation in different national contexts; the ways that these factors interact with each other; and whether or not the segmented assimilation framework is flexible enough to account for these variations. A final issue is the

relationship between these structural factors and individual differences, to be explored further below.

The research in Canada on structural dimensions of incorporation for immigrant youth to some extent mirrors that in the United States, although on a smaller scale, and with some gaps extending into the next section on variable outcomes. The smaller body of literature on Latin American immigration and incorporation in Canada, and related smaller population base, raises questions about the degree to which Canada differs as a reception context from that of the United States. Those studies that are available suggest that many of the same structural conditions that result in marginalization of Hispanic/Latino immigrants and immigrant offspring in the United States also exist in Canada. However, differences in entry status for Central American immigrants in Canada versus the United States are significant for incorporation. Secondly, important differences in immigration flows influence the availability of resources in the reception context. Finally, important contextual differences between Canada and the United States must also shape the incorporation process. Literature on Canadian immigration and incorporation emphasizing structural dimensions of the marginalization experience for youth are reviewed below. Consistent with literature on structural inequalities, emphasis is placed on measures of achievement in education and prospects for employment, as these are widely regarded as important dimensions of the incorporation process for youth from a structural perspective.

Examinations of past and present immigration policies in Canada frame the ongoing

challenges faced by racialized immigrant and ethnic minority groups in Canada within a

wider context of global human and capital flows. Prior to the 1960s, immigration policy

in Canada was explicitly racist and exclusionary. Immigration of non-Europeans stems

back to 1783 with the entrance of approximately 3,000 free black loyalists, who settled in

Nova Scotia, followed by the immigration of people of Chinese origin beginning in 1858,

which increased in the 1880s bringing approximately 15,700 male Chinese laborers to

work on the transcontinental railway between 1881-1884 (Knowles 1997: 24,50). There

were many other significant migrations of these and other ethnic minority groups over

the history of nation building in Canada. Up until the 1960s, however, most immigrants

were of European origin, and all others were explicitly restricted or prevented from

entering. Those who did gain entry were heavily discriminated against. This is important

to remember, because the historic shift in immigration policies to a "neutral" human

capital model based on a points system that began in the 1960s, and then became official

policy in 1976 (Knowles 1997:169), is often compared to this earlier time period with a

range of conclusions that nevertheless remain open to debate. What remains constant

according to Satzewich et al (2010: 51) and others is that immigration has always been

part of a wider process of state formation. This highlights the ongoing tension between

immigration for the purposes of labor and settlement, and the desirability in the eyes of

immigration officials of satisfying both. Another contribution of Satzewich et al (2010:

54-9) is a close examination of how notions of desirability in Canadian immigration

policy discourse, and indeed "race," have changed over time. This has implications for how we understand the relevance of racialization in Canadian immigration and incorporation, and whether and how change may be occurring with respect to this issue. Simmons (1999) explores the influence of these changes in Canadian immigration policy over time, suggesting that current policy analysis needs to pay close attention to the context of globalization and the neoliberal agenda to better understand the effects in terms of who is selected for entry into Canada, and possible implications for incorporation. Through a review of various arguments about multiculturalism in Canada, Simmons (2010: 175) comes to the conclusion that many of these arguments are framed solely within a national framework, and that it would be more appropriate in the present context to view incorporation as a process that takes place not only in a reception context, but also in relation to home countries, both of which are changing within a changing global context. This will be explored further below in terms of emerging transnational forms of incorporation.

Studies of the incorporation of immigrant and second-generation youth in Canada can be viewed as a subfield of the literature reviewed directly above. As in the United States, analyses employing structural frameworks often focus on documenting specific successes and failures of immigrant and second-generation youth in education and the labor market. Up until fairly recently little comprehensive data was available in Canada that differentiated among immigrant/refugee youth from different ethnic backgrounds, and that differentiated between immigrant and refugee youth. For instance, a 2002 Statistics

Canada release stated that while children from immigrant families entered school with a measurable disadvantage, they "overcome this disadvantage before the end of elementary school," but then qualified this by stating that, "There may be large variations underlying these averages" (Statistics Canada update April 2002). Similarly, Boyd (2002), in a quantitative analysis of census data, found that on average the second-generation children of immigrants in Canada were outperforming their parents and their native-born counterparts in educational achievement, but also cautioned that more analysis was needed to differentiate these findings according to ethnicity. In a study of academic achievement of refugee youth in Alberta, Wilkinson (2002: 189) confirmed that academic achievement does vary according to ethnicity. Wilkinson (2002: 178) based her findings on 91 structured interviews carried out in Alberta in 1998 with refugee youth aged 15-21. One common problem with data in Canada highlighted by these and other studies on education and employment outcomes of immigrant and refugee youth is small sample size (Beiser et al 2005, Reitz et al 2004, Wilkinson 2008). Symptomatic of this is the continued use of terms like "visible minority" and "racialized minority," terms that sometimes hide as much as they reveal, but without more detailed data remain necessary. A related problem is that studies focusing on a single ethnic group are often difficult to compare to other similar studies of other ethnic groups in Canada, and as Reitz et al (2004: 398) point out often provide little in the way of comparative analysis.

Despite the demonstrated long-term success of immigrant/refugee youth overall in Canada, more recent work extends these early findings to suggest a more complex

picture of structured inequality for some immigrant and refugee youth on the basis of

ethnicity, gender, social class, age at arrival, parental education, family structure,

neighborhood of residence, and immigration/refugee status. For instance, Anisef et al

(2008) conducted a quantitative analysis using data from the Toronto District School

Board (TDSB), where they traced the academic progress of 13-15 year-old students in

grade 9 in the year 2000, starting with a sample of N=18,798, and followed them for six

years. Anisef et al (2008: 19-20) found that dropout rates among immigrants in Canada

varied according to region of origin, but also by gender and neighborhood of residence.

The neighborhood effect incidentally contradicts the previous Statistics Canada release

mentioned above, which claimed that educational transitions among immigrant children

were due to individual family differences, and not neighborhoods (Statistics Canada

update April 2002). The study by Anisef et al (2008: 19,21) found an independent effect

based on immigrant family structure as well, with children of single-parent immigrant

families more likely to drop out of school, and found evidence of an accumulated

disadvantage for those who started school late and/or fell behind in credits, leading to

higher dropout after grade nine. Gosine (2000: 91) challenges the suggestion that the

vertical mosaic proposed by John Porter in 1965 is less prevalent today, citing research

and analyzing census data on postsecondary education and employment, and suggesting

the possibility of a new vertical mosaic that is "recast along racialized or visible minority

lines." This is consistent with subsequent research by Reitz et al (2004) among others,

but with some important qualifications by gender and generational status, although the

latter suffers from the lack of adequate data as stated above. Gosine (2000: 102) points to parental occupation as a possible determinant, indicating more research is needed on the influence of social and cultural capital. Aydemir et al (2008), however, using Canadian Census data from 2001 and data from the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), finds that "lower earning immigrant parents have more educated children." Partially resolving this apparent contradiction is the now frequent observation that the higher than average educational achievements of racialized minorities often do not translate into occupational and earnings advantages, particularly for young men (Aydemir et al 2008, Palameta 2007, Reitz and Banerjee 2007, Simmons and Plaza 2004). The results still seem counterintuitive, that is, for the children of immigrants there is no clear direct relationship between socio-economic status and educational attainment. Furthermore, Simmons (2004) provides an exploratory analysis of intergenerational educational attainment among Latin Americans in Canada, and finds quite divergent paths by gender with women exceeding the level of schooling of the previous generation, while men do the reverse, suggesting more research is needed to explain these divergent paths. Furthermore, whether the educational successes of the second generation will continue depends on the ongoing situation of successive cohorts of first generation parents. There is widespread agreement that recent immigrants are experiencing lower earnings than previous cohorts (Simmons 2010: 141-147). Furthermore, Wilkinson (2008: 167) found that some of the immigrant and refugee children in her study in Alberta were working

over 30 hours per week, both to continue their own studies and to supplement family income.

Beiser et al (2005: 22) argue that prior to the New Canadian Children and Youth Study (NCCYS), a longitudinal study that began in 2001, much of the evidence available on the adaptation of immigrant and refugee youth was contradictory because of a lack of comprehensive theory. More comprehensive theory is in fact emerging. Reitz et al (2004: 387,398), picking up on a structural analysis of possible inter-generational patterns of incorporation advanced by Boyd (2002), suggest that the experiences of the second generation are likely to be different, but contrary to what is implied in the literature to date, no less determined by the long-term institutional context of immigration/ incorporation. Simmons (2010) provides a careful analysis of the relative success of immigrants and the children of immigrants in education and the labor market in Canada that partially resolves some of the apparent contradictions. The eventual success of most immigrants, which is especially evident in the second generation, is positive overall, but may obscure both the larger picture and variations with respect to particularly disadvantaged groups (Simmons 2010: 143, 163). With respect to the former, the long-term success of immigrants overall in Canada is certainly a reflection of highly selective immigration policies, but it is cause for concern when immigrants with relatively high human capital take long periods of time, and in some cases a full generation, to reach their goals in Canada. With respect to the latter, the bigger picture of immigrant success, even over the long- term, certainly has tended to hide the quite different incorporation

patterns of the most disadvantaged groups, among those of particular concern here being

Salvadorian, Guatemalan, and other Hispanic youth. The framework provided by

Simmons (2010: 139-64) suggests further that immigrant/refugee communities in Canada

are evolving in relation to a context of change, to be examined in more detail further

below.

Finally, similar to the United States, studies in Canada stress the higher vulnerability

of refugees and their children to marginalization compared to non-refugee migrants

(Wilkinson, 2008). Wilkinson (2008: 157) used data on 276 immigrants from the 1998

Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), and also used data collected in the

form of structured interviews from a systematic random sample of 128 refugee youth

aged 15-24 as part of the Resettlement of Refugees to Alberta (RRA) study. The

incorporation of Central American immigrants is likely to be quite different in Canada,

because most came as documented refugees whereas in the United States many more

arrived as undocumented immigrants. A comparative study of Salvadorian migration and

incorporation by Landolt (2007) argues that the difference in entry status for Salvadorian

migrants in Canada and the United States has had implications for incorporation in these

different contexts that are not immediately obvious. These will be explored further below

in terms of variable outcomes. Wilkinson (2008) suggests that the very models that are

used to measure youth outcomes in Canada in terms of transitions do not allow us to

adequately measure how well refugee youth are doing relative to non-refugee Canadians,

causing her to call for a re-examination of these models to make them more inclusive, and for more qualitative research in this area.

Variable Outcomes Research

Research on variable outcomes in Canada and elsewhere tends to emphasize the complexity of incorporation for immigrant youth. This has contributed to an emerging understanding of incorporation as a context-specific and differentiated process along a number of dimensions, including age at arrival, the availability of social capital, ethnicity, generation, social class, gender, parental influence and support, and others. The sections below review literature on a range of important variable outcomes for incorporation, with a primary though not exclusive focus on Latino/Hispanic immigrant and second-generation youth in the Canadian context, in order to identify frontiers, gaps and related questions for further research, some of which are addressed in this dissertation. The review below considers: the degree to which various factors condition adaptation and incorporation in the Canadian context; the ways that these factors may interact with each other; and what the literature offers in terms of explanations for variable outcomes and the issue of social change. The overall goal here is to further explore the structural factors reviewed above in relation to individual difference by introducing literature that touches on: social capital; identity and belonging; gender variation; parental influences; peer influences; immigration variations such as age at arrival, generation and cohort; and contextual variations particularly in relation to schools

and schooling, and to identify gaps in the literature related to these concepts. Unlike the section above, which examined marginalization of Hispanic/Latino youth in the United States and Canada separately, the primary focus below is on the Canadian context, but such an analysis cannot be properly done without occasional reference to studies in the United States and elsewhere. As stated above, the Canadian context of reception has similarities and differences in relation to the context of reception in the United States. Drawing on studies in the UK and elsewhere is useful to sharpen the comparison between the United States and Canada, which are more similar. If more research were available on the incorporation process for Central American immigrants and their children in Canada, this strategy would not be as productive. The challenge here is to draw selectively on the insights of studies of similar topics, populations, and other national contexts, while striving to define what might be distinct about the Canadian context. Given the scope of this review, only a fraction of the overall literature on immigrant incorporation, that deemed most relevant, will be covered here. Cross-national comparative studies, of which there are unfortunately few, are particularly useful and will be given priority, only second to key Canadian studies - the focus of the review.

The view of incorporation as a multidimensional and differentiated process, and one that is also context specific, suggests that many outcomes are possible, but not that any outcome is possible, or that individuals can simply will a certain outcome. Rather, such an approach acknowledges the complex nature of incorporation and looks for patterns of

incorporation that take into account a range of structural factors, and that also account for

individual agency. In order to do this, one must consider the following questions:

1. What is the relative weight of different recognized factors for adaptation and incorporation?
2. How do various factors interact in the incorporation process?
3. What is the relationship between wider structures influencing incorporation and those factors of a more individual nature?
4. According to the literature, what are the most common patterns of incorporation for immigrant/refugee and second-generation youth in Canada, and where literature is available, for Central American male youths in particular?
5. What is missing from the literature with respect to these questions, the latter in particular?

There are a limited number of studies on the specific adaptation and incorporation

experiences of Central Americans in Canada. Even in the United States, where there is a

great deal more research available on the incorporation experiences of immigrants,

increases in the arrival of Central Americans are fairly recent, and there is a tendency to

assume incorrectly that their experiences will mirror those of other more established

Hispanic/Latino groups. Leslie et al (1989) argue that Central American immigrants and

refugees are different in a number of ways from other Hispanic/Latino immigrants in the

United States, and have arrived during a particularly unreceptive climate, further shaping

incorporation. Their study was based on 91 semi-structured interviews with Central

American immigrants that had arrived in the Washington, D.C. area within the last three

years (Leslie et al 1989). Their argument can be usefully extended when looking at the

adaptation and incorporation of Central American immigrants in Canada, which are

likely to be similar in some ways to that experienced by recent flows of Central

Americans to the United States; indeed they are part of the same flows, but also quite different, because of a very different reception context and community formation process in Canada. A qualitative study of changes in family life as a result of moving to Canada among 44 Salvadorians, Guatemalans and Nicaraguans, including roughly equal numbers of women and men, reveals interesting variations by gender as well as individually (Kulig 1998). Kulig (1998: 469) finds that the experiences between the three groups were very similar, perhaps accentuated in contrast to dominant norms for family life in Canada. The study by Kulig (1998) provides evidence for both the persistence of traditional gender roles as well as the potential for change in gender relations in the home. For instance, several of the men in the study felt that their sons should not do housework, as they regarded this as primarily women's work, while other men in the study did not feel this way, and had increased their own participation in household chores since moving to Canada (Kulig 1998: 475-6). A primary concern among parents is the success of their children in Canada, and in particular that they take advantage of educational opportunities, while they are also very concerned about the potential risks of living in Canada, which are perceived as gender specific (Kulig 1998; Simmons 2004).

Despite the important similarities in incorporation experiences for Salvadorians, Guatemalans and Nicaraguans found by Kulig (1998), others suggest that different contexts of migration and settlement have led to very different incorporation patterns for these groups (Basok 1990; Garcia 2006). Furthermore, there is more recognition that incorporation involves various forms of transnationalism, implying that home country

contexts remain relevant for immigrants and the second-generation (Levitt et al 2002, Satzewich et al 2006). Landolt (2008: 54) states that, "transnational practices involve not only a crossing of borders, but also a process of 'touching down' or being situated within different locations such as the nation, the neighborhood, the village or inherited family home." In a useful comparative analysis of the institutional dimensions of transnationalism among Salvadorians in Los Angeles and Toronto, Landolt (2007) finds that incorporation has taken very different forms in these two contexts. One of the reasons for this is the fact that Salvadorians in Canada, unlike their counterparts in the United States, gained entry as recognized refugees, which provided them with resettlement resources, but also resulted in rather dispersed settlement patterns, and meant that their efforts to organize around a Salvadorian collective identity have not taken root (Landolt 2007). In contrast to the extensive social networks typical of Salvadorian transnational formations in the United States, Salvadorians in Canada have formed networks of support based primarily on "family ties" and "political affinities," which represents a very different process of incorporation (Landolt 2007: 205). Guatemalans tend to have an even more localized process of incorporation in the Canadian context, according to a study by Nolin (2004). However, Nolin (2004: 267,283) argues that while the political and policy contexts of their migration process have resulted in a somewhat isolated incorporation process for them in Canada, Guatemalan incorporation represents a form of adaptation characterized by both household and transnational social relations. Nolin (2004: 271) uses a multi-method approach, including

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) population data, media analysis, and interview data from 19 Guatemalan origin participants collected in 1998 and 1999. These various studies reveal a complex adaptation and incorporation process for Central Americans in Canada, with some emerging features such as the importance of family support, the value placed on the success of children, and yet a struggling community formation process paired with cultural survival, all of which may take on important transnational dimensions.

This emerging picture of the adaptation and incorporation of Central American immigrants in Canada raises a number of questions for longer-term outcomes, and particularly for youth:

1. How does this wider struggle for community survival and growth impact on Central American origin children and youth in Canada?
2. What role do they play in this wider struggle?
3. How do their experiences differ from those of their parents, and what do they strive for?

In a study that examines the relationship between stress and subjective wellbeing for Salvadorian refugees in Canada, Young (2001) found that for recently arrived refugees, personal resources were significant for reducing stress, while for more established refugees social support became more significant. The study by Young (2001) collected survey data in London, Ontario, from 60 recently arrived Salvadorian refugees (less than two years) and 60 more established Salvadorian refugees (more than five years). It is now well known that issues of identity and belonging tend to be more challenging for second-generation immigrants than for their parents, but more research is needed on the

role that social support of various kinds can play in facilitating identity formation and a sense of belonging. Rajiva (2005: 25) argues that much of the literature in Canada approaches visible minorities as always immigrants, without considering that many visible minorities were born in Canada. Indeed, as mentioned above, some of the earliest settlers to Canada were visible minorities, such as the black loyalist settlements in Nova Scotia that date back to well before Confederation. The question of generational status, however, is not easily resolved. Calling attention to immigrant ancestry is precisely what reveals how incorporation is a differentiated process, and how racialization is implicated in identity formation and sense of belonging. Rajiva (2006: 180) suggests that further attention be paid to how second generation immigrant youth are racialized in Canada, and how age understood as a relation of power influences that process.

Inter-generational relations are also important for identity formation in the context of acculturation. Carranza (2007), using a grounded theory approach to analyze 32 in-depth qualitative interviews, found that Salvadorian mothers try to instill a sense of ethnic pride in their daughters in order to buffer the effects of racism in the Canadian context. Her study responds to a tendency in structural accounts of inter-generational relations to over-emphasize conflict resulting in poor adaptation, and emphasizes instead family resilience in the face of racism. Clearly, identity is shaped within multiple contexts of which family is an important one, particularly when identity development among youth takes place at the same time as acculturation. Hall (1996: 340) states that "We are always constructed in part by the practices and discourses that make us," but also suggests that identity

formation is a fluid process. This process is perhaps highlighted when identity and belonging are being negotiated in a transnational context. Haller et al (2005: 1188), using the CILS to examine transnationalism and identity formation among the second generation in Miami, found that transnationalism can provide a resource to youths facing racism and marginalization particularly in the process of identity formation. However, Haller et al (2005: 1189), echoing the concerns of Carranza (2007) and Rajiva (2005) in the Canadian context, suggest that sense of belonging for those facing a wider context of racialization is more problematic, and avoid any speculation on the potential for transnational ways of belonging to address social exclusion within national contexts. This transnational frontier for second-generation adaptation is as of yet largely unexplored in the Canadian context. This raises the issue of potentially important differences in acculturation between the first and second generation in communities such as Salvadorians in Canada, that are not yet well understood. While somewhat disparate, these findings on family and individual patterns of adaptation for immigrants and their children can nevertheless be usefully juxtaposed against wider patterns of community formation, which are increasingly framed within global and transnational contexts (Simmons 2010).

The review of literature addressing variable outcomes reveals ample evidence that many factors come into play where adaptation and incorporation of immigrants in Canada are concerned, but also that in certain contexts some variables are more determinative than others. The literature reviewed thus far emphasizes ethnicity and

racialization as particularly important for identity and belonging among second-generation youth within an acculturation context, and further suggests that subjectivity and individual/family responses are also important factors influencing incorporation outcomes. However, a more comprehensive theoretical framework for immigrant and second-generation youth adaptation and incorporation in Canada is lacking. Berry et al (2006) provide a useful starting point in their study of acculturation and adaptation of youth in thirteen different countries. They use cluster analysis to identify patterns of acculturation with a sample of 7997 adolescent youths (age 13-18), including 5366 immigrant youth and 2631 non-immigrant youth (307). Berry et al (2006: 323) suggest that immigrant and second-generation youth follow one of four distinct patterns of acculturation: integration; ethnic; national; and diffuse. The integration profile, characterized by involvement with both the national culture of reception and the culture of their ethnic group, was both the largest group (36.4%) and also was associated with the best outcomes for adaptation (Berry et al 2006: 323,326). However, 22.4% of youths in the study fit the diffuse profile characterized by marginalization and overall poor adaptation outcomes (Berry et al 2006: 323-4). The two remaining patterns fell roughly in-between these two extremes. The study also distinguished between psychological and sociocultural adaptation, where positive sociocultural adaptation was associated with the integration profile, and positive psychological adaptation was associated with either the integration or the ethnic profile. Unfortunately, the data did not allow for the inclusion of ethnicity and generation as separate variables, but did contain a variable for years spent

in the receiving society and also allowed for comparisons between different reception contexts and by gender (Berry et al 2006: 307-309). The collection of data in multiple national contexts in this study goes beyond the admittedly more developed Segmented Assimilation theory, because of the latter's sole reliance on data from the United States. The framework provided by Berry et al (2006) is the strongest to date with respect to addressing the Canadian context, but like its counterpart in the United States, Segmented Assimilation theory and "modes of incorporation," it tends to make a somewhat problematic value judgment about the role of peers, which only really comes into play in any meaningful way in the "diffuse" or "downward assimilation" pattern. What about the positive role of peers in the other patterns? And even more to the point, might the negative adaptation outcomes be better explained by other factors than simply the association with other marginalized peers?

A wider view of the literature suggests that we need other potentially more productive ways of organizing the multiple issues that come into play during incorporation, in order to obtain a more integrated understanding of the variable outcomes for incorporation experienced by youth in Canada. One potentially useful approach is to combine what we know about youth in general with what we know about incorporation of immigrant youth. I concur with Wilkinson (2008) who has identified this gap already in the Canadian case as the difference between literature on youth transitions and literature on integration of immigrant youth, which has remained largely separate. This begs the question: Don't immigrant and second-generation youth go through youth transitions in

Canada like other youth? Anisef et al (2005, 2007) approach this issue indirectly by first

identifying a range of challenges faced by all youth, and then, second, identifying

additional challenges faced by immigrant and second generation youth (Anisef et al

2005, 2007). Elsewhere Siemiatycki (2001) refers to the multiple challenges faced by

immigrant youth at risk of marginalization in terms of a "recipe of risk," offering a

somewhat more integrated understanding of the potential for marginalization in the

incorporation process. But this leaves largely unanswered the range of more positive

outcomes, beyond simply the avoidance of risk. Social capital theory provides the most

promising means of organizing the multiple issues that arise during incorporation, but

like many other insightful approaches, needs to be re-interpreted from a more youth-

centered perspective. Clark-Kazak (2011) develops a useful framework that regards age

in part as a socially constructed relation of power, echoing Rajiva's (2006) concern that

racialization is heavily structured by age, and that experiences of racialization that occur

during key moments of identity formation for youth often have lasting effects. This lends

further weight to the argument that in order to develop a framework for youth

incorporation, we need to take more seriously the subjectivity and views of youth about

their incorporation process. Gobin (1999), in a qualitative study using in-depth

interviewing, provides a critique of social capital as it applies to racial minority youths in

Toronto, pointing out that social capital can have both positive and negative effects on

incorporation. This may be true from a structuralist perspective, where we take for

granted that youth follow one of three distinct paths: they adopt the goals set out for them

by their parents; they reject the goals set out for them by their parents and society and adopt the alternative goals and values of a subculture; or they maintain a dual frame of reference where they manage both. However, Karakayali (2005) is critical of the "two-worlds" approach and suggests instead that immigrant youth may in fact negotiate between these extremes. From this perspective, social capital may be re-interpreted to include, for example, the negotiation of peer relations. This suggests that social capital as a resource available to youths operates within different institutional contexts such as schools, and in youth culture, and that these alternative contexts and the social capital that they can provide may be as relevant for youth incorporation as that of the family and ethnic community, which have been the focus of social capital analysis for immigrant and second-generation youth to date. Different institutional contexts may take on different degrees of relevance for incorporation in different national contexts as well.

There is little debate about how important schooling is for adaptation and incorporation of immigrant and second-generation youth in Canada and elsewhere, but many questions remain about the relationship between schooling and adaptation, and how to improve outcomes for marginalized youth in both of these areas. Community-based approaches to schooling have been proposed in some disadvantaged neighborhoods in Toronto that have a high number of racialized youth (Rowen et al 2006). Sefa Dei (2008: 346), within a critique of educational discourse in Ontario, argues that community-based approaches to education would allow for the development of positive social identity and provide social support and networks that are often lacking for

disadvantaged racialized youth in Toronto. This is consistent with a study in the United

States by Flores-Gonzalez (2002) that examines identity development in school among

Latinos with a range of identity outcomes linked to achievement. The latter study

provides a useful examination of the relationship between identity formation and

schooling outcomes, but both studies tend to reduce identity to something that is fixed

rather than fluid, suggesting that students only get one chance. Secondly, while Sefa Dei

(2008: 355) astutely points out how important it is to restore the agency of youth who

have been marginalized, nowhere is there any mention of how youths might be involved

in defining the community that will support them, or what they value with respect to

achievement. To be fair, these studies are responding to the systematic exclusion of

racialized students and so the focus is on these wider structures. The structures are indeed

formidable. For instance, drawing on Foucault, Raby (2005) shows how discipline is

differentially applied in Toronto on the basis of gender and "race" through seemingly

neutral school codes of conduct and dress. In an analysis of teachers attitudes at a

disadvantaged school in Toronto, Yon (2000) examines more broadly how the school

acts as a discursive space where "there are those who are read as belonging, those who

are made 'other,' and those who are somewhere in between." These studies emphasize

the importance of school context and social support or lack thereof in schooling

outcomes for racialized immigrant and second-generation youth. School context can play

a powerful role influencing schooling outcomes for immigrant and second-generation

youth, but youth themselves certainly also play a significant role in shaping contexts at

110

school. Suarez-Orozco et al (2001: 133) suggest that schools in the United States with high numbers of immigrant students range from those characterized by "fields of opportunity" versus those that are characterized by "fields of endangerment." But they emphasize a range of factors that bridge individual and structural levels, such as the importance of the "social climate," as well as school leadership, the morale of teachers, the relationship between students and teachers, and the relationships between students (Suarez-Orozco et al 2001: 132). These factors differ from those focused on exclusively structural accounts, which nevertheless remain important. More research is needed on the range of schooling contexts in Canada, particularly in schools with high numbers of immigrant and second-generation youth, as these schools face more challenges.

The literature on schooling for immigrant and second-generation youth tends to emphasize successes and failures, sometimes to the detriment of a more nuanced understanding of the range of variable outcomes. For instance, Suarez-Orozco et al (1995) challenge cultural understandings of schooling outcomes, and more specifically the dichotomy between individualist and collectivist understandings of achievement. They argue further that focusing on cultural capital and motivation (or aspirations) among Latino youth may obscure the role of discrimination and lack of wider community support, or lack of social capital (Suarez-Orozco et al 1995). In an earlier study of Central American refugees in U.S. high schools, however, Suarez-Orozco (1989) argued that these youth were using the history of sacrifice, memory of war, etc. as motivating factors for achievement. Clearly, positive social relations and a variety of supports lead

to better outcomes. But personal resources may be as relevant as social resources. For instance, Trueba et al (2000) argue that language is important not just for achievement, as many have noted, but also for identity. Suarez-Orozco et al (2001) concur, and both suggest that bilingual education could be a key resource for overcoming persistent inequality in educational contexts. It might be obvious, but it is worth a reminder that students may know best what they need to succeed in school. Many studies speak for immigrant/refugee youth without ever asking them about their experiences. In a qualitative study, Guatemalan and Salvadorian youth in Toronto stated that arriving in school for the first time was difficult for them, that teachers made little effort to understand them, and that they were labeled (incorrectly) as slow (Simmons 2004). This has real consequences for them as Anisef et al (2008: 21) find: when immigrants do not accumulate enough credits by grade nine, they are more likely to drop out, and also find that slower progress is related to academic streaming.

Literature on gender and school achievement in the UK (Connell 1995, Epstein et al 1998, Francis et al 2005, Frosh et al 2002, Haywood et al 1996, Jackson 1998, Sewell 1997) is worth considering for the issues under study here. This work has taken up claims that deindustrialization is resulting in a crisis of masculinity, and potential implications for schooling among male youth. Critical approaches to this topic situate changes in masculinity within a wider analysis of social change and continuity, and in relation to "race," class and gender dimensions. Haywood et al (1996: 51) argue that masculinity is best viewed as multiple, and combined with ethnicity and class, corresponds to different

social locations with different access to power. They examine social and cultural dimensions of masculinity, how it is produced in very specific spaces within schools and elsewhere, and emphasize the central role of peers for the development of masculinity among youth (Haywood et al 1996: 52, 54-5). Connell (1995: 238) concurs, and argues further that education is not only about the reproduction of masculinities, but also about the possible transformation of masculinity. Frosh et al (2002), in a qualitative study in the UK, found that boys negotiate masculinities in schools and in relation to peers in ways that address both schooling goals, and demands among peers. These studies acknowledge that important changes are occurring with respect to gender and explore implications for schooling among boys in particular, without reducing this to a crisis of masculinity. This work breaks down masculinity into multiple masculinities, highlighting intersections with ethnicity and class, and thereby qualifying wider overall changes that may be taking place for masculinity.

Feminist approaches to the so-called crisis of masculinity offer further insight into broader changes in gender relations affecting potential shifts in both masculinity and femininity. Epstein et al (1998) critique current discourses about gender and achievement that locate boys' underachievement as extrinsic to them, sometimes blame women for boys' perceived underachievement, and that call for the return of a less problematic masculinity. Francis et al (2005) shift the debate towards broader changes in masculinity as a result of neo-liberal ideology that tends to blame the victim. Together, these studies provide a useful framework for examining social change and continuity of gender in

113

relation to schooling and achievement. Francis et al (2005: 122-3) in particular, point to the frontier of study on masculinity, which questions essentialist accounts, and suggests further study on variable experiences and outcomes for boys in schooling is warranted. This also points to the importance of specificity for masculinity in terms of incorporation, including national and schooling contexts. What may be emerging is a parallel process in current analysis of masculinity that happened with early feminist analysis. Subjectively, gender may not represent the most significant barrier experienced by some ethnic minority boys that are having trouble achieving in school, but this does not mean that they are not part of the wider overall changes in masculinity. This is in part a theoretical issue about where the most appropriate vantage point is from which to examine a range of interrelated processes facing youth. The review of literature on masculinity and youth therefore highlights the specificity of social location, as well as the importance of approach. A study by Sewell (1997) suggests that it is important to consider the influence of specific racialization experiences for both masculinity and related schooling outcomes.

Finally, a related body of work relevant for the present study is wider debates about changes in transitions for male youth found in a number of studies from the UK (Bynner et al 2002, McDowell 2003, Nayak 2006, Taylor 2005). Ongoing interest in youth transitions is driven in part by the persistence of structured inequalities on the basis of class, gender, ethnicity and other social divisions. A number of current studies in the UK are revisiting the issue of youth transitions, however, with emphases on changes in masculinity and broader social changes with respect to class and gender. This work takes

as a starting point the well-known argument from Willis (1977) that working class boys'

opposition to middle class values in school contributes to the reproduction of the class

structure. Subsequent work has challenged that basic premise, by examining recent social

changes in school to work transitions. Many studies examine the implications of changes

in the nature of work in a post-industrial context. An ethnographic study by Nayak

(2006) finds that class differences remain salient in the post-industrial context, but also

that youth are forced to make new youth transitions, with important differences between

working-class youth and those facing inter-generational unemployment. Taylor (2005)

carried out qualitative interviews with 48 boys in secondary schools in Australia, and

found that youth career decision-making today is complicated by the changing labor

market, with the result that some youth are rushed into employment, while others are

delayed from employment by extended schooling. Taylor (2005: 500) argues further that

youth career decision-making is not only about jobs, but also influenced by "lifestyle

choices, life strategies, and identity formation." McDowell (2003: 828-9) draws on a

small case study of new workers in the UK, and argues that the diversification of

employment patterns, and an increase in the working poor in the present post-industrial

context has had a particularly adverse effect on white working-class male youth. Finally,

Bynner et al (2002), using data from a longitudinal study of a representative sample of

the population in the UK (n=1623) from birth over one week in 1970 to age 21, suggest

that the increased emphasis placed on educational credentials for employment places

additional pressure on disadvantaged youth, with different challenges for boys and girls.

How does racialization relate to these broader social changes in youth transitions, and are processes of racialization changing? What influence does national context have on youth transitions, and in particular for those youth who are also faced with the challenge of incorporation within an immigration context?

These questions are beginning to be addressed in studies on schooling transitions and transitions to work for youth in Canada (James 2003, Krahn et al 2005, Smith et al 2005, Thiessen et al 2001). The work discussed thus far about multiple influences and variable outcomes for achievement to a certain extent implies that youth are often viewed as undergoing a process of becoming. Transition literature, however, focuses on key turning points (transitions) that youth are required to make in order to become successful, contributing members of society, with emphasis on the transition from school to work. For instance, Thiessen et al (2001), in a comparative study of 1209 seventeen year-olds in 1989 in Ontario and Nova Scotia using face-to-face structured interviews, found that youth's images of work are shaped by class, gender and location, and thereby reproduce the social structure. Krahn et al (2005), using data from the 2000 Youth in Transition Survey (YITS), found that visible minority immigrants in Canada have high aspirations, but call for future research into the impact of aspirations among immigrant youth on educational and occupational outcomes. Smith et al (2005) explore subjective attitudes about schooling and available supports for clues into the variability of educational outcomes among black male and female Canadian youth. Finally, James (2003) in a qualitative analysis examines the strategies used by black male student athletes to aspire

to higher education. To some extent these studies all examine schooling in terms of the real and imagined outcomes among youth for future education and work. While the transition literature addresses temporal dimensions, it tends to do so in a somewhat formulaic way, and therefore runs the risk of reinforcing a set of expected outcomes as normal, and reinforcing alternatives as deviant and problematic. A useful corrective to this is more knowledge of the subjective views of differently positioned youth about schooling, and more analysis of the role of peers in decision-making about school. Key concepts in this regard are aspirations (well covered), but also subjective expectations, strategies, priorities, and short-term goals for achievement (requiring more research).

Summary of Issues for Further Study on Variable Outcomes and Social Change

The review of literature on variable outcomes for incorporation and achievement raises a number of issues that require further study. These are listed here, and then explored in greater depth immediately below:

1. Social capital and a range of related variables, such as gender, ethnicity, age at arrival, generation and others, that influence social capital and the ability to draw on it.
2. Contextual issues arising from the amount of support or distraction influences from parents, schools, and peers including the interaction of these three contextual variables.
3. Diverse overall patterns of acculturation including the frontier topic of transnational forms of adaptation and incorporation.
4. The relevance of identity and belonging, including hybrid and positional identities and sense of belonging, for incorporation and achievement.

117

The social capital literature is extensive with too many studies to mention here. However, there remains a gap in literature on social capital as a resource among peers, particularly among marginalized youth that lack all forms of capital relative to mainstream society. The work by Portes (1995) provides a useful framework that balances social capital in relation to other forms of capital, helping to explain divergent patterns of incorporation among groups that are similarly disadvantaged at a structural level. The Segmented Assimilation framework expands the definition of social capital within an incorporation context, taking into account the important role that ethnic communities can play in long-term inter-generational incorporation patterns. Gobin (1999) adds further to understanding of the role of social capital for racialized immigrant youth in Canada, suggesting that social capital within an incorporation context can actually have a downside in addition to being an advantage. What we do not yet know very much about is the extent to which racialized youth may generate and draw on social capital among peers in the context of schooling and elsewhere.

The literature on youth incorporation and achievement has called attention to many important contextual issues, from the broad temporal context of different historical contexts and ongoing change over time, to the many locations and institutional contexts that impact youth. A consensus has been reached that national contexts matter for incorporation; however, less influential national contexts tend to receive less attention and must contend with more developed theory in other national contexts, exemplified by the relationship between Canada and the United States respectively. A wide array of

studies of incorporation suggests variations according to local context, with important

differences between urban and rural contexts, provinces, and within these different

locations. Finally, institutional contexts such as schools (Bernhard et al 1998), families

(Carranza 2007) and youth culture (Poteet 2009, Simmons et al 2009) have been shown

to have important influences on the incorporation of Latin American origin youth in

Canada. However, as noted by Karakayali (2005), research to date in this area has

focused rather narrowly on the potential for cultural dissonance between the values and

attitudes learned and reinforced in the home, versus those that immigrant and second-

generation youth are exposed to at school. More research is needed on the relationship

between peer-influences and schooling for racialized youth. Similar to the emphasis in

the social capital literature, peers are regarded primarily as distractions from schooling,

particularly for racialized male youth. This calls for greater depth of knowledge into

subjectivity in the incorporation process for youth, and variations in influence from peers

in the schooling process. A study by Frosh et al (2002) looks at these issues for boys in

the UK, with emphasis on masculinity. Research in Canada suggests that taking ethnicity

as a starting point, rather than gender, may reveal more about how these variables

interact within an incorporation context. Finally, a broad gap in Canada relative to the

United States is more developed theory of how different contextual variables interact

within the incorporation process. To date, Canadian studies have tended to emphasize

one context over others, or suggest that there are multiple influences without providing

maps or models as to how such contextual variables interact within the incorporation process for youth.

There are rapid social changes taking place in the present global context, including changes to international migration and immigrant incorporation. There is some debate about how combined changes in reception contexts and migration flows may be impacting processes of acculturation. Awareness of diverse patterns of acculturation and the frontier topic of transnational forms has guided debate in this area. Exciting work on transnational forms of adaptation among Latin American origin communities in Canada (Goldring 2006, Landolt 2007, Nolin 2004) has opened up a number of issues for consideration. There is little exploration, however, of the implications of emerging transnational forms for immigrant and second- generation youth, with the notable exception of Simmons (2010). With global time-space compression, one challenge is simply keeping abreast of diverse patterns and formations as they emerge anew and change, and advancing theory to understand such changes.

Finally, many studies have found issues of identity and belonging to be more significant for the incorporation process for immigrant and second-generation youth than for their parents (Rajiva 2005). Whether this is a reflection of current social changes or not is a topic of debate. Plaza (2006) understands ethnic identity formation among Caribbean origin youth in Canada as a fluid and complex interplay of culture, environment, and community. He identifies complex strategies that involve constant shifting and assembling of new hybridized identities. This builds on the work of Stuart

120

Hall (1997), a well-known cultural studies scholar in the UK, who advanced theory of strategic and positional identities. The significance of identity and belonging for incorporation among marginalized youth in Canada such as the participants in this study, and the challenges that incorporation may present for identity formation and achievement in school for them, are topics requiring further study. Most studies on youth incorporation delving into issues of identity and belonging call for more research, perhaps a sign of the depth of this aspect of incorporation, an emerging consensus of its significance, and acknowledgement that we still have much to learn in this area.

Discussion and Conclusions

Structural reasons for various adaptation and incorporation outcomes are well covered for the United States context, and to some extent in Canada. Some gaps exist in Canada with respect to explaining outcomes/experiences for specific ethnic groups in Canada relative to the large body of literature in the United States. Overall the widest gap in Canada is the contextual and personal variations leading to a range of outcomes for incorporation. Within this, we need to look further into how multiple factors combine in the incorporation process, the relevance of belonging and social-cultural identity for incorporation, the relevance of peer-friendship patterns and support, as well as individual variations in relation to all of these. A second wide gap is the implications of broad historical changes in globalization and the emergence of new transnational forms for incorporation. Within this, we need to look at implications for incorporation of the shift

in source countries for immigration, and longer-term adaptation encompassing the second generation. As well, more research is needed on reasons for the persistence of forms of racialization and associated disadvantages. Literature on incorporation in the United States suggests racialization has serious consequences for identity and belonging, and that the influence of peers is also central in shaping identity and belonging. We need to know more about the persistence of education and employment disadvantages for some racialized youth in particular. More research is needed on how racialization of different ethnic and immigrant/refugee communities may interact with the well-documented gender gap in education. Finally, some attention must be paid to how experiences of adaptation and incorporation for marginalized groups such as refugees with low human and social capital may be distinct in relation to other more affluent immigrants.

A number of gaps emerge in terms of how incorporation in Canada for specific groups may differ from incorporation for their counterparts in the United States. As outlined above, the issues of education and transitions to employment are important, but so too are issues of identity and belonging. Furthermore, research is needed into how social changes may be influencing parents and children of newer cohorts of immigrants, such as the impact on children of the lower average earnings among recent immigrants to Canada noted in the literature. This issue is relevant for the present study, because it is not yet clear how incorporation for Latin American immigrants and their children in Canada may differ from incorporation for their counterparts in the United States, as well as how their

experiences of incorporation may be similar. One notable exception compares incorporation for Salvadorians in Canada and the United States (Landolt 2007), but analysis of the experiences of children and youth from these communities is lacking. This gap can be usefully addressed by building on research into variable outcomes in Canada. Two broad questions help to frame the series of gaps identified above: What is the relationship between structural and individual/contextual variables for incorporation in Canada? What are the patterns of incorporation for youth from different ethnic groups and for first and second-generation immigrants in the Canadian context? Taking the lead from the United States, it is reasonable to assume that different Hispanic/Latino ethnic groups likely face many unique challenges and draw on different sets of resources than others in their situation. Canada is also likely unique due to the evolving multicultural context, with implications for incorporation.

Youth literature and literature on incorporation, when combined, offers various insights, and opens up avenues for further inquiry. Comparative frameworks are particularly useful, for instance those that look at the differences in incorporation between children, youth and adults, between immigrants and refugees, and between first and second-generation immigrant youth. Wilkinson (2008) provides a useful comparison between literature on youth transitions and that on youth incorporation within an immigration framework, suggesting that new more inclusive models are needed in both of these areas. This is a sign of a greater problem whereby immigrant youth still tend to be defined against everyone else, rather than taking into account the specificity of their

experiences. There is still a tendency to homogenize immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds, refugees and immigrants, and first and second-generation immigrants. There is a need for more complex theory modeled on Canada, and not the United States. More research on the specificity of different incorporation experiences is needed. Given the recent attention to ongoing processes of racialization for youth, and different schooling outcomes based on ethnicity, more research is needed into differentiation of experiences according to ethnicity, gender and legal status. There is greater interest in how various institutional contexts such as schools interact with individual differences to produce variable outcomes. At present there is lack of focus on schools that prioritizes youth and peer relations from the perspective of marginalized groups.

Frontier topics relevant for variable incorporation outcomes among marginalized immigrant and second-generation youth include racialization, inter-generational relations, and wider community formation of ethnic groups. Another set of inquiries could be directed at the reasons for success, rather than just focusing on these in terms of the absence of negative conditions or barriers, including the role of social capital and the family, and the role of peers. We also need to look further at additional reasons for variable outcomes in education in Canada, specifically the importance of school context, and relations with teachers.

In sum, structuralist hypotheses are helpful for understanding broad similarities in outcomes among different groups on the basis of ethnicity, gender and class. However, factors that are associated with "average" and "good" outcomes (as opposed to the more

commonly noted "poor" outcomes) are not well understood. For example, research on gender differences showing better schooling outcomes for females raises the question as to why males fare so poorly, in general. For males, the issue of peer relations, friendships and so-called "gang" formations, and related social-cultural identity patterns, are of particular concern. What leads some youth into peer relations that are hostile to schooling and others not? Social capital arguments provide further insight into within group differences, such as those among Latin American youth, but the social capital literature is somewhat underdeveloped with respect to the negotiation of peer relations, and couched in fairly dichotomous terms. The modes of incorporation framework, and other related frameworks, help further to see the process of incorporation as dynamic over time in relation to specific circumstances of how Latin American minority youth engage with and relate to other minorities, and to non-minority youth within variable school contexts. But again, the role of peers for youth experiencing marginalization in the incorporation process is not well understood, except in so far as the absence of negative influences allows for other better understood influences of family and community support to be utilized. The main gap identified from this review, and that which provides an orienting hypothesis for the interpretation of findings in the dissertation, is on studies of temporal change taking into account specific patterns of how Latin American minority youth relate to others in their own community, in other minority and majority communities, and the relationship of these patterns of incorporation to variable school outcomes.

Studies that emphasize one or more of the important dimensions reviewed above nevertheless often continue to overlook another important issue at the center of all these other dimensions, the subjectivity of youth themselves. This is of particular concern for the gap in the literature on immigrant youth incorporation and marginalization in Canada, and specifically the extent to which patterns of incorporation change over time. At a more abstract level, this is reflective of the extent to which immigrant youth from different ethnic backgrounds have agency in the incorporation process, or put differently, the relationship between subjectivity and patterns of change over time for individuals and groups. While some previous studies have examined age/grade specific challenges for youth particularly in schooling, there is little study that examines these challenges and how they may shift and change over time in relation to issues of marginalization, racialization and stereotyping, suggesting caution in using previous models of youth adaptation to try to understand the experiences of immigrant and ethnic minority youth in Canada. The next chapter sets forward the methodology that was developed to address some of these questions and issues.

Chapter 4: Research Approach

This chapter details the choice and development of the research methods used to collect and analyze the data for this study. The methods were not set as totally fixed at the start of the study. Rather, they were set in terms of a general strategy. The strategy led to initial definitions of the characteristics of the participants sought for inclusion and to a set of themes and questions to be explored with the participants. The detailed methods were then modified and refined as the data collection and analysis process was developed and implemented. Through this process, the goals of the research became more focused. Emphasis was placed on gathering intensive data from a relatively small number of participants within a circular process that involved revisiting sensitizing questions gleaned from the literature and reconsidering these in relation to incoming data. In addition, new hypotheses began to emerge for subsequent analysis requiring a shift in focus with regard to the data being collected. These developments in the methodology were informed at all stages by contemporary debates on research methods in the social sciences, particularly on debates concerning different approaches to qualitative studies (Denzin et al 2005, Gubrium et al 1997).

The chapter is organized in two sections. The first section examines the arguments on different kinds of qualitative research and why a particular approach, known as "analytical bracketing," was adopted for development. The second section examines how

the approach selected was adapted to the goals of the present study. The chapter ends

with a short summary discussion of the main contributions that the study hopes to make

in three areas: theory and hypothesis development on schooling and incorporation for

racialized youth; more specific hypotheses on peer-related incorporation and schooling

among Central American male youth in Canada; and creative solutions to some

methodological and related ethical issues highlighted in the literature.

Section 1. Identifying the Approach

Research methods and their grounding in more general epistemological principles are

under constant critical examination in the social sciences. This section of the chapter

reviews the main issues that informed the choice of a particular approach for the present

study. The review is in two sub-sections. The first sub-section covers questions of

ontology, epistemology and interpretive practice. It examines why the key question in the

social sciences has become that of finding new ways of collecting and analyzing data that

correspond both to the substantive goals of the research while overcoming practical

constraints on data collection. The substantive goal of the study is to advance hypotheses

on peer-relation and schooling aspirations of a particular group of marginalized youth.

One main challenge to realizing this goal was overcoming resistance on the part of

marginalized youth and the wider community of which they were a part to participate in

the study due to issues of trust. The second sub-section examines the application of

conclusions from the first sub-section to the choice of an approach for this study that

would allow a high degree of participation among participants who displayed reluctance initially. It explains why a particular approach known as analytical bracketing was adopted.

Ontology, Epistemology and Interpretive Practice

In sociological inquiry as in life the only certainty is that things eventually change. The task of sociology is therefore to try to understand a changing social world. It follows that sociologists must be prepared to change their ideas about the social world based on new knowledge that becomes available, and to change their approach to the field based on the conditions they encounter. C. W. Mills (1959) suggests further that it is necessary to develop a "sociological imagination," defined as an ability to shift perspectives from the individual to the societal level, in order to better understand the relationship between individuals and society.

What makes the task of sociological inquiry so difficult today is that ongoing expectations for systematic, reliable and valid research are joined by increasing expectations for creative solutions to a range of new methodological challenges, most notably the crisis of representation raised by postmodern theory. There is also a wider critique of changes in the direction of social science research with implications for interpretive practice. The wider challenge for social science research is that as expectations increase, this leads to greater fragmentation within and across disciplines.

Denzin (1978:6) defines methodology as "the principal ways in which sociologists act on their environment." Qualitative researchers today are expected to seriously consider the impact they have on the field, and to provide an account after the fact of their interactions in the field and what role this may have played in various stages of the research process. In this early work, Denzin (1978) is critical of the separation of much of sociology into theory, method and substantive work. The response to this and other critiques from within the discipline of sociology has been an explosion of new approaches, particularly in qualitative inquiry. But has the problem of separation noted by Denzin changed? Or has it gotten worse? As the demands of the discipline increase, researchers may become less willing and able to seriously consider the theoretical, methodological and substantive dimensions of sociological inquiry, choosing instead to limit their efforts to only one or at most two of these areas. Qualitative researchers have long been expected to conduct rigorous analyses, and provide "thick description" (Geertz 1973), suggesting an emphasis on the empirical side, much like quantitative work. Bulmer (1984), however, suggests that sociological inquiry necessarily involves both theory and methods, and that the relationship between theory and methods in any given study is shaped by a particular problem of interest. This implies that the question for any study is not whether it is primarily theoretical or empirical, but rather what is the relationship between theory and methods for a given problem of interest. Consider the illustration provided by the grounded theory tradition. Theory occupies a rather complex position in grounded research because the intent is to build theory from data. A common

critique of grounded theory is that without a theoretical framework to serve as a starting point, this opens the door to bias of the researcher. It also opens the door to individual participants to direct the research process in a particular way. The task of grounded research is therefore to be sensitive to the field and to previous work in a given area, while at the same time reserving judgment early in the study about what may be going on for participants and through interactions between the researcher and participants. This requires reflection and reflexivity, reflecting about what may be going on by asking substantive questions, and being reflexive about the role the researcher may be playing in the research process by asking self-reflective questions.

Two common problems in qualitative studies arising from the discussion above warrant closer attention. Both have implications for my research design. The first is that academic work takes place within communities that develop specialized languages not accessible to everyone. This becomes a problem when those who furnish the raw data for research are excluded from different stages of the research process from conception to reporting of results. The second problem is the claim of postmodern theory that we are living in an age of "free-floating" signifiers (Gubrium et al 1997). This claim challenges the empirical basis of social science research. From this perspective, ethnomethodology for instance becomes the representation of representation. These two problems interact, as the increasing complexity and rigor expected of qualitative studies tends to make research less accessible. Denzin et al (2003: 28-9) go further, claiming that we are facing a "triple crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis." On the positive side, this has

led to a search for creative solutions, higher standards for ethics, and greater need to address politics in research.

To some extent, ontology and methodology are determined by the particular paradigm that is chosen for any given study, otherwise known as epistemology. More recently, however, researchers are called on to search for creative solutions to methodological problems that cannot be solved by strict adherence to a single specific predetermined methodological paradigm. A common proposal advanced by a number of methodological experts some time ago is to use triangulation, or the use of more than one method or methodological strategy to study a given problem (Campbell and Fiske 1959 and Webb et al 1966 in Bulmer 1984:32, Denzin 1978). Bulmer (1984:33) argues that triangulation allows for the evaluation of perspectives on the basis of "their capacity to explain." Triangulation is still recognized as a useful strategy in social science research, but a given study is only as good as the combination of triangulated methods, and doing more than one method well is almost certainly going to require more resources and take more time. More problematic still is the implied assumption that a researcher can enter the field without a sociological paradigm, "starting from scratch" in effect. Researchers are expected to be self-conscious about how they are approaching a given problem. In practice this means clarifying a starting point and any changes in approach that may take place and why these occurred. Bulmer (1984) raises an important question that is still hotly debated today, and one that is important for the evolution of grounded theory. Namely, how do researchers account for their role, and in particular their subjectivity, in

the production of knowledge? These developments in qualitative inquiry point to the need for creative solutions catered to particular research settings.

To summarize, social science research is faced with two challenges that are in tension with one another. The first is that more is expected of researchers both in terms of rigor and in practicing sensitivity and reflexivity. This has meant that research is subjected to more scrutiny, and that researchers are forced to specialize in a substantive area, and often focus on either theoretical or empirical work. The second challenge is that awareness of the situated nature of interpretive practice has led to further fragmentation, as researchers tailor their methods for a better fit in different research settings. These challenges have negative and positive outcomes. Transferability of knowledge becomes problematic in this context. On the positive side, these challenges have led to a search for creative solutions. The most promising solutions seem to be those that grapple with the compelling implications of the postmodern critique, without completely abandoning the search for "truth".

The Postmodern Challenge to Qualitative Inquiry

One of the most important challenges facing qualitative researchers today is the crisis of representation. The crisis of representation has emerged from the postmodern critique of the relationship between researchers, research subjects and "representational practice" (Gubrium et al 1997:10). Taken to the extreme, postmodern theory implies that there is no objective reality outside of experience (Guba et al 2005:205). Postmodernism

133

challenges the authority of researchers and the authenticity of the accounts produced by social research inquiry, but debate about the implications of the postmodern critique for social scientific research is ongoing. Gubrium et al (1997:100) argue that the crisis of representation provides an opportunity to improve on research inquiry. The critique has forced qualitative researchers to become more self-conscious, and to practice greater reflexivity and sensitivity. Rather than arguing for the superiority of one approach over others, Gubrium et al (1997) suggest that postmodernism, like other approaches, embodies certain "sensitivities" and "risks". Gubrium et al (1997) suggest that researchers operating from different paradigms can best address questions of representation in relation to "conditions of interpretation." The postmodern challenge has actually resulted in what Guba et al (2005:204) refer to as the emergence of "new-paradigm inquirers," including critical theorists and constructivists, who continue to engage the controversies raised by the postmodern critique in creative ways. Most importantly, postmodernism has forced researchers taking different approaches to consider more carefully the process by which knowledge is produced, discussed immediately below.

Accounting for Knowledge Production

The issues outlined above raise questions about the appropriate criteria for reliability and validity in qualitative research (Guba et al 2005: 206). For example, separate criteria of "trustworthiness" proposed by Lincoln et al (1985) led to a productive debate about

what is meant by rigor in interpretive inquiry. Consequently, expectations for rigor now include a deeper account of how reality is constructed, or how subjects arrive at certain knowledge. The discussion of what criteria to use to evaluate qualitative research is part of a wider debate about how the nature of social inquiry is transforming (Guba et al 2005:206).

Drawing on Gubrium et al (2003, 1997), in selecting initial assumptions and directions for the data collection and approach used in the present dissertation, I aimed to keep in mind the challenges to social science research highlighted in the above section. This was done by combining and adapting qualitative techniques within a paradigm that allowed for this flexibility. The approach taken was particularly oriented to allowing adjustments to the selection of participants, the content and structure of interview techniques, and the focus of the analysis as the study proceeded. The techniques and overall research process are examined in more detail further below.

Developing the Approach

Texts and handbooks on qualitative methods now offer a rich menu of alternative approaches (Bryant et al 2007; Denzin et al 2005; Gubrium et al 1997). Selecting among these may be a matter of individual preference and disciplinary inclination. Yet the selection is also governed by both the substantive goals of the research and by practical issues. In the present case, a substantive focus on peer relations, identity, and achievement among minority youth influenced the selection and adaptation of methods.

135

A practical challenge encountered was the resistance of many Latin American youth in Toronto to be interviewed on any matter, and perhaps most of all on sensitive issues of achievement in a context where they are often stereotyped as under-achievers. This further shaped the exact methods pursued. The remainder of this chapter outlines the particular approach adopted, provides an account of how this approach was selected to address key methodological problems, some of which are discussed above in relation to the literature, and closes with some reflection on the extent to which this approach was actually successful in addressing them.

Initial reflection on the research goals and on practical challenges to addressing them both led to the conclusion that the study would be well served by a qualitative approach involving a small sample and in-depth interviewing around a set of core themes. The goals were to use such an exploratory, qualitative study to develop hypotheses and open new research questions on issues concerning the schooling achievement of minority youth, in this case Latin American origin youth in Toronto (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3). While exploratory studies are not necessarily qualitative, it is also the case that qualitative studies are well suited to developing (as opposed to testing) hypotheses. A key advantage of a qualitative approach for developing hypotheses is that it is adaptable to pursuing new insights as they emerge in the research itself. With respect to overcoming the practical challenges –namely, to gain access to the community and generate confidence among participants—a qualitative approach offers many advantages. With a smaller number of participants, it is possible to spend more time on building their

confidence through repeated contacts and social networks. Interviewing based on the exploration of themes allows the researcher to constantly observe and adapt to resistance to questions on certain topics, to test ways around such resistance, and to find ways to overcome resistance that is based on the power (and perceptions of power) of the researcher.

The above points are summarized in Figure 4.1. Figure 4.1 A shows a common understanding of how research goals and practical issues of obtained data jointly determine the selection of a research approach. In this case, the goals and the practical constraints determine the choice of the approach (one-way arrows). Figure 4.1 B shows an expanded view of the process in which the adoption of a research approach (following the logic of Figure 4.1 A) later leads to an ongoing process of modifications and refinements to the goals of the research and to the specific methods used to address these goals. Figure 4.1 B reflects what happened in the present study. The process was in part anticipated by a review of debates taking place on the strengths and limitations of different kinds of qualitative research (Denzin et al 2005, Gubrium et al 1997).

Figure 4.1: Relationship Between Research Goals, Challenges and Approach

137
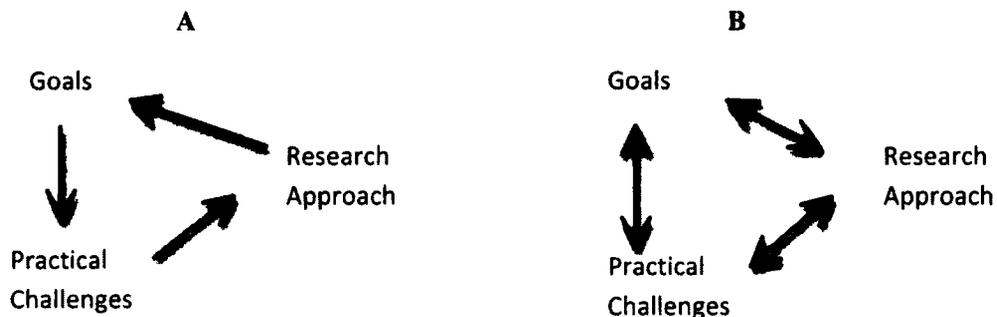
One of the initial uncertainties in the study was whether to adopt a narrative or a thematic qualitative-research strategy. Both have strong arguments in their favor. Both fall within the "constructivist" methodological approaches outlined in Diagram B above. They can be considered to be complementary to one another and incorporated into the same study. It is also the case that strong adherents of the narrative approach have been extremely critical of "grounded theory," an approach to thematic qualitative research that relies on precise thematic coding of relatively small pieces of interview text and counting (numerical analysis) of the coded pieces. However, other approaches to thematic qualitative research rely less on fixed principles of coding and interpretation, and are less subject to this criticism. Of particular interest in this regard is the technique of "analytical bracketing" (Gubrium et al 1997). The technique is appropriate for a study in which inter-subjectivity (connecting the researcher and participants), subjectivity (focus on the participants' experiences and understandings), and reflexivity (awareness of power relations at all times) are incorporated into the research process. Table 4.1 summarizes a number of approaches that influenced the overall approach adopted.

Constructivism

I approach the field from a constructivist paradigm. According to Denzin et al (2003: 33-5) this implies "relativist ontology," a "subjectivist epistemology," and a "naturalistic set of methodological procedures." A constructivist approach therefore does not endeavor to simply describe a (sometimes) hidden reality, but rather is concerned with

138

TABLE 4.1: Main Features and Features Adopted for the Study

APPROACH	MAIN FEATURES	ADOPTED
Constructivist	Research as inter-subjective, subjective experience, and critical analysis.	All main features as principles of research.
Grounded: Offers a mix of Objectivist and Constructivist Approaches	Qualitative analysis of themes, repeat coding to identify typologies of responses within themes (Strauss et al 1998), or constructivist grounded theory that derives more from the interpretivist tradition (Charmaz 2006). Allows for flexibility and combination with other techniques.	Adopted a constructivist approach to grounded theory. Thematic analysis of representations and conditions that emerge through dialogue between researcher and participants. Themes are viewed as pieces of emerging inter-subjective accounts of changing conditions arrived at through interpretive inquiry.
Narrative	Focus on lived experience structured by narratives (stories) as told by participants.	Sensitivity to narratives of participants informed the research process, but was not the main focus of analysis.
Analytical Bracketing	Developed by Gubrium et al (2003) to resolve the split between objective and subjective elements of research. Focus on "what" is achieved by bracketing questions of "how" and vice versa. Analysis incorporates both aspects and their relationship to each other.	Applied to thematic analysis of interview data. Analysis began with open-ended questions about "what" (What is going on here?) then moved intermittently to questions of "how" (How are participants representing their experience?) and integrating both sides of interpretive practice.

the ways in which subjects act on their environment in a process where both are changing in relation to each other. Similarly, constructivists view the production of knowledge as an ongoing and inter-subjective process in which researchers and participants are both engaged. Contrary to an objectivist stance that seeks to uncover a partially hidden reality, constructivism is guided by a recursive process that returns repeatedly to theoretical questions as data collection and analysis proceeds in order to develop an understanding

of the changing relationship of individuals to their environment. Circularity is further introduced by adjusting research methods in relation to incoming data. A constructivist approach is therefore iterative to the extent that knowledge is produced through a process whereby methods, the analysis of incoming data, and sensitizing questions emerging from the literature are all adjusted in relation to one another. Knowledge from a constructivist stance is viewed as context specific and contingent. This is a critical approach that acknowledges the role of power in enabling and constraining individuals who occupy different subject positions.

My use of constructivism is intended to approach the complexity of lived experience in relation to the conditions of interpretation. Constructivist approaches also provide an advantage in being able to address the critical issues ignored by positivist social science, such as authorial voice and the multiple possible viewpoints with respect to different aspects of social reality. However, they face the risk of losing sight of the inertia of broad social, institutional and historical contexts of influence. As Gubrium et al (2003: 216, 1997) exclaim, "consciousness is always consciousness of something," meaning that theory can never be completely divorced from the conditions which give rise to interpretation. Conditions are understood here as historical, cultural and institutional as well as situated, local and specific. The greatest challenge I faced in using a constructivist approach was to incorporate wider contexts in the analysis (Gubrium et al 2003), without conversely losing sight of the situated nature of interpretive practice (Denzin et al 2003). The risk was warranted as I sought to explore the overlap between

140

broader social structures and situated expressions of human agency as requisite to gain some insight into social change.

Grounded Theory Approaches

Grounded Theory as first elaborated in Glaser and Strauss' (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory was a response to the perception that qualitative studies, in contrast to quantitative studies, was not done systematically enough and therefore not replicable. Grounded theory in its early form involved a circular process of data collection and analysis intended to ground initial insights arising from the data in further data collection. The assumption that researcher bias could be removed from the equation by a tighter connection between data collection and analysis, so that the data could to some extent "speak for themselves," was made in response to the wider criticism that qualitative studies were too subjective, and therefore lacked validity. Since then the value of qualitative studies in building theory has become better recognized, and along with this is the recognition that trying to judge qualitative studies on the basis of criteria designed with quantitative methods in mind is misguided. During the same time, the original form of grounded theory has changed dramatically. These changes have been largely positive, as the intent has been to retain the rigor of grounded techniques, while better accounting for the role of researchers in the production of knowledge, rather than denying that the researcher plays a substantive role. Charmaz's (2003) constructivist approach is more consistent with the ethnographic tradition than with the naturalist. Charmaz raises

important epistemological questions, privileging situated knowledge and the immediate

implications for those involved (Ibid: 272). Multiple viewpoints that emerge through

interaction between researcher and research participants are valued equally and

"Causality is suggestive, incomplete and indeterminate in a constructivist grounded

theory" (Ibid: 273). Methods of writing and reporting also differ in a constructivist

approach. While theory remains a central objective of research, this is balanced with an

"evocative aesthetic" (Ibid: 278). Charmaz (2003) raises valid criticisms of grounded

theory as it evolved within the naturalist tradition. Her "constructivist" version of

grounded theory is promising in that it incorporates important elements of reflexivity,

inter-subjectivity, and resulting awareness of the constructed and multi-dimensional

character of social reality. A constructivist approach allows for the flexibility to borrow

techniques from grounded theory without threatening the overall research approach

adopted. In fact, according to Charmaz (2006) it is the flexibility of a constructivist

approach that is one of its greatest strengths.

Analytical Bracketing

Analytical bracketing, that is, switching the focus back and forth between "what" and

"how" provides footing for addressing "why" questions (Gubrium et al 2003: 238-9), a

vital element in theory building. It guards against totalizing accounts that lose sight of the

situational nature of interpretive practice. Conversely, it provides a means of exploring

human agency in social change, by contextualizing the local and specific in the global

and general. I thought the technique particularly suited to study of peer relations and schooling among marginalized youths, to guard against the tendency to interpret unselfconsciously on behalf of youths, and solely according to normative definitions of achievement in school. I hoped that bracketing would allow a deep examination of youth perspectives on peer relations, schooling, achievement and other related topics without losing sight of wider contexts of influence. The technique of bracketing promises to engage researchers in a critical consciousness of the reflexive relation they necessarily have with the field (Gubrium et al 2003: 240). My use of the technique of analytical bracketing was informed by current postmodern critiques of qualitative inquiry, in particular the "crisis of representation" (Denzin et al 2003). Lack of consensus over the nature of reality according to postmodern theory makes cultural representation especially problematic. Implications for qualitative inquiry suggest that research needs to be both contextualized in wider ongoing processes of continuity and change, and yet also grounded in specific social relationships. I attempted to apply this in my study by striving to: 1. Contextualize youths' perceptions of constraints and opportunities within a wider incorporation process and in relation to a number of significant others: and 2. Ground their perceptions in the context of the interview process. My objective was to find out how they perceived the world around them and how they sought to engage in it, but I was also aware that I had an influence on the research setting. According to Tedlock (2003: 175), ethnographic inquiry today is best characterized as "co-producing ethnographic knowledge... within a critical interactive self-other conversation or dialogue." Analytical

bracketing involves analysis across two interrelated borders. One is "the border of reality and representation" elaborated by Gubrium et al (1997:101) as a dialectic between substantive and constitutive sides of interpretive practice, discussed above. The other arises from the relationship between researcher and participant, referred to by Tedlock (2003: 174) as a new form of "border-zone cultural production" resulting from the "unsettling of the boundaries" between self and other. This introduces a critical question of "who" is representing the participants, and how they are doing so. Awareness of the border between self and other helps to reveal how participants are reconstituting their social worlds in the context of the interview process. According to Gubrium et al (2003: 239) such an analysis of subjectivity provides footing for addressing how and "why recognizable constellations of social order take on locally distinctive shapes," and this is equally true of the research setting.

A Combined Approach

New approaches, such as Charmaz's (2006) constructivist approach to grounded theory depart from orthodox, objectivist assumptions about the basis for knowledge in an attempt to satisfy an emerging expectation in qualitative studies for interpretive rigor. There is some debate among grounded theorists about whether this is a positive development (Glaser 2007). This study is part of a larger trend that borrows techniques from grounded theory but departs from orthodox use of these techniques, because of their usefulness for providing comprehensive understanding of complex, situated and

144

changing social contexts grounded in human experience. Gubrium et al (1997) suggest

that qualitative researchers today are called on to engage the border between reality and

representation. The technique of analytical bracketing bridges the two sides of

interpretive practice (representations of lived experience versus conditions of

interpretation), thereby allowing researchers to merge more self-consciously and inter-

subjectively with participants through analysis of evolving questions of "how" and

"what". Like both Strauss et al (1998) and Charmaz (2003) I retained the comparative

analytical framework, a key dimension of grounded theory. I sought to generate themes

through in-depth dialogue with participants, and then explore substantive and constitutive

dimensions of those themes with them. In subsequent interviews I was better able to

follow up on emergent themes as I got a better picture of their collective experiences and

their representation of those experiences. In a sense, I sought to contextualize in dialogue

with participants the situated knowledge they provided, thereby illuminating how both

interactional dynamics and structural factors are brought to bear on the participants. I was

particularly interested in how they understood wider constraints and opportunities in

relation to their perceptions of themselves, their relations with others and their efforts to

achieve. I thought the best way to understand the relationship between the conditions

they faced with their interpretation and accounts of those conditions was to draw on

constructivist grounded theory principles, thereby acknowledging my role in co-

constructing multiple viewpoints and realities (Charmaz 2003). Rather than attempting to

"give voice" to participants by reproducing their accounts, I tried to involve them more

actively in an inter-subjective exploration and analysis of general themes and issues framed by the wider literature, and more specific themes and issues that they raised.

My use of combined techniques and my overall research approach was informed by the way theoretical and methodological issues came together around particular substantive issues of interest. For example, narrative research suggests that relationship is key to adolescent development, and more recent studies suggest this is also true among boys (Deutsch 2007). Other studies have shown that issues of relatedness are key to immigrant adaptation (Pessach-Ramati et al 2007), and yet Josselson et al (2007) argue that relatedness has largely been ignored by studies in psychology because they tend to privilege agency over community. Social relations are central in much sociological research, but relatedness and relational understanding of processes at the small scale, interactional level is lacking. Pessach-Ramati et al (2007:169) suggest further that meanings attributed to concepts of relatedness may be culturally specific. The decision to explore themes of belonging in the context of key social relationships, namely those among peers and those between students and teachers was shaped by these insights from the literature, and these themes were further reinforced in my mind when I began to analyze the data. I wondered what a thematic approach would reveal about relatedness for identity and belonging among participants.

It was also an important part of my research design to consider how the relationships I was developing in the research setting, and especially among participants, were influencing the data. Researching within a community from which I was not a member

posed a risk that the knowledge produced would become decontextualized, reduced or simplified. In this regard it was important to consult with the community in early stages, and then with informed outsiders as data collection and analysis proceeded. Inevitably there would be gaps in what participants were willing to share with me, and what they shared would be influenced by how they perceived me. I responded to this limitation by working towards a position where I was viewed as a trusted outsider, mainly by aligning myself with key informants who were trusted among youths, and by being sensitive and flexible to the conditions under which youths wished to collaborate with me. My outsider status was not always a limitation. Participants were better able to openly discuss some issues with an outsider, because they were less concerned about the judgment they would receive from me than from an insider. Participants conveyed a strong sense of social pressure to behave in certain ways and to hold certain values among members of the same ethnic group. The confidential nature of the interviews paired with lack of shared ethnicity between interviewer and participants therefore allowed for more openness about some aspects of their experiences, identities, and sense of belonging in Canada. This advantage was only realized once a level of trust had been established, which varied among participants. Trust was important for helping to overcome the different social positions and potential imbalances in power between researcher and participants. Practicing sensitivity and patience, careful timing, providing moral support, measured self-disclosure and being flexible were all required to achieve the level of trust and participation that were sought after. In the end, there were advantages and disadvantages

to the differences in social position between researcher and participants. It is worth noting that gaining trust and a high level of participation in research are never simple tasks, and this is especially the case among groups such as the participants in this study that are difficult to access to begin with.

In sum, a constructivist approach combined with techniques borrowed from grounded theory, and the technique of analytical bracketing, allowed for an exploration of how participants represented themselves within the research setting, why they were representing themselves in particular ways, and what this could tell us about their experience. Constructivism lends itself to the analysis of how subjects come to know themselves in relation to others. A constructivist approach also helps the researcher to maintain an awareness of how he or she is participating in the re-construction of self and others through the research process, to look for opportunities to step out of the role of researcher, and to encourage participants to play the role of experts of their own lives.

Section 2: Detailed Methods

The steps outlined below involved systematic attention to detail within a recursive research process. The constructivist principles adopted for the present study were well suited to developing a methodology that could adapt to efforts to gain access to participants and interview them on key topics. Table 4.2 summarizes the process of methodological development from the start of the study and the methodology originally proposed for it to the end stage culminating in the data actually collected and analyzed.

TABLE 4.2: Comparison showing Initial and End Design

DESIGN ELEMENT	INITIAL DESIGN	END DESIGN
Sensitizing Questions	Literature review led to focus on sensitizing questions of variation in outcomes among youth facing similar structural disadvantages.	No change, except that the broad starting questions were narrowed to key processes, as summarized in points below.
Content	Broad focus on different areas of achievement, of which schooling was a key area but not the sole. Focus on peers and schools.	Over time, the focus on peers and schooling outcomes was accentuated. Family not a primary focus.
Selecting participants	Initially, the study was planned to include a set number of male and female youths, from set age groups, and with an equal number of high and low achievers.	Restricted to male youth. Age groups were expanded (14-20, 21-25). Emphasis on changes in school achievement and peer engagement over time for all participants.
Number of participants.	Planned as a small number, with target of 20	Interviewed 20 individually, and used data from 18.
Format of Interviews	In-depth Individual Interviews and Focus Groups	In-depth individual and small in-depth intimate focus groups. Some follow up interviews.
Gaining access	Networking through institutions concerned with and involving the participants.	Community organizations, previous contacts, snowball, always through a third party.
Interview questions	Structured interview guide on main themes, with a list of possible probes.	Sensitizing questions added. Unstructured interview checklist with broad questions.
Data recording	Recorded interviews and hand-written notes.	All interviews recorded and transcribed. Notes were taken at community meetings.
Coding	How to code the data was left undecided. The main possibility under consideration was thematic coding using the grounded theory approach.	Exploratory on the definition of themes rather than confirmatory with respect to typologies of responses within themes.
Analysis	Thematic analysis Open to narrative analysis.	Thematic analysis retained.

The remaining sub-sections of this section of the chapter clarify why the modifications were introduced.

Sensitizing Questions

Sensitizing questions about patterns of friendship and schooling for participants emerged from broader initial questions about inter-generational immigrant incorporation in Canada. As such, the study is informed not only by peers, schooling and family, but also by broader sensitizing concepts of community and society, reflected in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Sensitizing Concepts and Relationships
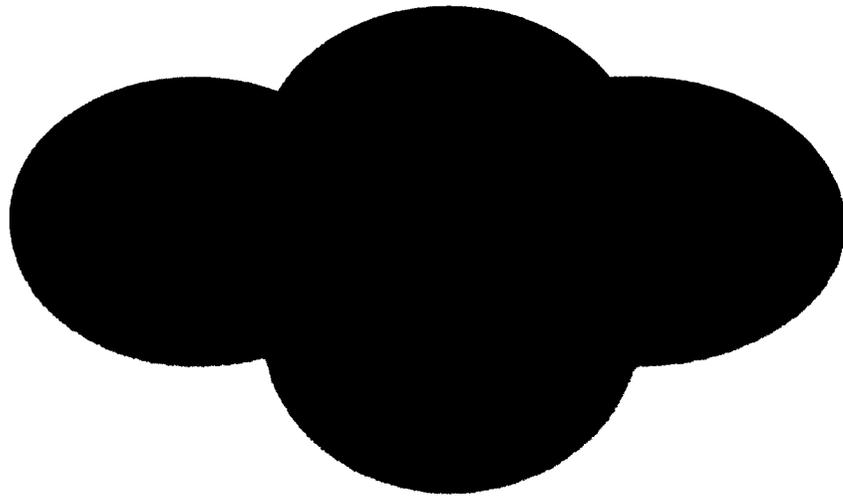
I wondered whether youths were being left out of debates about them in academia, and whether this might be even more pronounced for youths undergoing incorporation, because their voices might be further hidden beneath inter-generational immigrant narratives, such as parental sacrifice providing opportunities for "a better life" for the

next generation. The review of literature suggests that the extent to which immigrant and second generation youths in different reception contexts take up, adapt and/or combine such narratives with alternative ones, and the main themes around which such narratives are constructed, are largely open questions. The study considers the extent to which youth culture and schools as sites of intercultural contact inform short and long-term individual strategies of achievement, and the relationship to family strategies. The study also takes up questions of how their marginal position as racialized minorities, their position as male youth, as members of ethnic groups and multicultural friendship groups, and as first and second-generation immigrants, may influence constraints and opportunities for achievement from the perspective of participants. In sum, the study considers the multiple subject positions occupied by participants and how they may be negotiated in relation to peers and schooling from the perspective of participants, framed broadly within a context of incorporation.

A number of additional questions emerged in relation to the main themes of peer relations and schooling during the recursive process of analyzing incoming data and reflecting back on issues highlighted in the literature. A language of expectations coming from peers and schools, some of which were consistent and others in tension with each other, emerged from the research process. Questions about expectations from others in the context of schooling were also joined by questions around the theme of belonging. These questions touched on additional sensitizing concepts of social status, social networks, social capital and social cultural identity. The language of expectations was

broad and complex, including specific themes of achievement, stereotypes, responsibility, and goals. The negotiation of expectations of self and others further highlighted a relational dimension. I wondered how various specific themes falling under the broader heading of expectations might be related to the issue of belonging, among peers and to school principally, but also framed by the wider question of belonging as immigrant and ethnic minority youths in Canada.

During data collection and analysis, I identified two sensitive issues that led to additional questions for the study and for further study elsewhere. One was the issue of racism. The other was the issue of bullying. I raise the example of racism here to illustrate the relationship between sensitizing questions, sensitivity to the data, and substantive focus. I realized early on in data collection that there was hesitancy among participants to discuss issues of racism. I was aware that dynamics created by the interview context might have been preventing open discussion of racism. In most cases youths denied that they ever experienced racism personally. The question did elicit accounts of feeling discriminated as youths, however. In other cases, youths suggested that others experienced racism, but not them. Finally, another strategy was to normalize and downplay racism by suggesting that everyone experienced racism. On the one hand, I think the accounts provided by participants can be taken at face value. Participants do not emphasize "race" in their accounts of peer dynamics, nor do they identify it as the primary challenge that they face in schooling. At the same time, they are not naïve about the fact that racism exists. A reasonable explanation is that participants avoid discourses

of "race" both because these discourses do not reflect how they understand social relations at a deeper level, and more importantly because these discourses conflict with their views of their own identities, sense of belonging and, strategically, their aspirations for achievement. Questions about racism therefore led to productive and open exchanges about related issues of discrimination, stereotypes, and goals for achievement broadly defined, which could be usefully analyzed within higher order themes of expectations, belonging, and identity.

Academic achievement versus failure in school is another issue that became clearer in the interview context. The issue of academic failure, like racism and bullying, has the potential to bring up sensitive issues. Given that I was interested in subjectivity, the focus was on how well youths felt they were doing in school, rather than an objective measure. The accounts provided by youths displayed a more nuanced understanding of achievement as relational. This is what led me to pursue more openly and actively their subjective accounts of achievement and how these changed over time in relation to a range of expectations and the negotiation of belonging. This helped to contextualize what at first appeared as contradictory accounts from some youths who claimed that they both felt that academic achievement was important, and didn't care about school. Similarly, their accounts of achievement seemed at times contradictory, and I had trouble discerning "underachievers" from "overachievers," until I realized that the full complexity of such accounts could be better captured by adopting a relational and multi-level understanding of a number of common patterns of achievement. This emerging framework for

achievement fit better with the strategies of achievement that youths were describing, and in which contradictions were a common feature.

The emerging framework of changing patterns of peer and school engagement over time provided a means of examining a number of critical issues for achievement, belonging and identity. These issues seemed to be manifesting in terms of contradictions, and elsewhere as tensions. Individual and collective strategies involved in managing and trying to resolve various contradictions and tensions therefore also formed an important part of the emerging framework. I wondered what kind of a dynamic was operating for individual choice in the context of limited options. Peers and schools were approached as contexts that were encountered by participants, who in turn attempted to influence their immediate surroundings with an eye to achieving a sense of belonging and defining their identities in relation to various others. Within this I was interested in how achieving academically and making friends at school might be related goals, and what this could tell us about belonging. Another question for schooling, and thus belonging and identity, was the role played by teachers. Perceptions of teachers among participants revealed common patterns of strategic responses to limited options for belonging in school. I wanted to learn more about how participants attempted to resolve potentially conflicting expectations of peers, teachers and parents, and what this would reveal about belonging and the integration of identity in the context of incorporation.

Identifying the Participants

Originally I had intended on interviewing twenty youths equally from two age groups (12-15, 20-25), and further stratifying the sample for an equal number of high and low achievers. Once I began to collect and analyze the data I realized that participants did not fit neatly into categories of high and low achievers. In fact, there were a number of interesting reversals, such as when the highest achievers became the lowest achievers in response to schooling conditions. Once I began to get a better sense of how participants viewed achievement, the labels of high and low achievers gave way in my conceptualization of the study to more complex and ongoing processes of negotiation. For example, participants employed strategies involved in balancing a range of expectations from peers, parents, and schools that would allow them to secure enough friendships to survive daily in school, while at the same time satisfying long-term aspirations to stay in school long enough to complete. These processes led me to focus more actively on a number of key relations and key strategies for Central American origin male youths in Toronto schools. My criteria for participation became more broadly experience of schooling in Toronto for Central American origin male youths. I became less concerned with meeting the strict age targets I had originally set for the project, and began to focus more on issues of change over time, noting that youth from a wider range of ages could comment usefully on these processes of change from their unique positions at the time of interviewing. I included some youths in the study such as a twelve year old brother of a primary participant, and a fourteen year old youth from Colombia, simply

because they were part of important family and youth networks. To exclude such participants would have been counter-productive in terms of my goal of building trust and creating a supportive research setting for primary participants. I did not use all the interview data in the final analysis, adjusting the age limits for primary participants (to 14-26), to reflect particular schooling experiences among Central American origin male youths from the transition to high school, and then from high school to higher education and/or work.

The primary participants in the study are eighteen Central American origin male youths. Eleven participants are of Salvadorian origin, four are of Guatemalan origin, two are of Costa Rican origin and one is of Honduran origin. Ten participants are 1.5 generation immigrants with age at arrival between 5 to 13 years old, and eight are second generation, which is to say they were born in Canada to immigrant parents from Central America. The participants fall into roughly two age groups: eight are youths between 14 and 20 years old, and nine are youths between 21 and 26 years old. Three additional interviews were done with participants who are 12, 30 and 49 years old. The thirty-year old participant, Sol, was included in the analysis because he was able to provide useful data over a long time period including early experiences. The forty-nine year old participant served as a key informant for the study. The participant aged 12 years was excluded from the primary analysis. This participant could not provide any information on the transition to high school, the starting point of the analysis of change over time.

There was very little overlap in schools attended. Roughly half of participants attended Catholic schools, while the remainder attended non-denominational public schools. Eleven participants changed schools. In two cases this involved shifting from Catholic to non-denominational alternative schools. Reasons for changing schools included family change in residence, parents seeking better schools for their children, individual problems in school, or a combination of these factors. Two groups of three participants know each other, and there are two sets of brothers in the study. Fifteen participants are part of two-parent families, two of these with their mother and stepfather. Three participants had been or were being raised solely by their mother. Participants' families consisted of two to five siblings, the greatest number (n=8) with three siblings followed by two siblings (n=6). At the time of interviews two participants had completed middle school and were about to start high school, two had dropped out of high school, five were still in high school, three had completed high school, two were attending college, three had completed college, and one had completed university (see Table 4.2). The names of participants have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

Table 4.2: Profiles of Participants*								
Name	**Age**	**Origin Country**	**Gen. Stat.**	**Age A.A**	**Education Attain. HS Denomination**		**Number of Parents/Siblings**	
Alfredo	25	El Salvador	1.5	6	College	N	2	1 brother (younger)
Nestor	24	El Salvador	1.5	8	College	C	2	2 sisters
Diego	24	El Salvador	1.5	5	College in process	C	2	1bro,1sis (older)
Alejandro	19	El Salvador	1.5	11	H.S. in process	C	2	1 sister
Emilio	16	El Salvador	1.5	8	H.S. inc.	C A	2	1 bro,1 sis. (older)
Javier	17	El Salvador	2nd	NA	H.S. in process	C	2	1 bro(older)
Claudio	17	El Salvador	2nd	NA	H.S. in process	C	2	1 sis (older)
Fernando	17	El Salvador	2nd	NA	H.S. in process	N	2	1 brother (younger)
Raul	20	El Salvador	2nd	NA	H.S. in process	C R	2	2 bro (1 older)1sis (younger)
Manuel	21	El Salvador	2nd	NA	H.S.	C	2	2 brothers 1 sister (younger)
Rodrigo	23	El Salvador	2nd	NA	College in process	C	2	2 brothers (younger)
Sol	30	Guatemala	1.5	12	H.S.	N	1	½ brother ½ sister (younger)
Quito	25	Guatemala	1.5	7	B.A.	N	Step	1 sis. (older)
Mateo	23	Guatemala	2nd	NA	College	N	1	2 sis. (1 older)
Eduardo	21	Guatemala	2nd	NA	H.S. inc.	N	1	1 bro, 1 sis (older)
Octavio	23	Honduras	1.5	9	H.S.	N	Step	1 sis, 1 bro (younger)
Cesar	14	Costa Rica	1.5	13	M.S.	N	2	1 brother (younger) 2 sis (1 older)
Juan	14	Costa Rica	1.5	12	M.S.	C	2	3 bro, 1 sis (younger)

*Gen. Stat. = Generational Status, Age A.A. = Age at Arrival, HS = High School, C= Catholic, N= Non-Denominational, A= Alternative, R= Reform.

158

Gaining Access

   The study built on relationships with members of the diverse Central American

community in Toronto that had been established in previous research, and the focus of

the study also grew out of this earlier research. A key informant from the Hispanic

Development Council (HDC) in Toronto had facilitated access to Latino youths for my

Master's Thesis. When I began the research for this study the HDC was serving different

flows of Latin Americans, as flows from Central America had reduced greatly by this

time. This necessitated a longer process of finding and gaining access to the participants

needed for the study. I used my contacts with the HDC to make further contacts that

could provide access to participants, and I also explored other avenues for accessing

participants. Initial contact was always made via a third person, such as a youth worker,

community worker, friend or family relative. Once contact was made, I followed up

directly with participants to arrange individual and/or focus group interviews. I also

attended a number of workshops and community events in the Toronto area, some of

which were youth focused, others were more broadly Latin American focused, and still

others focused on Central American issues and populations. The most relevant of these

were a number of youth workshops and cultural events organized mainly by the HDC,

but also by other organizations such as the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples in

Toronto. Some of these events were focused on substantive issues such as violence

prevention and youth gangs, while others were open-ended events that celebrated culture,

identity, and creativity among youth and various Latino and other ethnic minority

communities. I was usually invited and accompanied by a member of the Latino-Hispanic community, and often by the organizers of the event. I usually remained silent during these events simply observing unless I was being introduced or during other short interactions, and took notes afterwards. In most cases I was viewed with curiosity, often warmly welcomed, sometimes humored, and only in one case did I experience outright hostility. In a gang prevention workshop, former gang members counseled youth on how and why to avoid joining youth gangs. This was followed by a discussion about how Canada provides better opportunities for education, and that youth need to be informed of this so that they know there are alternatives to joining gangs. I wondered what kind of experiences the youths who were listening to the advice had had in school and among their peers, what their family lives were like, and consequently what kinds of constraints and opportunities they were aware of. These youth were not available for interviews unfortunately. I was struck by the trust that these youth had placed in the HDC by coming to the organization, and this reinforced how important it was to align myself with such organizations, and with particular key informants who could vouch for me so that I could gain access to the participants I needed for the study.

I subsequently held three community consultation meetings: one at the Hispanic Development Council, one at the home of one of the community members, and one at my home. The consultation meeting I held at the HDC was much like many of the other events I had attended there. It was characterized by informality in a supportive environment. Discussions were very goal oriented and focused on solving specific

problems in the community, including troubles that many Latino youth were having in school. A member of the community and his family hosted the second consultation meeting. I was asked to do a presentation on my ideas for a research project, which I did, and then I asked for feedback. There was some debate about reasons for lack of achievement among some youth, and how other youth who were also facing marginalization did well in school. Finally, the consultation meeting I held in my home had a somewhat different atmosphere. I had arranged the meeting because I was having trouble finding participants for the study, and I felt that this gesture would help to build trust and to convince influential members of the community that I was committed to doing a research project that would be relevant for the community, and not just to advance my own career as an academic. There was very lively and open discussion, and some debate, of a number of issues relevant for Latino-Hispanic youth in Toronto. This was an important meeting that challenged me to revisit the reasons for doing the research, and to reconsider some of the substantive issues. It resulted in me strengthening my resolve that the research was important, and accepting that negotiating a dual insider-outsider position would be an ongoing process, with uncertain results. All of these activities were part of a process of gaining access and simultaneously sensitization to the field that took place over an eight-month period from January to August 2008.

The difficulty of gaining access necessitated patience, and required flexibility in terms of interview process, location, and in some cases format. I realized that not only would I need a fairly extensive network of key informants in order to reach the participants, but I

would also need to consider each case individually. Youth and community workers taught me that working with youths required patience and persistence. I felt it important to carefully distinguish those youths who did not wish to be interviewed from those who were simply difficult to make arrangements with for an interview. I had to respect the wishes of parents in one case when they forbade their children to be interviewed, even though the children wished to participate. In other cases, key informants wished for their adolescent children to participate, but the youths were not interested. I had to discern these cases from cases in which youth were interested, but tentative about participating. For example, in a few cases after making contact through a trusted third party, a youth would agree to participate and a meeting would be arranged, but then he would not show up to the interview. In other cases, youths would express interest, but then I would have difficulty contacting them to arrange an interview. This was potentially an issue of voluntary consent, because youths may not always feel comfortable declining an invitation to be interviewed. I also was aware that my use of key informants to reach youths might raise issues of voluntary consent, since participants might feel pressured to participate. I dealt with these issues of voluntary consent on an individual basis, carefully weighing potential risks and benefits. These ethnographic dimensions, originally intended simply as a set of techniques for accessing participants, became important analytically even though they were not primary sources of data. They allowed me to better negotiate access, and identify some possible themes of importance early in the study. For example, I realized that there were complex dynamics at work in the

community and within families that I would need to negotiate if I wanted to gain access to the participants I needed for the study.

The challenges of gaining access to and eliciting a high level of participation from youths who were from a different cultural and class background than my own resulted in an exploration for creative solutions, some of which were successful. In one case, an older brother started the interview until his younger brother felt comfortable, and then left the interview room. Interviewing participants under sixteen years of age proved to be the most difficult, due to the necessity of obtaining parental consent. It was often hard in these cases to get the consent of both parents and children. It was not always clear whether interviewing would take place even after arrangements had been made. Key informants claimed that this was not unusual when working with marginalized youth in the community. In my case, there was the added challenge of gaining access to a community for which I was not a member. My outsider status was less of a deterrent to participation once interviews were underway. In some cases it may have actually been a benefit in terms of eliciting active participation, but I would still need to take into account how my subject position and those of my participants were likely to interact in the production of knowledge.

The process of gaining access was one that tested my resolve and forced me to confront difficult issues about the overall research process and my role in this study in particular. I started to become concerned about difficulty in gaining access to participants in March 2008. I was also concerned that once I did find participants, they might be

reluctant to share details about their experiences and views. In July 2008, I had to cancel a focus group twice because of lack of participants. I knew that the population I was trying to reach was a difficult one to access, and not a cohesive community as such, since male youths with Latin American backgrounds often form multicultural friendship groups. This explained why organizing focus groups exclusively among Central American origin youths was proving difficult, but did not explain why I had completed only two individual interviews to date. In retrospect, the difficult process of gaining access resulted in a number of benefits for the study. Firstly, it forced me to clarify the goals of the research. Secondly, it resulted in improvements to the research design as a result of community consultation. Thirdly, it resulted in further sensitization to the field. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it forced me to practice reflexivity in order to maintain a workable insider-outsider status.

In August 2008 a fellow graduate student stated that he believed I was having difficulty gaining access because I was not Central American. I was resistant to this interpretation because I felt it was both essentialist and simplistic, and at the time I found it difficult to come to terms with the issues that it raised. I had two related concerns. If my colleague were correct, how would I ultimately gain access? Secondly, how would I generate the kind of active participation I was seeking? The questions brought to the surface a number of doubts I had about my ability to do the research, whether I had a right to research this topic, and how I would negotiate these and other difficult questions that were likely to come up. Extensive journaling helped to separate my own personal

process from what I was encountering in the field. The difficulties oriented me to the inter-subjective nature of qualitative study and allowed me to return to the field with more perspective. Working through my reactions to the challenge from my colleague improved my overall approach to the field and served to prepare me for the process of data collection and analysis in which it was essential that I keep track of my subjectivity. A key turning point was the third community consultation meeting I had at my home, which confirmed the inter-subjectivity involved in gaining access. The meeting forced me to confront and better integrate the questions raised above. Participants at the community consultation remarked that they were unlikely to all be brought together if it were not for the meeting. This confirmed the relevance of diverse social networks for the process of incorporation that I was interested in, and of which I was a part.

Having reflected on the issue of subjectivity for my research, I was better prepared to address the concrete issues of how to find participants and how to elicit the kind of active participation I was seeking. Through fieldwork to date I had developed a network of key informants with links to Central American youths in Toronto. They acknowledged the importance of the research, but also the difficulty of outreach work to Central American male youths, and were largely at a loss as to how to advise me to find participants. The Central American male youths I met directly were always a small minority at community events and workshops. Other Latin Americans and female youths at Latin American youth events heavily outnumbered them. Females and adults heavily outnumbered them at Central American community events, including those specific to Salvadorian and

165

Guatemalan populations in Canada. On one occasion I observed, at a popular theatre workshop I attended, the sole Central American male youth did not say one word during the entire event. My attendance at these events was crucial for expanding my network of key informants, but it also alerted me to the way in which Central American male youths are marginalized within their own communities. In sum, the difficult process of gaining access involved further sensitization to the field and greater awareness of the inter-subjectivity of qualitative research. I was able to work towards an insider-outsider position that drew on aspects of shared gender identity and experience between researcher and participants, and contrasting identity and experience in terms of minority versus mainstream positions between researcher and participants. Implications of inter-subjectivity are explored further below in discussion of different stages of the research process.

As explored above in detail in the section on gaining access, it was necessary to explore locations for interviewing in which youths would feel comfortable, and I also modified format and process in some cases. I carried out many interviews in "neutral" locations such as at public and college libraries, and community organizations. I was somewhat surprised that no youths wished to be interviewed in their homes. I was also surprised that the setting of my home seemed to elicit the highest quality of engagement among the minority of youths who so opted. The issue of minimizing discomfort and harm was relevant for the interview process as well. I viewed probing sensitive issues as an ethical issue to the extent that I wanted to allow youths an opportunity to reflect on

issues of relevance to them, in ways that benefited them. In one case I found that a participant required fairly lengthy silences to gather his thoughts and express them. Probing too far was unlikely to result in eliciting rich data, and also risked violating the principle of minimal harm. I found more success in practicing sensitivity, active listening and reflexivity.

Interview Questions and the Interview Process

The interview questions were developed from the following:

1. A review of the literature.

2. Preparation for the field including an ethics review process.

3. Community consultations.

4. Consultation with informed outsiders.

5. Initial testing of questions among participants.

The interview schedule (see Appendix A) is based on a comprehensive list of potentially relevant issues for incorporation and achievement among immigrant youths and second-generation children of immigrants (see Appendix B). The comprehensive list of potentially relevant issues for incorporation and achievement is based on a distillation of relevant research, some of which is reviewed in Chapter 3, and then revisited in Chapters 5-7 in relation to findings and analysis. The interview questions are based on a selection of those issues in order to address a number of wide gaps in the literature

outlined above in the section on literature sensitization, and then refined in the initial stages of data collection and analysis (see Appendix C and D).

Prior to the research, I had reviewed and made allowances to adhere to ethical principles of informed consent, voluntary participation, and minimizing discomfort to participants. Given the nature of the topic and what I knew about the general experiences of marginalized and "at risk" youths in inner-city high schools, I was aware of the potential for sensitive issues to come up during interviewing. I learned a great deal more during the actual research process about how such experiences were likely to manifest themselves in the interview context, and what would be required of me in order to secure interviews and successfully carry out the research in an ethical way. Overall, I gained an appreciation for the importance of reflexivity and sensitivity, which contributed to greater inter-subjectivity and ethical research practice. Informed consent posed a minor challenge at the outset of the study since I wanted to remain somewhat open to the experiences of youths. How would I inform participants of the goals of the study, if I wanted the participants to be involved in designing these goals? I addressed this with a rather lengthy process of field preparation, which involved a standard ethics review process, but also with a series of additional steps starting with community consultation meetings, discussed at length in the preceding section.

The first consultation meeting provided important feedback on the approach to questions, rather than specific question revision. More concretely, participants suggested that negative or confrontational language such as "conflicts" and "barriers" was unlikely

to solicit youths into talking about schooling. They stressed instead "opportunities," and "supports" as the kind of vocabulary that would elicit dialogue on schooling. After a number of unsuccessful attempts at constructing questions with the vocabulary of "supports" and "opportunities," I eventually realized that these concepts were part of the emerging theoretical framework and therefore applied more to the emerging theoretical questions (see Appendix E). In addition to providing clues about gaining access and specific data collection techniques, consultations were part of an eventual shift in emphasis towards youth strategies and more broadly youth agency. With regard to question revision, more neutral language was adopted and then focused on a set of emerging themes from incoming data.

The interview schedule was further grounded through consultation with the dissertation committee. Separate feedback was obtained from each committee member (3) on preliminary interview questions. Further revisions involved organizing questions into separate clusters, identifying missing questions, as well as improving question wording. Revisions were carried out in dialogue with my supervisor.

Interviewing began with a conversational style in order to elicit comprehensive accounts of broad topics of interest to me (and related topics of interest brought up by participants) furnishing rich data for preliminary analysis of themes and issues. When I began interviewing, informed consent involved more reciprocity than I had anticipated. In some cases youths wished to interview me before they felt comfortable being interviewed. This helped to establish rapport and greater inter-subjectivity. The actual

research design retained the basic comparative structure of the preliminary design with some important modifications. With only one exception, the two age categories of 14-20 and 21-26 (in addition to the 30 year old) correspond to those about to enter or still in high school, and those having completed high school respectively. These categories emerged from the data itself. The exception is a twenty-one year old participant who dropped out of high school and was in the process of re-entering to complete. These two age groups retained the basic comparative framework I was seeking in terms of temporal perspective on high school (during versus after completed), and potential changes in overall schooling context in Toronto over time. A third comparative axis is the difference between 1.5 and 2nd generation youths, which corresponded only loosely with age differences (see Table 4.3). My initial plan was to ask the older group of youths about their previous experiences in school, and then follow up with the younger participants to provide comparisons for analysis. The interviewing process ended up being more fluid than this. Older youths shared extensively on their previous experiences in school, but also contextualized this with details that extended back in time from high school and forward in time to the present, and projected into the future. Similarly, the younger participants echoed many of the same concerns about expectations, sense of belonging, and frustrations over achievement, while also presenting new issues and a slightly different account of opportunities and constraints, providing useful perspectives to fill in the overall (shifting) picture of change over time in patterns of friendship formation and schooling achievement, within a wider context of both continuity and change.

I also adopted a somewhat more circular and fluid order of interviewing than I had originally planned. I retained the basic structure of focus groups followed by individual interviews, and moving from the older to the younger age category. More circularity was introduced through follow-up interviews with early participants once a first round of interviews had been completed. This was important due to the revision of questions in the early stages of data collection, so as to adequately explore all main themes with all participants. This served to refine preliminary questions, resulting in specific modifications discussed in summary form above. There was also a certain amount of overlap between the first set of interviews with the older age category (21-26) and the younger age category (14-20). Specifically, interviews five to eleven out of a total of eighteen interviews included participants from both categories. Further overlap and circularity was introduced for four participants who were interviewed both in focus groups and individually, as individual interviews and focus groups with new participants continued while I arranged for follow up individual interviews with those who were interested.

The research began from a general exploratory perspective and then proceeded to examine gaps and confirm emerging findings. Drawing on Rao and Yuen (2006), interviews were guided by a holistic approach and reference to an interview protocol that was refined at each stage (see Appendices). The shift from emphasis on conflicts and barriers to strategies was consistent with the analysis of incoming data and echoed feedback from early consultation meetings discussed above. In addition to providing

emerging themes that could be further explored and confirmed in subsequent interviews, the early interviews revealed that many of my initial interview questions were worded as research questions. I tried modifying these questions with some success, but eventually found that I could interview more effectively with a set of simple, specific and yet open, comprehensive questions used as a checklist. The semi-structured interview schedule included a column of corresponding potential themes of interest (see Appendix A). This method allowed me to better explore, confirm and clarify themes as they came up. The more developed interview schedule used in the later stages also allowed me to focus in on emerging significant issues in more depth.

Participants were given flexibility to explore issues in depth through a conversation style of interaction in which the direction of the conversation was co- determined between researcher and participant. All interviews were recorded in order to capture detail and allow the researcher to remain focused on listening and responding in a manner that validated participants' views and experiences, and encouraged further dialogue. I strove to practice "receptivity," "reciprocity" and "sensitivity" during the research process (Strauss et al 1998: 6). The intent was to produce knowledge that would be relevant both to an academic audience and to the Central American youth who are the focus of the study, addressing the issue of authenticity. Data was obtained finally in the form of focus group transcripts, interview transcripts and field notes.

Analysis Procedures

The study draws on grounded theory within a qualitative exploratory framework to analyze in-depth interviews and to a lesser extent field data. A combined preliminary analysis of emerging themes was carried out inter-subjectively during interviews through comprehensive open questioning and probing. Secondly, this was followed by confirmation, clarification and extension of emerging themes and relationships in subsequent and follow up interviews. Finally, I employed a more systematic quantifying of variables and categories in order to confirm and refine the emerging findings. Drawing on Charmaz (2003), I attempted to develop a constructivist approach to grounded theory. A circular process of data collection and analysis allows initial insights to be grounded in further data collection, through member checking and consultation with informed outsiders. Secondary ethnographic data was used to contextualize interview questions and acted as a comparative tool to further ground the thematic analysis. Open coding in grounded research involves breaking down the research data into incidents and then comparing the incidents for similarities and differences, in order to recognize patterns (Glaser 1992). Building theory from data begins with "microanalysis" and then proceeds through open, axial and selective coding (Strauss et al 1998: 57). In axial coding, the analyst develops the relationships between categories, subcategories and properties and in doing so identifies the major axial codes and how they are related to one another (123-142). Finally, selective coding involves "integrating and refining the theory" (143). Strauss et al (1998: 75) emphasize the ongoing and active process of asking and

answering questions in grounded research, comprising both substantive and theoretical dimensions of the research. Theoretical comparisons are used to further clarify emerging themes and relationships, and also to direct further data collection. I drew on these techniques and adapted them, but I did not carry out an orthodox grounded analysis.

Charmaz (2003) is critical of the highly technical and complex analysis procedures advocated by Strauss et al (1998). She argues that fragmenting data loses important narrative elements (Charmaz 2003: 271). Thematic and narrative approaches to grounded theory represent a trade-off between increased complexity and a deeper understanding of lived experience. I chose to prioritize the complexity of the topic under study through an analysis of themes. Strict adherence to a set of complex abstract analytical procedures suggested by Strauss et al (1998) may exclude participants from the process of interpreting their own experience. I therefore attempted to reduce the potential for participants to become alienated from the research process by employing two adaptations. Firstly, I allowed participants to lead discussion initially and probed for emerging themes rather than structuring interviews solely around pre-determined questions. A comprehensive checklist of questions served as a reference to fill in gaps in latter portions of the interviews. Secondly, I allowed more direct participation by exploring relationships between "how" and "what" questions with participants. This was intended to make the relation between their lives, their stories and the analysis a more transparent process. More concretely, I attempted to achieve a better synthesis of data collection and analysis by closely exploring themes and distinctions with participants

particularly in the early stages of data collection, rather than artificially separating data collection and analysis. This emphasis on a tighter analysis is already implicit in the circular process of collection and analysis of data in grounded theory.

The study employed a number of grounding techniques to maintain a dual insider-outsider position and to increase inter-subjectivity during the research process. I first grounded my research approach including research questions gleaned from the literature through a series of community consultation meetings. Secondly, initial sensitizing, research, and interview questions were grounded through consultation with the dissertation committee. Further grounding was carried out through consultation with the committee, and in particular with my supervisor, once data collection and analysis were underway. A series of probes and additional questions were added and integrated into the evolving research schedule. Sensitizing issues were added adjacent to the interview questions on the research schedule so that these could be kept in mind during the interview process. Finally, grounding of the emerging theoretical framework was carried out as part of the interview process through careful listening and probing for key themes as they emerged, particularly in early testing of questions among participants.

One example of how the analysis led to dramatic shifts in the direction of questioning, and unexpected findings was in relation to the concept of "race." The avoidance of "race" as a topic of discussion was guided by a more complex process, in which youths were constructing their identities. Identifying occurrences of individual and systemic racism has the potential to be empowering or disempowering. I perceived among participants an

175

intimate understanding of the insidiousness of discourses of "race." They subvert "racial" stereotypes strategically among peers through the use of humor. Humor was a way of calling attention both to the stereotypes from an outsider perspective, and to an insider perspective that can see past the stereotypes. I built my analysis around what youths provided in terms of their accounts of peer dynamics and my reflections of how the interview context shaped the interview dialogue, and ultimately I did not see the value in second guessing their accounts. Inter-subjectivity in the analysis of the relevance of "race" for participants suggested that both the understanding and the dynamics of racialization are undergoing change, further warranting caution in either underemphasizing or overemphasizing such relevance and effects on participants.

Two additional examples of sensitive issues revealed important strategies of engagement that played out in the interview context, which led to shifts in analytical approach as well as substantive focus. Many youths brought up the importance of defending themselves and "proving themselves" among peers, but only two participants used the term bullying, one as a victim and the other as a perpetrator. In the former, the participant skirts the issue, which he has partially blocked out of his memory, by changing the subject: "Maybe I can say at a point, at one time, I think I was kinda [sic] being bullied? But I don't remember, I can't remember that much ..." Similar to racism, the topic of violence in schools is approached by the majority of participants strategically in a way that reinforces the achievement of a positive masculine identity. In addition, I realized that youths viewed bullying as part of a more complex process of negotiating

176

peer relations, and so the analysis focused on how this viewpoint was related to particular strategies of peer engagement, rather than trying to discern the accuracy or inaccuracy of particular accounts of violence in school.

Discussion

The exploratory research design adopted for this study involved tradeoffs in relation to a more structured research process. The semi-structured interview approach facilitated active participation, while also allowing for the emergence of key themes early in the research process that helped to uncover what I understand as hidden aspects of incorporation and achievement for marginalized immigrant and second-generation youth in Canada. The decision to depart from a more orthodox grounded approach also created new challenges, such as how to evaluate what was learned and the dissemination of findings

The study was motivated by a number of gaps detailed in the previous chapter, and summarized above. The contributions to these gaps are in three primary areas. The first is a contribution to sensitizing questions, hypotheses and research questions from other studies on schooling and incorporation of racialized youth. Previous research has emphasized the immediate and interrelated contexts of peers, school and family in shaping incorporation outcomes. The framework adopted for this study is informed by this previous work, but places participants at the center of these institutional contexts of influence, and also considers the way that individual identity and belonging are shaped at

a wider societal level within an incorporation context. The framework is necessarily

dynamic, and identifies a limited number of variable outcomes for school achievement

and patterns of friendship formation that also change over time. The variable outcomes

for patterns of friendship formation and schooling together form integrated strategies. It

is not a simple matter of participants choosing to focus on their friendships or schooling

as is often assumed by authority figures and even among some youths themselves. The

study suggests a complex balancing act that involves individualized responses to a

common set of challenges faced by marginalized Latino-Hispanic male youth. Social

change is evident at a societal level as contextual changes, and also over time for

individuals as they manage tensions and contradictions in the search for belonging and

the definition of their identities in multiple contexts. Central American male youths

develop strategies for surviving in school that are learned by similarly marginalized

peers. These strategies are documented and explored in relation to a range of goals and

aspirations expressed by the participants in the study.

This study also adds to theory and hypothesis development on the incorporation of

Central American male youth in Canada, particularly on issues related to school

achievement and peer relationships. There is no other comparable study. The in- depth

research of the challenges and opportunities for achievement, and the struggles with

marginalization and racialization form an integral part of the framework. This provides

the foundation for a better understanding of the specificity of incorporation for Central

American male youths, but also faces limitations. The study is not representative of all

Central American male youths, and varies in terms of applicability as a model to other immigrant and second-generation youth in Canada and elsewhere. The findings are grounded in the perceptions and experiences of Central American male youths, satisfying the goal of authenticity, but this does not rule out other sub-groups of Central American male youths that may display modifications of these patterns, and individual differences not discovered here.

This study also seeks to contribute to the literature by reflecting on and developing a particular methodology within an overall research approach. Qualitative approaches have advanced greatly, and researchers today are expected to maintain a critical awareness of the many challenges of inquiry and the limitations of their own research. This study attempts a close synthesis of data collection and analysis, and a high level of participation. It departs from an orthodox grounded theory approach, while retaining insights and techniques from Glaser and Strauss' (1967) early articulations of grounded theory that prove useful. This study is limited to providing a breakdown of a range of variable outcomes for belonging among peers and in school, from the perspective of Central American male youths in Toronto. The study provides understanding of the depth and complexity of the relationship between friendship formation and schooling for this group. The study is meant to address a gap in understanding of their lower than average academic achievements, and how this relates to other important aspects of their experiences in Canada. The study also makes a contribution to research inquiry among marginalized youth. Principally, it seriously questions the relationship between

researchers and youth participants, and explores techniques and epistemological approaches for eliciting more active participation without sacrificing important methodological principles. Principally, it aims to include the subjective accounts of youths in public debates where these accounts are often absent.

In sum, the field of sociology now employs many different approaches to inquiry. The expansion of qualitative approaches provides a greater range of methodological choices in this area alone. The constructivist approach is broad and can make use of a range of equally effective research techniques and strategies. Its main strength is the application of insights emerging from critical and postmodern theories. Namely, critical theory emphasizes how power relations are present in any interaction, and at the level of social structure. Postmodern theory by contrast questions the validity of the whole social scientific enterprise, and challenges researchers to look for creative solutions to the crisis of representation. Grounded techniques allow researchers to generate hypotheses from data, while analytical bracketing allows for a deeper analysis of both representation and the conditions of interpretation. This exploratory study involved adaptation and combination of grounded techniques with those of analytical bracketing in order to elicit the high level and quality of participation that was sought after, and develops new hypotheses on issues of school achievement among Central American youth in Canada. This combination of techniques also allows for greater reflexivity, to be able to consider and provide an account of how the researcher is influencing the research setting and resulting inter-subjective analysis.

Chapter 5: Belonging Among Peers and at School

Establishing supportive peer relations and succeeding at school are equally important for youth in gaining a sense of belonging in Canada. Belonging in relation to peers involves making friends, building status, finding social support, and gaining acceptance in one or more groups that confer a sense of identity. Belonging in relation to schooling involves adopting mainstream schooling norms, such as wanting to do well in school, attending to teacher expectations, and staying in school rather than dropping out. Examining combined sense of belonging among peers and in school bridges these two overlapping social settings, and informs, in a more complex way, our understanding of participants' social-cultural identities and their priorities for achievement. Furthermore, the different ways that participants interact among peers and in relation to teachers in school involve degrees of conformity and opposition to a range of social-interactional norms, with implications for their overall sense of belonging in Canada.

This chapter maps out the analytic framework that is further developed in the two subsequent analytic chapters. The ordering of chapters in this way is to foreground the importance of the interrelationship between peers and schooling for belonging and identity among participants. The relationship between peers and schooling for belonging among participants is complex and to some extent individual. Taken together, however, participants' individual responses convey patterns of belonging to common issues they

face among peers and in relation to schooling. Change in patterns of belonging over time is a common theme that helps to understand the issues they face and how they respond. I begin this chapter with a summary of questions on peer relations and schooling arising from the research reviewed in Chapter 2. This is followed by three separate analytic sections: one on patterns of belonging in relation to peers; a second on patterns of belonging in relation to schooling; and a third on integrated sense of belonging and identity covering both peer relations and schooling. In the two subsequent chapters, the analysis shifts to a closer analysis of the process of peer belonging and belonging in school respectively. In the concluding chapter, we return to the interrelated peer-school belonging dynamic to advance some hypotheses arising from the exploration of a number of questions posed in this chapter.

Three broad conclusions about participants' sense of belonging among peers and in school can be usefully summarized at the outset. First, gaining a sense of belonging among peers and at school in Toronto is a complex process that varies in important respects among participants. Second, this complex process for participants can be largely summarized at a higher level of analysis in terms of a limited number of common patterns of belonging with peers and in relation to schooling. Third, shifts in patterns of peer and school belonging for participants over time highlight constraints and opportunities faced by Central American male youth in Toronto, and specifically their attempts to be successful to some degree in achieving both belonging with peers and in school, even when these two objectives are at times in tension if not in conflict with one

another. Taken together, these three conclusions point to the importance of peer relations for schooling and vice versa for participants.

The primary data for the analysis leading to the findings here is transcribed interviews. To set the stage, Figure 5.1 presents a simplified conceptual framework for understanding the process of incorporation for Central American origin male youth in Toronto. The main concept is belonging with emphasis on peers and school. Two related concepts—namely, social identity and priorities for achievement are examined in this chapter. Social identity is broad including peer group, ethnic, cultural, gender and other socially defined identities. Priorities for achievement are also broad, including socially defined priorities for greater sense of belonging and aspirations for future identities, economically defined priorities for achievement such as succeeding in school and aspirations for gaining secure employment, and culturally defined priorities such as incorporating into Canadian society without losing attachment to culture of origin. Family, a setting for belonging that is at least as important as schools, is included in the diagram but placed in brackets because it is not addressed directly in the dissertation, although as will be noted later in the analysis it comes up indirectly at times in the interviews. In sum, this chapter provides an analysis of peers and schooling for how participants gain a sense of belonging in Canada, and begins an analysis of the significance of identity and priorities for achievement in that process.

Figure 5.1: Conceptual Framework for Incorporation Among Youth
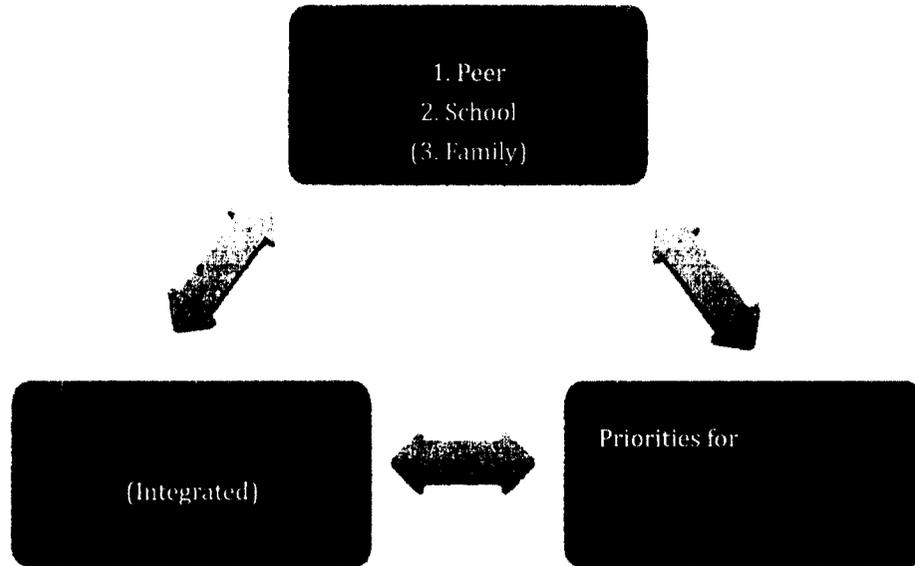
Sensitizing Issues and Questions

The review of historical studies in Chapter 2 draws attention to the highly disruptive

and often traumatic migration and settlement experiences of Central American origin

communities in Toronto. A relatively unexplored area is the challenges this background

creates for the children within these communities, including those who were born abroad

and arrived at a very young age, and those born in Canada to immigrant and refugee

parents. Possible challenges include finding a sense of belonging among peers and

personal identity formation in relation to peers, individual achievement in schools and

other settings, and feeling accepted in Canadian society overall. Studies reviewed in

Chapter 3 extend this perspective by drawing attention to diverse migration, cultural,

racialization, gender-specific and other socio-economic factors that lead to low levels of school achievement, delayed school completion, and higher dropout rates for Central American and Latin American male youths. Negative stereotypical views that circulate in the media and popular culture, and socio-economic disadvantage are highlighted in the literature as interacting constraints on friendship patterns for male Central American youths, and in some studies as part of a process that leads to ethnic youth gang formation and problems in school (Portes et al 2001).

A number of questions follow from the issues raised above. These questions serve to sensitize the analysis in this chapter. They include: What kinds of experiences in school do participants highlight as significant for their sense of belonging among peers and in school? What strategies are employed by them in order to gain a sense of belonging? To what extent do participants achieve a sense of belonging among peers and in school? What is the relationship between sense of belonging among peers and sense of belonging in school for participants over the course of high school? Do their experiences, strategies, long-term aspirations, and outcomes for belonging vary over time as they transition through high school?

The analysis in the following sections seeks to examine the transcribed interviews to see what can be learned to begin to answer these questions. The findings are organized into an overall typology of patterns of belonging among peers, followed by an analysis of patterns of belonging in relation to school. The analysis of patterns of belonging among peers involves particular attention to the nature of youth friendship groups, youth

networks, and social capital in the form of peer support among youths. The analysis of patterns of belonging in school highlights the significance of particular orientations to performance norms and expectations, and relations with teachers. In each of these exercises, I draw attention to the implications of a particular pattern for social identity, explored further in subsequent chapters.

Belonging Among Peers

Belonging among peers is important for all youth in high school, and yet it is also a highly differentiated process. A combination of individual and social factors present different challenges for peer belonging and shape it in different ways. For Central American origin male youths in Toronto gaining a sense of belonging among peers is complex and at times conflicts with attaining other goals such as doing well in school. Belonging and the related process of identity formation for Central American male youths reflect their migration and family histories, settlement experiences and other socio-economic factors. The analysis in the first part of this section identifies a number of common patterns of belonging among peers developed from the interviews with participants and presents these in the form of ideal types. These commonly observed patterns of belonging are illustrated with reference to the overall sample and individual cases. In the second part of the section, these patterns are explored with respect to changes for participants over the course of high school. In both parts, patterns of peer

belonging are linked to social identity, an observation that will be further analyzed in subsequent chapters.

A Snapshot of Peer Belonging for Central American Male Youths in Toronto

Peer relations and belonging are of central importance to all participants during high school. This was illustrated in the interview context through the highly descriptive accounts they provided of a variety of challenges and opportunities for finding acceptance and support among peers in school. Their accounts were specific to some degree, but also contained considerable overlap and some common themes. I found this combination of individual and social differences could be grouped into four common patterns (Table 5.1).

The "reactive" pattern is the most problematic for the participants who fall in this category because it involves conflict with and isolation from peers paired with rebellion against school norms, values and practices. Roughly one out of four participants fell into this pattern at some point during high school, but for most this was transitional. "Peer dependent" is the most common pattern among participants and offers the greatest stability for peer belonging. Peer dependency is defined here as prioritizing friends, including being there for friends and drawing support from friends. "Popular" is a fairly uncommon but highly sought after pattern among participants. Being popular is defined as adopting behaviors and attitudes of a particular peer group to the exclusion of other groups, and if accepted among "popular" peers, achieving higher status in school.

Table 5.1: Patterns of Peer Belonging and Relationship to Identity and Achievement

Patterns of Belonging among Peers	Wider elaboration of Peer Relations	Patterns of Identity and Achievement
Reactive Seeking trouble among peers. Motivated by the desire to prove to peers (and others) that they are tough. Reactive peers encourage one another to rebel against schooling and may get each other in trouble.	Involves bullying or being bullied. High degree of ambivalence towards peers, such as extreme loyalty to friends, and extreme hostility (and violence in some cases) towards other peers. Potential for isolation.	Lack of integrated identity leads to self-destructive behavior, excessive risk-taking, hyper-masculine identity, and self- reliance. This category is not stable. Friends offer protection but hinder other goals
Peer Dependent Loyalty to peers is a high priority. Stimulation or "having fun" is also a high priority. Unlike "reactive," avoid getting in (serious) trouble.	Develop selective friendship networks in order to avoid being stereotyped. Friendship groups may be ethnically diverse or not depending on school context.	Identify with peers like them and have a reasonably integrated peer identity. This is a stable pattern. Friendship groups offer support.
Popular Gain popularity among youths through sport and other normative masculine behavior.	Gain access to mainstream youth culture but close themselves off to others. Peer relations lack a meaningful basis that could better withstand challenges from without and within.	Reasonably integrated identity. Friends look up to them. However, participants may feel like they have denied important parts of their identity. Prevents isolation, but provides little basis for other goals.
Connected Oriented to developing multiple friendships. Gain a sense of belonging in a variety of peer contexts and among a wide range of friendship networks. Develop different friendships with different youths.	Have many diverse friends, and often claim that they are "Friends with everyone." Move seamlessly between different groups of friends. Maintain a strategic orientation to peers.	Well integrated peer identity. This is a stable pattern, and allows youths to satisfy a range of expectations among peers by compartmentalizing friendship networks and activities with friends. Friends are mutually supportive.

"Connected" is uncommon among participants, and yet it offers the best outcomes for achievement of a range of goals. The connected pattern involves the development of a

diverse network of friends, not closing oneself off from any peers, while at the same time maintaining a certain distance from peers in order to avoid being drawn too deeply into any one friendship group.

The reactive pattern was the most difficult to identify during the analysis because it corresponds to dominant negative stereotypes of Latino youths in North America. For this reason, participants were often hesitant to speak about experiences that exemplified a reactive sense of belonging among peers, and when they did, they often presented themselves in light of contrasting, more favorable, experiences and outcomes in order to prevent being further stereotyped. All participants, even those who adopted a reactive sense of belonging at some point while in high school, spoke as if the reactive pattern was indeed common among Latin American male youths in Toronto, and in other cases more broadly among Latinos in North America, and yet contrasted their own sense of belonging against it. Dominant stereotypes therefore form part of the context to which youth respond. For those in my study that seemed to fit the reactive pattern, self-destructive behavior, excessive risk-taking and hyper-masculine identity are linked to problems at home and school. The pattern is characterized by both extreme loyalty to few friends who are also reactive and paradoxically a high degree of self-reliance. Emilio exemplifies a reactive pattern of belonging among peers:

> I used to be into soccer, like a lot, with this guy, and ever since – I used to smoke weed too – I've played soccer since I was born. So I started to ditch soccer so I could go out with my friends, like we'd go and smoke weed, I don't know, like you get a rush out of stealing stuff, stupid things.

This contrasts with lack of a sense of belonging at home for Emilio who states, "Honestly, I'd say it's barely a family. We barely do anything together, like it's only my mom and my sister and my brother that will go out and do stuff." Similarly, Sol links trouble at school typical of the reactive pattern of belonging among peers to his experience as a refugee:

> You're out to prove a point and to try to look bad ... fuck the world mentality, where he's like 'I don't even know why I'm in this country. What the hell happened?' ... 'But here I am, so being good doesn't help ... so I'm going to be bad.' And from there it's just picking fights. You can see them getting bullied or bullying. It's like a jail mentality where you got to just intimidate other people into believing they got to respect you.

Only four participants became reactive for any length of time. For them, sense of belonging among peers was problematic, illustrated by conflicted identity and overriding ambivalence, and reflecting the instability of the reactive pattern. In all cases, participants who became reactive felt driven to such behavior due to a perceived lack of alternative ways of belonging among peers. Additional reflections on reactive sense of belonging are offered further below in relation to changes over time.

By contrast to the reactive pattern, the "peer-dependent" pattern of belonging was the most common among participants. This pattern is characterized by a high degree of commitment to peers, and participants who fit into this pattern derive stimulation and support from their friends in school. These participants are somewhat selective toward friendships in order to avoid being labeled a "troublemaker." Peer-dependent friendship groups may be ethnically based or partially based on ethnicity, but more often youths who fit into this pattern emphasized shared commitment to friends, lack of identification

190

with mainstream youth culture, and a shared interest in "fooling around," having fun, or just hanging out together. The size of peer-dependent friendship groups varies from a few friends to larger groups, and is shaped both by individuals as well as by the size and wider peer dynamics of the school. Raul describes his friendship group:

> Well the main group of people I hung out with, I don't want to say we were the black sheep's [sic] of the classrooms. In a way we were. One was really smart, one was really athletic, one was really irritating, I was really quiet and shy... I guess that's how we connected. In a way we sort of felt different.

Fitting in for peer-dependent youths may be problematic, but remains an important goal. Not fitting into the wider peer group at school paradoxically forms the basis of Raul's friendship group. Similarly, Javier speaks reservedly about friends in the following dialogue:

> *Interviewer*: What do you do with your friends at school?
> *Javier*: Hang out, play cards. We don't really go outside to play soccer. We mostly stay in the cafeteria and play cards and talk.
> *Interviewer*: Are your friends really important to you?
> *Javier*: They're important. Some they would help me with my schoolwork if I need help. There were some that I would just hang around with.

For both Raul and Javier, friends are important and yet wider peer relations are problematic in school. Javier's description of friendships is characterized in particular by ambivalence. He acknowledges support and stimulation derived from friends, but also mentions that he doesn't go outside to play soccer, suggesting that he would rather do that than stay in the cafeteria. For peer-dependent youths such as Raul and Javier, sense of belonging among peers in school is limited but meaningful. Lack of access to wider peer networks in school increases dependence on those friends that they do have. Peer-

dependent youths differ from reactive youths in that they offer and receive support and stimulation that does not undermine other goals such as schooling. Their exclusion from mainstream youth culture in fact forms an important dimension of their belonging with their friendship group, but they remain blocked from wider peer engagement. In addition to being the most common pattern of peer belonging for participants, it also represents a third position in-between "reactive" peer belonging and "popular" peer belonging, the most sought after pattern and the one I now turn to.

Many participants strove for a popular sense of peer belonging, although only four attained it for any length of time. Sport is an important basis of popular sense of belonging for male youths. This is consistent with normative masculinity and so affords certain advantages with respect to peers, in particular higher status, access to more school activities and greater stimulation among peers in school. However, popularity is also associated with certain constraints for belonging among peers. As Nestor states:

> There were certain people you didn't talk to because they weren't cool, which I think is ridiculous now, but at the time it was just what I was going through. People around me were doing that, so you tend to follow, right?

Nestor exemplifies how popularity paradoxically can be a more limiting sense of belonging than the peer dependency pattern in some respects. Popular youths have a lot of peer support, but this support relies on the exclusion of those deemed unpopular. They are not dependent on peers as much as they have conformed to mainstream youth culture in school to gain popularity, and this closes off access to alternative peer networks of support. Popularity therefore poses a contradiction for the development of identity and

192

belonging in relation to difference. This contradiction was partially resolved for participants whose pattern of peer belonging I am calling "connected," the next and final pattern in the typology.

The "connected" pattern of peer belonging involves a high degree of peer engagement and offers the best outcomes to participants for balancing supportive peer relations with the achievement of a range of goals. Like peer dependency, the connected pattern is stable, and harder to attain than simple popularity. A connected sense of belonging is strategic in that participants are able to satisfy a range of expectations among peers by expanding social networks. Participants reduce dependency on any one group by achieving a sense of belonging across a range of peer subdivisions in school. As Alfredo states, "I would really just hang around with everybody," illustrating how connected belonging goes beyond the popular pattern explored above. This allows him to provide and receive support from a greater variety of youths in school and for a number of goals directly and indirectly related to peer belonging. Only three participants managed to attain what I am defining as a "connected" sense of peer belonging in school. Claudio exemplifies the pattern in the following dialogue:

> *Claudio*: If you have a lot of friends that's good. I mean, the thing about my school is that I'm very well known. I go down the halls and everyone knows me. It's important to me. I didn't want it, it kind of came to me.
> *Interviewer*: Are you in a large school?
> *Claudio*: Yeah, over a thousand maybe.
> *Interviewer*: Can you tell me what your friends mean to you?
> *Claudio*: Well, they get me through the day, that's for sure. I don't have a strong relationship I'd say. When I get to school I find them, say hi and hang out there – can't really imagine being without friends.

Claudio's account conveys the importance of having many friends, and yet also maintaining distance from friends. A connected sense of belonging provides Claudio with the security he needs to maintain distance, since he is not dependent on any one group, not even to a "popular" crowd. Whereas most other participants convey a sense of ambivalence towards wider peer relations in school, Claudio conveys a certain amount of indifference. He recognizes the importance of friends and wider peer relations in school, but orients to them strategically. Similarly, Fernando exemplifies a strategic orientation to peer networks for protection. As he states, "I had friends in my school that were really respected. People won't mess with them. I can go to school and know I'm safe because I hang out with them."

For Claudio, Alfredo, Fernando, and Diego, sense of belonging among peers in school is about being connected to multiple networks. Connected sense of belonging is also the most strategic position for the attainment of a range of short and long-term goals in school and beyond. However, connected sense of belonging is difficult for participants to achieve, and once achieved raises concerns for identity. Participants in the connected category like other youth strive to belong among peers, but their sense of loyalty to peers, and corresponding sense of belonging, may be under question for them and in the eyes of their peer group. In order to belong, they must both identify with marginalized peers in some ways, and yet also simultaneously distance themselves from marginalized peers in other ways in order to avoid being marginalized themselves. As Fernando stated, "I don't consider myself one of those guys." Achieving a connected sense of belonging, while

clearly the most sought after outcome, remains a delicate balancing act. The resolution of the paradox of belonging among peers is therefore a long-term project for participants, and is further complicated by aspirations for belonging in school explored further below.

In sum, those who attain or approach a "connected" pattern of belonging convey less ambivalence towards peers because they have partially resolved the belonging paradox they face. However, they continue to face a wider social context that views and treats them differently, and their status among friends is also a work in progress. This requires them to continue to negotiate belonging in complex ways that involve shifts in identifying with and distancing from various peer subdivisions. The connected pattern best exemplifies the challenge of peer belonging for Central American male youths, because it shows quite explicitly how they have to "not belong" (exclusively to any one group) before they can belong more fully among peers. In some sense, this is the challenge facing all participants as they negotiate identity in relation to difference. Finally, the accounts of participants suggest that school context heavily shapes options for peer belonging and identity, explored further below in relation to changes over time.

Changes in Peer Belonging for Central American Male Youths in Toronto

The preceding section provides an overview of the range of patterns that can be found among participants at any given moment in time. In reality, however, participants' patterns of belonging in relation to peers are not static. Inter-linked goals, strategies and outcomes for belonging among peers change significantly over the course of high school.

For roughly two thirds of participants this involves one or more complete shifts in pattern of belonging during high school. Initially, participants search for any friendship group that will offer them support, even if this is minimal. After an initial period of friendship group formation that typically takes place in grade nine, friendship patterns for participants diverge somewhat over the course of high school. Common patterns of change include:

1. Maintaining and expanding an initial friendship group.
2. Losing friends and potentially becoming isolated.
3. Expanding networks and maintaining multiple friendship groups.

Finally, the options available to participants for and resulting changes in peer belonging depend heavily on the overall social environment (size, demographic makeup of the students, individual faculty, surrounding community, and culture) of the particular school in question. The accounts of participants who have changed schools highlight clearly how important overall social environment is for their sense of peer belonging. Below I look at the initial period of friendship group formation in high school, which is fairly similar for all participants, and then I look at the three common changes in peer belonging. I illustrate these changes with examples from a cross-section of participant interviews, and then explore more complex changes in peer support patterns over the course of high school for individual cases.

Initially, participants are oriented to finding a friendship group. This initial period is guided by expedience and convenience, and motivated by the desire to avoid isolation. Friends or acquaintances from previous schools or shared neighborhoods constitute the

most common basis for initial friendship groups. Rodrigo explains, "I didn't know anybody, I was nervous. So when I met somebody from school that I knew back then from elementary, I was happy to see him ... We weren't really friends at the time in elementary ..." This early period is also guided by urgency to establish an initial identity and status among peers. Mateo explains:

> But grade 9 was kind of a funny year, the transition year ... That was the year
> I probably got into the most fights, just because older kids start picking on
> the younger kids or the younger kids want to feel like they're big and bad ...

The degree of urgency and the shape of this initial process of friendship group formation depend on both the availability of previous contacts (acquaintances and/or friends) and the overall social environment in a particular school. In sum, all participants, and perhaps all youth, begin grade nine with a "peer-dependent" sense of belonging, reflected by the common goal of establishing an initial friendship group, but the process itself is a highly differentiated one. These differences come out more explicitly following the initial period as friendship groups solidify, expand, decline, disintegrate or change as the case may be.

Five participants simply stayed in the peer-dependent pattern throughout high school. The analysis revealed no dramatic change in their sense of peer belonging over the course of high school. This is not to say that they maintained all the same friends or even that they stayed in the same school. Rather they are similar in that they neither fall into a reactive pattern, nor do they reach a higher level of peer engagement as exemplified by popular or connected sense of belonging. That a significant number of participants

remain in the peer dependent pattern signifies both lack of acceptance into mainstream youth culture as well as the importance for Central American male youths in Toronto schools for finding an accepting friendship group. All five who remained in the peer dependent pattern managed to complete high school, suggesting that peer dependency tends to be associated with lower achievement with respect to school norms, but not to failure at school. This conclusion is further reinforced by the fact that an additional four participants, who at an earlier period in high school departed from peer dependency into a range of other patterns, returned to a peer dependent pattern as they completed high school. These complex changes involving two shifts in peer belonging are explored in more depth further below.

I identified three common directions of change in peer belonging over the course of high school that involve shifts from one pattern to another. The three common directions are: expansion of an initial friendship group to include more members; withdrawal from friends and potentially becoming isolated, and; expansion of friendship networks to become part of multiple friendship groups. Departure from peer dependency involves a degree of risk, with potential for both positive and negative outcomes. In some sense, expansion of friendships is a common goal among all participants, since most or all youth want to be popular, but this attempt to expand a friendship group can lead to different patterns. Four participants are successful in the expansion of an initial friendship group in the direction of "popular" sense of belonging. Alejandro describes the simple expansion of his group:

Again, I didn't really have any friends when I came in, in grade 9 ... We had some classes together and I guess that's how we met, me and Pat. After that we gathered more people and more people started to come along after that. At the end we had quite a large group actually ... And I guess as any other group in the school, we thought we were the coolest, obviously (laughs).

Sports in school were central for all four participants who attained popularity. As Octavio states, "Being on sports teams, we won a soccer championship in that school, and friends came pretty easy I guess ..." Another important dimension for all four was "being cool," which involved a degree of distancing from recently arrived Latin American immigrant youth. As Nestor states:

I was in the cool crowd, I can say, right? There was [sic] other students that were new to the country but I didn't bother trying to help them because they were not considered cool, or whatever ...

This division illustrates that the expansion of friends toward greater popularity often involved distancing from newer immigrants, with implications for changes in identity and belonging for both groups.

Another four participants were less successful than those discussed above in that they further closed themselves off from youths outside their group and risked becoming isolated. These kinds of dynamics either led a friendship group to become hardened and potentially hostile to others outside the group, or in other cases led participants to become isolated and reactive. Emilio exemplifies the former, as he stated:

I used to like mess around with kids and what not, like we used to do things to other kids, and bully them around and stuff. Someone would come around and do something to our friend, like he'd come to us. We'd all go and fight them.

The environment in Emilio's school leads to what other participants referred to as a "jail mentality." While problematic, the other three participants who developed a reactive sense of belonging seem to face even greater marginalization and isolation because they cannot find other peers in school with whom to relate. Eduardo exemplifies this pattern of change:

> Um, well, high school, there was bullies yeah, but I think about the other people, but it never came to me, um, most of the time. In high school I had like three friends I was really close with, tight. So we used to go in the gym, auditorium I think they call it, something like that, and that's where I basically stayed for lunch all the time ... Sometimes I'd just go to the library and go on the computer, internet, play games and stuff, um... I don't know. Sometimes I knew I didn't fit in, but at the same time I didn't really care.

Emilio became more isolated from school, while Eduardo became more isolated from peers within school. Eventually they both drop out of school. In contrast, Mateo and Sol also initially "react" within the school environment in a fashion similar to Eduardo, but then settle back into a dependent pattern of peer belonging in order to complete school.

Finally, a further four participants are able to expand and diversify peer friendships in the direction of connected sense of belonging. Participants seek to have a connected sense of belonging because it both prevents isolation and provides the most social capital in the form of peer support for a variety of goals. As Fernando describes his friendship groups:

> So it's like normal kids. Well there was a little bit of everything. There's [sic] really smart kids, and tough kids. They weren't bullies but they were tough. Then there were normal groups.

Developing a connected sense of belonging relies on a combination of individual and social factors, including both school context and peer group dynamics. Having a stable home seems to be a precondition for developing a connected sense of belonging among peers in school. Wider peer group dynamics in school are also important for belonging among participants, but they depend further on the overall school context. In large inner-city schools where youth tend to polarize into ethnic-specific groups for comfort and protection, the response of school faculty and administration is absolutely essential. Fernando describes such a response:

> I remember the first day of school there was three fights out of nowhere and I was like "I'm screwed." There were a lot of gangs before. When I was in grade nine we were still the young ones. Half way through, I forgot what happened, and the police arrested some guys and then the school got better after awhile and the older guys left. Right now it's great.

Given the right conditions at home, at school, and among peers, participants developed multiple friendship groups and moved seamlessly between them. This allowed them to give and receive support from a wider range of peers in school leading to better outcomes for overall sense of belonging and related goals. However, maintaining a connected sense of belonging over the course of high school posed ongoing challenges for identity development. This is explored further in the last section in relation to overall balance between achieving peer support and achieving academically in school.

Complex patterns some of which are mentioned above included more than one shift, such as expanding friendship networks in the first few years of school, followed by distancing from peers. The popular and reactive patterns of peer belonging are the least

stable. Friends in popular and reactive friendship groups may provide status but they tend not to support other goals that participants may have, such as school completion and academic achievement. Four participants returned to a peer dependent sense of belonging after having at some moment moved away from this pattern, two having become reactive and two having become popular towards the middle period of high school. Connected sense of belonging offers even more support for other goals than the peer dependent pattern, but causes additional challenges for identity development. Finding positive friendship support patterns in high school were particularly challenging for participants who changed schools or experienced interruption in schooling. In the case of Octavio, a level of popularity based on sport, similar to but exceeding Nestor in terms of the attainment of a range of goals linked to peer belonging, is transformed into peer dependency and even borders on isolation typical of the reactive pattern when he is forced to change schools. Compared to the cases analyzed above, his overall schooling trajectory illustrates the common challenges faced by Central American male youths in Toronto schools, and also the variation both among participants and over time. The analysis above also illustrates the degree to which school context heavily shapes the extent and direction of friendship group expansion, or contraction.

In sum, sense of belonging among peers for each participant at any given moment in time falls into one of four common patterns that I have named "reactive," "peer dependent," "popular," and "connected." The patterns also vary in terms of internal stability. The reactive and popular patterns of peer belonging tend not to be stable

because the basis for friendships are tentative, and in the former pattern there is considerably more risk associated with friendships than for the other three patterns. The connected and peer dependent patterns are the most stable and also offer favorable outcomes with respect to related goals, explored further below. The connected pattern seems to be the most difficult to attain, and also poses additional challenges for identity development, but offers the greatest access to social capital. The peer dependent pattern is the safest pattern for avoiding excessive risk while also maintaining supportive peer relations. The shifts from one pattern of peer belonging to another reflect the negotiation of belonging among peers over time taking into account the internal dynamics of the patterns themselves, overall school context and peer dynamics, and other important dimensions of belonging such as those in the family and wider community.

Finally, the overall accounts of peer belonging provided by participants point to common experiences of social inclusion and exclusion, common strategies of building status and avoiding isolation, and common aspirations for greater popularity among peers. These common themes emphasize how gaining a sense of belonging is fundamentally a social process. On the other hand, gaining a sense of belonging among peers also varies from one individual to another. Participants define acceptance among peers in different ways, and they rely on peers for different kinds of support. The combination of individual and social factors for peer belonging in the sample as a whole highlights the tension between wanting to be accepted for who they are, and wanting to form a new identity that does not carry so many complex challenges for belonging

among peers. Despite a range of individual responses to common challenges and opportunities, participants displayed this common feeling of ambivalence in relation to peer belonging. This sense of ambivalence further informed their aspirations and strategies for belonging both as a goal in itself, and as an important means of attaining other goals such as academic achievement in school, explored further below in relation to belonging in school.

Belonging in School

This section presents the analysis of belonging in school for participants. Belonging in school is frequently a complicated process for participants. It involves negotiating expectations and impressions with teachers and others at school. Central American male youths face considerable challenges for gaining a sense of belonging in school. These challenges are framed by a wider social context that tends to stereotype these boys as underachievers and problem youth. The negotiation of belonging in schools is however quite specific, to the extent that individual schools and teachers mediate the wider social context in very different ways. Additionally, there is variation among participants in how they respond to the situations they encounter when seeking to belong in schools as institutions with set-norms on performance. Finally, sense of belonging in schools is further negotiated by participants in relation to their efforts to achieve a sense of belonging among peers. This last issue is given particular attention in the last section of this chapter.

Similar to the section above on peer belonging, this section presents a typology of belonging in school based on the interviews. The typology arises from an analysis of the data informed in part by the sensitizing questions reviewed earlier. The analysis highlights experiences in school as well as transitions in schooling strategies and outcomes as they relate to belonging as defined by participants, and that are interpreted analytically. The section begins by outlining the patterns of belonging in school at any one time, and then secondly by outlining the patterns of change in belonging in school over the course of high school to completion. Implications of gaining a sense of belonging in school and among peers for identity, schooling goals and long-term aspirations for achievement to the extent that they are evident in the data are discussed at the end of this chapter.

A Snapshot of Belonging in School for Central American Male Youths in Toronto

Patterns of belonging in school among participants are related to patterns of identification in school and schooling outcomes. I define and elaborate each pattern briefly in Table 5.2. The table shows the four patterns of belonging in terms of two key dimensions (adoption of schooling achievement norms and adoption of normative strategies for achieving well in school) and their relationship to a) sense of belonging in school, b) schooling outcomes and c) longer-term aspirations for achievement.

Table 5.2: Relationship Between Belonging, Identity and Achievement

Active Pattern of Belonging (schooling goals and strategies)	Sense of Belonging and Identity in School	Schooling Outcomes	Longer –term Aspirations for Achievement
"Don't Care" Don't care about school, rebel against rules and schooling process in general, lack of respect for teachers	Feel rejected, invisible and like they don't belong in school.	Marks are low/failing or borderline failing and/or declining, some end up getting expelled, dropping out, or taking a break. Some return later with a different attitude.	This is not only unstable, but also reflects conflicting goals and aspirations. Some think school doesn't matter, or that they can succeed without an education.
"Just Finish" Determined to pass and complete school	Belonging is stable but minimal. Don't see themselves as academic achievers. Belonging is temporary (until they finish).	Marks are low-moderate, but linked to strategic orientation to longer-term goals such as school completion.	This is a relatively stable pattern, but perhaps associated with lack of aspirations for post-secondary schooling.
Interested Goal is to do fairly well in most classes.	Feel like they belong in school as much as other students	Moderate grades in most classes	This is an unstable pattern.
Invested Goal is to do well in most classes and to do very well in exceptional classes.	Advantaged youth, feel that they belong in school, and attribute any feelings of lack of belonging to specific classes and teachers, and schooling practices that undermine the education process.	Moderate-high grades, and potentially higher grades in exceptional classes. Primarily those with privileges that allow them to do well relative to other male Central American peers.	Stable pattern, but potential instability of actually losing interest, rather than simply pretending to be uninterested.

"Don't care" is primarily a reactive and transitional pattern for participants. Roughly

half of participants felt that they "didn't care" at some point in high school. Not caring

about achieving or belonging in school is made up of a number of orientations to school

206

that include ambivalence, anomie, disenchantment and rejection. A sense of ambivalence

is manifested because participants are almost completely marginalized from the

schooling process, and yet values about the importance of education remain strong, most

likely because their parents, extended family and other Latin American friends all hold

these values.

> *Rodrigo*: I just went to art class like any other class, just do what I do. I
> didn't care too much about it.
> *Interviewer*: Were you doing any drawing on your own?
> *Rodrigo*: No, just doing whatever the teacher said. I mean, from that point,
> once I went to that other school, I just didn't care too much.
> *Interviewer*: In terms of school, or in terms of everything?
> *Rodrigo*: I think in terms of everything. I don't know. I just changed.

Not caring about school is linked to negative experiences in classes and with teachers.

Lack of positive engagement of participants is a common theme that reinforces not

caring. As Nestor states:

> If I'm not doing well, either I'm not doing my work or I don't understand.
> I'm asking for help and you're not helping me as much as other students, and
> I think that you don't like me, you hate me, you know?

Consistent with Valenzuela (1997), "not caring" was relational for participants to the

extent that they reacted to teachers and overall schooling environments in which they felt

that nobody cared about them, so why should they care about school? However, not

caring about school is part of a more pervasive sense of ambivalence for participants that

was not solely about teachers, classes or the school context, but shaped also by social

norms and expectations among peers, explored further below in the section on combined

peer and school belonging.

The other three patterns of belonging in school involve some adoption of dominant schooling norms and expectations for academic achievement. The first of these involves minimal academic engagement. I call this "just pass," again to convey the way that participants who fell into this pattern described their orientation to school. Just over half of participants adopted this orientation at some point in their high school career. This pattern is characterized by a limited and temporary sense of belonging, since the goal is not to become invested in school but simply to finish. It is a kind of holding pattern. As Diego explains:

> At least I just wanted to pass. That's all I cared about, so then I'd be finished school and then I'd just get a job. That's what I was thinking, go out in the world and get a job.

Others mirrored this limited academic engagement and sense of belonging:

> We didn't really care who got the highest marks or anything like that. It was, yeah, let's concentrate on finishing, and you know, actually making it" (Alejandro)

> As long as I passed, that was okay with me. Like a fifty was good for me. (Nestor)

While the "just pass" orientation to school seems at first glance a rejection of schooling, it is also linked to strong determination to accomplish the goal of completion, a goal that participants see many other marginalized male youths in their position fail to accomplish. Scaling back interest and engagement in academics for some participants is in fact part of a strategy of school completion, as it tends to better satisfy peer expectations with respect to academics. Focusing on the end goal of completion is nevertheless paired in this

208

pattern with limited and temporary sense of belonging in school, and with limited

aspirations for post-secondary schooling.

Participants who fell into what I am calling an "interested" pattern reported that they

were engaged and invested in some aspects of school, for example in getting at least

acceptable grades and receiving some support from teachers, but that their investment

and interest was modest and sometimes narrow. The first dimension of this, similar to the

previous pattern of belonging explored above, is described by Alfredo:

> I just thought if you get a sixty, you're average, so you're not lumped up with
> all the other kids who everybody makes fun of who are getting ten, thirty,
> forty, and everybody used to make fun of them, 'Oh, they're idiots.' At least
> you got a sixty. You're average.

Being average academically within this pattern is about striking a balance between being

an "underachiever" and an "overachiever," which are both to be avoided. Being an

underachiever is to be avoided because peers view these youths as "idiots," and therefore

somehow unable to achieve even low or at least a passing grade. Being an overachiever

is to be avoided because these youths are viewed as nerds, and lacking in the social skills

necessary to make and keep friends. One strategy for bridging from this pattern to the

more "invested" pattern begins with a high level of academic engagement in one class

and in relation to one teacher. The following three quotes illustrate the importance of

such exceptional teachers for participants:

> He's going to treat you like everybody else, so at the same time I kind of felt
> uncomfortable in his class ... but in like semester two, or grade eleven, ten
> eleven, I was like, I was comfortable with him, because I know how he was,
> right? (Eduardo).

> I didn't apply myself at school, but she, she really like believed in me, she was like 'no, you can do this,' like 'here,' and I remember grade nine I did really well (Quito).

> I just thought he cared, and he thought I could do the work, and he had me in esteem, and he thought I was a good student. And what he thought, I had to prove (Alfredo).

Despite important differences in the way that participants described exceptional teachers, they all emphasized the link between a special relationship with a teacher and a high level of academic engagement, and how this contrasted with other classes and teachers they had. Exceptional teachers by definition provide participants with a context for academic engagement that contrasts with the wider school context. They are often described as caring, but how caring is interpreted by participants varies.

The most widely sought after pattern of belonging in school with respect to academic engagement is what I am calling "invested." Only about one third of participants were invested in their schooling at some point over high school. Participants who are invested in their schooling strive to achieve academically overall. In order to become invested academically two common challenges in relation to schooling must be overcome. The first is the challenge of finding a school that provides opportunities for intellectual stimulation and academic engagement. As Octavio states in referring to his high school, "They look at it as a very academic school." The second is overcoming stereotypes that prevent Central American male youths from academic engagement. "Invested" participants identify the orientation of teachers to students as a precondition for academic

210

engagement. Fernando who is invested in academics throughout high school describes his teachers:

> *Fernando*: Every teacher at our school tells us to study more and then we'll do better. For example, I failed a physics test and she was like "you can do better than this" … and the next time, I did…
> *Interviewer*: Do you appreciate when a teacher pushes you like that?
> *Fernando*: Yeah, it's good. Sometimes you kind of need it.

Fernando mentions the groups that are marginalized in his school, but he does not identify with them. A secure home life and positive attitude seem to be all he needs to succeed at school, but he also has managed to avoid being stereotyped as a marginalized youth, which would render these other assets inadequate to allow him to achieve at school.

In sum, the four outcome patterns for belonging in school can be summarized as:

1. *Don't Care*: Participants who "don't care" see no value in trying at school, and therefore openly reject school and the schooling process.
2. *Just Pass*: Participants who fit into the "just pass" pattern are strongly oriented to school completion, but are not concerned with getting high grades.
3. *Interested*: "Interested" participants are focused on school completion, and want to do well in school, but their performance in different classes and in relation to different teachers varies widely.
4. *Invested*: "Invested" participants are oriented to completing school, doing well, and often have their eye on longer term goals that involve post-secondary schooling.

Participants stressed that positive experiences in classes and with teachers, counselors and others were rare but crucial for their sense of belonging in school. Many participants conveyed both the widespread challenges and the importance of a single teacher during interviews by referring to such teachers as exceptions to the rule. In other cases,

211

participants spoke directly about their negative experiences. The relatively low academic engagement among participants overall must be interpreted within this wider context of lack of overall sense of belonging in school among participants. The analysis above reveals quite complex strategies of academic engagement and belonging that involve at the one extreme complete rejection of schooling norms and expectations and at the other extreme investment in moderate to high academic achievement. Most participants' fell somewhere in between these two extremes, and their sense of belonging in school also tended to shift over time. Ambivalence in schooling was a key theme among participants because outside forces tended to push participants towards the extremes, while they countered by trying to achieve a balanced sense of belonging that involved negotiating peer-related and academic goals.

Changes in School Belonging for Central American Male Youths in Toronto

Participants often described their schooling experiences in terms of variations over time, with changes from year to year or broader time periods, as they proceeded through high school. While each participant had a unique overall schooling trajectory, a limited number of patterns of change could be discerned over the course of high school. Contrary to the somewhat common experience of peer belonging upon entering school explored above, orientation to schooling at the start of high school was quite diverse, and then also varied considerably over the course of high school. For almost half of participants this involved quite negative and ongoing challenges, such as lack of positive relations with

teachers, low and/or declining grades, and for a significant minority, early school leaving or breaks in school. All but one participant who developed a "don't care" orientation to school at some point early in their high school experience recovered later to a higher level of school engagement. Correspondingly, many described a kind of roller-coaster pattern of achievement: a measure of achievement, followed by declining achievement, followed by somewhat of a recovery. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that academic engagement and belonging in school tends to be moderate for the majority of participants over the entire course of high school. Table 5.3 provides a breakdown of change in school belonging over time for all participants in the study.

One noteworthy finding is that half of participants (9) became less engaged after an initial period of academic engagement that ranged from "just pass" to "invested." All but one of these participants adopted a "don't care" attitude. A decrease in academic engagement seems to be linked to multiple factors including strained relations with teachers and peers and associated lack of support, an overall school context that does not support academic achievement for participants, and individual factors such as depression. Lack of support is a key theme highlighted by participants who experienced a decline in academic engagement. As Sol states:

> There was nothing in school to help me deal with the everyday problems that
> were happening, you know? The problems at home, the fact that the father
> had sold out, the fact that I came from a war-torn country, none of that. It was
> just like, sit here and learn about whatever the hell it is that's on the lesson
> plan today and for the most part, you don't really relate and you're
> wondering 'Why am I even doing this?'

Table 5.3: High School Sense of Belonging Over Time

Case #	Name	Grade 9	Grade 10-11	Grade 12
1	Rodrigo	Just Pass	Don't Care	Just Pass
2	Quito	Invested	Don't Care	Interested
3	Eduardo	Interested	Don't Care	Just Pass
4	Diego	Invested	Just Pass	Interested
5	Alejandro	Interested	Don't Care	Just Pass
6	Alfredo	Interested	Interested	Invested
7	Emilio	Just Pass	Transition	Don't Care
8	Claudio	Just Pass	Transition	Invested
9	Mateo	Just Pass	Transition	Interested
10	Octavio	Interested	Interested	Interested
11	Nestor	Don't Care	Just Pass	Interested
12	Raul	Interested	Don't Care	Invested
13	Javier	Interested	Interested	Interested
14	Manuel	Interested	Don't Care	Interested
15	Cesar	Just Pass	N.A.	N.A.
16	Juan	Interested	N.A.	N.A.
17	Sol	Invested	Don't Care	Just Pass
18	Fernando	Invested	Invested	Invested
	Total Don't Care	1	7	1
	Total Just Pass	5	2(+3 in transit)	4
	Total Interested	8	2	7
	Total Invested	4	1	4

High school coincides with an important period of adolescence when youths are questioning themselves and the world around them. Support within schools may be more important for Central American male youths for whom this period of questioning combines with additional challenges for belonging in school. In other cases loss of interest in school may be linked to lack of stimulation. As Manuel states,

> English I did well in. I can read and write perfectly. When I would do something, I'd get a good mark. I just didn't find it interesting. High school came around and I had a lot of bad teachers.

214

Finally, loss of interest in school and academics among participants is linked to peer relations, explored further below in terms of balancing peer and school belonging.

Some participants became more engaged academically and gained a greater sense of belonging in school over time. For a small minority (4) this involved a linear progression towards greater academic achievement. Nestor who has very little interest in high school at first gradually develops a strategic orientation to completing school and even a goal to do well as he enters college. In his words, "I don't know. For me now, it's trying and trying my best. It's not just passing." Paradoxically, his lack of greater interest in academics during high school in some sense shields him from greater disappointment. Claudio on the other hand starts with little interest and then shifts dramatically to become highly invested during high school. The reasons he provides for the dramatic shift include a stable and loving family, a good school and his own realization of the importance of education. Part of Claudio's realization is that belonging in school is not provided for him, but rather something that he actively works at creating. As he states, "I'm going at it with all my heart." His sense of belonging at school illustrates the links to other spheres of belonging, but also important links to identity and aspirations for the future.

A greater number of participants (8) tended to lose interest in academics in the middle years of high school (explored above), and then recovered some interest near completion of high school. Recovery of interest seemed to be largely a strategic response motivated by the goal of school completion, and with an eye to postsecondary education for roughly

half of the eight who followed this complex pattern. This "late academic" recovery differed from previous interest in academics prior to losing interest in the middle years of high school, and also differed from those who maintained interest over the course of high school, explored directly below, or developed an interest in a linear progression, explored directly above. This suggests that there are lasting effects of marginalization from school even for those participants who regain a sense of belonging in school and complete.

Maintaining stable academic engagement and related sense of belonging in Toronto schools is rare for Central American male youths. Only three participants manage to maintain a stable sense of belonging in school, two as "interested" students and one as "invested" according to the typology. This suggests that in fact change in school belonging over time is the norm for participants. The patterns of change explored here coincide partially with dominant schooling trajectories in terms of what we would expect, such as a range of starting points initially followed by divergent paths, and then overall greater interest in academics near the end of high school. In other respects the patterns of change seem to be more specific to participants and Central American male youths in general, such as the ongoing struggle to belong and achieve, and the overall tentative sense of belonging in school that characterizes many of the experiences of participants. The high degree of change in school belonging for participants during high school is itself an important indicator of the scope of the challenge of belonging in school that they face, and helps to inform why many experience interruptions in schooling or perform at levels below what they may actually be capable of.

Sense of ambivalence among participants plays an important role in school belonging or lack thereof. Disadvantages they face such as low language proficiency, low socio-economic status, less support from parents who are also struggling with incorporation, and schooling practices and values that differ from those their parents are familiar with and try to reinforce with their children, all likely make school belonging difficult. Their ability to do well relative to others in school is heavily reduced as a result of these disadvantages, and lack of supports in place to help them overcome such disadvantages. Belonging in school is made even more difficult by the many negative experiences they have had in classrooms, with teachers and with other school staff in Toronto. Some participants were reluctant to discuss these experiences because they conflicted with deeply held values about the importance of education and respect for teachers, and with their belief that education is the only means of gaining a better life for themselves and their families. This conflict between their hopes for educational success and the many challenges they faced in school resulted in ambivalence, making belonging in school more of a challenge. In order to understand how participants endeavor to avoid being stereotyped in school we need to look more closely at the relationship between peer and school belonging, examined next.

Balancing Peer Relations with Schooling

Participants are involved in a delicate balancing act between belonging among peers and belonging in school. All youth want to have supportive friendships, be accepted by

others in their friendship group, and spend time with their friends for pleasure and to sustain the friendships and support. Yet at the same time, they realize that being accepted among friends requires time that takes away from focusing on school and doing well in school. The opposite is also true: achieving in school is desirable but may be resented by peers, especially when it takes time away from developing a friendship-based sense of security, belonging and identity. For Central American and other ethnic minority youth in Toronto additional challenges are added to this negotiation between peer and school belonging. As such, the relationship between peer belonging and school belonging emerging from this study adds new elements to our understanding of the experience of schooling for Central American male youths in Toronto.

Below I explore the relationship between belonging in school and belonging among peers to reveal how participants strive to overcome the challenges they face for achieving a balance between these two overlapping spheres. Figure 5.2 provides a breakdown of peer, school and combined belonging for participants. Note that there is only a loose fit across the columns, but there is a discernible relationship. The tightest fit is at the extremes (Reactive versus Connected). The two rows in the middle (Peer Dependent and Popular) are characterized by a looser fit across columns. I begin by outlining each pattern of combined belonging, and then explore how each combined pattern is in fact an attempt to achieve consistency across different overlapping spheres of peer and school belonging. Finally, I explore how participants take advantage of any opportunity to move

toward greater balance between school and peer belonging, as exemplified by "exceptional" belonging.

Figure 5.2

Peer Belonging   *School Belonging*   *Combined Belonging*
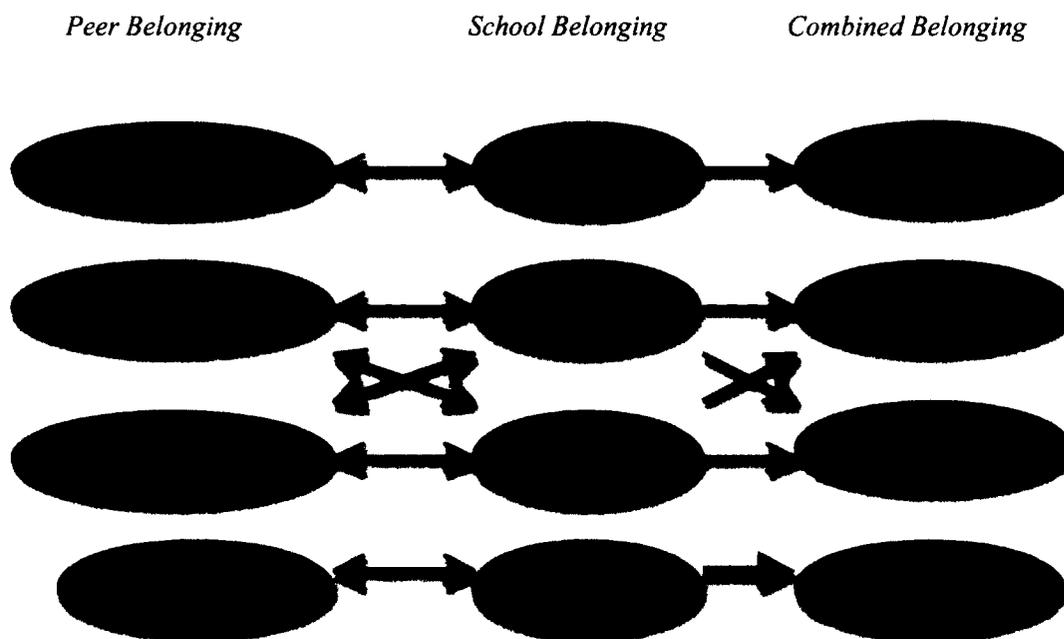
I first address the "distracted" pattern. It tends to be associated with a popular sense of belonging combined with an "interest" or simple focus on "just passing" in school. Achieving popularity in school is a goal of most if not all youths. And yet for participants in this study, simple popularity among peers did not lead to the best outcomes with respect to peer or school belonging. Lack of focus on academics is characteristic of the popular pattern of belonging among peers. Participants who become popular lack the peer support that could sustain focus on a moderate or greater investment in academics. However, popularity to the extent that it satisfies expectations and leads to belonging

219

among peers is consistent with school completion since these participants are less likely to leave school early. Popular youths may link sports to academic achievement, and schools make every effort to capitalize on this opportunity, but participants who did this suggested that while sports provided stimulation and status, sports also constituted a distraction from academics. That is why I call this pattern of combined belonging "distracted." Even for those youths who are interested in academics, popularity among peers tends to be more interesting.

The peer-dependent pattern of belonging offers the most reliable outcomes with respect to belonging in school, but not the highest academic engagement. Paired with a simple emphasis on school completion, peer dependent youth form a combined belonging I call "discouraged," because these participants are discouraged from a higher level of engagement. This pattern is characterized by a stable sense of belonging among peers. It is the most common pattern of peer belonging. It represents a starting point in school. Some participants venture out of the peer dependent pattern trying to gain more popularity or extend friendship networks. In some cases these attempts may work, and may be combined with schooling. In other cases they backfire and participants find that they fall behind in school and alienate themselves from previous friends that offered more concrete support for schooling. This helps to explain why some participants return to a peer dependent pattern at the end of school, so that they can successfully complete. It seems contradictory on the face of it, but in retrospect many participants view schooling as more of a social process than an academic one. They emphasize this in terms of the

importance of peer relations for school completion, and also in terms of what they felt were the most valuable lessons they learned in school.

Reactive sense of belonging among peers tends to be associated with not caring about school to form a combined belonging that I am calling "disappointed." While "not caring" about school was mostly a temporary sense of belonging among those who fell into this pattern, it continued to threaten participants and condition their sense of belonging among peers. In some sense, disappointed youths have failed to achieve balance between peer belonging and school belonging. This is reflected in the degree to which they prioritize hanging out with friends and activities among friends such as "getting in trouble," over schooling. On closer analysis, however, the disappointed pattern represents a failure to achieve balance in relation to peers as well. Those who display a disappointed pattern are threatened with isolation, tend to be looked down upon by other Central American and Latin American origin youths because they reinforce negative stereotypes that reflect badly on their communities as a whole, and expose themselves to greater risk. Disappointed youths may feel driven to adopt a negative attitude towards schooling, and may see no other option than to intimidate peers as a means of survival. While a balanced sense of belonging may be out of reach for them, they nevertheless attempt to achieve a consistent sense of belonging that totally rejects schooling in favor of street smarts and an alternative value system that views schooling as a waste of time. Interestingly, the rejection of schooling does not necessarily mean that they reject the value of education.

221

Participants who do achieve moderate to high grades consistently are identified and are forced to identify as "exceptions." This is because their performance in school contrasts with dominant stereotypes of them as troublemakers and underachievers. Participants in the exceptional pattern of combined belonging strive to belong among youths, but paradoxically their relative success with respect to other Central American youths place their loyalty among peers, and corresponding sense of belonging, under question. This is further complicated for male Central American youths for whom conformity in relation to schooling conflicts with normative masculinity. Alfredo captures the significance of exceptional belonging and identity for participants in the following account:

> I had a friend who used to do a joke. He used to call me Archbishop Alfredo. He would say 'you're so good compared to all Latinos,' like Archbishop Romero in El Salvador, because I didn't have a record, and he would always joke to that. He would always be like 'you're so strange compared.'

Alfredo's lack of offense to this joke illustrates the importance of exceptional sense of belonging in school for him. Later in the interview, Alfredo further clarifies his connected sense of belonging among peers in relation to his investment in academics:

> I would really just hang around with everybody. To this day, people still think I was in their classes, but I was never in any of their classes because I was in Academic, but I used to hang around with people in General that were going to the workplace ... I would just hang around with everybody.

The passage above illustrates how an exceptional sense of belonging in school both allows others to see Alfredo as an individual and simultaneously allows him to achieve an integrated identity. Diego's status as an "exception" among peers is similar to

222

Alfredo's in having advantages that other Latinos lack, and like Alfredo he both identifies with and distances himself from his less fortunate peers. In order to belong, they must both identify with marginalized peers, and yet also simultaneously distinguish themselves from marginalized peers as a means of distancing from dominant stereotypes that are involved in the process of marginalization.

In some cases exceptional participants can use their academic achievement to make/keep friends, by helping friends with assignments, for example. But they are also aware of how academic achievement creates a potential instability if they are labeled an overachiever. If labeled an overachiever, a potential conflict in identity may arise if they are further accused of "selling out," and therefore no longer know where/among whom they belong. This is why invested participants downplay importance of academics, and resist a stronger sense of belonging in school.

Adopting an exceptional "identity" is an integral even if paradoxical imperative for participants striving to achieve a deeper sense of belonging in school. However, participants adopt different patterns of peer belonging in relation to this goal. As discussed above, only three participants are able to achieve a connected sense of belonging among peers with associated advantages for their schooling goals. Two participants devote attention to building popularity among peers, and then retreat to a peer-dependent pattern in the last few years of high school in order to finish school and achieve academically. Mateo is forced into a reactive sense of belonging among peers at first and then regains a more workable peer-dependent pattern in order to complete

school. Octavio strives to bring his peer and school belonging together with an emphasis on consistency, rather than balance. As he states "In grade 10, 11, I started taking it more serious. And a lot of my friends, they started taking school more serious." These contrasting cases illustrate not only individual differences but also, and more importantly, the different schooling contexts in which participants are endeavoring to belong. The wider context on the other hand frames the ongoing struggle for Central American and other similarly marginalized youths to resolve the paradox of "exceptional" belonging in school. It is the wider context that compels them to emphasize individual identity and achievement in school, even if only to survive school and complete, because it allows them to get one step closer to fulfilling longer-term aspirations to "be someone."

While "popular" sense of belonging among peers is the most sought after pattern, it is not the most effective when it comes to balancing belonging in school with belonging among peers. "Peer-dependent" and "Connected" patterns are the most stable with respect to peer support, providing participants with a more effective foundation for the pursuit of schooling goals. The peer-dependent pattern provides needed stimulation and sufficient sense of belonging among peers to remain in school. The connected pattern goes one step further by allowing access to a wider range of peer networks in school. Participants who are connected to peers in this way are better able to achieve an optimal balance between the expectations of peers and expectations of schooling. However, opportunities for developing diverse peer networks depend on the specific social

environment in schools, and tend to be further limited for Central American male youths because of the way they are stereotyped within the wider social context. It is this same social context that frames the risks that participants face when they attempt to balance popular sense of belonging among peers in relation to schooling. For those who are forced into a reactive sense of belonging among peers resembling dominant stereotypes, sense of belonging in school becomes virtually impossible. This is why sense of belonging among peers is so important for sense of belonging in school among Central American male youths. In sum, changes in patterns of belonging with peers relative to schooling are discernible for participants. Participants strive to balance these two important overlapping spheres of belonging. Participants are able to reduce the ambivalence they feel to the extent that they are able to achieve balance within each sphere and between peers and schools for a more integrated sense of belonging and identity.

Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter provides analysis on belonging among peers, belonging in school, and the ways in which these two dimensions of belonging tend to fall into particular patterns. In order to belong among peers, participants must contend with stereotypes that precede them. Belonging among peers is both a social and an individual process. Participants must negotiate their identities in relation to difference in order to gain a sense of belonging. This results in ambivalence for participants because they want to be accepted

225

for who they are, but at the same time want to adopt a new identity that does not carry so many challenges for belonging. Common patterns of belonging among peers in some sense represent different strategies for resolving this paradox of identity and belonging. Successful peer belonging reduces ambivalence for participants to some extent, but must be further negotiated in relation to schooling.

Belonging in school is also characterized by ambivalence among participants. Ambivalence towards schooling is created by the fact that the wider social context and in particular the existence of negative stereotypes of Central American male youths as underachievers tends to push participants to extremes. One extreme involves adopting the stereotype and completely rejecting school, while the other extreme involves "proving others wrong" by doing exceptionally well in school. Most participants resisted these outside forces by striving for a balanced outcome in school, meaning resisting the forces that push them to either adopt the stereotype and not overcompensating by trying to "overachieve." The shape that balance took differed among participants. In some cases it meant achieving moderately in school, while in others it meant achieving in particular courses and just passing in others. As was the case for peer belonging, the different strategies for school belonging were importantly geared towards overcoming ambivalence and finding belonging rather than achieving a specific grade, which was the means to an end.

One of the main findings in this chapter is that achieving belonging among peers is dependent on achieving belonging in school and vice versa. Moreover, the relationship

between these two spheres of belonging is not linear, but rather highly complex. Balance between peer and school belonging is guided by a more profound negotiation of social identity, which is itself negotiated in relation to longer-term aspirations for achievement. A common aspiration among participants was to "become someone." How this long-term project of identity is defined varies from one participant to the next and changes over time as well. Despite such complexity, three conclusions can be drawn. First, the process of gaining a sense of belonging for participants among peers and in school is highly complex, largely due to the additional challenges they face due to family and migration histories, discrimination and stereotyping in society, and lack of support. Second, the ways in which participants strive to overcome the challenges they face among peers and in schools are characterized by a limited number of patterns of belonging combined with important individual differences. Third, belonging among participants is not static, but . rather changes over time as they change. These conclusions will be further elaborated in subsequent chapters with an eye to understanding the implications of belonging for both identity and priorities for achievement, including immediate goals and longer-term aspirations. Subsequent analysis aims to further explore why despite holding strong values about the importance of education, Central American male youths achieve only modestly in Toronto.

227

Chapter 6: Marginalization, Support, and Social Identity Among Peers in School

This chapter examines the participants' preferences for peer belonging in a wider context of marginalization among peers in school, their efforts to establish supportive peer relations, and the implications of both of these factors for identity formation. The analysis points in particular to dilemmas and trade-offs involved in their efforts to establish peer support during their high school years. It therefore constitutes a shift in viewpoint and emphasis from the analysis in the previous chapter, which focused on belonging in terms of both peer relations and schooling outcomes. We turn in the present chapter to an analysis of subjectivity and process with emphasis on peer support. Subjectivity is examined in relation to preferences for peer belonging to develop an understanding of how choice may influence outcomes. Another concern in this regard is social interaction, since the relations an individual forms with others are not determined by the desire of the individual alone, but rather are the result of complex interactions and mutual acceptance. The focus in this chapter on process aims to clarify how participants strived to establish supportive relations with peers, and formed longer-term aspirations for status and identity, within contexts that threatened to marginalize them with respect to peers. The analysis therefore seeks to elaborate how day-to-day preferences for peer belonging hinge on longer term aspirations for achievement, broadly defined. The analysis necessarily considers the extent to which preferences and outcomes for peer relations are shaped by social contexts in schools and the wider society. The framework

228

of preferences with an eye to the future is then further elaborated in the next chapter with focus on academics and student-teacher relations.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 draws attention to adolescence as a turbulent period of social identity formation in which youths seek to find a place or places of belonging, security and identity through individual and clustered friendships. This chapter examines in more detail how Central American male youth in Toronto who participated in the present study understand their own efforts to find belonging given their ethnic and immigration background. Their stories are complex and often highly individual in ways that make analysis challenging. However, a significant common theme running through their stories provides an important starting point for analysis. This is the negative stereotyping that they face in school and more generally in society. As immigrants or as the children of immigrants, many who arrived with their families in Canada under difficult circumstances, as part of larger refugee-led flows, they have been exposed variously to social-emotional dislocation and a shortage of social, cultural and material support. In addition, they experience marginalization in varying degrees arising from negative stereotypes of Latin American male youths as gang members and drug dealers. Central American, and especially Salvadorian, male youths within this sub-group of Latin Americans, are further stereotyped and marginalized within the Latin American community in Toronto and Canada. The main question for the present chapter is: how do such negative stereotypes of Central American male youths influence the ways they

endeavor to establish supportive peer relations in school, the outcomes of their efforts, and the kinds of identities they form in Canada?

The chapter is organized into six sections. Part 1 sets forth issues and questions concerning the links between marginalization, peer relations and identity for immigrant and second-generation Central American male youths in Toronto. Part 2 examines the findings with respect to the participants' perceptions of negative stereotypes and marginalization and provides an overview of the various strategies used to cope on a day-to-day basis. Part 3 and 4 analyze different options for them with regard to finding peer support: these elucidate the outcomes examined previously in Chapter 5. Part 5 gives particular attention to the issue of "trouble" and how the participants seek to negotiate complex peer dynamics at school through selective opposition to dominant schooling and societal norms. Part 6 examines how identity tends to become "fluid" in varying degrees as youths seek— through a mix of self-determination and peer-group solidarity-- to belong to more than one set or cluster of peers. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the main findings.

Issues and Questions

The literature points to both challenges and opportunities faced by Latin American male youths in forming supportive peer relations (Portes et al 2001). The challenge arises from a "deficit" view of them in the popular press and imagination. How do they respond to this stereotyping? Theoretically, one can imagine various responses. Some might

simply acquiesce to the negative views and come to see themselves and others like them in negative terms as people whose destiny will be at the bottom of the social order. Others might develop hostile relations to the dominant order and join "gangs" whose identity is based on counter-norms. Others still might attempt to prove the stereotypes wrong and negotiate membership variously among ethnic minority and mainstream youths. The research literature notes that options for peer relations for ethnic minority youth in a dominant culture are deeply shaped by social context: some social settings promote "downward assimilation" (Portes 2001), others promote "hostile interactions" (Berry 2006), while still others provide more room for negotiated alternatives for peer relations and identity (Rajiva 2006). While previous studies have advanced our understanding of different social-relations outcomes for ethnic minority youths threatened by marginalization, less is known about the experiences themselves, and the subjective views of those involved in schooling contexts where marginalization may be present for them and others. A number of questions can be posed:

1. What do Central American male youths involved in forming friendships and peer-group solidarity in schooling contexts perceive as advantageous friendship and wider peer relations outcomes?
2. Do they experience schooling as a process in which they have some agency among peers?
3. What is involved in the process of forming friendships in school?
4. How do different strategies of friendship formation match up with the breakdown of outcomes for peer belonging examined in the previous chapter?

The preceding questions are not well addressed in the existing literature. Much of the literature implies that youths are caught up in social interactional systems that generate

231

outcomes independently of how they perceive and respond to challenges among peers in school. This was closely examined in the review of marginalization literature in Chapter 3, and is especially the case for youths most subject to marginalization, stereotyping and racism among peers, for whom responses are absolutely critical. In contrast, the interviews in this study give a significantly different picture. Participants are actively engaged in assessing, responding to and shaping peer group dynamics in settings such as schools. This picture departs considerably from the limited characterizations of friendships, peer relations and identities expected by others and reinforced in the media. Participants recognize the dynamics of acceptance and rejection by others and how these play into their own prospects for friendships. They know through experience that wider forces of family, schools and media constrain and guide friendship- group formation. This knowledge allows them to better navigate peer relations in school in relation to other concerns. More interesting still is that they share common views as to risks and benefits of different strategies and outcomes for peer relations, belonging and identity. Strategies for identity formation are consistent with peer engagement in that they tend to stress self-determination and yet are also dependent to varying degrees on solidarity among peers. Finally, outcomes tend to be consistent with such strategies as participants carefully weigh options for belonging among peers and adjust identity and aspirations accordingly.

The data analyzed in this chapter suggest a framework for understanding subjectivity among participants in the formation of friendships and wider patterns of peer-relations

examined previously in Chapter 5. The framework is a simplified version of commonly

held experiences and preferences, and can be expressed in terms of a number of

interlinked widely held subjective views:

1.   Individual isolation and lack of friendships are understood to be signs of distress and unhappiness.
2.   A small friendship group is less than ideal and tends to be associated with a defensive, and yet meaningful, engagement with peers.
3.   A larger friendship group or one that is more diversified has advantages, but also brings risks associated with possible tensions across different constituent sub-groups within the wider range of friendships.
4.   Belonging to a "cool" in-group can offer status and related support and protection, but it also may mean significant losses with respect to maintaining meaningful relations with marginalized friends.
5.   The participants understood that "trouble", in the form of negative relations with other youths, with teachers, with the police, etc. is a mixed affair when it comes to forming friendships. "Trouble" can be the price of admission to a friendship network and can lead to gains in status among peers; it can be excitement and fun, and yet too much trouble can backfire and lead to marginalization among peers.

Finally, identity formation is linked to belonging and related preferences for belonging.

Many participants favor outcomes that involve friendships, either individually or in

clusters, with a range of social-cultural others, and their identities come to incorporate

common features of postmodernity. Their social-cultural identities show evidence of

hybridity or mixing, fluidity such as identity changes in relation to context and over time,

and multiplicity such as holding multiple identities simultaneously. This last point

suggests, in contrast to much of the existing marginalization literature reviewed in

Chapter 3, that youths facing marginalization in school do not necessarily become locked

into a static reactive response to their situation, but rather that their schooling trajectories

are characterized by a high degree of change and in some cases involve some transformation of their marginalized condition.

The above framework can also be expressed in dynamic terms as a sequence of hypothetical decisions, or preferences related to certain outcomes. Negative stereotypes and related exclusions can make it easier for Central American male youths to develop friendships within their own group than outside their own group. This may provide certain advantages particularly for children and youth who are new to Canada because they can communicate more easily and may share common experiences related to family background, migration and integration. Yet, over time friendships limited to others within one's own ethnic group may carry increased risks. Associating exclusively with youth from one's own ethnic group is often perceived negatively by others and therefore may inadvertently provoke negative interactions with others. In worse case scenarios, ethnically exclusive friendship groups adopt negative labels and become part of a wider system of conflict and disproportionate trouble. In addition, an ethnic "in group" may itself contain a number of divisions, and provide only a narrow range of support. Lack of acceptance into more mainstream friendship groups presents a further challenge to building social capital among peers. Given these risks, ethnically diverse friendship groups may offer certain advantages, particularly in settings such as those in Toronto high schools where Central American, and even Latin American youths are a minority. However, expanding one's friendships away from one's ethnic support group or other narrow-cluster of peers is only an advantage to the extent that a multicultural friendship

234

group is available. The process of developing supportive peer relations is fraught with risks and trade-offs. The analysis in this chapter concerns how the participants view these risks and trade-offs, the strategies they develop to address them, and the implications of their strategies for aspects of their identity.

Findings

Stereotypes and Marginalization

Central American male youths are faced with a challenging context in high school in which they must devote a considerable amount of energy to constructing identities and building status in relation to peers. The process is particularly challenging for marginalized youths and youths at risk of marginalization such as the participants in this study, because of the ways they are stereotyped in the wider society. Wider stereotypes of Latin American male youths as "gang bangers" and drug dealers destined for either low-wage labour or a "life of crime," get played out among students in high schools. Such stereotypes heavily influence social inclusion and exclusion of Central American male youths among peers in school. Negative dynamics that exclude Central Americans from wider friendship groups are essentially a process of *othering* in which some students define Latinos as both different from and inferior to themselves. This process uses negative stereotypes to legitimate and reinforce existing inequalities based on adjustment to a dominant culture, and often also socioeconomic status. Central American male youths are therefore faced with the challenge of defining their identities in relation

235

to difference, in which actual differences are misunderstood from the outside in negative ways. In addition to this challenge for symbolic representation, many participants also complained that limited access to material resources put them at further disadvantage in relation to their peers. This context for peer relations in school and the wider stereotypes that inform it limited options to participants for peer support. Stereotypes were a major preoccupation among the participants in the study. This section examines their experiences with stereotypes and the range of strategies they employed to avoid further marginalization. In subsequent sections, we examine more closely how the strategies participants used to respond to the threat of marginalization were linked to the development of peer support, and consider implications for identity.

Isolation from peers and lack of friends are clearly signs of distress and unhappiness for participants, but stereotypes made the process of making and keeping friends problematic. In particular, the existence of stereotypes constrained the ability of participants to make friends with who they wanted, and in some cases resulted in additional negative personal consequences. Participants were quite aware of the wider stereotypes about Latinos. Interesting differences emerged in how participants talked about these common stereotypes, reflecting different experiences and orientations to stereotypes. The way participants spoke about stereotypes seemed highly relevant in particular for how they described their peer associations in school. Some mentioned personal experiences of being stereotyped in school, others mentioned how other Latin American youths had been stereotyped in school, while others still spoke more generally

about the existence of stereotypes of Latinos, Central Americans, and Salvadorians in particular, as gang members, drug dealers, and future low-wage labourers, or criminals. Examples from participants display these variations, as well as consensus about the actual stereotypical characterizations. As Eduardo stated:

> So many people say, 'oh, just another Spanish person, Latinos are (so) much alike. Either he's going to be cleaning, construction, gang, drug dealer, be in jail,' or whatever it is. Someone always has something to say about that.

In some cases, participants stressed how they avoided ethnic-exclusive friendship groups because they believed that they resulted in stereotyping of themselves and others. Octavio's personal experience of ethnic-exclusive groups in his school was characterized by insecurity and isolation, and he perceived them as fundamentally problematic, going so far as to state, "I think that's where stereotypes come from." Despite important variations, all accounts emphasized how participants were forced to engage in some way with negative stereotypes, and how the pervasive nature of such stereotypes heightened the importance of differentiation for participants, to be further explored below.

Participants were forced to engage with stereotypes in order to negotiate belonging and identity among peers at school, and their accounts displayed both similarities and differences in the ways they did so. One strategy to cope with negative stereotypes was simply to reject them. As Eduardo stated:

> I want to also let people know, you know, I'm not just a regular gang banging Spanish person or whatever else you want to call it. I'm something, you know? Make people think different about me."

Eduardo's strategy involved an acknowledgement of the negative stereotype and an outright assertion that it does not apply to him personally. Other participants who adopted this strategy often distinguished themselves from other Latinos and other ethnic minority youths who they felt had caved in by adopting negative stereotypes of themselves. Mateo referred to these youth as "little kids in gangs." A minority of participants admitted that they had temporarily adopted the negative stereotype being placed on them from the outside. As Emilio stated:

> I used to like mess around with kids and what not, like, we used to do things to other kids, and bully them around and stuff - someone would come around and do something to our friend, like, he'd come to us, we'd all go and fight them or whatever, retaliate.

Emilio was conflicted about his adoption of the very stereotypes he viewed were being unfairly placed on him from the outside. At times during the interview he accepted responsibility for his actions, and referred to periodic efforts to change his sense of belonging and identity. At other times he blamed his school, family, friends and society in general for his predicament. Other participants had made a cleaner break from the past, claiming that the adoption of negative stereotypes into their sense of belonging and identity among peers was over, and that they had changed course since. In both cases the adoption of negative stereotypes was viewed as a transitional phase. As Claudio stated, "I was trying to find myself. I used to slack off, I was kind of into the stereotype of the Latino gangbanger, smoking weed, drinking and partying." Both Claudio and Emilio used the past tense suggesting that their orientation to peers had changed since, but Emilio was clearly still in transition in this regard. A number of participants mentioned

238

that they felt the media played a significant role in encouraging impressionable Central and Latin American male youths (and other youths at risk of marginalization) in Toronto to aspire to a glamorized image of gang life, even though only very few actually joined youth gangs. As Nestor stated "Gangs, they think gangs are so cool or whatever. I guess the media focus, that's what they see on T.V - shootings every day in school, stabbings." Schools seem to serve as one setting for the enactment of gang-type posturing and peer associations, which are different from actual youth gang involvement. While none of the participants actually joined youth gangs, they were aware that some of their friendship groups were often viewed negatively from the outside as gangs, and this played into their strategies for peer belonging and identity in complex ways.

Stereotypes threatened to marginalize participants from their peers in school, leading to heightened importance of differentiation for them. This is paradoxical since the adoption of some stereotypes, such as being a "gang banger," were described by participants as efforts to be "cool," and therefore popular. This led participants to negotiate individual identity in relation to collective sense of belonging among peers in complex ways. In retrospect, participants felt that anything beyond a temporary flirtation with being a "gang-banger" as exemplified in media, was sure to lead to school failure and early school leaving, and possibly incarceration or death. Participants knew that negative stereotypes sometimes resulted in unfair treatment for Latin American and other youths at risk of marginalization, but they also differentiated themselves as individuals

that were spared from this unfair treatment. Quito related a frequent story among

participants:

> Most of the Hispanic kids got kicked out just before I went to high school,
> because they were believed to be in gangs – some of them were, so there
> wasn't a big Hispanic community there.

An almost identical version of this story, only now with emphasis on Salvadorians, was

told by Alfredo:

> There was a lot of Salvadorians, and actually our school was, before they
> kicked everybody out, it was full of Salvadorians – pure Latin American kids.

After filling in a few more details about how rough the school was before Alfredo

arrived, he stated, "It was really different than now - I didn't really see it as a bad thing –

I didn't really think it would happen to me." The adoption of the stereotype was therefore

viewed by participants as a misguided effort to find a place in which to belong, and to

build status among peers, because ultimately it resulted in marginalization from peers at

school. This was further reinforced by a related story, only now focused on the actual

experiences of participants in school:

> That immediate support was the basketball team, the Latino community and
> then it became just basketball and the Caribbean community because I mean,
> some got deported, some got expelled, some transferred out, some were
> suspended – you kind of end up feeling like the last of the Mohicans by the
> time you make it to the final year, it's like, 'where are all my people?' (Sol)

Two points are relevant about this second story for the qualitative analysis here. The first

is the reminder it provided to participants while they were in high school that they were

at risk of not finishing. The second point is how this attrition rate of Latin American male

youths in any given school affects the identity and sense of belonging for those Latin

American youths that stay. Participants took ongoing measures to differentiate from those who had left, but they also felt abandoned by them. Even if dropout rates for Latin American youths in Toronto are higher than average, the stories seem exaggerated, suggesting that from the perspective of participants it is the absence near the end of high school, of those other Latin American youths who they entered high school with, that often made Sol and others feel like "The last of the Mohicans." As Nestor stated "By the time grade twelve hits, the same people that were there in grade nine were not going to be there – they dropped out or got kicked out, right?" The relatively small numbers of Latin American, and even smaller number of Central American youth entering Toronto schools paired with their higher than average attrition rate in any given school make ethnic-specific peer support difficult for them in school. The sample itself is quite mobile but presents a slightly different picture, since roughly two thirds (11/18) of participants changed schools, but only two dropped out, one of whom had re-entered and one who was in the process of applying to re-enter high school to complete. The mobility of participants, and the attrition of Latin American male youth in schools pose a challenge for ethnic-specific identity and belonging for them in school. This is all the more so since as Sol stated, "There was a limited number of Latino students to begin with." In sum, while participants were careful to differentiate themselves from other Latinos who were marginalized from school, they also felt left behind, faced an increased threat of isolation, and many also expressed ambivalence about graduating from high school "alone," that is, without the support of other Latin American and Central American

friends beside them. This is not surprising, given that the strong determination to complete school expressed by all participants was mixed with anxieties about the kinds of challenges that may lie beyond graduation. Would they succeed in overcoming negative stereotyping of them and other challenges for making successful transitions to work? And what would they need to sacrifice in order to increase their odds of succeeding in this regard?

In sum, the accounts of stereotypes provided by participants called attention to the wider context for stereotyping with which they had little control, and the everyday decisions and interactions among peers in school where they had a measure of control. This control largely involved positioning themselves in relation to well-known negative stereotypes of Latinos. A common strategy was to define their own positioning in positive terms in contrast to the negative positioning of some other Latinos. The identification or lack thereof with stereotypes was further linked to aspirations. As Rodrigo stated:

> I met this other person who was also from El Salvador. He seemed pretty focused in school. He knew it was important and stuff, but he kept assuming that he was going to drop out eventually. (Interviewer: Why do you think that is?) He just kept assuming, I don't know, I mean, he was stereotyping himself.

Rodrigo's comment that the other student from El Salvador was "stereotyping himself" illustrates the importance Rodrigo places on the response to stereotypes. This was an important theme among all participants and reflected the degree to which they felt they had individual agency, and could avoid marginalization through self-determination. In

subsequent sections responses to the threat of stereotyping and marginalization will be examined in relation to the kinds of friendship groups participants formed, and the implications of both of these processes for a third process of identity formation.

Ethnicity and Peer Relations

Central American male youths face ongoing challenges in expanding and maintaining social networks in high school among peers that are supportive. A combination of inter/intra-ethnic stereotyping and conflict among peers threaten to socially exclude and isolate Central American male youths in the context of schooling. The process of developing supportive peer relations in school is further complicated for Central American male youths by their ethnic minority status in a dominant culture. Participants tended to identify with youths from a wide range of ethnic groups and avoided ethnic-exclusive friendship groups. One reason for not restricting their friendships on the basis of ethnicity was because ethnic-exclusive friendship groups tended to be perceived negatively by others, and thus could result in conflict. However, some school contexts made it more difficult for participants to diversify friendship groups, forcing them to choose between ethnic-exclusive friendship groups or isolation, with associated risks that accompany each of these choices. The key issue for participants was therefore one of accepting the potential costs of certain friendships and being part of certain friendship groups, with the benefits of doing so, and exercising choice accordingly. Usually this meant not relying entirely or too heavily on ethnicity in their friendship clusters, and

sometimes compartmentalizing ethnic- specific friendship groups they did have in relation to wider, more ethnically diverse and flexible peer associations. Friendships with others from the same ethnic community continued to be important outside of the school context even for those who avoided ethnic-exclusive friendship groups in school. Ethnic-specific friends outside of school were involved in a range of group activities organized at the level of the community either by youths themselves, or by a range of community organizations that worked with youth. In school contexts, however, ethnic-specific peer associations were more complex. Immediately below we examine some risks and tradeoffs that factored into the decision-making process for participants around whether or not to form friendships in school with others from the same or a similar ethnic background, and how they managed these friendships in relation to other peers in school.

Ethnic-specific friendships in school tended to be meaningful and provided some benefits for participants, but also remained tentative and were sometimes short lived. Despite important variations among participants, ethnic-specific friendship groups in school tended not to expand beyond two or three members, unless they transformed into more ethnically diverse groups. Participants often gravitated toward members of the same or a similar ethnic group when they were new to Canada, and in other cases when they entered a new school. In the first instance this is because making friends with others who speak the same language can provide moral support and companionship. As Alejandro stated:

> Another Spanish kid came in who was from Colombia, and I made friends
> with him. A little bit later ... another Spanish kid came in and he was from

244

Cuba. And so our, the three Spanish kids, we made a group of us, just the three of us, 'cause, you know, we wouldn't talk to anyone else, just hang out by ourselves, and speak Spanish.

In a contrasting case we can see how making friends with other Latin American students at school could have practical benefits for participants, such as to facilitate access to the dominant culture rather than insulating oneself from others. As Octavio stated:

There was this kid, … he was Colombian. He came to my school and he spoke Spanish so then I started hanging out with him …I started meeting other people. He was my source of communication with other people …He knew the language better than me. He was born here, but he spoke Spanish.

In both cases above, the presence of even one or two other students who spoke Spanish, and who were willing to be friends, provided participants with a sense of belonging and identity in the school. As Alejandro stated, others would comment on his friendship group: "There go the Spanish kids." Despite the practical benefits and comfort provided by friendships with other Latin Americans with whom they may be able to identify, ethnic-specific friendship groups in school tended to be temporary adaptations to a new situation, and were often fleeting for participants in other instances as well. Over time, participants tended to distance from such friends at least while at school in part to avoid negative consequences of maintaining ethnic- specific friendships in the school setting.

Participants discover over time that there are costs associated with maintaining friendships with others of the same or a similar ethnic group in school. The costs are most obvious for those who form an ethnic-specific friendship group, because they are at the greatest risk of being labelled as a gang. This labelling process is catalyzed by the existence of negative stereotypes examined at length above, and also involves

245

homogenization. Homogenization tends not only to obscure important differences among Latin Americans, but is itself an unequal process that subsumes marginalized sub-groups among Latin Americans. As Octavio stated:

> Another thing is, if someone asks me 'Where you from?' 'Oh I'm Spanish.' 'Oh you're from Mexico, you speak Spanish – you're from Mexico.' I always get that one.

Similarly, Claudio stated:

> When I say I'm from El Salvador, they're like 'What part of Mexico is that?' And I've found that a lot. And I guess that's why a lot of Latinos group up.

The reason why participants pursue ethnic-specific friendships in school particularly when they are new to Canada, or simply new to a particular school in other cases, is to avoid isolation. As Sol stated: "With the Latino youth … in grade 9, I really connected with them and got a welcome student group." Sol contrasts this with his feeling from wider peer networks at school:

> I think as far as the school setting, it was just I was mainly in a white Anglo-Saxon environment, that I did not feel that I (belonged). I had some friendships – some people were cool but I recall different incidents where you get left out of groups.

However, the increased risk of stereotyping and homogenization that arises from associating with members of the same or a similar ethnic group, if they are actually available, works to keep such ethnic-specific groups in school fairly small, and this ultimately remains a defensive position for most participants. In some sense this defeats the purpose of making friends with others of the same or a similar ethnic background at

school, since they remain somewhat isolated, which is what participants ultimately seek to avoid.

Another cost of associating with members of the same or a similar ethnic group is the potential for inter-ethnic conflict. The particular school context heavily shapes options for making friends with others from the same or a similar ethnic background, and also influences wider ethnic relations among peers in school. As Octavio stated:

> At that school I noticed a lot of conflict, especially racial conflicts. Like I remember walking down the alley. I was going to class. There was a big fight between Spanish guys and black guys. It was hectic. I seen [sic] this guy on the floor twitching, being hit by a brick, like, stuff that you shouldn't have to experience in school if you just want to go learn, you know? That was conflict. There was conflict between all sorts of races in my school, and when you go to lunch you see them, like the Spanish guys for example will hang in one area, and everybody will know that's where the Spanish guys will hang out. And the Portuguese have their spot, and the Asians.

Octavio enters this school near the end of his high school career, and manages to keep a distance from these kinds of conflicts. Other participants also commented on a tendency in larger schools for people to "just stick with what they know," meaning to primarily associate with members from the same or a similar ethnic group. Interestingly, though, like Octavio they contrasted their own friendship group associations against such ethnic exclusive ones. For Octavio, in opting to avoid ethnic exclusive friendship groups, he admits that he "felt a little more insecure," and that in comparison to his previous school there was "a little more isolation and not as much help." Claudio admits to originally being "into the stereotype of the Latino gangbanger," and then distances from this

identity later in high school. He pinpoints ethnic-group association as the key formative moment for inter-ethnic conflict in school:

> Technically, that kind of trying to make yourself look big thing, really, is like that stereotypical Latino look. I guess it would start, like when you group up. You group up, and then you have friends, and then when someone else tries to go against that, you have to go against that back, and usually it's violence, usually it's insults.

Claudio acknowledges that the perceived need to seek out peer support in school not only for companionship but also for protection started for him much earlier. As he stated, "All through elementary, I felt like I need to be in a group or I'm going to get targeted." In sum, for Octavio, Claudio, Sol and other participants, peer support from friends is important in school, but processes of stereotyping and homogenization, and the related potential for inter-ethnic conflict tends to discourage them from forming and maintaining ethnic –specific friendships in school, and keeps such friendship groups small when they do form. This creates a challenge for participants in their search for support among peers, with a variety of responses and outcomes.

Another issue for developing friendships and peer support among members of the same or a similar ethnic group for participants in school was the potential for intra-ethnic divisions and conflict. As Octavio stated, "Even in the Spanish community, not all of them get along." The process of homogenization of ethnic groups in Canada tends to obscure important differences among Latin American and Central American youths. While there was variation in how participants described such differences, all agreed that they were significant for friendships and peer support or lack thereof, and emphasized a

common set of themes. One of the most important divisions was in fact between more "popular", read integrated, and an "immigrant type." As Diego stated:

> Between the Latin Americans, I remember there were two big groups. There was one group that would be like, the popular ones, Latin Americans, and the other one would seem like the immigrant type that just came in, and they didn't know that much English... sometimes with your own people, I felt like they didn't want to associate with them, because they viewed them as immigrants.

The account above illustrates how ethnic-exclusive friendship groups among Latin Americans in Canada could be internally divisive and promote additional stereotypes such as the "immigrant type." Another way in which ethnic-exclusive friendship groups could be divisive and lead to conflict was on the basis of territoriality by school and neighborhood. As Octavio stated:

> There used to be this gang called Fam 1 and they used to go to **** and they were Spanish background but from Jane and Finch, which did not get along with some Spanish guys from Christie.

Octavio and other participants sometimes also highlighted country and region of origin differences. As he stated, "For example, a lot of Mexicans don't like Central Americans or vice versa." Diego implied that some intra-ethnic conflict in his school was individually based. As he stated, "It could have been Latin Americans against Latin Americans, Portuguese against Portuguese, just fights that broke out." Finally, in addition to the divisions (and alliances, to be explored further below) that are created in the Canadian reception context, participants mentioned divisions that transcended national boundaries. Diego discusses and ranks a number of intra-ethnic divisions among Latin Americans in Toronto, worth quoting at length:

249

I think that it stems back from, from back home too, about those with money and those without. Those without seem to be the more indigenous looking people. And those that have money... I'll give you a good example about ... Spanish soap operas, where they show the working people are all the indigenous looking people, and the people with money that own all these factories are all light skin, Spaniard looking people. So, there's always, there's so much tension and, even not back home, just here in society between Latin Americans because of that... If I go to a Spanish restaurant... I remember I went and there's this guy, with his family, all dressed up, good shoes, Gucci glasses and he pulls out a lot of money. He's like the snobbish type and white skinned Spanish person. I don't know. I'm not trying to be prejudiced... I feel that they already look white, so maybe they'll have it easier. That's what I always felt. Now I don't really look into it too much, except the stuff that's on T.V. That really pisses me off. Here, whether you're white looking, I don't really care about that stuff anymore. But I can still see it, and I know (pause) there's a big separation in the Latin community because of it (pause).

For Diego, class differences seemed to be the least flexible in terms of developing mutually supportive relations. Diego's account suggests further that these class differences can also interact in the Canadian context with "race." Outcomes for developing peer support among members of the same or a similar ethnic group are difficult to interpret, however, and the Canadian context seems to provide both challenges and opportunities in this regard, with different school contexts factoring into the complex equation.

In the accounts above of differences and potential divisions largely created in the Canadian reception context, but also stemming back to historical divisions among Latin Americans, participants often implied that this was "just jokes." This is difficult to interpret since in some cases jokes could escalate to violence, so I think it is safer to conclude that these kinds of teasing and tensions that exist among Latin and Central

Americans in the Canadian context reflect the complicated nature of their intra-ethnic relations in Canada, which can be characterized as both meaningful and yet tentative. Participants often found acceptance among co-ethnics particularly when they were new to Canada, or entering a new school. Maintaining some ethnic-specific friendships proved to be problematic for some participants, however, particularly when this involved ethnic-specific friendship groups, because they tended to be perceived negatively by others and could therefore result in conflict. The result for participants overall is that they were involved in a complicated process of managing risks and tradeoffs, a process that was individual in some respects, but also highlighted some common themes for developing supportive relations among peers in school. In sum, participants were selective about their ethnic-specific friendship groups, and this depended on the context in school, and the availability of like-minded others of the same or a similar ethnic background. Over time, and as a result of acculturation, participants emphasized the advantages of being part of multicultural friendship groups for developing peer support in school, the topic we now turn to below.

Diversifying Friendships

Ethnic diversity in friendship groups was highly valued among participants, and so they strove to diversify their friendships and support across different peer clusters. The extent to which they were able to develop diverse friendship groups and ideally, diverse peer networks, depended on their own individual resources and orientation to peers, as

well as various challenges and opportunities for diversification shaped by different school and neighborhood contexts. Lack of availability of members of the same or a similar ethnic group was one compelling reason to diversify friendship groups. A second and even more compelling reason for diversification of friendship groups was lack of acceptance into the dominant peer group in school. For many participants these two conditions coincided in schools, leaving them with little choice but to form ethnically diverse friendship groups. Finally, negative stereotyping of ethnic specific friendship groups in schools as gangs was highlighted by participants as a reason to avoid such peer groupings in favor of more ethnically diverse friendship groups. Strategies for forming ethnically diverse friendship groups involved the use of various sources of social capital and talent to build multicultural links. Friendships may have arisen initially through sports, residential propinquity, common interests in music or hobbies, being in the same classes in school, accidental encounters, and through other means. For purposes of analysis, two general patterns of diversification in friendship groups are examined here. The first is a pattern of incorporation into a separate ethnically defined friendship group as an honorary member, or incorporation into a white mainstream peer group in school. A second pattern of diversification is when youths form complex multicultural friendship groups. Multicultural friendship groups are often, but not always, based on ethnic minority status in relation to a dominant majority, and may cut across gender, sexual orientation, social class and other potential divides, such as those between "geeks," "jocks," "gangsters," and others. Despite obvious advantages, diversification was

252

constrained by acceptance among others, and by one's skills and social capital.

Diversification of friendship groups was therefore not always easily attained, and

depended on the school context. As with other friendship group formations in school,

diverse friendship groups were sought after in the first instance to avoid isolation, but

also for the access they provided to peer support. Developing multicultural networks of

friends provided participants with the best outcomes for peer support for a range of goals

in school.

Like other youths in school, participants wanted to be popular among peers.

Popularity affords certain obvious advantages, namely having many friends and therefore

avoiding isolation, but also more critically, popularity provides access to important peer

support in school. Support from peers may help in the achievement of goals at school as

well as provide protection from a range of risks at school, such as bullying. Participants

often found themselves in schools that had a high percentage of ethnic minorities. As

Nestor stated:

> My school was basically all minorities, Hispanics, Portuguese, Blacks. It was
> a certain percentage of whites, but it was more foreigners. It was basically the
> atmosphere, 'oh, it was cool to do this, it was cool to do that,' other students,
> it was still white students hanging around with other cultures, but I guess
> because there was so many of us, like, we understood each other as opposed
> to being born here.

In some schools, diversification of friendships meant incorporating into a larger ethnic

minority group. As Javier stated, "In high school I don't really hang out with the Spanish

or the Black kids too much. I hanged out with more Italians." In another case, Sol

incorporates into a less mainstream group, Black Caribbeans, that nevertheless offers him more support in school than the Hispanic community:

> I was on the verge of basically just dropping out altogether but the basketball practices and the games were really the only motivation for me to come back to the school and that was my community, my settlement, which at Oakwood is mainly Caribbean community, and I felt so much more safe and welcome being who I was, in that setting.

The quote above highlights a related strategy for gaining popularity in school for participants, to draw on skills in sport. Octavio also finds that this strategy works well for him. As he stated, "Being on sports teams, we won a soccer championship for that school, and friends came pretty easy I guess." This strategy is also used by Nestor, allowing him to be part of the popular crowd. As he states:

> I went to a pretty tough school, to a pretty bad school. So they always told you that you have to be a certain way, so you're always kind of scared. You always kind of get threatened from the older grades, like 'Oh, if you come through the front door, I'm gonna rush you, I'm gonna initiate you [sic].' Just stuff like that, right? I hung around people that went to my elementary because I knew them. Then as I started going to the classes and started meeting new people, I just hung around people in my class, and my soccer mates, right?

Participants went to schools in Toronto that had a high percentage of ethnic minorities, but they often found that their friendship groups were still defined against a mainstream white majority. Incorporating into a separate ethnically or racially defined group as an honorary member provided them with a buffer against risks of becoming isolated, dropping out of school, being bullied, and others. In some cases, they were able to diversify their friendship networks further to include members of the white majority as

well, through the use of sport. This allowed them to gain popularity among peers overall in school with benefits for peer support.

Even though popularity was valued and could provide such benefits, the dynamics of popularity and unpopularity could be a double-edged sword for participants. Just as there were risks of being unpopular such as the risk of isolation, so too were there risks of being popular. Nestor emphasized the risks of unpopularity, but was clearly conflicted about his status of being popular, as evident in the following quote:

> I was the one that was 'Oh, They're not cool,' … I kind of knew it was wrong to not talk to them and see them by themselves at lunch and not sit down with them, but like I didn't want to sit down with them because 'What is this guy doing? This guy's dumb.' They would judge you, right? The in crowd would judge you, so I just kind of blocked it out of my mind. I always knew it was kind of wrong, but I didn't speak up.

In retrospect Nestor felt bad about not helping those who were isolated in school, because as he said, "I knew where they were coming from," but he also found that he was left in the lurch by the friends he had made near the end of high school because in contrast to them, he had not thought about what he was doing after high school. Other participants had also expressed regret at having alienated themselves from other members of the same or a similar ethnic background, when they had initiated the separation, and resentment towards friends who had withdrawn their support either by leaving school early or leaving for college or university without them. The risks in school, and the efforts of participants to avoid or lessen them by making friends and drawing on the support of friends, illustrate a number of tradeoffs in relation to friends,

but also tradeoffs between developing peer support and other goals such as academic achievement and school completion, examined in the next chapter.

Developing friendship groups was of utmost importance for participants in school, as friends supported one another through various challenges. There was a tendency for participants, like other youths in school, to strive for popularity. With important differences in school and neighborhood contexts, participants were faced with a situation in which each option for developing a friendship group in school posed risks that seemed to outweigh the advantages. Participants therefore had to make tradeoffs in order to avoid total isolation. In some cases a few close friends were enough to cope in school, and this was certainly better than complete isolation from peers at school. Participants sometimes settled for a small friendship group, given the risks posed by stereotyping and the difficulties that ethnic minorities, and particularly marginalized Central American male youths, faced in becoming popular in a wider Canadian context dominated by white mainstream youths, and in which they were in competition with other more established ethnic-minority groups. When they could, however, participants tried to develop complex patterns of friendship networks that they could move through seamlessly, and sometimes requiring them to compartmentalize some friendship groups. In exceptional cases, it seemed that the limits for friendship acceptance experienced by participants actually resulted in them developing more extensive social networks of weak ties crucial for bridging to networks outside their ethnic networks. As Mateo stated in reference to his high school:

> Very multicultural, I got along with everybody so...there's this small Spanish community too, but I didn't really hang out with them a lot. They weren't really focused on school. They were very... I don't know what to say about them. They were, I just hung out with them to play soccer. If we wanted to play soccer, I was on the soccer team in high school. The first time we played soccer that was about it. Most of my friends were pretty multicultural. I hung out with everybody really.

In Mateo's case his neighborhood does not provide him with a multicultural context, but his school allows for greater diversification. As Mateo stated in reference to his school:

> It (the school) was diverse but the neighborhood was very Italian. So we had a lot of Italian people in our school... kind of funny because we had kind of a multicultural kind of clique. I had a Filipino friend; a Black friend, also hung out with other classmates, but primarily hung out with them.

Over two thirds of participants (13/18) mentioned that they had made friends specifically with youths outside their ethnic group, but diversification of friendship groups went beyond cultural diversity. In some cases friendship groups that were multicultural were not necessarily based on ethnic-minority status. Notice how Raul describes his group:

> I don't want to say we were the black sheeps of the classrooms [sic]. In a way we were. One was really smart, one was really athletic, one was really irritating. I was really quiet and shy. I guess these qualities brought us together because in a way it was a bit different than the other students. I mean the girl was really athletic, so much so that she would pretty much win at everything, so the other kids wouldn't want to play sports with her. The other one was really smart. She'd rather pick up a book rather than play basketball. One was irritating. I guess that's how we connected. In a way we sort of felt different.

Even though the basis of diverse friendship groups in which participants found acceptance need not always have been ethnic-minority status, or multiculturalism, often the framing of such groups was contrasted against homogeneous and more dominant

257

ethnic groups in a particular context. Notice how Raul qualifies the group mentioned above in the context of his school:

> The majority of the school was Filipino and a lot of the Filipino kids stayed with themselves. But I basically knew everyone and everyone knew me. If my three friends weren't around, I'd go with (my Vietnamese friend), and if she was busy I'd just go to another group of people.

Raul does not identify solely or even primarily as "Spanish," nor does he close himself off from others that also occupy a marginal status in relation to the more numerous Filipino students. Like other participants, he strives to accept, and be accepted by, everyone in school. Alfredo echoes this common refrain "And with me, I would really just hang around with everybody."

The best outcome for diversifying friendship groups is one that combines both patterns above, that is, maintaining ethnically diverse friendship groups, but also gaining a degree of popularity and gaining access to more mainstream youth networks in school. This outcome was not easily attained because it required both individual/personal resources as well as certain mainstream peer dynamics in school that did not socially exclude marginalized ethnic minority youths such as the participants in this study. There were clearly important differences between more marginalized schools situated in marginalized neighborhoods with a high degree of ethnic minorities, and schools with a more homogeneous, mainstream student body. Each presented unique challenges to participants for making friends and building peer support, but despite the risks and tradeoffs associated with the former, participants often found the latter the most challenging for finding friends and peer support. In certain cases, a very limited

friendship group or a single friend in school was all that was available, which was isolating and offered little in the form of peer support. Quito's experience of being an ethnic minority in a school that is dominated by mainstream peers, is illustrative of this situation: "There wasn't a lot of diversity, so it was hard ... so I had a couple of friends, not very many and yeah, it was really hard."

Managing Troubles and Popularity

There are various reasons why few of the participants gained acceptance in an exclusive "cool" crowd at school. First of all, gaining acceptance from individuals within such a group may be difficult. Secondly, being a member of an exclusive group may make it difficult for them to maintain friendships with others outside such a group. This would threaten important friendships with marginalized youth, including Central and Latin American youth subject to stereotyping and exclusion as well as diverse others in more heterogeneous friendship networks and clusters. Parallel to the goal of establishing, maintaining and if possible, expanding friendship networks was an ongoing process of managing troubles. In general, participants wanted to avoid trouble especially in the latter years of high school. This was a reflection of the fact that they already felt that their status in school was tentative, that as ethnic minority racialized male youths they were aware that many others viewed them in negative terms and were in a sense expecting trouble from them. Another reason why they wanted to avoid trouble in school was that their families and ethnic community had instilled in them strong values in favor of

259

education and respect for the authority of teachers. On the other hand, participants learned that avoiding trouble in school was not an easy task. They found that a certain level of trouble was "normal" in Toronto schools, and that peers expected them to get in a certain amount of trouble, or to at least push the boundaries of school rules. Their engagement with peers therefore involved a careful process of managing trouble. This process involved measured adoption of Canadian norms in youth culture about trouble and masculinity, while not losing values about the importance of education. Managing trouble in school was not a smooth process for participants, and one with a number of variations. Here I examine troubles in relation to peers, and then revisit troubles in relation to schooling in the next chapter.

Participants generally held strong values about the importance of education and respect for the authority of teachers at school. As Diego stated:

> I think the education system for me, as an overall experience its been good, at least in Toronto, I think teachers do a good job. It's just up to the students. They don't want to engage in their learning. That's a big thing, because teachers show up and they do their job. It's just the students got to put in their part, to want to be there and want to learn.

Claudio acknowledged that the value he placed on education learned from his parents was something that he also believed was true. As he stated, "I was taught that school is really important, and I've seen it with my sister as she grows up." The importance placed on education was often paired with acceptance of the authority of teachers and a belief in the benefits of a structured learning environment. As Raul stated, "Teachers need to be more strict. I've seen kids pass when they shouldn't have." Despite entering high school

260

with such values of the importance of education and deference to authority, participants

discovered over time that in the Canadian context getting in trouble was not only

"normal," but also expected of them, in order to be accepted by their peers. Participants

highlighted grade 9 as a time in which they had to prove themselves to peers. As Mateo

stated:

> Grade 9 was kind of a funny year... that was the year I probably got into the
> most fights, just because that's the year the older kids start picking on the
> younger kids, or the younger kids want to feel like they're big and bad and
> they feel like they have something to prove of themselves.

Fighting provided status among peers at school, but a certain amount of rebelling against

school rules was also expected. As Rodrigo stated, "We just did, we just did what any kid

would have done, you know, get into trouble, tease people." Rebelling in school was also

about stimulation. In a dialogue between Emilio and Claudio, they described trouble as a

"rush" and "fun." Emilio continued to explore the theme of trouble, and how it conflicted

with deeply held values:

> I don't know. It feels just good. For me, I've stolen things, I drank, I smoked
> weed. I've done a lot of things. For some reason it just feels good. When you
> know for a fact that you're going the wrong way like, my mind is straight but
> my actions aren't. So like, you know it's bad, but you get a kick out of doing
> it.

Participants discovered that trouble could have more serious consequences for them

because of stereotypes. For example, Nestor describes a situation in school where he is

late for class and he gets into trouble, whereas another student who was late did not. The

double standards that participants faced caused them to try to avoid trouble.

261

Avoiding trouble was a common preoccupation for participants and one they had to learn over the course of high school. This was framed by a wider negotiation between the values learned at home and those learned among youths at school. In some cases these values conflicted and in other cases they were consistent with one another. There was also a degree of variation in how participants managed the troubles they faced among peers at school. As high school progressed, participants increasingly distanced themselves from situations that might result in trouble for them. As Mateo stated:

> I just like to keep things nice and simple. I don't like to create trouble for myself. I have enough trouble of my own everyday of life. Why would I want to make more problems for myself, right?

Participants also distanced themselves from peers who they felt might get them in trouble. As Rodrigo stated:

> There was this one teacher we had - she took over for half a year, and the students just attacked her, basically just made her teaching a living hell. It was pretty harsh but, I'm not really into that kind of stuff. I just stood by, just watched.

Other participants echoed this cautious orientation to peers who might get them into trouble. In reference to trouble among peers at school Javier stated, "I stay back."

From an outsider perspective, it seems as if avoiding trouble was not a very successful strategy for participants who were concerned about getting along with peers and completing school. Many participants related situations in which they were faced with trouble they had not bargained for. For instance, lacking friendship support exposed participants to bullying, so those who had opted to stay too far "back" found themselves standing alone and without protection. For Quito, who ended up isolated at school, this is

exactly what happened. As he stated, "Another thing that I hated about school, actually, there were these kids, bullies, that were constantly trying to push me down the stairs." Eduardo suffers even greater consequences despite his efforts to avoid trouble and his strong values about the importance of education. In the following quote we can hear Eduardo struggle to reconcile the fact that despite his best efforts to the contrary he faced isolation among peers and serious trouble in school:

> I wasn't really looking to fit in. I was just looking to get my work done, just to meet people I meet, when I meet I meet, and learn things. I don't know, sometimes I knew I didn't fit in, but at the same time I didn't really care, 'cause I wasn't really thinking – I didn't really care what people thought about me. I was just there for one thing, to finish, which I didn't, but I wasn't really trying to fit in, but at the same time I was just, I was always with the three of my friends, so that's all that made me fit in, so as long as I knew somebody, that's all that mattered to me.

Participants varied in the degree to which they were able to avoid trouble, or in some cases to simply avoid the consequences of trouble, but they all seemed to face a double bind. They needed friends and the more the better for gaining more support in school, but devoting too much attention to friendships and building popularity could also backfire, undermining personal goals. A common adaptation to the double bind that participants faced was therefore to devise strategies of managing trouble. For Rodrigo this meant, "... to get in trouble for small things." Mateo found that he could compartmentalize trouble outside of school. As he stated, "I did stuff outside of school, school was pretty well behaved." Alejandro found that "a little bit of trouble" was enough:

> We started a poker tournament, but this is only little bets [sic] of course, like taking five cents, like that and at the end you would win like a dollar or so.

263

> So yeah, um, like in high school, I guess I was a little bit now, a little bit of a trouble maker.

Sol manages trouble through association. As he stated:

> So I didn't really smoke cigarettes, I didn't really smoke weed or nothing growing up – partially because of the views (my mother) instilled in me – but I still hung out with people who did.

These examples of the different ways that participants managed trouble illustrate how despite their best efforts, trouble was something that they could not simply avoid. This is because a certain amount of trouble was expected of peers in order to gain status among friends. The situation was complicated for participants because of the way their actions were perceived by others. Stereotypes of Latinos as troublemakers forced participants to balance trouble whenever possible. This had implications for emerging postmodern identities among participants, explored in the section below.

Hybrid and Fluid Identities

In addition to speaking about stereotypes as problematic for their relations with peers, participants also spoke about stereotypes as problematic for sense of belonging and identity. The ways in which stereotypes were problematic for sense of belonging were examined in the previous chapter on outcomes for peer and school belonging, and then further examined above in relation to the process of friendship group formation in school. Participants develop a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards peer belonging in school. On the one hand, most of the participants want to diversify their friendships because this provides access to more friends, and potentially more peer support. Diversity in

friendship groups also provides access to a wider range of social-cultural resources for belonging. On the other hand, many of these same participants recognize the risks involved in detaching too much from an ethnic-specific friendship group, or similarly marginalized group of "multicultural" peers. The support offered by marginalized peers is more accessible, even if it results in scaling back aspirations with respect to belonging, achievement and identity. As will be clear by now, the theme of identity runs through all the peer-group interactions explored thus far. Stereotypes were problematic for identity specifically because they resulted in others misinterpreting the dress, mannerisms, speech and values of participants in negative ways. No matter which path participants chose in relation to friendship-group formation and peer belonging, their social-cultural identities were constantly challenged by several issues. One was how to avoid negative stereotyping by taking back the term "Latino" or "Salvadorian" and redefining it in positive ways. Another was how to adopt an identity that allows for bridging across ethnic identities. A third was how to have more than one social-cultural identity that could be used, without discomfort, as one moved across different social contexts. The participants frequently reported on their experiences among peers in relation to these challenges to social-cultural identity. The characterizations of identity tended to bridge stable unitary identities to more fluid, hybrid and multiple identity formations, providing evidence of both continuity and change in identity over the course of high school.

Participants emphasized two themes most strongly when they spoke about themselves in relation to peers at school. The first theme emphasized by all but four participants

(14/18) was that they identified simply as "normal" youth. I interpreted this to mean that they identified with peers on a number of issues not specific to their ethnic background or family migration history. It was also, however, a reaction to being oriented to as if they were not like their peers. Certainly they faced additional issues not faced by mainstream youth by virtue of having different experiences, but in addition to these issues, they faced many of the same issues as their peers and therefore identified with them as "normal" youth. Normal was often defined by participants with reference to evidence of masculinity. Interest in sports (15/18), joking or fooling around (10/18), and getting in trouble (11/18) were common indicators of normative masculinity mentioned by participants. Participants often linked a particular friendship group to a particular activity in order to convey a sense of context-specific identity. As Rodrigo stated:

> Well, the ones that were wild were the ones that I got into trouble with, the ones that came up with the ideas, "let's do this, let's do that." Yeah, I mean it was with them that we got that game going. Yeah, those were the ones, their role was to basically get us into trouble, just having fun, getting into trouble.

Claudio similarly related a particular moment when he found an identity and linked this to peer association on the basis of sport, contrasting this against activities associated with trouble:

> But as soon as I started growing up, the swim team actually helped me a lot, it saved me from that. I used to smoke, but as soon as I joined swim team, I still kind of smoked but then as the season progressed and things got more serious I quit. And when the season stopped I just kept swimming.

Alejandro is even more explicit about his association between sport and his identity. As he stated:

> If I were to look at myself as another person and knew, like knew myself, I would, I would see myself be an athlete type of thing, type of guy. So I guess I would be nothing else but that.

The emphasis that participants placed on being "normal" reflected their desire to be accepted among peers, but the ways they engaged with that normality varied between conformity and rebellion. Usually strategies involved a combination of these two patterns. Identities associated with such patterns were context-specific, that is, they changed with the context, and sometimes they had totally separate friendship groups in which to satisfy one aspect of identity. Identities among participants were also multiple, that is, the presence of one aspect of identity, in this case being a "normal" youth, did not negate other aspects of identity, such as being a Salvadorian, Guatemalan or Latin American, explored next.

The second theme emphasized by all participants in relation to identity was ethnicity. Ethnic or cultural identity in the Canadian context is a complex affair for participants. Their primary loyalty and commitment is to their families and they are proud of their cultural heritage. Participants are unequivocal, for instance, that the reason for wanting to finish school is to make their parents proud, and to be able to provide for them. At the same time, they are well aware that their ethnic identity in the Canadian context penalizes them in every aspect of their public lives. Stereotypes, explored at length above, over-determine outcomes in schooling, employment and among friends, so that they feel they must "prove themselves" every step of the way in life. The strong identification as a "normal" youth explored above is a reflection of the degree to which others view them in

negatively stereotypical ways, and their efforts to prove to others that they are individuals

deserving of a fair chance. At the same time, participants feel that their cultural heritage

holds meaning for them personally and they feel a sense of responsibility particularly to

their parents to represent their culture in a positive light. This presents participants with

somewhat of an impossible task, and calls for various strategies for negotiating multiple,

fluid and context-specific identities.

The main challenge for participants is the avoidance of negative stereotypes. The most

common strategy of avoiding such negative stereotypes was to define their own identities

in contrast to other negatively stereotyped Latinos and Salvadorians. This was something

emphasized by all but four participants (14/18). As Eduardo stated:

> So many people say, 'oh, just another Spanish person, Latins [sic] are much
> alike. Either he's going to be cleaning, construction, gang, drug dealer, be in
> jail' or whatever it is. Someone always has something to say about that, so I
> want to also let people know, you know, I'm not just a regular gang banging
> Spanish person or whatever else you want to call it. I'm something, you
> know? Make people think different about me.

In addition to feeling compelled to define themselves against other negatively

stereotyped Latinos, it was also important to have that recognition from others that they

were exceptions. As Alfredo stated:

> And also, I had a friend who used to do a joke. He used to call me Arch
> Bishop Alfredo. He would say 'You're so good compared to all Latinos'.
> Like Archbishop Romero in El Salvador because I didn't have a record and
> he would always joke to that. He would always be like 'You're so strange
> compared.' ... We were very close friends. It was just an on-going joke that
> he would say.

268

In some sense defining themselves as exceptions to negatively stereotyped Latinos was consistent with being a "normal" youth, but the situation for participants was more complex than this. For one thing, they actually did not fully subscribe to the framework of normative masculinity examined above in terms of getting in trouble, because this conflicted with deeply held values about the importance of education and respect for authority. Secondly, despite the imperative of distancing from other negatively stereotyped Latino youth, they identified strongly as Salvadorians, Guatemalans, Latin Americans, or whatever the case may be. In a sense, they are combining their identification with their Latin American heritage with a new youth identity that they develop in school among peers. The hybrid identity they form is one that is consistent with the goal of school completion. Defining an identity for themselves among peers and distancing from negative stereotypes both help in the attainment of that goal. The goal is not theirs alone but rather a collective goal of the family. As Alfredo stated, "There is always that sense in El Salvadorian or other Latino families that you want to show other people that your son has achieved." Distancing from others from the same or a similar ethnic background in high school is strategic in two ways. On the one hand, it is a temporary strategy. Once youths are able to complete school and take up employment, they often rediscover a commitment to their community and to youths who may be at risk of marginalization. This was in fact a common path, to be explored more in the next chapter. Distancing is also strategic in a second sense as well, as it is a means of integration. As Diego stated:

269

> I think a lot of Central American or Latin American youths are in a lot more trouble, especially if they're just recent. My experiences are going to be a lot different from Central Americans that have just come too, because my family was able to be a lot more stable. At least now, sorry [participant is choked up], from the high school. When I got to high school, I was able to, I had a good home. A lot of Central Americans now just trying to survive. I know they're going to have a lot more difficulties in school, just with focusing on their careers. They could go either way.

Diego follows the passage above in which he distances himself from more "recent" Central Americans with the following passage describing what happens for Central Americans who identify too closely with other Central Americans:

> It's a lot more difficult too because you feel like you don't fit in too, so they start associating themselves with people just like them. Especially youth, the youth just start getting into gangs, a lot of violence. You see that especially on the West end of Toronto. Like I even know a lot of people too, they just get caught up in that lifestyle because they feel that they just don't fit in.

We can see that Diego both distances from and identifies with other Central American youth in Toronto depending on situation and context. His view is that the situation is more difficult for them than it was for him, referring to advantages that he has. But the doubt he expresses is common among participants, and reflects the difficulty of reconciling multiple identities. The strategies involve developing fluid, hybrid and context- specific identities. The main challenge for negotiating peer relations among participants in high school is how to maintain an exceptional and a "normal" youth identity simultaneously. This is necessary in order to counter stereotypes by not internalizing them too much, by not projecting them too much, and ultimately not becoming the stereotype.

Discussion and Conclusions

Friends are crucial for a sense of belonging among participants. Central American male youths are threatened with marginalization among peers in Toronto schools regardless of whether they are new to Canada, have been in Canada for some time, or were born in Canada to immigrant parents. The participants in this study emphasized in particular negative stereotypes of them as gang members and drug dealers. Their exposure to such negative stereotypes complicated friendship group formation and overall sense of belonging. This in turn complicated overall adjustment to Canada in the short and long term because it potentially exacerbated existing socioeconomic disadvantages mentioned by them. The stereotypes are part of a more pervasive deficit view of them that is reflected in the media and in academia. A deficit approach even shapes the way Central American male youths in Canada are viewed by other Latin and Central Americans in Canada. Participants strive to form friendships in school and adopt identities that will allow them to avoid being marginalized. At the same time, they seek out friendships that provide support for goals that they have in school. While many of those who stereotype Central and Latin American male youths are oblivious to important group and individual differences, participants seek to differentiate themselves accordingly. Finding belonging among peers therefore involves negotiating both external and internal dimensions of finding belonging in Canada. What participants discover is that such a process involves making difficult decisions about friendships that involve trade-offs for a range of outcomes for belonging.

271

Avoiding isolation was a major preoccupation of participants, because without the support of friends, marginalization in school, and eventually from school, was almost a certainty according to them. The importance of friends for sense of belonging reflected not only the vulnerability of participants but also an opportunity to exercise some agency among peers and by extension in the schooling process. They learned that developing supportive relations among peers involved a series of trade-offs with respect to the size of friendship groups, the extensiveness of friendship networks, and the quality of friendships. Small friendship groups provided reliable and yet limited sense of belonging and support in school. And while popularity was highly sought after because it provided stimulation, it tended to be associated with a high degree of risk. Exclusive sense of belonging in mainstream youth culture tended to be out of reach because of the existence of stereotypes, but also subjectively because participants maintained a strong sense of belonging on the basis of cultural background. One of the strongest tendencies with respect to friendship-group formation was to strive for diverse or "multicultural" associations and networks. A related and equally strong tendency was for change both on a day-to-day basis in terms of shifting identities with context, and over time as participants sought to transform their own personal situations of risk into opportunities for belonging and achievement. The activities and collective behavior engaged in among friends tended to match the above points about size, extensiveness and quality of friendship groups. Managing troubles was the most important consideration with respect to the activities and collective behavior engaged in among friends. The extent to which

participants were able to develop diverse peer networks was in fact related to their ability to manage a range of common troubles, with implications for belonging, identity and achievement.

In contrast to what is suggested in much of the literature on marginalized youth in school reviewed in Chapter 3, and most notably in the United States where more literature is available on the topic, the participants in this study do not necessarily become locked into a static reactive response to their situation, but rather their schooling trajectories are characterized by a high degree of change. Their accounts of schooling and attempts to avoid marginalization and develop supportive relations in schooling contexts show evidence of fluid identities, with emphasis on both stability and flexibility. While individual identities vary among participants, they all share common strategies and goals with respect to developing diverse friendship networks, while avoiding the risks associated with a narrow emphasis on superficial relations and popularity among peers, because this can undermine other goals. In the next chapter we examine the process by which participants attempt to find caring and supportive teachers. We also examine how identities and aspirations evolve in relation to the search for belonging among friends and teachers. The process by which they attempt to find belonging and support involves combining values learned at home and among friends at school. Much like the negotiation of friendship patterns of support examined in this chapter, the next chapter explores how participants understand their own schooling process as one that involves varying degrees of personal transformation of their own marginalized condition.

Chapter 7: Belonging in School

We know from the analysis in Chapter 5 that the participants have a diverse and often shifting perception of belonging with teachers and with schools as institutions. This raises two questions: What subjective experiences with teachers and schools promote these diverse and shifting perceptions of belonging? How do perceptions of belonging in school relate to social-cultural identity and priorities for achievement? In sum, the chapter draws on the experiences, preferences and views of participants to examine the relevance of schooling for belonging, and inter-linked issues of identity and achievement.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first summarizes the questions for analysis suggested by the literature and the findings to this point. The second examines the data with respect to four main issues of concern. These are: 1) perceptions of teachers; 2) perceptions of schools as institutions; 3) trade offs arising when participants seek to balance the advantages and disadvantages, from their perspective, in identifying strongly or weakly with the goals that teachers and schools put forward for them; 4) how the resolution of these trade offs affects their priorities for socio-cultural identity and schooling achievement.

Issues and Questions

Challenges faced by Latin American and other ethnic minority youth for gaining a sense of belonging in Toronto schools are complex. A positive sense of belonging in school involves feeling comfortable with and supported by teachers; meeting official school and gender-specific norms, and forming friendships and peer relations that do not stray too far from what teachers and schools consider to be acceptable. These diverse dimensions of belonging are interdependent with each other. The literature and research findings in previous chapters suggest that Latin American and other marginalized ethnic minority youth in Canada often feel unwelcome and out of place in school settings (Anisef et al 2008, Bernhard et al 1998, Carranza 2007, Poteet 2009, Rowen et al 2006, Sefa Dei 2008, Simmons 2004, Simmons et al 2009).

The literature leaves unanswered a number of questions of particular relevance to the analysis in the present case. One matter is the nature of the perceptions and experiences that lead Latin American youth to a sense of not belonging in schools. The interviews in the present study provide insights on this point. Another is the range of experience. Is it uniformly negative in ways consistent with the generalizations in previous studies? Or, are some experiences positive? If so, how and for whom? A third question concerns the degree to which perceptions of and experiences in school change over time. Finally, how does an understanding of schooling as a fluid process inform the shifting identities and priorities for achievement observed among participants?

As with avoiding marginalization among peers, a challenge in schooling highlighted by many participants is the existence of negative stereotypes of them that complicate sense of belonging, and performance in school. Overall, participants perceived a lack of engagement of them by teachers. This contributed to boredom and alienation. In some cases participants also identified double standards of teachers and other school staff, as for example when they were criticized for behavior such as arriving late or talking during class, while this behavior among other students was overlooked. Often it was simply the attitude of teachers toward them that made them feel out of place and unwelcome that they discerned through subtle cues, and not being called on to answer questions, or not having their comments taken up by teachers that made them feel that they were being treated differently and with less concern. Participants found such double standards particularly difficult to accept. It contributed to a lack of respect for teachers and authority in general among their peers. The perceptions and experiences of participants in school varied as well, and they identified significant differences in schooling and neighborhood contexts, as well as differences among individual teachers. The ways in which individual schools and teachers mediated the wider context of stereotyping and marginalization of Central American male youths therefore also emerged in the analysis as a significant factor in the schooling process. In particular, the participants' perceptions of teachers had an impact on their strategies to overcome perceived challenges, and shifting identities and priorities for achievement over the course of high school.

Participants struggled to find acceptance among peers and this shaped in part their orientation to school. Participants emphasized important differences in neighborhoods and schools with respect to access to resources, and peer dynamics, especially among those who had changed schools. Independently of context, however, their efforts to find a sense of belonging both in school and among peers display some common patterns of balancing long-term goals with more immediate concerns. This was evident in the common pattern of selective academic engagement in specific courses and selective engagement with certain teachers only. Their strong determination to complete school struggled against a somewhat turbulent trajectory of marginality and partial acceptance by teachers and the school system over the course of high school. In this process, participants appear to be negotiating often complex relations with authority figures and peers in school in order to normalize and achieve at least a moderate sense of belonging in school, so that they can actually complete their schooling through to graduation. The result is an engagement with and belonging process that changes somewhat over time. The change is associated with the adoption of multiple, context-specific and fluid social-cultural identities and friendship patterns. Tensions created by competing expectations for schooling faced by participants often resulted in a loss of interest in school and sometimes to alienation from peers, and led them to scale back aspirations. At the same time, participants rarely lost sight of the goal of school completion, often regained momentum towards achieving that goal as it drew nearer, and in the meantime tried to salvage important life lessons during the process of schooling. Negotiating their

277

expectations in relation to others and eliciting support for a range of goals during high school has implications for their identities and priorities for achievement. The entire process over time contributes to a somewhat tentative sense of belonging in school.

Findings

Experiences in and Perceptions of Schools

Experiences in school varied for individual participants and also varied for participants by school, classroom and teacher. Despite such differences, a common theme was lack of interest and boredom in school. Some lack of interest was linked to lack of socio-cultural relevance of the social sciences and humanities curriculum for individuals of immigrant and Latin American background. Sol voiced a common complaint among participants in this regard:

> Where is the Latin American history? Where is what I come out of? ... I'm learning about these pioneers coming to Canada, and crossing the river by canoe. What the hell does that have to do with why I'm in Canada?

Sol reacted to the fact that his personal cultural and family history was not reflected in the curriculum, and made the link between early immigration and settlement in Canadian history, and more recent migration flows to Canada, of which he is a part. A related complaint among participants is summarized by Alejandro's response to whether courses were interesting:

> Yeah, it was a little bit interesting, but the History and Geography not so much, because we only concentrated on Canadian history and geography, so it wasn't really that interesting to me. Half way through the class I knew everything, like provinces of Canada and stuff like that and so just taking that

278

the whole year was kind of boring to me. I kind of wanted to know more about outside of Canada.

Alejandro disliked what he perceived as a narrow focus on Canadian history and geography. Like other participants, he would have liked a more global focus on history, rather than simply substituting or adding another narrow focus on his own personal cultural history. Another important theme highlighted in Alejandro's response that resulted in lack of interest among participants is lack of challenge. For Rodrigo, it was the threat of being placed in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes that spurred him on. As he stated, "I just proved to them that I could do better." Alejandro had a similar experience, suggesting that the lack of challenge undermined his ability to do well:

> If they would have taken out the ESL, I could have been okay, I guess, and just taken the English, and just went with it. I think if I did that, I wouldn't have had trouble going through high school. But I guess that's one of the main points why I failed high school ... I was really mad, because they held me back. And I knew that wasn't what I, what I was capable of.

Finally, interest in school among participants was hindered by the perception that schooling was not preparing them sufficiently for the challenges they would face in the future. As Claudio stated:

> I find it like... it was really babyish. It's kind of like really cushioned, like I don't know, it felt like they weren't giving us the bigger picture. Like as if they were keeping it in a little cushy box... as long as I'm here, I'm like a little baby in a crib. I can't get hurt... I found it childish. I didn't feel mature in school. I really didn't. I didn't feel like I had any responsibility. And I guess that responsibility really teaches people, you know?

In sum, participants found many classes in school to be uninteresting and school in general was often experienced as boring. Interest in school was hindered by a number of different factors some of which are explored above. In some sense being bored in school was viewed by participants as "normal" and therefore consistent with gaining a sense of belonging among peers. But lack of interest in school was also specific for participants, based on lack of relevance of curriculum for cultural and family history. As Sol stated, "Where is the Latin American history?"

Participants also expressed some concern about what they perceived as a lack of structure in schools, and sometimes found the model of schooling in Canada to be confusing. The common perception among participants that schools in Toronto were unstructured was in part a reflection of a different set of values about education and respect for authority learned in the home. The value set reinforced in the home tended toward a more rigidly defined set of rules for students, while the value set encountered at school was one in which a greater amount of freedom was granted to students and more tolerance was exercised with respect to student behavior. However, the ways in which participants interpreted these two separate value sets was informed by both common experiences they shared as Central American male youths in relation to a dominant mainstream, and their own individual preferences for belonging in school. As Eduardo stated:

> I went to high school. It was like twenty, twenty-five people in a class, so it's hard to learn. There's all these people in the back screaming [sic], yelling and talking, fooling around, right?

280

Eduardo's description suggests that he would have preferred a more structured classroom environment. Rodrigo related a similar story:

> There was this one teacher we had. She took over for half a year, and the students just attacked her, basically just made her teaching a living hell. It was pretty harsh, but... I'm not really into that kind of stuff. I just stood by, just watched.

Rodrigo maintained somewhat of a middle ground in relation to the lack of structure in school. On the one hand he found school boring and derived stimulation from fooling around with friends and even getting in a little trouble, but on the other hand he was shocked by how far his friends went in tormenting this teacher. Other participants indicated that the lack of structure had consequences for them because of their minority status in schools. As Quito stated:

> Another thing that I hated about school, actually, there were these kids, bullies, that were constantly trying to push me down the stairs, and when I would tell my teachers, they wouldn't do anything.

As explored in detail in the previous chapter, considerable energy was required to build and maintain status among peers. Participants often found that lack of structure, and related issues of lack of supervision, made it difficult for them to find the support they needed in school. Despite differences in how participants responded to such challenges, with some becoming bullies for brief periods, others being bullied usually for longer periods, and for most participants most of the time trying to negotiate middle positions where they were neither bullies nor victims of bullying, there was a perception among participants that they were largely left to their own devices in school. Participants also

suggested that boredom was a factor that led to prioritizing hanging out with friends over

school, because of lack of stimulation overall in school. As Emilio stated:

> You want to party and stuff like that. You want to like have fun (Claudio:
> Yeah). But like really, if I were to straighten myself out, I'd do all my work
> now and party later, but it's the opposite. Like whenever ... I used to ditch
> school, go out, hang out with my friends.

Boredom and lack of engagement in school is also increased for participants because

they feel that students are simply demonstrating what they already know, rather than

learning. As Claudio stated:

> It's sort of funny the system the way it's run here. I find they want you to
> know stuff already when you're here as opposed to teaching them anything
> that's new. It's kind of funny.

In this quote, Claudio expresses how his perception of inequality in condition results in

his estrangement from the process of schooling, which he defines as "funny." In sum, the

perception that schools are not structured enough is a reflection not only of a different

value system, but more importantly how that value system is perceived and whether it

impacts differentially on students. This theme is explored further below in relation to

how schooling norms may be unevenly applied as a result of stereotypes, with potentially

serious consequences for participants.

Despite important differences in levels of conformity to school rules, participants

generally felt that schooling norms in Canada did not benefit them. According to a

number of participants, some rules about student conduct seemed to be lacking or not

well enforced because of lack of supervision, while other rules were perceived as

arbitrary and overly concerned with superficial matters. Talking about his early

experiences in school many years later, Quito highlighted a series of encounters with teachers and school staff that he described as "traumatic." They included being yelled at by a teacher for looking at a piano because as he stated "I was curious. I had never seen a piano before." They also included routines that confused him. As he stated, "During lunch time you had to be outside ... and I hated it because it was cold, I didn't have like the proper things to be wearing." When Quito fell on the ice and broke his arm, he felt that school staff did not take him seriously and left him waiting in the office for hours. These experiences provided a context for how Quito came to "hate" school. Rodrigo responded somewhat differently than Quito, but like Quito he viewed school rules with suspicion, did not feel like the rules benefited him, experienced a loss of interest in school, and his sense of belonging in school remained tentative. Rodrigo's account of school rules, and his response among peers is worth quoting at length:

> What I remember is that we used to get in trouble for small things, in the schoolyard. Whenever there was ice, every time ice would build up, they were usually saying 'don't step on the ice' and we would just do it anyways. Or 'don't go behind the school' and stuff like that. Um, yeah, stuff like that – stupid stuff. We were kids back then, what could we do? Um, let's see. One game we used to play is that we'd have people lined up on the wall and one person would throw the ball at them, a tennis ball, and basically it's like dodge ball basically. One person gets a tennis ball and they'll throw it at you as hard as they can. So if you get hit, you've got to switch places. So, that hurt a lot, depending on where it landed. But we got in trouble for that a few times. Most of the time, if the teacher found out we were playing that, I think they made an announcement about that saying that we weren't allowed to play that anymore, but we kept going.

The accounts provided by Quito and Rodrigo highlight how participants' perceived themselves as both similar to and different from other students in school. Their sense of

283

belonging among peers led them to view schooling norms with suspicion, but they experienced another level of suspicion based on their ethnic minority status. The weather provided one potential source of frustration. Participants often felt forced outside in the cold and then told they could not step on the ice, or not to pick up the snow, the only material resources available to them. There were restrictions on their movements, which applied to all students, but some participants expressed a specific concern about lack of supervision. There were of course individual differences among participants in how they perceived schooling norms. Sense of belonging for both Quito and Rodrigo remained somewhat tentative, but Rodrigo's sense of belonging in school seemed to be more firmly rooted in his relations with peers. Without this sense of belonging among peers, Quito was marginalized from school. The game Rodrigo and his friends came up with, described in detail in the quote above illustrates how peers provided a context for belonging for Rodrigo in school. The game provided stimulation, based on the fear of getting hit, and the fear of getting caught, both of which were downplayed by Rodrigo. Rodrigo viewed flaunting the rules and exposing oneself to danger as "normal." The rules placed restrictions with very little in the way of alternatives, so students flaunted the rules. However, for participants a degree of "trouble" was often viewed as necessary for gaining a sense of belonging in school. In addition to this, participants viewed school rules as part of an arbitrary bureaucratic system excessively concerned with details, as Rodrigo stated, "stupid stuff."

Despite individual differences among participants with regard to their level of

engagement with peers and academics, achieving a degree of balance between sense of

belonging in school and sense of belonging among peers was significant for overall

experiences in school and for the goal of school completion. Participants reported few

positive views of the schooling system. They understood their lack of interest in school

as a natural response to what they perceived as arbitrariness of rules, irrelevance of

curriculum, and neglect of them as individuals, resulting in their alienation from school.

Most positive views about school concerned friends in school and in some cases peers in

general for those who had attained a degree of popularity. In a few notable cases,

participants expressed positive views of smaller alternative schools. There was a larger

tendency for participants to contrast their negative perceptions and experiences of high

school against those in Middle School (grades 7-8). However, most participants also

differentiated their perceptions and experiences in high school temporally by grade

and/or in terms of entering high school, followed by shifts during high school, nearing

completion, and upon completion in retrospect. Participants also made important

distinctions by classes and among teachers, examined immediately below.

Experiences with and Perceptions of Teachers

Despite the intentions of teachers, schooling is structured in a way that when

combined with wider stereotypes, may disadvantage Central American male youth. The

analysis in this section addresses how the participants understood their relations with

teachers, the significance of exceptional teachers, and potential for support from teachers for overcoming challenges to belonging in school. The accounts provided of teachers differed somewhat among participants. However, some common themes emerged that provide insight into participants' experiences with teachers and relationship to sense of belonging and performance in school. Many participants felt that teachers did not engage students sufficiently, and in some cases that they received less attention, or more negative attention than other students. When this happened, they often felt misunderstood and socially excluded. But participants did not immediately assume that they were being discriminated against. Rather, their perceptions of their treatment by teachers varied by individual teacher and situation. This section advances this argument by looking specifically at how teachers mediated stereotyping in the school context, and how participants perceived such a mediating process in relation to their efforts to achieve in school. The analysis picks up on the process of schooling explored above in terms of how teachers interacted with participants and other students, and specifically the role played by teachers in either challenging or reinforcing systemic disadvantages facing participants in school.

Perceptions are formed on the basis of a variety of cues. The worst scenario mentioned by roughly two thirds of participants was the perception that they were being discriminated against by teachers. Such perceptions were formed on the basis of the treatment they received personally in relation to the treatment they witnessed of other students, including other marginalized youth. Cesar felt that he received less attention

from teachers than other students did due to his ethnicity and language, that teachers lacked the skills and resources to help him, that they perceived him as unintelligent, and deliberately undermined his efforts to understand them. As he stated:

> I got there the first day and I didn't know any English. The teacher started treating me like I was dumb because I didn't know the language. The Spanish students - the teachers don't pay as much attention as they do to the English-speaking students. What else is there? I think they should be trained more in how to help students learn English. They don't have enough books. Some teachers, they know that you're trying to learn English, and they speak very quickly even though they know that you are trying to learn. And that's it.

Even when there was awareness that other marginalized students like them were also being discriminated against, participants took the discrimination very personally. As Alfredo stated, "When I would go and ask them for something, they wouldn't get me, or brush me off kind of thing." This was particularly difficult for Alfredo because as he stated, "I would be struggling and stuff, but I didn't like going and asking the teacher." Similarly, Nestor stated, "I'm asking for help, and you're not helping me as much as other students, and I think that you don't like me, you hate me, you know?" In some cases, there was an attempt to find a less arbitrary reason for discrimination. Quito offered a somewhat common perception as to why he was receiving different treatment from teachers. As he stated, "Most teachers didn't like me in high school – I think they just thought I didn't apply myself." In sum, participants attempted to understand why teachers would treat them differently on the basis of a variety of cues, and reflected on their subjectivity in the process of negotiating a sense of belonging in relation to teachers and other students in school. One theme emerging from this is that they often suggested

287

that teachers simply did not understand them, reflecting their reluctance to blame teachers, and their awareness of wider processes of stereotyping. In general, though, few teachers mediated wider systemic issues to the satisfaction of participants, resulting in rather tentative relations with most teachers.

Lack of engagement of students by teachers in high school was a common complaint among participants, and in many cases participants did not see that they were any different from other students in having this perception. Similarly, participants felt that they were not alone in placing some responsibility on teachers for not making school more interesting. As Rodrigo stated, "All the teachers ever did was talk, talk, talk. After awhile people start falling asleep and you start losing interest." The perception of teachers as disconnected from students is consistent with the expectation from peers for participants to find school boring. However, the perception of teachers by participants was also rooted in culturally specific expectations. Participants often complained about what they perceived as teaching methods that were aloof. As Fernando stated:

> This teacher teaches at a university level and then you do the work, and if
> you have a question she won't answer you and say I already taught you,
> please go by yourself. She teaches on the board once, and that's it. She
> doesn't go up to you and say you have to do this, this and that.

In other cases, even when a teacher engaged participants personally, they felt that the approach was less than helpful. As Mateo stated:

> He would criticize me. He was trying to help me out, but I felt like he was
> actually making things a lot worse. When you do a study he'd be like 'okay,
> read this, okay, we'll talk about this.' And he would kind of just skim
> through it. He wouldn't really go in depth about the lesson so it made it a lot
> harder for me because this to me was like new stuff, where some of the

288

students were really well advanced and they know some of the stuff already, so it's easier for them.

Mateo offers a common critique about teachers similar to Fernando, but he also elaborates on how this affects him personally without blaming the teacher. As he stated, "He was trying to help me out." In other cases, participants felt that the tendency for aloofness was applied unevenly to them. As Nestor stated:

> I would raise my hand, like he didn't, he didn't believe in me basically. I would raise my hand and he'd ask somebody else. He never picked me, picked me to answer. Sometimes I didn't know, but I was trying, right? And he didn't believe I knew, I guess. The way he reacted (to me) was 'No, that's not the answer.' Someone else would get it wrong, and he'd be like 'No, that's not the answer, but this is how you do it.' But for me it's like 'No, that's not it. Next person.' He wouldn't explain it to me.

Nestor felt that not only did teachers pay less attention to him, but also that they did not take it up when he did answer a question, even incorrectly, when it would be more important to take this up. Even though participants were reluctant to talk about discrimination, many had indeed experienced it. Their reluctance was informed by a deeper understanding of the wider context of stereotyping, so that even though they expected more of many of their teachers, they could see how the teachers were guided by the wider context and constrained within schools. They needed support from teachers, but often felt that they received the opposite, negative attention. In some sense though, participants were caught in a double bind: participants often felt like they were either being given special treatment creating problems for them among peers, or being treated negatively and unfairly, thereby reproducing wider systemic issues in the context of schooling.

289

Participants often talked about their relations with teachers in nuanced terms, recognizing not only the wider context of stereotyping, but also how this was negotiated in the institutional context of schooling and schools. Common practices used by teachers depended on the specific school context, shaping relations among students, and relations between students and teachers. As Octavio stated:

> Choosing a good high school is very important when you don't know the language or if you come from another country because when I went to ****, I noticed that there, students weren't getting as much help. It was more like... you're independent. Sometimes I felt like maybe teachers there didn't really care that much about students. Maybe there, you can say, maybe I noticed a little bit of discrimination just because of the type of people that go to ****.

Octavio suggests that the school context has implications for relations between students and teachers particularly for immigrants, but also that the school context is shaped by students. The common theme highlighted here is the tendency for participants to view their experiences with teachers in school as relational. As Nestor stated:

> Like some teachers, I'll give you an example: If you didn't pay attention, or if you didn't do good [sic], didn't go to class, they would just leave you – 'Get out of my class,' ... 'Okay, I'll get out,' like nothing, right?

Nestor suggests that students bear some responsibility for not paying attention, but still expects that teachers will engage him. Elsewhere he states:

> If I was a teacher and the student's not doing good in my class [sic], I'm going to figure out why, how can I help them? To try to motivate ... Instead of being like, 'this kid's a waste of time.'

There was evidence that in general participants did not immediately assume that they were being discriminated against when teachers were not engaging them personally. More often they pointed to common practices in schooling, overall schooling contexts

and wider processes of stereotyping that made it difficult for them to feel that they belonged in school as much as other students, and therefore also made it difficult for them to do well, suggesting a systemic level of discrimination.

A common form of systemic disadvantage facing participants were their experiences in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and in particular how these interacted with the process of stereotyping explored above. Unfortunately, for many participants ESL exacerbated separate treatment of them by teachers, and negative stereotyping by some teachers and among peers. We saw in the section above how strongly Rodrigo felt about avoiding ESL classes, all the more so because he was born in Canada and did not want to be identified by others as an ESL student. Similarly, Claudio often felt that schooling was not challenging enough referring to school as "babyish." Consistent with the perception of school as boring and school rules as overly concerned with superficial details explored in the section above, participants often found ESL teachers did not engage them in a way that made them feel like they belonged in school and could achieve. As Alejandro stated:

> This teacher that came for ESL in grade ten, she was a little bit like my grade seven ESL teacher, you know like 'Oh, you're an immigrant, you don't know much English,' and you know, she would give you, not easy assignments, but she would give you big assignments, but with the easiest things in the world, but she would still find something to make your marks go down really low. She would, I guess she would expect us to have great grammar and stuff, so she would find little details. So she was like that. I didn't like her personally, you know? I never got into an argument with her or anything like that, but to me she was, let's say, a bad teacher, you know? Teachers like that, I don't like.

The method of providing different or additional curriculum based on lack of proficiency in the dominant language exacerbated the separation of participants from their peer group in school. Furthermore, Juan felt that teachers were discriminating against him by preventing him from using the regular Math and Science textbooks. As he stated:

> For those ESL students who are still learning English, he doesn't let those students use the books... Math and Science, the important ones. Except for Math, you can just think about it. You don't need the book. But for Science, that's where you need to use the book, to help yourself.

An early experience in elementary school that sticks in Raul's mind, is worth considering here because it illustrates the wider context for stereotyping in schooling, and how separating students exacerbates the problem:

> One thing that I do remember that kind of upset me was that we used to have these books, and we would have to write about our family and stuff, and I put down that I was born in Canada, but my teacher saw that and said, 'Are you sure?' And I said 'Yeah.' And she said 'You don't really speak English.' And I said 'Well I grew up in Spanish.' And she took the book from me, crossed out Canada and put in El Salvador, which upset me because I wasn't born in El Salvador. And from there I remember they put me in a special ed. class for English and penmanship. I'm not sure why, though... I was in ESL for a few months, and then they put me in special ed. [sic] For me, I always thought they assumed that I didn't know English because I wasn't taught English growing up. So I felt really bad about that.

Raul remembers how the experience made him feel socially excluded both symbolically in terms of being told in so many words that he did not belong, but also in concrete terms because he equates this experience with being placed in separate classes. He then goes on to discuss the implications of these experiences for his performance in school:

> For the longest time I couldn't tell the time on the clock, because every time the teacher would talk about that kind of stuff I had to go downstairs to the

basement, write my signature in handwriting. So for the longest time I didn't tell time from the clock, and that was a huge embarrassment for me.

A picture emerges from these accounts of the combination of separate treatment, identity and achievement that reinforces negative stereotypes and lack of belonging. Quito further illustrates the way that wider systemic issues reinforce negative experiences in school:

> I always thought I was a bit of a bright kid and so it was really frustrating to like not be able to participate and do things, but I still tried. It was because of the language and a lot of self-esteem things that would come up, like not having, being different, and all that.

In the following dialogue Javier exemplifies the low self-esteem and resulting lack of confidence of which Quito is speaking:

> *Javier*: I don't think I've accomplished too many things.
> *Interviewer*: Nothing you feel proud about?
> *Javier*: I don't feel like I accomplished anything big.
> *Interviewer*: How confident are you that you will reach your goals? For instance, on how you want to be a school teacher.
> *Javier*: Not that confident. I'm not the best in English, I'm not that good either. It's an obstacle. I can't write good essays. I don't feel confident that I can overcome it.

Once again, participants seem to be caught in a double bind. They often require additional instruction in the dominant language, but according to participants the way in which this is delivered in schools often exacerbates stereotypes, hinders their integration among peers in school, and may even backfire with respect to their overall achievement in school. The potential exacerbation of stereotypes as a result of separate treatment in schools therefore has implications for social identity and aspirations for achievement.

293

The problems in ESL highlighted above may simply be a reflection of greater

systemic issues. These become apparent when both sides of belonging are examined for

participants, that is, among peers and in relation to schooling. As Quito stated:

> I didn't have to go to ESL anymore so, I mean everyone still thought of me
> as the ESL kid, but I didn't have to go to ESL anymore, so that was better.

If participants were able to negotiate a tangible sense of belonging among peers, another

challenge tended to arise. The social dynamics among peers were so important for

participants that it sometimes made them sacrifice academics in order to maintain their

status among peers. I examined this in previous chapters in terms of common trade-offs

between peer relations and schooling. In general, sense of belonging among peers was

necessary and could provide support and motivation for participants to stay in school, but

popularity among peers could also backfire by creating additional troubles that

undermine schooling. Participants often felt that they could not go to teachers or other

school staff and expect to receive support or protection when they were having difficulty

among peers. As explored above, Quito, Alfredo and other participants felt that schools

and teachers as representatives of school did not provide protection from bullying. This

increased risk or at least the perception of risk involved in seeking support from teachers.

Seeking support from the school was already risky because it would betray trust among

peers. The lack of support from teachers may have been a result of stereotypes.

Therefore, the perception of Latino, and particularly Salvadorian, youth as trouble

makers exposed them to more risk, but it also made it less likely for them to seek support

from teachers, and more likely to attempt to deal with conflicts on their own. As Alfredo stated:

> I would be struggling and stuff, but didn't like going and asking the teacher. Even if I did get bullied, I didn't go tell them or whatever. I just felt like you shouldn't tell the teacher, when I was a child. Like, everybody is like 'Nobody likes a tattletale' kind of thing even within kids. I just had a fear of going and asking them for help. Like even with a math problem, I would just not like asking them.

The twin challenge of gaining a sense of belonging and achieving in school encouraged participants to adopt strategic approaches that involved difficult trade-offs. A range of situational factors and contingencies resulted in various outcomes, but with important patterns that tended towards tentative sense of belonging in school, fluid identities and scaled-back aspirations for achievement.

Participants often looked to a single teacher for support, inspiration and in some cases guidance in school. In the absence of a supportive context for academic engagement in school, reinforced by expectations from peers to rebel against schooling norms for performance, and the complicated relationship with teachers in general explored above, participants took advantage of the opportunity provided by teachers they perceived of as exceptional. How exceptional teachers were defined by participants was to some extent individual, but some common themes also emerged from their accounts of exceptional teachers and the support they provided in helping participants to overcome challenges for belonging and achievement in school. Exceptional teachers were by definition not like most other teachers, and were sometimes recognized by participants for their ability to

engage all students more actively and their use of specific techniques to make school more interesting. As Nestor stated:

> Doing more things where you have to get up and you have to do projects with other people was better, right? It interested me to learn.

More often, however, they defined exceptional teachers as those that were defined as strict but fair. This resolved the potential risk in seeking support identified above, because they did not feel they were receiving special treatment and consequently were not concerned that this would create problems for them among peers. In fact, all but four participants expressed a preference for teachers they perceived of as both strict and fair. As Eduardo stated:

> No matter how smart you are, how nice you are to him, you know, he's going to treat you like everybody, so at the same time I kind of felt uncomfortable in his class, but at the same time – that was in the beginning, but in like semester two, or grade eleven, ten eleven, I was like, I was comfortable with him, because I know how he was, right? So I knew how he was a serious person. You just got to go to class and get your work done.

Some participants also commented on how they were often one of few students who appreciated teachers they perceived of as strict but fair. As Mateo stated, "I had this teacher, and she was very strict – not a lot of people liked her, but I actually did like her." In some cases, participants developed a personal connection with a teacher, with benefits that often extended beyond the classroom. As Diego stated:

> He was the most strict teacher of all there... I thought he was great. It was funny because me and him had [sic]... I'd always ... we had to wear grey pants and white shirts, but I always wore black pants... And then he'd always call me out on it, 'where's your grey pants' and I'd always tell him 'I have a note, I have a note.' Eventually he just started calling me black pants. One day he just got really mad at me, and he just called me out and said ... he just

didn't believe me, and then he walked me all the way to the office and then I showed him that I actually did bring the note. I guess he was just pissed off 'cause I was always coming with black pants (laughs). But other than that, no, he liked me. I was like one of the best students in the class.

In a number of cases a personal connection was based both on the structure provided by such exceptional teachers and actual interest in a course. As Alfredo stated:

I think the difference was that I enjoyed Philosophy because a lot of the students in the class didn't enjoy it. It was kind of a dense topic but I kind of enjoyed it. So maybe because he saw that I really enjoyed what he was teaching, he had that relationship with me. A lot of the other students would try but they wouldn't really like it.

A personal connection with a teacher was therefore established not through special treatment but by a shared understanding about expectations. Participants tended to respond better to teachers who they felt treated all students equally, within a more familiar model that clearly defined the roles of student and teacher. This preference reflected not so much on individual preferences among participants, but more so as a result of wider systemic issues that were more influential in schooling contexts that were less structured, with less supervision, and where students were left to their own devices in relation to peers and academically.

To reiterate, it was not so much that participants were necessarily different from other students in school. The present study did not collect data on the experiences of other students. Yet, it does not seem surprising when students, regardless of their background, state that they tended to find school boring, they would much prefer to hang out with their friends, have less homework, and even enjoyed getting in a little trouble just for fun. The reason why participants tended to prefer more structure in school and stricter

297

teachers that had clearer expectations, is because this created a more level playing field for them to compete with other students. The principle of fairness was highly valued among participants because it helped to support their efforts to overcome disadvantages and because it was less likely to invoke negative stereotypes about them that circulated among peers and in society in general. How participants perceived fairness, however, depended on their negotiation of expectations with teachers. In isolated cases exceptional teachers developed enough trust with participants to be able to provide additional guidance, emotional support, and even food to participants who were experiencing marginalization from peers, school and in society in general, without undermining their status among peers. As Quito stated:

> I found this one teacher, the most amazing woman, and without her I wouldn't have gotten through high school. If it wasn't for this one teacher, I would have fallen through the cracks like every other Hispanic kid, like every other kid who doesn't fit in. She was brilliant. She would give me lunch.

When an exceptional teacher negotiated a trusting relationship that was not perceived by participants as a threat to relations among peers, participants made good use of the support provided, and integrated this into their overall strategies to minimize the effects of stereotyping and to balance belonging among peers in relation to belonging in school, while remaining focused on the goal of school completion. When a supportive relationship with a teacher, coach or guidance counselor was not available, participants relied more heavily on peers for sense of belonging. In all cases, however, gaining a sense of belonging and performing at school depended on reconciling often contradictory expectations of parents, teachers, peers and self. Participants made good use of whatever

298

resources were available to them, and did relatively better in school overall than one would expect from the literature. This may have been because in relation to Central American male youths in Toronto overall, they tended to have more support at home and better personal resources, with a few exceptions. It may also have been because most of them attended schools with a culturally diverse student body, so they were able to find some of the support they needed among similarly disadvantaged youths.

Reconciling Expectations of Self and Others in School

How did the expectations of others relate to the expectations participants' had about their own sense of belonging and performance in school? Stereotypes and related assumptions about how participants endeavoured to gain a sense of belonging in school and what they would achieve had implications for their experience in schools. Furthermore, how participants responded to stereotypes also had an effect on outcomes. In contrast to dominant stereotypes, participants tended to enter high school with strong aspirations to complete school and to do well in school. These reflected the expectations of their parent(s). While not a main focus here, it is important to note that all participants not only felt that school was important, and felt that they had a responsibility to do well in school, but also seemed to take it for granted that they owed this to their parent(s) who had sacrificed so that they could get an education in Canada. The focus of the analysis here is on how participants endeavoured to gain a sense of belonging and achieve in school, which seemed to differ considerably from what others expected of them.

Participants reported that one of their main challenges was reconciling often contradictory expectations that were simultaneously present in attending school. Teachers and the school system tended to present a mix of stereotyped low expectations, indifference, and in notable exceptions hopeful positive expectations of participants' performance in school. Other students, depending on peer group friendships, also presented a range, from negative expectations of Central American male youths as underachievers that were unlikely to finish school, to more positive expectations of participants as possible friends that would be mutually supportive of achievement in school. The analysis below examines efforts by participants to manage these various expectations in relation to their own expectations of schooling and for their performance in school.

Participants often felt that teachers had different expectations for them than for other students, but looked for opportunities to challenge expectations they felt were inaccurate or unfair. One main challenge that participants faced was that teachers often inadvertently contributed to the reproduction of stereotypes about them. This was a challenge for teachers as well, as suggested by the different ways in which they endeavoured to mitigate such stereotypes in the classroom environment. Few teachers seemed to be able to rise to the challenge in this regard to the satisfaction of most participants. One perception was that teachers sometimes did not recognize participants in the class, making them feel invisible. As Nestor stated:

> I would raise my hand, like he didn't, he didn't believe in me basically. I
> would raise my hand and he'd ask somebody else. He never picked me,
> picked me to answer.

And as Alfredo stated, "Nobody sees you." Another way in which participants felt a lack

of recognition was a result of pedagogy. As Mateo stated, "Some of the teachers here

they don't really teach you, you're expected to know everything already." The frustration

participants expressed about teachers not providing enough background and context for

what was being taught was exacerbated by lack of reflection of personal and family

history in the curriculum. Another way in which participants felt that teachers did not

recognize them was when they were struggling and did not feel they could ask for help.

As Nestor stated:

> I guess in school there's no confidence in the student being able to ask the
> teacher, like, there's no, there's not enough good relationships in students,
> students and teachers, right? I guess the teachers do not understand where
> they're coming from. They're just 'Oh, this guy couldn't do the work.'
> Unless they ask why he didn't do his work, if there's something they can help
> him with. 'Oh, he's not doing his work? That's his problem.' I don't know.

These perceptions all point to what participants expect from school and teachers, and

how the lack of recognition contradicts these expectations. Lack of recognition of

marginalized students maintains the status quo, and may actually reproduce stereotypes.

In some sense it represents a lack of expectations, and participants perceive this

negatively as a sign that their teachers do not care about them. It also opens the door for

participants to question whether lack of attention from teachers and specifically lack of

sensitivity about their needs may actually be motivated by expectations of teachers that

are hidden, such as that they do not believe that participants have potential or are

unwilling to put enough effort in, and therefore are not worth their effort. As Nestor stated:

> The stereotype was like – or they would assume that – 'He's doing bad' or, 'this guy's in a gang' or this and that, 'These guys are not here to learn, they're here to mess around' or whatever.

Notice that stereotypes are invoked for Nestor because, as he stated above, "I don't know." When teachers did not engage participants, they often wondered why, and frequently ended up with the impression that teachers thought they lacked potential or that they were unwilling to try, or both, but ultimately they just did not know. This lack of clear expectations among teachers could be unsettling for participants given that their status in school, among peers and in society in general was already precarious due to negative stereotypes of them.

When participants perceived that teachers had low or negative expectations of them in school, they sometimes reacted by simply affirming this. As Sol stated, "Being good doesn't help, because I'm actively trying to be good, so I'm going to be bad." Similarly, one response to teachers who had low expectations was to scale back academic engagement to a minimum. As Nestor stated:

> I passed his class with a fifty, right? But it was like, you know, whatever, I didn't even get along with him ... Like, I was never behind on credits or anything like that, I just didn't care because teachers like that, they didn't care.

More frequently, however, participants responded to stereotypes about them as underachievers and potential troublemakers by trying to "prove their teachers wrong." As Rodrigo stated:

> Well, for English it was always somewhat of a struggle, because the teachers were always thinking I should go to a special class. I was always stuck in the middle. Every time they would test me I would always stay in English. I never actually did do a special class (pause).

The suggestion that Rodrigo go to an ESL class took on added significance since he was born in Canada, and so his ability to stay in regular English was in part an indicator for him of his sense of belonging in mainstream society in Canada. But it was also a means through which he negotiated expectations with his teacher, challenged the stereotype of him as an underachiever, and re-affirmed his potential to achieve. As he stated, "I just proved to them that I can do better," and "Just to show the teachers that I can go further." Sometimes teachers challenged participants directly. When participants were convinced about the sincerity of such a challenge from a teacher, they often responded by becoming more engaged in a course. As Alfredo stated:

> It wasn't until basically some teacher told me, he said 'you're not going no where, you have bad marks, don't even try to apply to university, you're not going nowhere.'… and that is when I really, I really actually took initiative, right?… so basically it was because of what he told me right?

The direct challenge from a teacher may have spurred some participants on because it brought the negotiation of expectations into the open. It may have been easier to respond to a teacher who made their expectations clear, even when these were not necessarily positive. Even more important about these exchanges was the perception among participants that their teachers cared enough to take a chance on them. Nestor articulated the reverse case when he stated that:

That was in the back of my mind – He didn't want to take a chance on us, right? So, I guess, to me that's wrong, because if you're teaching you should help everybody.

When participants felt that teachers approached them as individuals rather than as embodiments of a stereotype, they may have interpreted this as recognition of their potential, and this provided them with an opportunity. Alfredo continues:

I had skipped maybe more than half of his class, and I think he was just fed up and just said it, like I don't know, I don't know how he meant it, right? But it pushed me, it really pushed me to go forward and I had a course with him the next semester. By mid-term I had like an eighty-nine in his course, right? It was, it was economics, right? So, he was like 'I was wrong, you're doing good.'

Alfredo's account exemplifies how difficult the negotiation of expectations with teachers can be for participants, and how doubts remain. As Alfredo stated in the passage above, "I don't know how he meant it." However, when these expectations were out in the open this seemed to create more opportunity for negotiation and human agency among participants.

In some cases participants felt that teachers had higher expectations for them than for other students. This was an interesting reversal from what they were used to from other teachers and their experience of stereotypes about Latinos in society in general. Like the perception of low or negative expectations, the perception of higher expectations was complex, at times subtle and often fraught with danger particularly with respect to the issue of belonging. It was, however, another means through which participants could negotiate expectations and strive to achieve in school. One perception expressed was that teachers sometimes had unrealistic expectations. As Cesar stated, "They expect you to

pick up English within a week, like really quickly. It doesn't happen like that. It takes

time to learn a language." Juan concurred, "It's not like I would go and tell one of the

teachers to go learn Spanish within a week." In most other cases participants interpreted

having high expectations in a more positive light, but some doubts remained. As Sol

stated:

> He was the best teacher I ever had in my life. He was my teacher in the Law
> class and he was the coach so he really kept me on point – just drilled me –
> all these questions. I used to get upset, like 'what the hell is he picking on me
> for?' But towards the end of the year I realized he was picking on me because
> I was on the ball team, and because he saw the potential I had, and he wasn't
> gonna settle for less from me [sic]. So, where there were other students who
> could screw around and get by, if I screwed around, that didn't get by. He
> made sure to let me know, and he'd expect the best from me.

Sol admitted that at the time he sometimes resented the attention he received from this

teacher, illustrating the potential delicacy of negotiating expectations within a wider

context plagued by stereotypes. Alfredo related a scenario in which the challenge from a

teacher had the opposite effect of spurring him on. As he stated:

> The way he would teach class, it would seem like he was upset at life. He
> would be very grumpy, screaming, 'You're not going to make it'. The way he
> would say it was not like how other teachers would say it. It wasn't like,
> 'Why don't you try?' It was like, 'You're not going to make it, that's it.'

The risk involved in making expectations known to participants was that they could be

interpreted in different ways and might invoke wider stereotypes, as illustrated above.

However, when teachers engaged participants in some sort of a negotiation over

expectations, it provided an opportunity for them to respond. Whether proving teachers

right when they had high expectations, or proving them wrong when they had low

305

expectations, almost any effort on the part of teachers to engage participants was preferable to a hands off approach. This is because wider stereotypes of Central American male youths in Canada, if left unchallenged, reinforced disadvantages systemically through the process of schooling. Paradoxically, while stereotypes hindered sense of belonging and achievement in school, they also sometimes provided participants with motivation to achieve in school, highlighting once again the important role of human agency. Participants stressed, however, that despite their strong determination to overcome stereotypes in the context of schooling, they wanted teachers to meet them half way, illustrating how sense of belonging and achievement in school are also relational. This is why for many participants it was not simply enough to be treated like everyone else. As Manuel stated, "A lot of my teachers told me that I had a lot of potential. 'You're a smart kid, but you don't do the work.'" The suggestion from "a lot of teachers" that participants were wasting their potential made them feel that they were indistinguishable from other students. In the absence of a deeper level of engagement, the negotiation of expectations remained somewhat ambiguous, participants continued to be haunted by stereotypes, and they viewed these teachers, in turn, as indistinguishable from each other.

As explored in previous chapters, sense of belonging and achievement in school are also negotiated in relation to peers. With important differences for specific schooling contexts, challenges faced by participants for gaining a sense of belonging and achieving in school are contingent on their negotiation of expectations among peers. Pressures to

"fit in" among peers sometimes constrained their sense of belonging and performance in school. Frustration over the negotiation of expectations with teachers could therefore lead participants to take refuge among friends. Many participants mentioned that they liked to fool around with friends at school. As Rodrigo stated, "I was easily distracted at school - my friends and I would always fool around, basically, get ourselves into trouble." Similarly, Claudio acknowledges that friends were important for schooling. As he stated, "In grade nine I had a few friends in art class that were slackers that caused me to go down." Eduardo attributes his troubles in school largely to the influence of peers. In middle school he "got along with everyone," but in high school he isolates himself, and after dropping out of school concludes that "there's no such thing as friends." Peers, however, sometimes contributed to academic engagement as well. As Octavio stated:

> My group of friends was not very competitive but did seem to get decent grades, so me getting a bad grade – I felt like I'm not living up to what my friends are probably saying.

Mateo refers to competition among friends at school as a motivating factor for achievement. As he stated: "We're very competitive because we're into sports - even with school, we'd be very competitive." Expectations among peers that participants would do poorly in school based on stereotypes created difficulties for them particularly when they were forced to do group work. The following account from Alfredo about peers is worth quoting at length:

> They saw me in a different light. Like, in high school there would be comments, or surprised by the marks I would get. Like, in the economics class, there was a student who was Italian who was well-liked by teachers, honour roll student – but he didn't understand the Law of Diminishing

> Returns, in economics and I had studied with the same teacher. I tried to explain it to him and he was like, well no, who are you to tell me. And I was like 'No, look it up in the book – it's just like that - the way I'm saying it is easier than the way the book is saying it'. Then he understood it, but the way he said it was like 'well, how would you know.'

The example provided by Alfredo illustrates the challenge participants faced in developing relations among peers that were supportive of schooling. If they were lucky, they found a small group of friends that faced similar challenges and were committed to doing relatively well in school. If not, they often faced isolation and social exclusion from peers, or felt pressure to scale back academic engagement. In most cases, participants experienced a mix of these two scenarios over the course of schooling. They learned that friends could have both a negative influence, distracting them from school and in particular their goal of school completion, but also a positive influence by providing support for academic achievement. In general, over the course of high school, friends were important for sense of belonging in school and therefore the goal of school completion, but the negotiation of expectations among peers often led participants to scale back academic engagement, to the disappointment of teachers and parents, and in retrospect to themselves.

Participants faced a potential conflict for belonging among peers when teachers singled them out in class, either positively when teachers took a special interest in them, or negatively when teachers discriminated against them. Participants coped with negative attention in various ways such as withdrawing and taking refuge among peers, or by trying harder in order to prove their teacher wrong, as explored above. A third option was

to strive for a middle position, that is, to be accepted by peers and to do relatively well in school. When such a balanced middle position was not available to them, participants often focused on simply passing a course and making whatever friends they could. A common variation of balance was to simply "get by" in the majority of courses in this way, and then to engage at a high level selectively in response to the opportunity provided by what they perceived as an exceptional teacher. Participants defined exceptionality among teachers in different ways, illustrating individuality, but also displayed some common themes regarding the schooling process and the negotiation of expectations with teachers. Exceptional teachers seemed to be able to break through the stereotypical representation of participants that plagued other teachers. Participants felt that such teachers saw them for who they were, complex individuals with many of the same desires and needs as other students, but with some additional disadvantages that put them at risk of being marginalized. Friends, family and teachers all occupy a place in the negotiation of expectations that participants have for themselves, which are adjusted and modified in relation to the ongoing search for belonging. The findings on expectations are consistent with marginalization literature reviewed in Chapter 3, namely that systemic disadvantages are reproduced through schooling in many cases, particularly when teachers that are part of the dominant mainstream culture are not aware that this is taking place, and/or do nothing to try to reverse this process. The findings also offer new insights. We can see that even where teachers are aware of disadvantages, their attempts to address them in some cases make the situation worse if they alienate individual

students. The relations among peers at school also factor into the ability of teachers to address systemic issues, but in a more complex way than is implied in much of the marginalization literature reviewed in Chapter 3, because it tends to view peer influences as primarily negative and contrary to academic achievement. Participants add further insight in this area by illustrating their role in negotiating expectations, and thus their agency.

Shifting Priorities for Achievement

Participants entered high schools with a range of short and long-term goals for what they wanted to achieve, which included balancing academic engagement with engagement among peers on a daily basis, defining their identities, and working towards collectively oriented familial goals. I refer to these as priorities for achievement because some achievements, like making their parents proud, were of a higher order for participants in relation to a number of other goals that were nevertheless also important to them. Participants shifted priorities for achievement in school in relation to the challenges and opportunities for belonging explored above. The trade-offs involved in reconciling a range of expectations of self and others, some of which contradicted with each other, had implications for these shifts in priorities. Participants faced tensions between their commitment to performance norms in school and their sense of attachment to peers. A second challenge for participants was developing an integrated identity that encompassed their role as a student in school and their role as a friend among peers. In

both cases, they faced stereotypes about how they would perform these roles. The negotiation of identity in school for participants, a process that was dominated by their relations among peers, was measured against a third process in which they worked towards longer-term aspirations for achievement.

One important shift that took place for many participants was a loss of interest in schoolwork, paired with a corresponding increase in interest to spend time with friends. Participants provided many reasons why they lost interest in school. One common "push" factor expressed by participants was what they perceived of as a lack of challenge. As Alejandro stated, "I was mad because they were holding me back... After that I just kind of stopped caring." Participants expressed a range of degrees of not caring. With important variations, losing interest in school did not lead to complete disengagement for most participants but rather to scaling back the amount of time they spent on school work in a strategic fashion with corresponding reductions in their level of enthusiasm for the learning process in school. As Nestor stated, "As long as I passed, I was okay with that, like a fifty was good for me." Participants further linked their loss of interest in schoolwork with increased interest among peers. As Nestor stated;

> High school was not about reading – more peer pressure, right? So it's more
> about what everyone is doing... You're going to be outside with your friends,
> or trying to fit in, right? And everything. It's not about going home and
> reading. It wasn't fun, right?

One common "pull" factor evident in the quote above was the association of peers with stimulation and having fun. As Rodrigo stated, "Enjoying life – that was my main interest at that time, hang out with friends and do whatever. School was just boring." The

311

following dialogue between Emilio and Claudio further illustrates the importance of stimulation among peers:

> *Emilio*: The way I see it, like, one thing led to another and then another, 'cause in school, kids used to tell me 'go tell the teacher 'fuck you'… that means go to the washroom,' and they used to like send me up to do stuff like that 'cause I didn't know. But after that, it's like funny, and you want to do more stuff, like trouble, like you look for trouble.
> *Claudio*: Like a rush kind of.
> *Emilio*: Yeah. Like it feels good doing bad things, that like other people might think are cool, or something. So you feel the need to do it.
> *Claudio*: It's like bad… it's like the opposite of good. Like, it's like the opposite of structure. It's like going out of boundaries. It's like exploring new territory.

That some participants misbehaved to derive stimulation is not surprising *in itself*, as this conforms to normative masculinity. It is the meaning participants attached to such activities that further informs our understanding of how they shifted their priorities for achievement. The dialogue above illustrates that interest among peers at the expense of schoolwork is both about stimulation, and about achieving and maintaining status among peers. Furthermore, devoting time and attention to establishing and maintaining friendships in school, and the status that this affords participants, was not always fun. When asked about this, Diego stated:

> It wasn't fun, because it's not something that you think about that you're trying to do. You're just living it… You get sucked in, and it becomes part of your life.

In retrospect, Eduardo questions the shift towards peers in terms of both a short-term strategy of maintaining status, and in terms of his goal of school completion. As he stated, "I was just trying to be someone popular, but it wasn't worth it, 'cause look where

312

I am now." Despite these differences in how participants endeavoured to balance achieving academically with achieving status among peers, it is clear that they faced considerable challenges and limited options for doing so. A common strategy was to try to achieve some consistency across a range of challenges for achievement. Here is Claudio talking about his views on challenges and achievement at school:

> It was a challenge, like you're pride was on the line. Like you were chasing a goal, especially the projects part, trying to complete them. Going home and you're tired, and trying to finish. There was a time where I was on the swim team at the same time... I liked doing the work. I was being pushed and rushed. It really helped me grow. I can actually do it with pride.

Like Claudio, Octavio and Mateo bridged interest and achievement in sports to status gains among peers and whenever possible, to academic achievement. In other cases, such as for Nestor, sport served as a means to greater popularity and status among peers, but distracted from school work, necessitating once again trade-offs and strategies to try to balance these two separate and shifting priorities for achievement.

A second important shift in priorities took place in relation to identity. Spending time with peers was an important part of gaining a sense of belonging and defining an identity consistent with expectations among peers. Finding a place among peers informed identity. As Nestor stated, "I always joked around, so everybody knew me as a joker." On one level, to be viewed as a "normal" youth was very important for participants. As Diego stated:

> It's a lot more difficult too because you feel like you don't fit in too, so they start associating themselves with people just like them. Especially youth, the youth just start getting into gangs, a lot of violence... It's a huge thing, feeling like you're not part of this overall society, that ... If you can't be part

313

of it, if you don't feel like... you're not part of it, you're not going to survive in the world and all it entails.

A common challenge for participants is gaining a sense of belonging among peers without having to sacrifice important parts of their identities. Previously, I examined how Mateo was invested in projecting an identity among peers as both a nice guy and a tough guy. This is consistent with normative masculinity in Canada. However, defining an integrated identity is more complex than this for Mateo and other participants, because they must balance identity among peers with identity in school. As Mateo stated:

> They see me... I talk like this... they look at me like I'm not very intelligent, I don't know what I'm doing, just fooling around. They see me like that. But they don't also see me as someone who is motivated, a person who is very ambitious who wants to do bigger and better things. They don't see that side.

During the process of schooling, participants developed identities that were both stable and fluid, in an effort to manage these tensions and overcome negative stereotypes. Participants felt a sense of responsibility to achieve for the sake of their family and their parents in particular (who in turn wanted other Latin Americans in Canada to see that their son was achieving), and therefore often felt compelled to present themselves paradoxically as exceptions to other negatively stereotyped Latin American male youths (paradoxical because they were distancing from other Latin Americans in order to represent Latin Americans in a positive light). As Diego stated:

> You don't hear about, or you don't see a lot of Salvadorians being successful... They kind of got a reputation of just criminals because of all the crime that goes back [sic], that goes on at home. So for me to become something and accomplish something such as getting a university degree and a good job, it just means a lot to me, to be able to say that I am from El Salvador and I have a university degree.

314

Even for those participants who struggled to stay in school and achieve minimally, subjectively this was not a process of disengagement, but rather a high level of complex engagement, reflecting shifting priorities for a range of achievements. This was because, for participants, the definition of identity among peers and the adoption of longer-term aspirations for achievement that takes place in school were adjusted in relation to other long-term goals that are reinforced by their families.

A third important shift that emerged from the data was a sense of urgency among participants for greater independence and responsibility. Participants often commented that they felt school was not preparing them sufficiently for challenges they would face in the future as adults. Part of this was rooted in a perception that they would not get a return on their education. As Alfredo stated, "Like, you're not going anywhere, so why would I go to university? Why would I go do this? I'm going to go make money, right?" The second reason for this attitude was a sense of urgency for more independence. Claudio conveys this sense of wanting more responsibility, and how the schooling process hinders this:

> I find it's like a joke, I find it like... it was really babyish. It's kind of like really cushioned, like I don't know, it felt like they weren't giving us the bigger picture, like, as if they were keeping it in a little cushy box. And like, I can't get here, as long as I'm here, I'm like a little baby in a crib. I can't get hurt. I thought it was a joke, kind of like, I thought it was too babyish... I didn't see the point in it.

When probed further on this, Claudio stated:

> I didn't feel like I had any responsibility, and I guess that responsibility really teaches people, you know? ... Just taking care of something other than

315

yourself, on your own, that truly teaches you, not just reading books or doing baby things in education.

Emilio concurs with Claudio, stating, "They got to teach you that you got to get money, you got to pay bills [sic]." For some participants, wanting to leave school and begin earning money is linked to frustration at not being able to achieve in school. As Eduardo stated:

> But in grade eleven, grade twelve is where I started slowing down, I started failing classes, I had to retake some, and grade twelve being in grade eleven courses, like all slow, I don't know. It was that same time I wanted to work, make money, because I'm never going to get this thing done.

For participants, the process of schooling involved reconciling and balancing a number of tensions for a range of achievements in school and among peers. Despite immediate challenges, and sometimes failures, they drew from a strong sense of determination to "be someone" and they often maintained or returned to the longer-term and somewhat open-ended goal passed down by their parents to get "a better life." Balancing these objectives in school, however, involved trade-offs, with implications for both immediate goals for achievement in school as well as longer-term aspirations.

The findings on shifting priorities provide insight into two dimensions of change for participants that have yet to be adequately explored in the literature. The first is to suggest that participants facing marginalization from schooling do not simply succeed or fail, but rather shift between different measures and combinations of peer and school belonging in a dynamic way in order to achieve a range of goals. Taken together, the broad pattern in schooling seems to be one of declining achievement in the middle years

316

of high school followed by somewhat of a recovery, if only to complete at a lower level of engagement than where they began in grade 9. This confirms the structural disadvantages that they face, but contrary to the marginalization literature reviewed in Chapter 3, the findings here suggest that peer relations are crucial for the attainment of other goals, such as achieving at school. This may be especially true for minority youth, who experience their difference from mainstream youth as yet another form of social exclusion. Their efforts to balance peer and academic achievement are not always successful, and in some cases participants end up both isolated from peers and performing at levels well below what they are capable of. However, their understanding of the importance of these two measures of belonging is profound, illustrating how they are both part of longer term collective goals to "get a better life" for themselves and their families, and to belong and contribute to society on a deeper level. Finally, both short and long-term goals evolve for participants, as do their identities and sense of belonging, suggesting that more attention be devoted in the literature to subjectivity in the incorporation process.

Summary of Findings

The analysis in this chapter has examined experiences in school in terms of subjectivity and process in order to further clarify how participants endeavoured to gain a sense of belonging in school, the challenges and opportunities they encountered in doing so, and the degree to which they felt they were successful in this regard. Participants

found that schooling for them was often an exercise of choice that involved difficult trade-offs. Choices were made based on their perception of a range of expectations for schooling, and their personal goals in a number of areas including but not limited to schooling. Participants were forced to accept trade-offs with respect to short-term school and peer-oriented goals, but they also worked towards resolving tensions as part of longer-term aspirations that involved: personal goals to "become somebody": family aspirations for "a better life": and more societal-level aspirations to help others and make a contribution.

Participants faced disadvantage in school based on a range of background issues that led their families to seek a new life in Canada. The context of reception presented a host of additional challenges for schooling, most notably the prevalence of negative stereotypes about them as underachievers and problem youth. These stereotypes made it difficult for them to find and maintain friendships in school that were supportive of their goal of school completion. Participants felt that most teachers did not engage students in meaningful ways, and in some cases they felt that they received less attention or more negative attention than other students. Their perception of these and other experiences in school reveal a number of contradictions in the school system that made it more difficult for them to gain a sense of belonging in school, with related challenges for identity formation and achievement.

As seen in the extensive quotes in the analysis above, participants faced competing expectations for peer engagement and schooling performance. This often resulted, at

least at first, in a loss of interest in school in favor of friends. Over the course of high school they became more immersed in a process of learning how to balance the competing expectations of others in relation to their own expectations. They sought to gain support from both teachers and peers in various ways. This often resulted in scaling back academic engagement at first, but many also tended to regain momentum towards completion of school, and all seemed to salvage important life lessons in the process of schooling regardless of academic outcomes.

Participants sought out teachers that they perceived of as exceptional, and defined their own identity and efforts to achieve as exceptional in the context of such relationships. They attempted to negotiate expectations with teachers (and among peers) in ways that challenged stereotypes about them. They sought to define themselves against other negatively stereotyped Latin American youth, as exceptions, and to belong as "normal" youth among a range of peers. Their identity formation in school was relational to the extent that they managed and attempted to resolve tensions between their commitment to performance norms in school (reinforced by teachers), and their attachment to peers. The strategies they developed to manage such tensions were further oriented to overcoming stereotypes about them, with consequences for belonging and achievement in school. Participants described a somewhat tentative sense of belonging in school. They also often displayed fairly low self- expectations for achievement in school. Despite high self-determination to succeed, they also tended to scale back their longer-term aspirations as a result of experiences in school and among peers.

319

Discussion and Conclusions

This study adds to a better understanding of the reasons for disengagement and relatively low academic achievement among Latin American male youth in Toronto, and challenges some of the explanations that have been advanced in the literature on marginalized youth and schooling that are reviewed in Chapter 3. Lack of a sense of belonging in school eroded the ability of participants to thrive in high school. The data provide sufficient evidence that these youth are not receiving the support they need to develop a sense of belonging in school. There was also considerable evidence indicating that participants often felt misunderstood no matter what they did. If they strayed too far from normative academic performance goals, and sought instead to focus on building status among peers, they fell prey to negative stereotypes of them as underachievers prone to criminal behavior such as selling drugs. This adds to an understanding of the role of peers for schooling of marginalized youth, and suggests that this has previously been misunderstood. Specifically, the findings here suggest that it is not the association with peers per se that leads to divergent schooling outcomes. We need to look elsewhere for explanations as to why systemic disadvantages in education for Central American male youths and others persist. At a more abstract level, the ways that wider stereotypes and systemic inequalities operate in the context of schools, in classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, and elsewhere, suggests an interplay between systemic and individual/interactional dynamics. The analysis suggests further that the orientation of teachers, mainstream peers, and others to marginalized and non-marginalized youth, and

also frequently the lack of engagement of marginalized youth in a variety of contexts, may reproduce and reinforce disadvantages. Following this logic, stereotypes work together with social exclusion to undermine the attempts of marginalized youth to succeed, and contrary to what much of the literature on marginalization reviewed in Chapter 3 implies, the suggestion that associating with already marginalized peers is what leads to marginalization is not only a circular argument, but further contributes to stereotypes and disengagement of marginalized youth from school.

When participants tried to focus on academic achievement in order to satisfy the expectations of teachers, they often found themselves isolated from peers, and in some cases became victims of bullying. This explains why many participants longed to be accepted simply as "normal" youth. Strategically, this involved striving for a moderate level of academic achievement, and in some cases simply passing courses, and completing school. In other cases it involved more diversification of academic engagement by doing exceptionally well in a specific class with a sympathetic teacher, and simply getting by in other courses. These findings confirm but also extend the analysis of literature on variable outcomes for balancing peer and academic engagement reviewed in Chapter 3. This helps to fill a gap in the literature of the influence of racialization and minority status for education contexts and for the evolving critical analysis of gender and education. The education literature provides useful detail on the negotiation of identity in relation to gender (Mac an Ghaill 1996). An even older analysis of class relations in schooling and the transition to work is available (Willis 1997). More

recently, youth studies have taken an approach that looks at the intersections of "race," class and gender (Rutherford 1998), but a gap remains between this intersectional analysis and the body of literature on education, with a few notable exceptions (Epstein et al 1998, Haywood et al 1996).

This study sought to partially address this gap by examining the achievement goals that participants set for themselves, how successfully they felt they were achieving such goals, and how such goals may evolve and change over time. The findings suggest that they have shifting priorities for achievement according to two dimensions. The first dimension concerns shifting back and forth between immediate goals to balance daily academic engagement (and achievement), and achieving status and approval from peers. The findings here confirm and extend an existing analysis of this in the education literature (Frosh et al 2002). The second dimension involves shifting back and forth between attention to the array of daily concerns for achievement, and focus on longer-term goals for achievement such as completing secondary school. It is in relation to this dimension that the present study makes a more significant contribution, especially in the Canadian context, where no comparable study is available. Furthermore, the evident complexity and difficulty of managing these two dimensions simultaneously helps to explain why participants longed to simply be "normal" youth. It also helps to explain the high incidence of disengagement among Latin American youth and lower academic achievement rates for this population.

A related contribution of this study is better understanding of what Central American youth make of the challenges they face in school. They were aware of the problems faced by Latin American male youths in school based in part on their own experience. In addition, their proximity to other Latin Americans allowed them to see how this affected others like them. Interestingly, they did not immediately assume that school contexts were discriminatory, despite the weight of evidence that pointed in this direction. To the contrary, they often gave the benefit of the doubt to teachers, assuming that they generally had good intentions and wanted all their students to do well. They also acknowledged the opportunity to attend school, viewing it as a privilege rather than a right, had respect for teachers, and generally regarded school rules and discipline in school as legitimate. When they experienced discrimination at the hands of a teacher or another student, or both, or viewed another student being discriminated against, they tended to view it as an isolated incident, and not as representative of a wider context of discrimination against them or others like them. On the one hand this confirmed findings in the United States that Latin American immigrant youth generally hold strong values about the importance of education, appreciate structured learning environments in which expectations are clear, and defer to the authority of teachers, except that participants were either 1.5 or second generation immigrants, that is they either came as children or were born in Canada. Following the segmented assimilation logic, we would expect them to have been drawn into an adversarial stance, remained largely confined to an ethnic community, or integrated into mainstream society. Instead we find that over the course of

high school participants strive for more multicultural peer associations, and maintain or regain some interest in completing school. At the same time, many participants who implied that discrimination does not exist at a structural level, expressed frustration at the school system overall, and felt that no matter how hard they tried to belong and succeed in school, they could not reach their goals for achievement on a number of fronts. Rather than despair, it seems that participants strove to manage these contradictions in various ways. This may be a reflection of a strategic orientation to systemic issues, that to call attention to them in certain ways and in certain contexts, such as within a formal interview, simply has the effect of reinforcing them. More research is needed in this area.

Another gap filled by this study is a better understanding of how marginalized ethnic minority male youth in Canada respond to the challenges they face in schooling. Existing marginalization literature reviewed in Chapter 3 provides evidence that structural disadvantages exist for these youth, and these studies further examine how stereotypes reproduce and in some cases reinforce such disadvantages. Understanding of social change and human agency based on these studies is incomplete at best. A greater danger is the tendency to prematurely conclude that structural disadvantages are static, and that disadvantaged youth play little role in broader outcomes of belonging, identity and achievement. More specifically, there is a gap in our understanding of why some youth are able to overcome such challenges while others are not, and the range of outcomes in between these two extremes. The present study provides insight into this question. The determination to succeed and value for education that all participants had, caused them to

make every use of opportunities provided by certain teachers that they perceived of as exceptional. Their search for a particular teacher to serve as an ally in their struggle to belong and achieve was an important element of their effort to resolve tensions, or when this was not possible, to manage them. In short, all participants either managed to complete school or had concrete plans to do so. Their paths during the process of schooling were quite diverse, but with common themes of frequent changes in priorities for achievement, sometimes between extremes of dropping out and singular focus on schooling. This is not a surprise given what the data has revealed about a context of schooling that tends to push marginalized youth to extremes. In terms of strategy, however, what is novel about this study is the window it provides into subjective elements of the process of schooling for participants and those who face similar challenges. Specifically, the data reveals complex strategies involved in balancing competing expectations, and a second process of moderating extremes by making choices among a set of trade-offs. The result is a process of schooling for participants characterized by considerable change. This involved learning to live with a number of contradictions not of their making, staying firmly rooted in the search for a better life, and whenever possible seizing opportunities to achieve. Overall, participants were oriented toward both the transformation of themselves and the society around them, because they wanted to belong and achieve on their own merit. That most of them did not achieve at levels that they were aiming for, or felt they were capable of, was a result of

the range of challenges that they were faced with among peers, in schools, and in society

in general.

Chapter 8: Summary and Conclusions

This final chapter summarizes and discusses the main findings and conclusions. It begins with a short overview of the objectives of the research and the study design. These are stated in terms of intended contributions of the study to the field. The chapter then continues with a more detailed review of the study design and how it sought to address specific gaps and unresolved questions. The chapter then turns to its main focus, namely an overview of findings. The chapter ends with a discussion of the limitations of the present study, and topics and issues raised in this study that could be explored in future research.

Objectives of the Research

This study was designed to understand how male Central American youth in Toronto develop goals and strategies with respect to two important challenges of incorporation—finding identity, security and belonging among peers while at the same time getting through secondary school. The literature on structural disadvantages and variations reviewed in Chapter 3 suggests that goals and strategies in these two areas are related, but is only suggestive in the forms or patterns the relationship takes. Furthermore, the literature has little to say about how the goals and strategies of youths in these two areas might shift over time as they mature. If anything, the marginalization literature reviewed

in Chapter 3 suggests that youths fall early into fixed patterns that are difficult to change. This turned out not to be the case for the participants in the present study, and as such this study adds more significantly to the literature on variable outcomes for incorporation, as will be detailed in the review of findings later in this chapter.

The study began and maintained throughout a curiosity with the subjective viewpoints of male Central American youths in Toronto and their responses to a range of challenges faced in schools. A focus on peers and teachers in the context of schooling arose in part from the findings of previous research I conducted on identity for immigrant and second generation Latin American youths in Toronto. This research suggested that both peer relations and schooling were high priorities for Latin American youths in Toronto. Here the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 offers a rich array of findings and hypotheses, but also suffers from some important oversights. For example, lower levels of school achievement among some ethnic minority youth, particularly those with refugee backgrounds, is widely understood in the literature as an outcome of a range of interacting factors: weak family support, emotional and social disruption related to family dislocation and trauma, racial and cultural prejudice in the community and schools, difficulty reconciling perceived contradictions in values learned at home and school, and others. Overall, the literature is strong in documenting family-level variables and how they interact with variables relevant for incorporation into mainstream society. A useful framework for such an analysis is to approach the process of incorporation as a negotiation of "two worlds" (Zhou 2001). Critiques and adaptations to this approach

provide further insights into hybrid identity and associated strategies of achievement (Karakayali 2005, Plaza 2006). The literature is weak however, when it comes to interpreting additional specific challenges faced by immigrant and second generation youths, such as the relationship between peer relations and schooling.

Little research is available on the specific case of immigrant and second generation Central American youths in Canada. Central American migration streams to Canada are relatively recent. Studies in Canada benefit from being able to draw on findings from other contexts in the United States and Europe. More research in Canada is needed, however, to be able to identify what is distinctive about the Canadian context, and make contributions to wider debates. Here the marginalization literature reviewed in Chapter 3 suggests that so-called "gang" type peer-relations are closely linked to "dropping out" of school and losing all interest in future schooling. The findings from the present study suggest some important qualifications to this view and add to the understanding of complex relationships between achievement and belonging in different reception contexts. Two aspects of belonging serve to frame the most important contributions of the dissertation to a better understanding of incorporation for male Central American youths in Toronto: one concerning social aspects of belonging associated with friendships and wider peer engagement and the other concerning meeting societal expectations on schooling.

As the study proceeded, I noted that the relationship between peer-relations goals and schooling goals did not fit dominant views arising from the marginalization literature

reviewed in Chapter 3. Rather than a linear relation between peer-related and schooling goals with one influencing the other, a range of strategies were being employed to negotiate between peer-related and schooling goals. In addition, the marginalization literature places a great deal of emphasis on historical and structural factors that determine peer-relations and schooling outcomes. This emphasis assumes that parents, schools and other actors play mediating roles in outcomes. Initial interviews with participants suggested that outcomes tended to be mediated by "proximate experiences" with peers (in relation to social belonging and social status) and with teachers (in relation to schooling). These proximate experiences became an increasingly important focus of my data gathering and analysis. The findings, reviewed later in this chapter, suggest that peer-relations and schooling goals are not set immutably by social and family background or discrimination, but rather are shaped more variably by direct experiences with peers and teachers. Furthermore, shifts in goals over the course of high school are guided by the interplay between self-determination and the range of expectations from these various social actors, highlighting the role of human agency in continuity and social change.

The study was guided by a number of research questions that emerged first from a review of literature, and then were further refined and joined by additional questions based on analysis of incoming data. The main research question that emerged strongly and early in the study was: What is the relevance of peer relations for schooling, and subsequent achievements? This focus was reinforced by the relatively little literature

available on this topic, and the lack of consistency in the variable outcomes literature reviewed in Chapter 3 regarding analyses of peer relations and schooling for immigrant and second generation youths. Furthermore, such analyses were somewhat inconsistent with the accounts provided by the participants in this study. This is not surprising given that a number of contradictory tendencies frame the negotiation between peers and schooling, and therefore requires a complex analysis to account for both diversity and common patterns. A number of additional research questions were included to strive for such an analysis: How do immigrant and second generation youths define achievement? What is the relationship between identity and achievement for immigrant and second generation youths undergoing incorporation? To what do immigrant and second generation youths aspire and how do they seek to achieve this?

The objectives of this dissertation may therefore be understood as an effort to contribute to literature on specific aspects of incorporation for immigrant and second generation youths in Canada, and greater specificity with respect to male Central American youths. The research was also guided by an effort to address wider debates that concern similar processes in other national contexts framed by the research questions outlined above and extending from them. The main intended contributions may be summarized as follows:

1. Expanding the understanding of peer relations and school achievement for male Central American youth in Toronto. The specific objective was to contribute to efforts to

develop hypotheses and typologies of the ways in which school achievement and peer-relations in this population relate to one another at any given moment, and how these patterns shift over time as the youths move through high school. A related objective was to study the role of day-to-day experiences with proximate actors, specifically teachers and other students, in explaining patterns of peer relations and school achievement.

2. Contributing a "case study" to the broader research literature on Latin American youth incorporation in Canada and North America more broadly. Marginalization literature in both cases tends to be "deficit" oriented. This literature tends to focus on the lower than average school achievement levels of refugee-origin youths from Central America without closely examining processes of schooling that precede this outcome. Low parental human and social capital is identified as an important determinant in the schooling outcomes of children in families from Latin America largely to the exclusion of other possible independent variables. Furthermore, the marginalization literature tends to emphasize the normative views and concerns of school teachers and administrators, community leaders, and parents in this regard. The present study adopts a different stance: it focuses on the experiences, viewpoints and strategies of youths, as recounted by them, to see what could be learned. As the findings discussed further below will confirm, the shift in focus leads to rich insights on subjectivity and the role of human agency for a range of achievement outcomes. This serves to qualify differences in achievement and the reasons advanced for such differences. The findings add to theory

on the complexity and variability of individual and group-level incorporation processes for immigrant and second generation youths, and for Central American male youths in Toronto specifically.

3. Contributing to the literature on research design (Gubrium et al 1997). Getting the trust of the participants, some of who were quite young and many of who had faced marginalization at one or more points in their lives, was a major task. The study seeks to add to the literature on research designs that rely on developing trust with youths who for various reasons are often hesitant to talking to outsiders about matters related to security among friends (or lack of it) and their achievement in school (or lack of it). Specifically, the research design was intended to both acknowledge inter-subjectivity, and to use it to greater advantage by providing youths with more agency within the interview process.

Research Design

The design of this study was oriented to the main research goals. The main objective of this dissertation is to explore incorporation and achievement for immigrant and second generation Central American male youths in Toronto. Early data collection led me to focus more specifically on strategies of peer relations, identity formation, and academic engagement. Both peer and academic engagement emerged strongly as parts of an overall process of achieving a sense of belonging linked to a range of concrete achievements, of which school completion was an important one. Consistent with the research emphasis

on youth agency, the dynamics of peer-related and schooling goals and aspirations were analyzed according to youths' subjective experiences, viewpoints, and strategies. The role of day-to-day experiences with peers and teachers is examined in relation to diverse patterns of peer networks and school achievement. The main objectives focus on discovery and the development of new hypotheses to fill gaps and puzzles in the literature. The study was designed with the following features to address these objectives:

1. The sample was purposively selected to include Central American male youth in Toronto who currently revealed quite different patterns of schooling outcomes. The sample was composed of two age groups (21-26, 14-20) that corresponded to those having completed high school and those not yet completed respectively. The former group included one university graduate (25 years old), three college graduates (23-25 years old), two participants pursuing college degrees (23-24 years old), two high school graduates (21,23 years old), and one participant with high school incomplete (21 years old), for a total n=9. The latter group included two participants just entering high school (14 years old), five in high school (17-20 years old), and one dropped out (16 years old), for a total n=8. One additional respondent with age of thirty years, and having graduated high school, was included for a total sample N=18. More details on profiles are presented in Chapter 4. Both groups contained participants with a range of academic achievements, and for roughly two thirds of participants academic achievement changed over time.

Common patterns of academic achievement including shifts over time are explored more thoroughly below in overall findings. The most academically marginalized male Central American youths, that is those that left school early for various reasons and never returned, were difficult to find. This represents a limitation in the study. However, given that the focus of the study was on the process of schooling during high school and particularly shifts over time, those who never reached high school or dropped out early would require a different temporal focus. The lack of participation of the most marginalized youths in the community should not be interpreted as lack of interest in marginalization, or as lack of data on marginalized youth. In fact, all participants in the sample spoke about marginalization in schooling, and this is highly significant. Some participants also spoke about formative experiences that went back as early as elementary and middle school, and even further back schooling and peer-related experiences in Central America prior to immigrating to Canada. This provided useful background to contextualize data obtained from further probing of experiences, views and strategies used during high school, the main temporal focus of the study.

2. The small sample size was a necessary trade-off in order to privilege in- depth and (in some cases) repeat interviews, and to access hard-to-reach youths. Interviews covered two key moments in the participants' history, as well as the period in-between: the 'moment' of transition into high school and early experiences, a later moment toward the end of high school studies, and the period between these two moments that marked the

beginning and end of the participant's overall high school experience. For sixteen participants data was obtained on the transition to high school and then toward the end of, on or after completing high school. Two participants were just entering high school and so only provided data on the former (Cesar, Juan). In quantitative terms this amounts to a total of thirty four observations (2X16 +2). Another focus of data collection was on changes in peer and academic engagement over the course of high school, for an additional sixteen observations. Together these observations provided rich accounts of academic achievement, and peer and student-teacher relations from the perspective of participants. The data forms the foundation for the theoretical framework advanced in regards to common patterns of achievement (or lack thereof) and related strategies involved in negotiating peer relations and identity.

3. The data set contains individual interviews for most participants, including some follow up interviews with early participants, and some modified focus groups. Individual interviews were completed with fifteen participants. Among those fifteen, follow up individual interviews were completed with the first two and the fourth participants interviewed respectively (Rodrigo, Quito, Diego). This was to obtain comprehensive data for all participants, in particular to follow up with initial participants on emerging themes and questions after the first round of interviews had been completed. A follow up interview with the third participant (Eduardo) was attempted, but was not possible. Three small modified focus groups or "group interviews" were also carried out (Claudio,

Emilio), (Alfredo, Nestor), (Cesar, Juan). Three participants were interviewed in these modified focus groups only (Emilio, Cesar, Juan). Three participants were interviewed individually as well as in the small focus groups (Alfredo, Claudio, Nestor). Three additional participants took part in the focus groups, one in the second focus group and two in the third focus group, but data collected from these participants were not included in the main thematic analysis because in two cases participants could not contribute to the topic of interest due to age, and in the third case the participant was from Colombia. The focus groups were similar to in-depth individual interviews due to the small number of participants. This provided participants with the opportunity to share in depth. Focus group members also knew each other, so this allowed for open sharing of quite personal details more characteristic of individual interviews. The presence of others who had similar experiences allowed for interaction more characteristic of regular focus groups. The reason for these modified interview formats and in particular the small focus group interviews was twofold. Firstly, it allowed greater access to participants who were difficult to obtain interviews with. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it added greater depth and complexity particularly for those who were interviewed through more than one format.

4. The interviews were structured around a short set of basic questions and a longer and variable set of probes. The basic questions covered such matters as: schooling experiences and outcomes; views on schooling and achievement; experiences with peers

at school; views about the influence of peers on schooling; views of the relevance of peers for identity and belonging; aspirations; experiences with and views of teachers; relevance of teachers for schooling; relevance of family for schooling, aspirations, and achievement, and; preferences in relation to schooling, peers, families, and activities. Early in data collection more specific follow-up questions on prejudice, discrimination, conflicts with peers, school environment, parental expectations, strategies in relation to schooling and peers, and identity, were added. The interview schedule was further modified early in data collection by categorizing questions into clusters organized into five main sections: overall schooling, views about teachers and classes, friends and peer groups, parents and family, and aspirations. The interview schedule was used as a checklist to insure comprehensive data collection while the precise order of question-answers was co-determined during dialogue between interviewer and participants. This allowed for additional themes to emerge and for participants to draw links between different themes that could be probed further. The variable probes focused on comprehensiveness and key dimensions of the emerging framework to confirm and extend the findings.

5. All interviews and modified focus groups were taped, transcribed and then analyzed for themes and change over time. Initial ethnographic fieldwork required in order to gain access, helped to ground the study and focus in the community, and served to contextualize the interview data obtained from participants within the wider community.

A preliminary analysis of emerging themes was carried out through open and axial coding and then confirmed, clarified and in some cases modified through a more systematic micro-analysis of the data. This approach departed from traditional grounded methods of analysis that begin with line by line coding, or micro-analysis, followed by open, axial and selective coding. Data collection procedures also departed from a strictly grounded theory approach as defined by Strauss et al (1998) in that a priority was placed on constitutive aspects of experience and viewpoint more consistent with a constructivist grounded theory approach as elaborated by Charmaz (2003). The main implication of this departure was that incoming data was primarily geared towards expanding the interview schedule rather than refining it. The advantage of this approach was that it introduced circularity and feedback in the process of data collection. The disadvantage is that it caused delays and made for a somewhat inefficient process of data collection and analysis. It also did not allow a fully grounded cycle of data collection and analysis, since the fully systematic quantifying of categories and properties did not take place until late in the data collection process. In this sense, the study resembles a more straightforward thematic analysis.

6.   The study employed an innovation that is worth mentioning, particularly because it has implications for the review of findings below. Emphasis in data collection was on transitional aspects of schooling, specifically those experienced upon entering and

exiting high school. This emerged from the data itself as participants emphasized these transitional moments. I had entered the field with an awareness of the potential significance of the transition from middle school to high school, as emphasized in the literature. What I found through in-depth probing into participants' high school experiences, however, was the significance of transitional shifts during high school. This prompted me to probe further into an initial period of adjustment in high school, and in particular during grade nine, and to examine this in relation to final outcomes in high school, another dimension emphasized by participants in terms of the importance of "finishing school" (school completion). Further detail on the relationship between entering and exiting high school was collected in the form of data on what happens during high school. The typology advanced below reflects the range of combinations between these two significant moments, and provides a useful tool for developing an overall framework to better understand the schooling and peer-related outcomes of Central American male youths in Toronto.

The strengths and limitations of the above research design are best examined in light of the research findings. These issues are therefore discussed at the end of the paper in a review of the limitations of the current study and suggestions for future research. Let us turn next to the findings—the main focus of the present chapter.

Research Findings

Table 8.1 summarizes the topics that were addressed in the present study and that are covered in this section on findings. The chart draws attention to the fact that the study focused on peer-relation and school-achievement patterns. It also notes that the closely related focus on other students, teachers, and friendship and school environments arises as part of the effort to interpret variability and pattern in peer-relation and school-achievement patterns. A number of other variables are understood to be important in shaping the more proximate experiences (with other students, teachers, and in schools) and the outcomes. The review of findings in this section follows the ordering of these three levels of variables. It begins by reviewing the findings related to peer relations and school achievement. It then examines the proximate experiences with other students, teachers, and the school environment and how these relate to the peer relations and school achievement outcomes. Finally, it reviews briefly and in more general terms, findings that relate to the broad range of "background" factors.

Findings on Outcome Patterns

The data were assessed in relation to a typology of outcomes suggested by the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 and further developed in relation to incoming data. The literature suggests that secondary schooling outcomes may be understood as falling into a range running from low achieving to high achieving students, with the greatest number

Table 8.1: Main Topics

Background Factors	Proximate experiences in relation to other actors and environments:	Outcomes
Migration history Settlement history Stereotypes and racism Financial, human, social capital Cultural values and transmission Masculinity	Focus in this study: Other students Teachers and classes Other relevant actors: Parents and siblings Neighborhood Police and courts	Peer relations School achievement

falling in the middle. Low academic achievement in school is a concern because it is linked to higher rates of early school leaving, streaming into non-academic courses, and reduced post-secondary options for further schooling and/or work. In the case of already-marginalized youths and youths at risk of marginalization, the outcome distribution not surprisingly shifts to one with higher proportions in the low achieving category. Central American male youths who are more likely to face discrimination in schools, and other challenges arising from traumatic migration patterns, are therefore also more likely to face difficulty in school. The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 suggests that academic difficulty may be further complicated by problematic relations with peers and authority figures. According to this view, peer-relations among marginalized youth constitute so-called "gang" formations, that is, social groups who have a hostile view of other social groups and the school system and its values. These are thought to contrast with supportive peer- networks among youths who are succeeding at school and who have more positive attitudes to teachers and education. The assumption that friendship groups

among marginalized youths are necessarily antithetical to academic achievement is not supported by the data in this study. The participants in this study sought to expand friendship networks both to provide sense of belonging and facilitate achievement. This suggests a more complex typology combining schooling and peer-relations variables is needed to understand a range of outcomes. This typology is summarized in Table 8.2.

Few participants resembled the disappointed pattern at any given time, and when they did so either in terms of their relations with peers or their schooling, this tended to be fleeting and gave way to one of the other three patterns of peer and school belonging. Youths fitting the low extreme (Disappointed) are difficult to access, and difficult to interview. In previous research carried out for my Master's Thesis I was acquainted with some Hispanic youths in Toronto who followed this pattern. They had little to say about high school because they tended to drop out or were expelled early. The "Disappointed" pattern is likely a small minority, which tends to be inflated because of high profile media accounts of youth gang violence. The punitive response of schools in Toronto to conflict among youths in the form of "zero tolerance" policies adds to moral panic in relation to youth violence. The widespread perception in Canada of a direct correlation between "Disappointed" Hispanic youths and the higher than average dropout rate for this group is called into question by my findings. Five of the participants in the study would have shown up in aggregate data as early school leavers, however only one of those had not later returned and finished. Furthermore, none of these five displayed a "Disappointed" orientation to school. The one who had not returned (but stated an

Table 8.2: Patterns of Peer Relations and Schooling Goals and Outcomes

Combined Outcome	Peer Relations Outcome	Schooling Outcome	Notes on elaboration
Disappointed	**Reactive**: Reactive peers encourage one another to rebel against schooling and may get each other in trouble. "No such thing as friends" (Eduardo).	**Don't Care**: Rebel against rules and schooling process in general. Marks are low/failing or borderline failing.	Offers protection, but exposes youths to negative stereotypes ("gangs"). Results in trouble, school failure, and potential isolation. These youths are misunderstood, as they likely see no other option than to adopt a "hostile" and defensive stance in relation to school, and other peers.
Discouraged	**Peer Dependent**: Loyalty to peers is a high priority. Stimulation or "having fun" is also a high priority.	**Just Pass**: Marks are low-moderate, but determined to pass and complete school.	More interested in hanging out with friends, but with strategic orientation to school, so engage in minor trouble. Friends are very important, and offer support. Strategy for school completion.
Distracted	**Popular**: Gain popularity among peers through sport and other normative masculine behavior.	**Interested**: Goal is to do fairly well in most classes. Moderate grades in most classes.	Prevents isolation, but provides little basis for other goals. Popularity can involve a trade-off with respect to and distract from academic achievement. Outcomes for schooling vary.
Exceptional	**Connected**: "Friends with everyone" (Alfredo). Oriented to peer relations, expanding diverse peer networks, and establish multiple context specific friendship groups.	**Invested**: Goal is to do well or very well. Moderate-high grades, and potentially higher grades in exceptional classes.	Characterized by strategic orientation to both academics and peers. Allows participants to build social capital among peers. Potential bridge to exceptional pattern by engaging at a high level in one class as means toward higher achievement overall in school and beyond.

intention to), Eduardo, had in fact tried briefly and desperately to be popular among peers and invested in school, but this proved not to be an effective strategy of school

completion for him. These findings suggest that it is far more likely that Hispanic youths who are struggling in school are being stereotyped as "Hostile," and that only a small minority of them actually adopt a "Disappointed" pattern. A related finding that warrants further study is that almost two thirds of participants (11/18) had changed schools while in Toronto. At the very least, this finding suggests that in addition to being somewhat dispersed geographically, Central American youths follow complex paths of schooling that often involve changing schools and neighborhoods.

My analysis suggests that just as the low extreme of underachievement in the disappointed pattern is rare for Central American male youth, trading off peer support in order to focus exclusively on becoming an overachiever (or "nerd") is even further out of reach for them. This is because it exposes them to potential bullying and creates problems for gaining a sense of belonging among peers. In sum, these two opposing extreme patterns (underachieving and overachieving) are therefore illustrative in terms of the absence of participants that followed such responses, and this was consistent with the accounts provided by participants of the importance of negotiating peer-relations with academic goals, and avoiding such extreme responses to marginalization during high school. The three remaining outcome patterns illustrate the bulk of peer and academic engagement combinations for the participants in this study. These more common outcome patterns form a typology that falls along a rough continuum of patterns outlined above, with some important qualifications elaborated below.

When participants were "Disappointed," they rebelled against schooling and experienced low and/or declining academic achievement. In some sense this represented an extended period of "proving themselves" to peers, while for others establishing status among peers, expected in the early period of high school, was more transitional. The risk of an extended period of status building among peers is that this will lead to "getting in trouble" and being stereotyped, thus perpetuating declining academic achievement. A more common pattern was one best described as "Discouraged," involving an emphasis on passing or slightly better grades if possible, and high priority for developing a supportive friendship group but not necessarily an extensive peer network. Participants falling into this pattern are focused on school completion, but tend not to value academic achievement. Peer engagement is primarily geared toward stimulation rather than rebellion. This is a more effective strategy for gaining a sense of peer belonging in school, because it does not involve deliberately undermining schooling in order to establish a sense of belonging among peers. Peer dependent participants derive stimulation, and in some cases receive protection where needed, and this increases the likelihood of school completion. However, low grades provided limited options for postsecondary education as some participants later discovered.

The "Exceptional" pattern is characterized by a highly strategic orientation to schooling, and specifically to overcoming barriers to academic achievement. A common strategy in this regard was to engage in selective high to extremely high achievement in specific courses and with specific teachers (and frequently one teacher) who could also

be defined as exceptional. Grades for those who attain somewhat of an exceptional pattern may continue to be moderate in other courses, mostly because of lack of interest in curriculum, lack of equal opportunity to participate, and in some cases discrimination experienced by male Central American youths. In some sense this represents a hidden context of achievement, described by youths as a perception that even when they wanted to do well in a course, they often experienced barriers not faced by mainstream youths. These barriers acted to limit how much they could achieve in concrete terms (i.e. grades). Sometimes the barriers were subtle and difficult for participants to define, and thus "hidden." While variations exist, overall it seems that frustrations at being blocked in the majority of classes serve as motivation to achieve in exceptional classes where this is not the case. The "Invested" schooling dimension of the "Exceptional" pattern therefore makes sense in contrasting cases where a hidden context for achievement has been removed. I examine the role of exceptional teachers in more depth below.

The "Exceptional" pattern is characterized by a strategic orientation to peers as well. This means that participants devote considerable care to expanding diverse peer networks, and ultimately do not close themselves off from anyone. This emphasis on being "friends with everyone" is strategic in the sense that building social capital among a diverse range of peers at school contributes to multiple achievements. Most importantly, strategic orientation to peers allows for a better negotiation between peer-relations goals and academic goals. Strategies involved compartmentalizing engagement with different peer groups in different contexts in order to establish and maintain a sense

of belonging, while avoiding problematic situations among peers in school that may result in being stereotyped and greater difficulty achieving academically. The importance for participants of peer-based social capital in school is outlined in more detail below.

There is a question about the degree to which the "Exceptional" pattern, and specifically the negotiation of moderate-high to high achievement in relation to maintaining and extending social networks of reciprocity and trust among peers, is an option for all participants. This pattern may only be attained by a small minority of male Central American youths who because of certain advantages (such as having more educated parents, an exceptional command of English, previous schooling, etc) do well in school without having to spend as much time on their school work as other minority youths. For those without such advantages, and assuming they are not forced into a defensive, hostile, "Disappointed" pattern where they "Don't Care" about school at all, they may be faced with two limited options, which I have called the "Discouraged" and "Distracted" patterns. I have outlined the "Discouraged" pattern in detail above. To reiterate, youths who form a supportive but limited friendship group (Peer Dependent) may be discouraged from interest in academics, but they are still determined to complete school. Loyalty to peers dampers interest in academics, as doing too well academically exposes them to the risk of being labeled "over-achievers" by their friends, and potential alienation from them. A common strategy to guard against this eventuality is downplaying interest in and importance of school, and by engaging in peer related activities such as sports, joking around and minor trouble. The main difference for

somewhat advantaged youths, therefore, is that academic achievement is more within reach, but they may still face issues with peers, and in some cases with teachers, that if not attended to could undermine achievement and even lead to early school leaving.

The final option for those youths who cannot attain an "Exceptional" pattern, and who avoid becoming "Disappointed," is the "Distracted" pattern. The distracted pattern perhaps best illustrates how Central American male youth are both expected to conform to the values of the dominant society, and yet largely prevented from doing so. This represents in some sense a higher level of peer engagement, because they strive for popularity and may even attain a degree of popularity depending on the overall context of peer relations in school. However, to the extent that it is a departure from the more stable holding pattern of peer dependency characteristic of the "Discouraged" pattern, it also presents a risk of distracting from the goal of school completion ("Just Pass"). Furthermore, there is a question of the kind of support provided to "Popular" youths, particularly when the expectations of them distract and maybe even compel them to trade off time and attention that they could devote to academics. Paradoxically, for those youth for whom popularity is very important and yet out of reach, they may be tempted to adopt a more "Reactive" stance in order to impress peers, and in the process undermine their chances at popularity, and school success. Patterns of change will be explored further in the next section, but it is worth noting here that conflicting expectations exemplified by the "Distracted" pattern illustrate both the limits to belonging for

349

participants, and <u>why</u> they may be compelled to adopt a strategic orientation to both peers and schooling, and more specifically to the negotiation between the two.

The four patterns outlined above explain well the variations in how participants negotiated challenges and opportunities with regard to peer relations and academics at school. There are some exceptions. For instance, Eduardo falls into a "Disappointed" pattern in terms of his actions, but his values about the importance of education remain strong. Emilio, similarly articulated this incongruence between thought and action by stating, "My mind is straight, but my actions aren't." There are other moments when participants come up against limits to peer and academic goals as defined in the typology, and therefore depart from the outcome patterns described above. The four "Exceptional" participants in the study nearing the completion of high school in some sense do not succeed ultimately at levels that we might expect them to. This reflects how even with successful deployment of such complex strategies, the participants incurred costs in the form of outcomes for belonging among peers and in school because of marginalization. Nevertheless, their greater ability to achieve academically frees them up to devote time and attention to peers, illustrating that these two dimensions of belonging need not always be in conflict. Similarly, but on a less positive note, according to the second hand accounts of participants marginalization from peers is often accompanied by marginalization from school.

The next section on changing patterns over time further clarifies the efforts of participants to achieve a degree of stability as they are pulled toward ideal typical

350

responses to conditions they face in school. One of the main contributions of this dissertation is in fact to provide a better understanding of what takes place over the course of high school for students such as male Central American youths who face additional challenges. The changes that take place during high school call attention to complex shifts over the course of high school as participants try to maintain a sense of belonging while also focusing on the goal of school completion.

Findings on Changing Patterns Over Time

The relationship between peer engagement and academic engagement for each pattern reflects the strategic orientation of participants to a number of related goals. One of the main contributions of the dissertation is an understanding of how participants sought to balance peer-relation and academic goals in the context of common constraints and opportunities faced in schooling. Participants tended to follow relatively stable patterns of peer and academic engagement in high school that allowed for the development of the typology put forward here, but these were by no means completely static. The outcomes observed for participants illustrate both continuity and change as they strived for stable identities and relations with peers and teachers in school that would allow them to achieve a sense of belonging, complete school and in some cases achieve academically. This section examines common shifts between the ideal types of outcome patterns over the course of high school.

Central American male youths like other youths go through a period of transition to high school that depends on a number of variables such as previous experiences and schooling, school context and peer relations, and support or lack thereof at home. Participants display outcome patterns in schooling that reflect these wider conditions and variables, but also display more specific patterns that can be linked to their particular experiences as Central American youths in Toronto. Strategic orientation to schooling among participants is a reflection of a narrower range of options for achieving peer-relation and academic goals. Despite considerable movement among participants over the course of high school in relation to the outcome patterns highlighted above, the absence of extreme patterns is an important finding. A second important finding is that the similarity of outcome patterns among participants in early high school contrasts with more divergent patterns later in high school. A third finding is that participants experience an overall decline in academic achievement over the course of high school. A fourth finding is that over two thirds of participants (11/16) exited high school with a different outcome pattern than they had entered with, including complete reversals. For others, they went through shifts during high school before returning to the pattern they entered with. It was less common for participants to maintain stable friendship and schooling patterns over the course of high school.

Table 8.3 shows changes in the combined outcome patterns between the beginning and end of high school. Data for four participants are not included in the table. Two participants, Cesar and Juan, could only provide data on pattern of belonging upon

entering high school. Juan enters with an "Interested" orientation to high school and

Cesar with a "Just Pass" orientation. Two additional participants, Nestor and Emilio, fall

outside the table. Nestor enters school with a "Don't Care" attitude, then gradually

adopts an effort in passing ("Just Pass"), and finally exits high school as "Interested."

Emilio, on the other hand enters high school with the intent of just passing, but loses all

interest, no longer cares about school, and drops out. A common entry pattern among

seven participants of "Distracted" is contrasted against the fact that fully two thirds

(12/18) of participants start school as "Peer Dependent." This is followed by a

divergence in the middle of high school, a return to peer dependency for seven

participants, and an additional three participants that retreat to peer dependency from

"Popular" and "Connected" sense of belonging, for a total of ten. The divergence of

outcome patterns suggests that stability for participants in school is difficult to maintain.

Indeed, knowledge of the structural constraints facing male Central American youth

might lead us to conclude that interactions with peers and teachers within a wider

Canadian context would push male Central American youths into extreme stereotypical

responses, either towards disappointment, or to become overachievers. However, the

participants know from experience that the adoption of either of these extreme responses

does not lead to desirable outcomes with respect to finding a sense of belonging among

peers or completing school. This explains why participants invariable emphasized that

despite pressures, these extremes were to be avoided. In fact, common strategies among

participants tended to strive for balance and a middle ground in terms of both peer and

school belonging, and more importantly in the negotiation of these two important dimensions in relation to each other. This is not to suggest that such a middle ground or sense of balance was easily attained. In fact, tensions for participants were ever present, and they often conveyed in interviews that the task of gaining a sense of belonging among peers and in school was at times an impossible one for them. For example in one discussion Eduardo repeats the phrase twice that, "There's no such thing as friends."

Table 8.3: Changes in Combined Outcome Patterns Over Time

	CATEGORY AT END OF HIGH SCHOOL			
CATEGORY AT START OF HIGH SCHOOL		Discouraged	Distracted	Exceptional	TOTAL
	Discouraged	1	1	1	3
	Distracted	2	3	2	7
	Exceptional	1	2	1	4
	TOTAL	4	6	4	14

In addition to greater divergence of outcome patterns among participants over the course of high school, there are a number of reversals reflecting the difficult balance and ongoing tension between peer-related and academic goals. Overall, academic engagement among participants at the end of high school is slightly less than at the start of high school. Even more surprising perhaps is that this contrasts with a high degree of change for individual participants, with overall drops in academic engagement during high school for a number of participants (6/18), and increases in academic engagement

354

for almost as many (5/18). Only three participants maintain a steady level of academic engagement over the course of high school. These reversals suggest that the difficult balance between academic and peer-related goals in high school lead to changes over the course of high school that are hard to predict. Despite the difficulty of balancing peer-related and academic goals, it seems that this is the most effective strategy of school completion. However, the fairly limited academic achievement among participants means that most are college bound. The overall decline in outcomes consistent with academic achievement is also troubling, and one wonders whether in some respects, some male Central American youths are worse off on completion than when they started high school. Those that are marginalized and drop out are certainly worse off.

Findings on Teachers and Students

The study sought to explore the role of peers in school, teachers, and overall school environments in the formation of the outcome patterns examined above. The main findings from this analysis, reported in chapters 6 and 7, are as follows.

The primary immediate concerns among male Central American youths particularly at the beginning of high school are peer-related. These include building status among peers, constructing identity in relation to peers, and finally expanding peer networks. While all three dimensions of status, identity and networks are related, and therefore must be attended to continually over the course of high school, it seems that the initial period of high school (grade 9) is characterized by a preoccupation with establishing peer relations,

while latter years in high school are more geared towards maintenance of relations previously established, as we might expect. It is therefore not surprising to find that during this first year the demands of peers take precedence over academic demands. It is also significant, however, that at the beginning of high school only one participant in the study displayed a "Disappointed" pattern with associated rejection of selected school norms and practices as outlined above. Furthermore, the ability of participants to form and maintain a supportive friendship group had implications for academic achievement and school completion.

Participants emphasized how important friends were. Like other youths, male Central American youths seek friendships for stimulation, but friendships take on heightened importance for them because they are often one of few Hispanic students, and even fewer Central Americans. Friendships are therefore important for protection particularly in large schools where ethnic-exclusive friendship groups and related inter-ethnic conflict are more common. Friendship groups for male Central American youths are important more broadly as a means of finding a sense of belonging. Moreover, friendship groups are most advantageous when they are diverse and link to wider networks of reciprocity and trust. Friendships therefore provide access to useful information. They also provide access to less tangible but equally important links to wider youth culture. This not only provides a greater sense of belonging but allows relatively marginalized male youths to build and draw on social capital.

The findings suggest that teachers play a significant role in the patterns of peer-related and academic outcomes. In general, teachers play a mediating role in the experiences of male Central American youths in Toronto schools, and related outcomes. Participants in the study conveyed a sense of an overall schooling environment characterized by structural barriers. This was perpetuated through interactions with peers and the majority of teachers. Some participants, however, emphasized the importance of exceptional teachers that provided very different learning environments and wider support for their efforts to achieve academically and find a sense of belonging.

The strategies emphasized by participants while different in some respects, also emphasized a common overall pattern. This pattern was one that devoted considerable attention to expanding diverse peer networks, and balancing this in relation to selective academic engagement. The degree to which such strategies were successful, as reflected in the outcome patterns outlined above, was dependent on a range of factors including personal self-determination, overall school environment, peer dynamics in school, the size of school, the availability of exceptional teachers at key moments during high school, and other outside resources available to participants such as family support.

According to participants, challenges to overcome in the search for a sense of belonging among peers and the goal of completing secondary school were many. The most pervasive problem mentioned by participants is the role of stereotypes, and thus the need for ongoing, creative and strategic responses. Stereotypes of male Hispanic youth were overwhelmingly negative, and even those that could be construed as positive were

357

damaging for participants because stereotypes constructed them as different from the norm, denying both individuality and acceptance into mainstream society. Responses to stereotypes were somewhat individual, but all involved some engagement with them either to strategically adopt some aspects of a stereotypical representation and subvert it, or more frequently to define themselves in complete contrast to stereotypes. Stereotypes resulted in serious costs for them, not only because of the way that it constrained their responses, but also because of the damaging effects this had on their relations with others. Participants variably expressed anger, disappointment, frustration, resentment and fatigue about this situation.

Perhaps more interesting and more surprising than the difficulties that stereotypes posed for participants, were the creative and strategic responses among participants to the predicament they faced. Stereotypes largely closed off full acceptance into mainstream friendship groups. Forming exclusive ethnically-based friendship groups particularly when new to Canada, or upon entering a new school made sense on one level, but served to reinforce their perceived difference from the norm. However, denying acceptance of others with whom they shared some cultural attributes such as language closed off a potential source of support in a context where they had little to begin with. The response among participants was to diversify their friendship groups to the extent that variables outside their control allowed. This overall strategy involved specific strategies such as compartmentalization of friendship groups, and a qualitatively different orientation to peers that allowed for a sense of belonging in more than one friendship context. This

overall strategy allowed participants to build social capital among peers and specifically friendship groups and friendship networks, resulting in better outcomes both for belonging and achievement.

The response to stereotypes was also linked to complex identity-related concerns, strategies and goals. On one level, the desire to be accepted among peers involved a degree of conformity to normative masculinity for most participants. However, this was often part of a more complex negotiation of identity and social relations in the context of peers, school and family. Participants often held onto a deep attachment to family and cultural background even in situations among peers and in school when they were forced to distance themselves from these. This necessitated dual or multiple attachments and related identifications. To further facilitate the ability to hold multiple attachments simultaneously, participants developed fluidity of identity and the ability to shift identity contexts relatively seamlessly. Finally, the response to stereotypes and other related challenges that participants faced in gaining a sense of belonging in Canada, and the negotiation of peer relations and identity that this involved, allowed for a process of schooling characterized by change. Despite the structural disadvantages faced by participants in school, they did not become locked into negative patterns of peer association, but rather exercised agency within a context not of their choosing to better themselves and the society around them. A number of other background variables served to sensitize me to the way in which the strategies of belonging among male Central American youth may be linked to a wider incorporation process, and in particular those

359

that frame the relevance of families and communities for incorporation. While these are equally important, I leave them for a separate analysis elsewhere.

Discussion and Conclusions

This is the final section of the concluding chapter. It advances some overall conclusions, along with qualification on the limitations of the present study and suggestions on priorities for future research.

Overall Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the findings that address the main objectives of the study. The main objective was to explore and provide a better understanding of how male Central American youths in Toronto develop goals and strategies for completing secondary school and at the same time find a sense of belonging among peers. Over the course of research both of these dimensions remained important, but peer relations became the central concern and the starting point for examining schooling goals and strategies. The emphasis on youth subjectivities was an attempt to access the experiences, views and strategies of participants in the study, given that these tend to be marginalized both in mainstream society and within their own ethnic communities. In addition to advancing a number of conclusions with respect to youth subjectivities, the findings also lead to conclusions about the wider incorporation context. The subjective accounts of youths and implications for the wider incorporation context

lead finally to a number of questions for future research, examined in the last section of this concluding chapter.

The experiences of participants in schooling are somewhat varied, but they also share some commonalities. The most significant finding here is that all but one participant experienced difficulty in school in relation to peers and/or academics. Despite the negative experiences reported by the great majority of participants, all still maintained a strong determination to complete. Similarly, despite the many examples participants provided of conflictive peer relations, the great majority identified strongly with other youths in school. The strong identification of participants as "normal youths" reflects a strategic position from which to resist marginalization in schooling.

The views of participants on schooling in Toronto are shaped by their past experiences as well as their experiences and perceptions of the present. Central American youths hold strong values about the importance of education, and participants maintained these despite negative experiences in school that caused them to oppose and resist specific schooling practices. The overwhelming view of the school system in Toronto is that it contains a hidden context of achievement. This context is shaped by a variety of influences, but one particularly important influence is the way that wider stereotypes enter into and play out in school settings and various social relations in school. This was supported both by overall perceptions of schooling as well as by specific examples of discrimination usually expressed in the form of double standards. Most participants tended not to identify with most teachers or with school culture.

The strategies of participants reflect the experiences and views outlined above. Participants overwhelmingly distanced themselves from ethnic-exclusive friendship groups in school. The wider strategy for participants involved balancing a sense of belonging among peers with a strategic orientation to both peers and academics. The importance placed on balance arises from the fact that participants feel pushed toward extremes, neither of which led to satisfactory outcomes in relation to peers and schooling. By contrast, participants endeavored to resist such extreme orientations by adopting multiple, fluid and context-specific identities. This involved establishing, maintaining and expanding diverse peer networks. Peer-relation goals (such as short-term sense of belonging) were further balanced in relation to more long-term academic goals, somewhat open-ended family-related goals to "get a better life," and identity-related goals to "be someone." Most participants opted for the intermediate focus on simple school completion, rather than striving for top grades. The demands of socialization among peers therefore limited academic engagement, but for male Central American youths peer relations were crucial for the intermediate goal of school completion.

The specific findings outlined above on participants' experiences, views and strategies in schooling lead to two important conclusions on the wider incorporation context for male Central American youths in Canada. The findings suggest that there are processes during high school that limit and make it difficult for these youths to find a sense of belonging and achieve in school. The findings suggest further that these processes, and in particular the demands of social interaction and negotiating relations with peers and

teachers in school, are linked to the dampening of aspirations beyond high school. The possible implications of these wider conclusions are explored in relation to questions for future research below.

Qualifications on the Research

As this is a qualitative study with a relatively small sample, I make no claims about the generalizability of the findings to male Central American youths in Toronto as a whole. While the sample was small, the use of a number of key informants and considerable fieldwork led to a sample that varied according to country of origin, generational status and class background. The main contribution of the dissertation is the rich data obtained from male youths from this diverse community, providing new insights into a range of outcome patterns for academic achievement and peer relations in schooling. The lack of typically "Disappointed" youths in the sample is a limitation in the study. The most marginalized youths are hardest to access and hardest to interview. The focus on high school made this more difficult, since the most marginalized tend to leave school early, and may not return until much later, if at all. The lack of such individuals while clearly a limitation, should not affect the understanding advanced in this study with regard to other youths and other categories of outcome that were observed. Most importantly, lack of inclusion of the most marginalized youths did not prevent an analysis of marginalization, as this emerged as a main theme in the analysis of data.

Questions for future research

There are a number of questions about incorporation and achievement of Central American youths that require further research. Some of these questions were present prior to the study and simply could not be dealt with here. This study focused on male youth in Toronto, leaving aside potential differences for female Central American youths and variations across different locations in Canada. There are further comparative questions on the degree to which the outcome patterns for the population studied here resemble or differ from those of other marginalized, ethnic minority youths.

The study was also unable to sufficiently address a number of questions that emerged in the course of research due to lack of time and resource limitations. These questions relate broadly to maturation issues and issues of historical change. Lack of immediate post-secondary options for male Central American youths who focus primarily on school completion is quite evident from this study. But what are the longer-term implications of the patterns of relatively low academic achievement found in the study? Similarly, the study demonstrated quite clearly that the additional demands faced by male Central American youths in school and resulting narrow focus on completion, tend to dampen and/or delay longer-term aspirations. Many participants ended up in a kind of limbo because of the rough transition out of high school, including variously taking on dead-end jobs, returning to upgrade high school qualifications or in some cases to complete high school, and in other cases switching majors in college because of previous hasty decisions. Does the rough transition out of high school have longer-term consequences

for the ultimate goal of obtaining a better life, held by Central American parents and their children alike?

The study suggests that male Central American youths face additional challenges for achievement in the Canadian context not faced by dominant mainstream youths. The focus was on the influence of peers, teachers and overall schooling contexts for achievement outcomes. The study highlighted how participants drew on their own self-determination to achieve and find a sense of belonging in schools. More broadly, the study highlighted youth resiliency and the importance of social capital among peers in school for a range of goals. The focus was intended to shed light on the negotiation between peer-related goals and academic goals, whereas previous literature tended to focus on the negotiation between home and school (Adams et al 2006). What are the implications of the strategies highlighted here on the negotiation of values and goals between contexts at home and school? These strategies may be effective for youths who are part of families with at least a minimal level of financial and human capital, and assuming a minimal level of family support. But what if minimal family resources and support are not available? How then does this impact the strategies and outcomes examined here?

Finally, there are important issues of historical and social change that beg further research. One of the most significant of these is the question of how and to what degree are schools responding to the issues highlighted here with respect to disparities in schooling outcomes? A related question is the degree to which communities are

responding to the needs of youths. Interestingly, many participants in this study expressed an overwhelming desire to make a contribution to issues of social justice. This requires further study to examine whether this is something specific to Central American communities, to Hispanic communities in general, to refugee origin youths, or simply a desire among those who made it through school despite the additional challenges they faced to help others to do the same.

Bibliography

Abrego, L.J. (2006) "I Can't Go to College Because I Don't Have Papers": Incorporation

Patterns of Latino Undocumented Youth," Latino Studies, 4, 212-231.

Adams, L. et al (2006) "Introduction: Global Migration and the Education of Children"

in Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families, Leah D.

Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum

Associates.

Adams, L. et al (2006) "Teachers', Children's and Parents' Perspectives on Newly

Arrived Children's Adjustment to Elementary School" in Global Migration and

Education: Schools, Children, and Families, Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova

(eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Alba, R. et al (2003) Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and

Contemporary Immigration, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Alexander, C. (2004) "Imagining the Asian Gang: Ethnicity, Masculinity and Youth after

'the Riots'," Critical Social Policy, 24(4), 526-549.

Anisef, P. et al (2007) "Issues Confronting Newcomer Youth in Canada: Alternative

Models for a National Youth Host Program," CERIS Policy Matters, 29, 1-12.

Anisef, P. et al (2008) "Early School Leaving among Immigrants in Toronto Secondary

Schools," CERIS working paper no. 67, Michael J. Doucet (ed).

Back, L. (1996) <u>New Ethnicities and Urban Culture: Racisms and multiculture in young</u> <u>lives,</u> London: UCL Press.

Anisef, P. et al (2010) "Educational Pathways and Academic Performance of Youth of Immigrant Origin in Toronto," CERIS Working Paper No. 82, Judith K. Bernhard (series ed), CERIS- The Ontario Metropolis Centre, December.

Aydemir, A. et al (2008) "Intergenerational Educational Mobility Among the Children of Canadian Immigrants," <u>Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series,</u> Cat. # 110019M, No 316, Business and Labour Market Analysis Division, Statistics Canada.

Bannerji, H. (2000) <u>The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism,</u> <u>Nationalism and Gender,</u> Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

Barker, G. T. (2005) <u>Dying to Be Men: Youth, Masculinity and Social Exclusion,</u> Sage: Thousand Oaks.

Basch, L. et al (1994). <u>Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial</u> <u>Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States.</u> Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach.

Basok, T. (1990) "Welcome Some and Reject Others: Constraints and Interests Influencing Costa Rican Policies on Refugees," <u>International Migration Review,</u> 24(4), 722-747.

Beiser, M. et al (2005) "The New Canadian Children and Youth Study: Research to Fill a

Gap in Canada's Children's Agenda," Canadian Issues: Immigration and the

Intersections of Diversity, Spring, 21-24.

Bernhard, J. et al (1998) "Resisting Enculturation in Canadian Elementary Schools:

Culturally Contested Issues of Latin American Parents," CERIS Working Paper

Series.

Berry J. W. (2006) "Mutual attitudes among immigrants and ethnocultural groups in

Canada," International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 30(6), 719-734.

Berry, J.W. et al (2006) "Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity and Adaptation,"

Applied Psychology: An International Review, 55(3), 303-332.

Booth, J.A. et al (1993) Understanding Central America, 2nd ed, Westview Press: Oxford.

Bottinelli, M.C. (1990) Psychological Impacts of Exile: Salvadoran and Guatemalan

families in Mexico, Washington D.C. Hemispheric Migration Project, Center for

Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance, Georgetown University.

Boyd, M. (2002) "Educational Attainments of Immigrant Offspring: success or

segmented assimilation?" International Migration Review, 36(4), 1037.

Brinkley, I. (1998) "Underworked and Underpaid" in Rutherford, Jonathan (ed) (1998)

Young Britain: Politics, Pleasures and Predicaments, London: Lawrence and

Wishart.

Bryant, A. et al (2007) "Introduction: Grounded Theory Research: Methods and

Practices" in <u>The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory</u>, Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz (eds), Los Angeles: Sage.

Bulmer, M. (1984) "Introduction: Problems, Theories and Methods in Sociology – (How) Do They Interrelate?" in <u>Sociological Research Methods: An Introduction</u>, 2nd Edition, Martin Bulmer (ed), London: Macmillan.

Butler, J. (1990) <u>Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity</u>, New York and London: Routledge.

Bynner, J. M. (2002) "Changing Youth Transitions across Time: An Examination of Processes and Outcomes for Three Post-War Generations Born across the Interval 1946-1970" <u>International Sociological Association</u>, Brisbane, Australia AND Institute for Education, U London: UK.

Bynner, J. M. et al (2002) "Social Exclusion and the Transition from School to Work: The Case of Young People Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)," <u>Journal of Vocational Behaviour</u>, 60, 289-309.

Carranza, M.E. "Building resilience and resistance against racism and discrimination among Salvadorian female youth in Canada," <u>Child and Family Social Work</u>, 12, 390-398.

Carrillos, L. et al (1999) "Home and Heart: Identity Politics Among 'Latino' Youths in Toronto," Paper prepared for the panel on Latin American Immigrants and their Children in Toronto in the Conference on Immigrants and Immigration, organized

by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Toronto, August 13-
16.

Carter, P. L. (2001) "Between a 'Soft' and a 'Hard' Place: Gender Identity in the
Schooling and Job Behaviors of Low-Income Minority Youth," Sociological
Studies of Children and Youth, 8, 211-233.

Cavanagh, S. E. (2004) Social Context and Adolescent Well-Being: The Interplay of the
Friendship Group with the Family, Immigrant Status, and Romantic Activity
Dissertation Abstracts International, The Humanities and Social Sciences,
64(11), 4221-A, May.

Chan, K. (2003) "Inner Hybridity in the City: Toward a Critique of Multiculturalism,"
Global Economic Review, 32(2), 91-105.

Charmaz, K. (2006) Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through
Qualitative Analysis, Los Angeles: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2003) "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods" in
Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln
(eds), Second Edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cheung, C. et al (2004) "Developing Civic Consciousness through Social Engagement
among Hong Kong Youths," The Social Science Journal, 41(4), 651.

Clark-Kazak, C. (2011) "Age discrimination or age blindness in Canada's migration
policy and practice?," Paper presented at the Canadian Association for Refugees

and Forced Migrations Studies (CARFMS) Annual Conference, Forced

Migration: Human Rights Challenges, McGill University, Montreal, May 12-13.

Clarke, J. et al (2006) "Subcultures, cultures and class" in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson

(eds), Resistance through Rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain, London:

Routledge.

Cohen, P. (1999) "Strange Encounters: Adolescent Geographies of Risk and the Urban

Uncanny", Finding The Way Home Working Papers, Centre for New Ethnicities

Research (CNER), University of East London.

Collier, R. (2001) "'Rat Boys' and 'Little Angels': Corporeality, Male Youth and the

Bodies of (Dis)Order," in Contested Bodies, Richard Collier (ed), London:

Routledge, 21-35.

Connell, R.W. (1995) Masculinities, Polity Press.

Connolly, K. (2007) "Introduction to Part 2: Exploring Narrative Inquiry Practices,"

Qualitative Inquiry, 13, 450.

Darroch, G. D. (1979) "Another look at ethnicity, stratification and social mobility in

Canada," Canadian Journal of Sociology, 4(1).

de Block, L. (2006) "Talking Television Across Cultures: Negotiating Inclusion and

Exclusion" in Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families,

Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence

Erlbaum Associates.

372

de Rivero, J. (2001) "Reinventing community: the resettlement of Guatemalan refugees," Forced Migration Review, 11, 8-11.

Denzin, N.K. et al (2005) "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research" in The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N.K. et al (2003) "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research" in Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), Second Edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N.K. (1978) The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods, 2nd Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Deutsch, N.L. (2007) "From Island to Archipelago: Narratives of Relatedness in an Urban Youth Organization" in The Meaning of Others: Narrative Studies of Relationships, Reuthellen Josselson, Amia Lieblich and Dan P. McAdams (eds), Washington: American Psychological Association.

Dunn, S. (2000) "Keeping the Pain: Health, Belonging and Resilience Among Guatemalan Immigrant Men," Master's Thesis, York University: Toronto.

Ebbeck, M. et al (2006) "The Experiences of Third-Culture Children" in Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families, Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Epstein, D. et al (1998) "Schoolboy Frictions: feminism and 'failing' boys" in <u>Failing Boys?: Issues in Gender and Achievement,</u> Debbie Epstein, Jannette Elwood, Valerie Hey and Janet Maw (eds), Buckingham: Open University Press.

Fabian, H. et al (2006) "Children in Transition: Learning to Become Global Citizens" in <u>Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families,</u> Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Feliciano, C. et al (2005) "Gendered Paths: Educational and occupational expectations and outcomes among adult children of immigrants," <u>Ethnic and Racial Studies,</u> 28(6), November, 1087-1118.

Fernandez-Kelly, P. et al (2001) "Nicaraguans: Voices Lost, Voices Found" in <u>Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America,</u> Ruben G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes (eds), Berkeley: University of California Press.

Flores-Gonzales, N. (2002) <u>School Kids/Street Kids: Identity Development in Latino Students,</u> New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

Fong, E. et al (2006) "Patterns of Participation in Informal Social Activities among Chinese Immigrants in Toronto," <u>International Migration Review,</u> 40(2), 348-374.

Francis, B. et al (2005) <u>Reassessing Gender and Achievement: Questioning contemporary key debates,</u> New York: Routledge.

Frank, B. et al (2003) 'A Tangle of Trouble: boys, masculinity and schooling--future directions', Educational Review, 55(2), 119 - 133

Frosh, S. et al (2002) Young Masculinities: Understanding Boys in Contemporary Society, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Frost, L. (2003) "Doing Bodies Differently? Gender, Youth, Appearance and Damage," Journal of Youth Studies, 6(1), 53-70.

Garcia, M.C. (2006) Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, The United States, and Canada, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gardner, J.B. (2003) Living to Tell About It: Incarcerated Youth Coming of Age in Another America Dissertation Abstracts International, The Humanities and Social Sciences, 64(5), pp. 1594-A.

Geertz, C. (1973) The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays, New York: Basic Books.

Gill, R. et al (2005) "Body Projects and the Regulation of Normative Masculinity," Body & Society, 11(1), 37-62.

Glaser, B.G. (2007) "Doing Formal Theory" in The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory, Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz (eds), Los Angeles: Sage.

Glaser, B.G. (1992) Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis, Mill Valley CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B.G. et al (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research, Chicago: Aldine.

Gobin, D. (1999) "The Differential Incorporation of Racial Minority Youths: Indo-Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean and Punjabi Sikh Teens in Toronto and Surrounding Areas," Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Department of Sociology, University of Toronto.

Goldring, L. (2006) "Latin American Transnationalism in Canada: Does it Exist, What Forms Does it Take, and Where Is It Going?" in Transnational Identities and Practices in Canada, Vic Satzewich and Lloyd Wong (eds), Vancouver: UBC Press.

Goldring, L. et al (2006) "Toronto Hispano, Toronto Latino: Latin American Institutional Community Development in the Greater Toronto Area (1973-2005)," in Ruptures, Continuities and Re-Learning: The Political Participation of Latin Americans in Canada, Daniel Schugurensky and Jorge Giginiewicz, Toronto, Canada: OISE, Transformative Learning Centre.

Gosine, K. (2000) "Revisiting the notion of a 'recast' vertical mosaic in Canada: Does a post secondary education make a difference?" Canadian Ethnic Studies, 32(3), 89-104.

Guba, E.G. et al (2005) "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences" in The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gubrium, J.F. et al (1997) The New Language of Qualitative Method, New York: Oxford University Press.

Hall, S. (1996) "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference," in <u>Becoming National: A Reader</u>,

Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (eds), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 339-

349.

Hall, S. (ed) (1997) <u>Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices</u>,

London: Sage.

Hall, S. and T. Jefferson (eds) (2006) <u>Resistance through Rituals: Youth subcultures in</u>

<u>post-war Britain</u>, London: Routledge.

Haller, W. et al (2005) "The transnational dimensions of identity formation: Adult

children of immigrants in Miami," <u>Ethnic and Racial Studies</u>, 28 (6),

November, 1182- 1214.

Hayes, D. (2006) "Making music meaningful: Youth investment in popular music"

Dissertation at University of Toronto in Dissertation Abstracts International:

The Humanities and Social Sciences, 67(6), 2344.

Haywood, C. et al (1996) "Schooling Masculinities" in <u>Understanding Masculinities:</u>

<u>Social Relations and Cultural Arenas</u>, Mac an Ghaill, M. (ed) Buckingham: Open

University Press.

Herwartz –Emdem, L. et al (2006) "Acculturation and Educational Achievement of

Children With an Immigrant Background in German Primary Schools" in <u>Global</u>

<u>Migration Education: Schools, Children, and Families</u>, Leah D. Adams and Anna

Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Horst, C. et al (2006) "Bringing Multicultural Education into the Mainstream: Developing Schools for Minority and Majority Students" in Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families, Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hunter, A. G. et al (2006) "Loss, Survival, and Redemption: African American Male Youths' Reflections on Life Without Fathers, Manhood, and Coming of Age," Youth & Society, 37(4), 423-452.

Isajiw, W.W. (1997) "On the Concept and Theory of Social Incorporation" in Multiculturalism in North America and Europe, Wsevolod W. Isajiw and Tanuja Perera (eds), Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 79-102.

Jackson, D. (1998) "Breaking out of the binary trap: boys' underachievement, schooling and gender relations," in Failing Boys?: Issues in Gender and Achievement, Debbie Epstein, Jannette Elwood, Valerie Hey and Janet Maw (eds), Buckingham: Open University Press.

James, C.E. (2003) "Schooling, Basketball and US Scholarship Aspirations of Canadian Student Athletes," Race, Ethnicity and Education, 6(2), pp. 123-144.

Janesick, V.J. (2003) "The Choreography of Qualitative Research Design: Minuets, Improvisations, and Crystallization" in Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), Second Edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Jansen, G.G. et al (1998) "Honoring Voice and Visibility: Sensitive-Topic Research and Feminist Interpretive Inquiry," Affilia, 13(3), 289-311.

Josselson, R. et al (2007) "Introduction" in <u>The Meaning of Others: Narrative Studies of Relationships</u>, Reuthellen Josselson, Amia Lieblich and Dan P. McAdams (eds), Washington: American Psychological Association.

Josselson, R. et al (1993) "Introduction" in <u>The Narrative Study of Lives</u>, Ruthellen Josselson and Amia Lieblich (eds), Newbury Park: Sage.

Kalb, D. (2005) "From flows to violence: Politics and knowledge in the debates on globalization and empire," <u>Anthropological Theory</u>, 5(2), 176-204.

Karakayali, N. (2005) "Duality and Diversity in the Lives of Immigrant Children: Rethinking the 'Problem of the Second Generation' in Light of Immigrant Autobiographies," <u>Canadian Review of Sociology & Anthropology</u>, 42(3), 325-343.

Kehily, M. "Bodies in School: Young Men, Embodiment, and Heterosexual Masculinities," <u>Men and Masculinities</u>, 4(2), Open U: UK, 173-185.

Kemmis, S. et al (2003) "Participatory Action Research" in <u>Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry</u>, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), Second Edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Kirova, A. (2006) "Moving Childhoods: Young Children's Lived Experiences of Being Between Languages and Cultures" in <u>Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families</u>, Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Kirova, A. et al (2006) "Immigrant Children's Understandings of Nonverbal Peer

    Interactions Through the Development of Visual Narratives" in <u>Global Migration</u>

    <u>and Education: Schools, Children, and Families</u>, Leah D. Adams and Anna

    Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Knowles, V. (1997) <u>Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration</u>

    <u>Policy, 1540-1997</u>, Toronto: Dundurn Press.

Krahn, H. et al (2005) "Resilient Teenagers: Explaining the High Educational

    Aspirations of Visible Minority Youth in Canada," <u>Journal of International</u>

    <u>Migration and Integration</u>, 6(3,4), 405-434.

Kreager, D.A. (2007) "Killing time: Peers, violence, and the informal organization of

    Schools" Dissertation at University of Washington in Dissertation Abstracts

    International, A: The Humanities and Social Sciences, 67(7), 2761.

Kulig, J.C. (1998) "Family Life among El Salvadorans, Guatemalans and Nicaraguans: A

    Comparative Study," <u>Journal of Comparative Family Studies</u>, 29(3), 469-479.

Kunz, J. L. (2006) "A Second Look at Second Generation," <u>Canadian Diversity</u>,

    5(1),123-126.

Landale, N.S. et al (2006) "Hispanic Families in the United States: Family Structure and

    Process in an Era of Family Change" in <u>Hispanics and the Future of America</u>,

    Marta Tienda and Faith Mitchell (eds), The National Academies Press,

    Washington, D.C.

Landolt, P. et al (1999) "From Hermano Lejano to Hermano Mayor: the dialectics of

Salvadoran transnationalism," Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22(2), 290-315.

Landolt, P. (2007) "The Institutional Landscapes of Salvadoran Refugee Migration:

Transnational and Local Views from Los Angeles and Toronto" in Organizing the

Transnational: The Experience of Asian, Caribbean and Latin American Migrants

in Canada, Luin Goldring and Sailaja V. Krishnamurti (eds), University of British

Columbia Press.

Landolt, P. (2008) "The Transnational Geographies of Immigrant Politics: Insights from

a Comparative Study of Migrant Grassroots Organizing," The Sociological

Quarterly, 49, 53-77.

Le Espiritu, Y. et al (2001) "The Paradox of Assimilation: Children of Filipino

Immigrants in San Diego, in Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America,

Ruben G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes (eds), Berkeley: University of

California Press.

Leslie, L. A. et al (1989) "A Demographic Profile of Recent Central American

Immigrants: Clinical and Service Implications," Hispanic Journal of Behavioral

Sciences, 11(4), November, 315-329.

Levitt, P and M.C. Waters (eds) (2002) The Changing Face of Home: The Transnational

Lives of the Second Generation, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Li, G. (2006) "Crossing Cultural Borders in the United States: A Case Study of a

Sudanese Refugee Family's Experiences With Urban Schooling" in Global

Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families, Leah D. Adams and

Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Li, P. (2003) "Deconstructing Canada's Discourse of Immigrant Integration," Journal of

International Migration and Integration, 4(3), summer, 315-333.

Lieblich, A. (2006) "Vicisitudes: A Study, a Book, a Play: Lessons From the Work of a

Narrative Scholar," Qualitative Inquiry, 12(1), 60-80.

Lincoln,Y.S. et al (1985) Naturalistic Inquiry, Beverly Hills, California: Sage.

Lopez, N. (2000) Race-Gender Matters: Schooling among Second-Generation

Dominicans, West Indians and Haitians in New York City" Dissertation, City

U: New York, in Dissertation Abstracts International, The Humanities and

Social Sciences, 60(9), 3315A-3316A.

Lopez, N. (2002) "Race-Gender Experiences and Schooling: second-generation

Dominican, West Indian, and Haitian youth in New York City," Race Ethnicity

and Education, 5(1), Taylor and Francis.

Lundquist, J. et al (2005) "Politics or Economics? International Migration during the

Nicaraguan Contra War," Journal of Latin American Studies, 37(1), 29-53.

Martino, W. et al (2003) "Boys, Schooling and Masculinities: interrogating the 'Right'

way to educate boys," Educational Review, 55(2), 99 –117.

Mac an Ghaill, M. (ed) (1996) Understanding Masculinities: Social Relations and

Cultural Arenas, Buckingham: Open University Press.

McCormack, C. (2004) "Storying Stories: A Narrative Approach to In-Depth Interview

Conversations," International Journal of Social Research Methods, 7(3), 219-236.

McDowell, L. (2000) "Learning to Serve? Employment Aspirations and Attitudes of

Young Working-Class Men in an Era of Labour Market Restructuring,"

Gender, Place and Culture, 7(4), 389-416.

McDowell, L. (2003) Redundant Masculinities? Employment Change and White

Working Class Youth, Malden, MA: Blackwell.

McDowell, L. (2003A) "Masculine Identities and Low-Paid Work: Young Men in Urban

Labour Markets," International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 27(4),

December, 828-848.

Mclaren, P. (2000) "Introduction: Democracy Sabotaged by Democracy: Immigration

under Neoliberalism" in Immigrant Voices: In Search of Educational Equity,

Enrique T. Trueba and Lilia I Bartolome (eds), Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Mills, C.W. (1959) The Sociological Imagination, New York: Oxford University Press.

Munsch, C. (2005) "How Engagement Reproduces Social Exclusion,"

Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen, 18(3), 108.

Nayak, A. (2003) "Boyz to Men': masculinities, schooling and labour transitions in de-

industrial times', Educational Review, 55(2), 147 – 159.

Nayak, A. (2006) "Displaced Masculinities: Chavs, Youth and Class in the Post-

Industrial City," Sociology, 40(5), 813-831.

Nolin, C. (2004) "Spatializing the Immobility of Guatemalan Transnationalism," Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 29(57-8), 267-288.

Nolin Hanlon, C. et al (2000) "Gendered Spaces of Terror and Assault: The Testimonio of REMHI and the Commission for Historical Clarification," Gender, Place and Culture, 7(3), Research Library Core, 265-286.

North, L. L. and A.B. Simmons (eds) (1999) Journeys of fear: refugee return and national transformation in Guatemala, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

North, L. and CAPA (1990) Between War and Peace in Central America: Choices for Canada, Toronto: Between the Lines.

Nygren, A. (2003) "Violent Conflicts and Threatened Lives: Nicaraguan Experiences of Wartime Displacement and Postwar Distress," Journal of Latin American Studies, 35(2), 367-393.

O'Dogherty, L. (1989) Central Americans in Mexico City: Uprooted and Silenced, Washington D.C. Hemispheric Migration Project, Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance, Georgetown University.

Pacheco, G. (1989) Nicaraguan Refugees in Costa Rica: adjustment to camp life, Washington D.C. Hemispheric Migration Project, Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance, Georgetown University.

Palameta, B. (2007) "Economic integration of immigrants' children," Perspectives on Labour and Income, 8(10), October.

Pessach-Ramati, D. et al (2007) "Vicissitudes of 'Holding' in the Immigration Experience: The Case of Ethiopian Israeli Adolescents" in The Meaning of Others: Narrative Studies of Relationships, Reuthellen Josselson, Amia Lieblich and Dan P. McAdams (eds), Washington: American Psychological Association.

Plaza, D. (2006) "The Construction of a Segmented Hybrid Identity Among One-and-a-Half-Generation and Second-Generation Indo-Caribbean and African Caribbean Canadians," Identity: International Journal of Theory and Research, 6(3), 207-229.

Porter, J. (1965) The Vertical Mosaic: an analysis of social class and power in Canada, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Portes, A. et al (1993) "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 530, 74-96.

Portes, A. (ed) (1995) The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Portes, A. et al (1999) "The Study of Transnationalism: pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field," Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22(2), 217-237.

Portes, A. et al (2001) Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation, Berkeley, University of California Press.

Portes, A. et al (2008) "No Margin for Error: Educational and Occupational Achievement among Disadvantaged Children of Immigrants," The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 620(12), 12-36.

Portes, A. et al (2008A) Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS), 1991-2006 [Computer file]. ICPSR20520-v1. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor]. Doi: 10.3886/ICPSR20520.v1. http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/DSDR/studies/20520/detail, accessed on 11/12/30.

Portes, A. (2009) "Migration and Development: Reconciling opposite views" Ethnic and Racial Relations, 32(1), January, 5-22.

Poteet, M. (2002) "Cultural Identity and Identity Performance Among Latin American Youths in Toronto" Master's Thesis, Toronto: York University.

Poteet, M. (2009) Transforming Identities: Latin American Youths and Culture in Toronto, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing.

Raby, R. (2005) "Polite, Well-dressed and on Time: Secondary School Conduct Codes and the Production of Docile Citizens," The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, Vol. 42(1), Research Library, 71.

Rajiva, M. (2006) "Racing through Adolescence: Becoming and Belonging in the Narratives of Second Generation South Asian Girls" Dissertation, Carleton University: Ottawa, in Dissertation Abstracts International, The Humanities and Social Sciences, 66(9), 3473A-3474A.

Rajiva, M. (2006A) "Brown Girls, White Worlds: Adolescence and the Making of Racialized Selves," CRSA/RCSA, 43(2), 165-183.

Rajiva, M. (2005) "Bridging the Generation Gap: Exploring the Differences between Immigrant Parents and their Canadian-Born Children," Canadian Issues: Immigration and the Intersections of Diversity, Spring, 25-28.

Ramirez, M.A. (1989) Refugee Policy Challenges : the case of Nicaraguans in Costa Rica, Washington D.C. Hemispheric Migration Project, Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance, Georgetown University.

Rao, N. et al (2006) "Listening to Children: Voices of Newly Arrived Immigrants From the Chinese Mainland to Hong Kong" in Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families, Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Reitz, J.G. et al (2004) "Institutional Change and Emerging Cohorts of the New Immigrant Second Generation: Implications for the Integration of Racial Minorities in Canada," Journal of International Migration and Integration, 5(4), 385.

Reitz, J.G. et al (2007) "Racial Inequality, Social Cohesion and Policy Issues," in Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada, Keith Banting, Thomas J. Courchene and F. Leslie Seidle (eds), Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 489-546.

Richmond, A.H. (1994) Global Apartheid: Refugees, Racism and the New World Order, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Ripton, J. (2006) "Export Agriculture and Agrarian Crisis: Salvadoran Peasants and the Global Market," Latin American Perspectives, 33(6), 101-135.

Rodriguez, A. P. (2005) "'Departamento 15': Cultural Narratives of Salvadoran Transnational Migration," Latino Studies, 3(1), 19-41.

Roer-Strier, D. et al (2006) "The Role of Home and School in the Socialization of Immigrant Children in Israel: Fathers' Views" in Global Migration and Education: Schools, Children, and Families, Leah D. Adams and Anna Kirova (eds), Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rosenthal, G. (1993) "Reconstruction of Life Stories" in The Narrative Study of Lives, Ruthellen Josselson and Amia Lieblich (eds), Newbury Park: Sage.

Rowen, N. et al (2006) "Chapter 14: Support That Matters: A Community-Based Response to the Challenge of Raising the Academic Achievement of Economically Vulnerable Youth," Inclusion in Urban Educational Environments: Addressing Issues of Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice, 277-299.

Rumbaut, R.G. et al (2001) "Introduction" in Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America, Rubén G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes (eds), Berkeley: University of California Press,1-20.

Rutherford, J. (1992) Men's Silences: Predicaments in Masculinity, London: Routledge.

Rutherford, J. (ed) (1998) Young Britain: Politics, Pleasures and Predicaments, London:

Lawrence and Wishart.

Sassen, S. (2001) <u>The Global City</u>, 2nd edition, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Satzewich, V. and L. Wong (eds) (2006) <u>Transnational Identities and Practices in Canada</u>, Vancouver: UBC Press.

Satzewich, V. et al (2010) '<u>Race' and Ethnicity in Canada: A Critical Introduction</u>, 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schneider, B. et al (2006) "Barriers to Educational Opportunities for Hispanics in the United States" in <u>Hispanics and the Future of America</u>, Marta Tienda and Faith Mitchell (eds), National Academics Press: Washington.

Sefa Dei, G.J. (2008) "Schooling as Community: Race, Schooling, and the Education of African Youth," <u>Journal of Black Studies</u>, 38(3), January, 346-366.

Sewell, T. (1997) <u>Black Masculinities and Schooling: How Black boys survive modern schooling</u>, Staffordshire: Trentham Books.

Siemiatycki, M. et al (2001) "To Build on Hope: Overcoming the Challenges Facing Newcomer Youth at Risk in Ontario," <u>Joint Center of Excellence in Research on Immigration and Settlement</u> – Toronto.

Simmons, A.B. (2010) <u>Immigration and Canada: Global and Transnational Perspectives</u>, Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.

Simmons, A.B. et al (2004) "The Caribbean Community in Canada" in <u>Communities in Canada: Emergent Identities, Practices and Issues</u>, Vic Satzwich and Lloyd Wong (eds), UBC Press.

Simmons A. B. (2004) "Combining Census Tabulations with Interview Data: An

Exploratory Study of Gendered Schooling Among Latino Youth." Paper presented

at the "Gender and Work: Knowledge Production in Practice" conference, October

1-2, York University, North York, Ontario, Canada.

Simmons, A. B. (1999) "Economic Integration and Designer Immigrants: Canadian

Policy in the 1990's," in Max Castro (ed), Free Markets, Open Societies, Closed

Borders? University of Miami: North South Centre Press, 53-69.

Sinclair, R. L. (2003) "Male Peer Support and Male-to-Female Dating Abuse Committed

by Socially Displaced Male Youth: An Exploratory Study," Dissertation,

Carleton U in Dissertation Abstracts International, A: The Humanities and

Social Sciences, 64(5), 1854-A.

Smith, A. et al (2005) "'Thinking About Makin' It': Black Canadian Students' Beliefs

Regarding Education and Academic Achievement," Journal of Youth and

Adolescence, 34(4), 347-359.

Smith, J. (2007) "'Ye've got to 'ave balls to play this game sir'! Boys, peers and fears: the

negative influence of school-based 'cultural accomplices' in constructing

hegemonic masculinities," Gender and Education, 19(2), 179-198.

Smith, R.C. (2002) "Life Course, Generation, and Social Location as Factors Shaping

Second-Generation Transnational Life" in The Changing Face of Home, Levitt, P

and Mary C. Waters (eds) New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 145-167.

Stafseng, O. (2002) "On the Problem of Youth in Educational Research, and the Problem

of Education in Youth Research: Historical Controversies and Actual Agendas"

International Sociological Association, Brisbane, Australia, AND Dept

Education, U Oslo: Norway.

Statistics Canada (2002) "School Performance of Children from Immigrant Families,"

update on Family and Labour Studies, Catalogue # 89-001-XIE, April.

Strauss, A. et al (1998) Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for

Developing Grounded Theory, Second Edition, London: Sage.

Suarez-Orozco, M. (1989) Central American Refugees and U.S. High Schools: A

Psychosocial Study of Motivation and Achievement, Stanford: Stanford

University Press.

Suarez-Orozco, C. et al (1995) Transformations: Immigration, Family Life, and

Achievement Motivation Among Latino Adolescents, Stanford: Stanford

University Press.

Suarez-Orozco, M. et al (2000) "Some Conceptual Considerations in the Interdisciplinary

Study of Immigrant Children" in Immigrant Voices: In Search of Educational

Equity, Enrique T. Trueba and Lilia I Bartolome (eds), Lanham: Rowman and

Littlefield.

Suarez-Orozco, C. et al (2001) Children of Immigration, Cambridge: Harvard University

Press.

Taylor, A. (2005) "It's For the Rest of Your Life: The Pragmatics of Youth Career

    Decision Making," Youth & Society, 36(4), 471-503.

Tedlock, B. (2003) "Ethnography and Ethnographic Representation" in Strategies of

    Qualitative Inquiry, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), Second

    Edition, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Thiessen, V. et al (2002) "The Social Distribution of Youth's Images of Work," The

    Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 39(1), 49-78.

Tienda, M. et al (2006) " Introduction: E Pluribus or E Pluribus Unum?" in Hispanics

    and the Future of America, Marta Tienda and Faith Mitchell (eds), Washington, D.C.:

    The National Academies Press.

Titus, J. (2004) "Boy Trouble: Rhetorical Framing of Boys' Underachievement,"

    Discourse, 25(2), 145-169.

Tolonen, T. (2004) "'Everyone at School Thinks I Am a Nerd' -- Schoolboys' Fights and

    Ambivalence about Masculinities," Socialna pedagogika, 8(4), 437-456.

Totten, M. (2003) "Girlfriend Abuse as a Form of Masculinity Construction among

    Violent, Marginal Male Youth," Men and Masculinities, 6(1), 70-92.

Trueba, E.T. et al (2000) "Critical Ethnography for the Study of Immigrants" in

    Immigrant Voices: In Search of Educational Equity, Enrique T. Trueba and Lilia I

    Bartolome (eds), Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Valenzuela, A. (1999) Subtractive Schooling: U.S. – Mexican Youth and the Politics of

    Caring, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Welsh, S. (2004) "Work and Occupations" in New Society: Sociology for the 21st

Century, Fourth Edition, Robert J. Brym (ed), University of Toronto: Thomson

Nelson, 330-358.

Wilkinson, L. (2002) "Factors Influencing the Academic Success of Refugee Youth,"

Journal of Youth Studies, 5(2), 173-193.

Wilkinson, L. (2008) "Labor Market Transitions of Immigrant-Born, Refugee-Born and

Canadian-Born Youth," Canadian Review of Sociology, 5(2), 151-176.

Willis, P.E. (1977) Learning to Labour: How working class kids get working class jobs,

Westmead: Saxon House.

Whyte, W.F. (ed) (1991) Participatory Action Research, Newbury Park, California: Sage

Publications.

Williamson, H. (2002) "Making the Best of Things: A Biographical Life Course Analysis

of Risk and Resilience at the Local Level," International Sociological

Association, Brisbane, Australia AND School Social Sciences, U Wales:

Cardiff.

Wilmott, P. (1966) Adolescent Boys of East London, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Ltd.

Wyn, J. et al (2004) "Youth Research in Australia and New Zealand," Research on

Youth and Youth Culture, 12(3), 271-289.

Yates, L. (1997) "Gender Equity and the Boys Debate: What sort of challenge is it?"

British Journal of Sociology of Education, Research Library, 18(3), September, 337.

Yeo, E.J. (2004) "'The Boy Is the Father of the Man': Moral Panic over Working-Class Youth, 1850 to the Present," Labour History Review, 69(2), 185-199.

Yon, D.A. (2000) Elusive Culture: Schooling, Race, and Identity in Global Times, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Young, M.Y. (2001) "Moderators of Stress in Salvadoran Refugees: The Role of Social and Personal Resources," International Migration Review, 35(3), 840-869.

Zhou, M. et al (1994) "Social capital and the adaptation of the second generation: The case of Vietnamese youth in New Orleans," The International Migration Review, 28(4), 821.

Zhou, M. (2001) "Straddling Different Worlds: The Acculturation of Vietnamese Refugee Children," in Ethnicities: Children of Immigrants in America, Ruben G. Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes (eds), Berkeley: University of California Press.

APPENDIX A: Interview Schedule

Introduction

    (Sign consent forms, ask participant to fill out Questionnaire of background)

    I'm interested in your thoughts and feelings about school and the role of friends, teachers and your family. I'm also interested in any plans or ideas you have about your future. I'll start us off with some questions. I'd like you to feel free throughout the interview to tell me what you think is most important.

Participant's Overall Impressions and Experience of School

1a. Can you start by telling me a little about your school? What is it like? Do you like school? Hate it?	Get a sense of participant's views, overall experience at school. Get a sense of the school and participant's feelings about it.
1b. Do you find school interesting? What is interesting? OR Why not?	Level of intellectual stimulation at school.
1c. Do you feel that school is important? Why? OR Why not?	Values about schooling.
1d. Do you feel you are learning anything useful at school? Will it be useful later on in life?	Strategic, practical dimension of school. Value of schooling. Open up aspirations and expectations.
1e. What was middle school like in relation to high school? What was it like going from middle school to high school?	Comparing high school to middle school. Transition from middle school to high school. Digging deeper on significance of grade 9.
1f. Do you look forward to going to school? Why? OR Why not?	Positive or negative experience at school? Digging deeper on stimulation at school.
1g. What do you like most about school? Least about school?	Extreme/representative examples of feelings about school.

Views about Teachers and Classes

2a. What are the teachers like at your school?	Overall orientation to teachers.
2b. Is there a teacher at school that has had a big impact on you? What is it about this teacher that made such an impact on you?	Significant teachers that shaped schooling. Repeat for positive and negative impressions of particular teachers.
2d. Does this teacher pay attention to you? As much as other students? More than others? Less than others? Why do you think that is?	Follow up on fairness, double-standards, special attention both positive and negative.
2c. Does this teacher notice when you're trying and when you're not trying?	Follow up on significance of "trying" in context of student-teacher relationship.
2e. Does this teacher encourage you to participate in class? To explore your own interests? How? OR Why do you think he/she	Further on impressions of teachers in terms of fairness, caring, support for genuine learning.

doesn't?	
2f. Would you go to this teacher with a personal problem?	Perception of teacher caring, trust.
2g. Do you feel you're being challenged enough at school? Has a teacher ever challenged you personally in any way?	Level of stimulation in class. Follow-up on special teachers that challenge participant to do better.
2h. Have you taken ESL Classes? Can you tell me what that was like? Can you tell me a little (more) about the approach of the ESL teacher?	Digging deeper about negative experience with ESL, lack of challenge, lack of stimulation, feelings of being segregated. Variations in teaching approach?
2i. Do you like any of your courses at school? Why? OR Why not? If your courses don't interest you, what does? Are you involved in any after-school activities? What do you like to do after school?	What participants are interested in. Open up participation and interest to access values about achievement. Segue to talking about friends.

Friends and Peer Groups

3a. Can you tell me what it's like to hang around at your school? What do you do? What matters to you and your friends?	Getting a sense of participant's orientation to peer groups, popularity, tendency towards isolation, etc. Group interests.
3b. Do people always hang around in the same groups at school? What are the groups based on? Do you have many friends at school? Do you hang out with the same group of friends every day? What is your group like?	Depending on last answer- exploring popularity, isolation further. Peer groups, belonging, collective identity.
3c. Do you have many friends outside school? Are they different in any way from your school friends?	Exploring community in relation to school and peer groups.
3d. What do your friends mean to you?	Significance of friends.
3e. What influence do your friends have on your life? On how much you try at school? On what you do after school? Do you have similar interests? What are they? Do you feel accepted by your friends?	Relationship between friends and achievement. Shared interests to open up friends and aspirations. Exploring "fitting in" at school.
3f. Are there many conflicts at your school, between students? What are they about? Have you been involved in any of these? How do they get resolved?	Peer relations, proving yourself, conflict and conflict resolution, maintaining and building status, defining identity.
Do your teachers understand what you and your friends are all about?	Exploring tension between peer affiliation and academic engagement with teachers.

Parents and Family

4a. What was it like for (you and) your family when you/they arrived? Did they find jobs easily? What kind of work? And now? What about before "back home?"	Class background, skills, and resources of parents.

4b. Do you know how far your parents went with their education?	Parents' educational attainment.
4c. Do your parents speak English now? What about when they first arrived?	Parents' English language proficiency.
4d. What are your parents'/mother's expectations of you in school? (Does your father have different expectations than your mother?) Why do you think they have such high(/low) expectations?	Parents' general orientation to participants schooling (participant's perception). Differences between parents (for 2 parent families). Difference between single and dual parent families throughout.
4e. Do your parents know how you're doing in school? Do they ask you about school on a regular basis? (Does one of your parents ask more than the other?)	Digging deeper on communication between parents and children regarding schooling. Differences between parents (for 2 parent families).
4f. Do your parents ask to see what you're doing in school? Do they offer to help you out in any way with school? (Does one parent help out more than the other?)	Digging deeper on parent involvement in participant's schooling. Differences between parents (for 2 parent families).
4g. Does your older brother (or sister) help you out in any way with school? (For instance giving advice, homework, problems at school with other kids?) Have you learned anything from him/her about school? Do you get help with school from anyone else?	Only for those with older siblings, finer intergenerational distinctions in orientation to schooling, aspirations, expectations, in particular influence of older siblings' experience on younger brothers' views and experience.
4h. Do you feel that your parents understand what school is like for you? (Does one parent seem to understand more than the other?).	Parent-child understanding of school system in Canada – significance for short term goals and long term aspirations. Differences between parents (for 2 parent families).
4i. Do your parents encourage you to go after what you want in life? (Does one parent encourage you more than the other? Or encourage you in a different way? Or a different direction?) How does that affect you?	Relationship between parents' expectations/aspirations of son and son's aspirations, expectations for self. Differences between parents (for 2 parent families).

Overall Views on Long-term Achievement (Aspirations)

5. Are you planning on finishing school? How confident are you that you will finish school?	Aspirations and expectations for finishing school.
5a. What would you like to do after you finish school? If you don't finish, what would you do?	Opening up discussion on aspirations beyond finishing school, or after dropping out.
5b. How will you go about doing this/these?	Plan for getting a better life.
5c. How confident are you that you will achieve this/these goal(s)?	Expectations for achievement.
5d. Is there anything that you feel might keep you from achieving this/these goal(s)? Or make	Digging deeper on expectations.

it harder to achieve?	
5e. Will school help you to achieve these goals? (If yes,) In what way? (If not) Why not?	Relationship between achievement and school.
5f. What else is helping you or will help you to achieve this/these goal(s)?	Relationship between expectations, aspirations and achievement for getting a better life.
5g. What do your parents think of this/these goal(s)?	Parent-child differences in views of achievement. Parent child negotiation of getting a better life.
5h. What would you consider to be the ultimate success for you? Would your parents agree? Would one parent agree more than the other? (If they disagree) What would they consider to be the ultimate success for you? How do you feel about that? Is that also something you'd like for yourself?	Digging deeper on intergenerational views of aspirations and getting a better life. Differences between parents (for 2 parent families). Different dynamic for single parent families? Identity/belonging in relation to achievement: Being somebody and doing something.

Is there anything else you wanted to say before we end the interview?

Thank you very much for your participation!

APPENDIX B: Potential Issues of Incorporation and Achievement

School Issues

Quality of Teaching
- teachers' expectations – amount and difficulty of homework
- teachers' level of patience
- teachers' knowledge of student's cultural background
- teachers' level of interest in student's background
- teachers' relationships with student's parents
- teachers' workload and availability

Resources of School

1. Curriculum Resources
- textbooks, labs, sports equipment, etc
- ESL classes
- tutoring services
- assessment and placement services

398

2. Counseling Services

- academic counseling
- personal counseling
- peer support services

3. Extracurricular Activities

- clubs
- sports
- social events
- student committees

Conditions at School

- peer relations
- level of safety
- availability of illegal drugs
- racism, discrimination, anti-immigrant sentiment
- school environment and subcultures
- relationship of school to community
- gender relations and differences
- underperforming at school
- bullying and fighting
- opportunities for hanging out
- acceptance and opportunities for bilingualism

Home Issues

Family
- family structure
- family cohesion and support
- home environment – learning, nutrition, etc.
- parent – child relations and conflict
- sibling relations
- gender relations in the home
- changes in family life
- changes in family roles
- prospects for leaving home and independence

Parents

- relationship between parents and educators
- father's versus mother's influence on children's education
- parents' level of educational attainment
- parental literacy in English
- socio-economic status of family – employment, income (human capital)
- parents' expectations

Community

- social capital and networks
- family networks and transnationalism
- cultural capital
- contact with home country
- culture shock versus degree of continuity with past
- retention of home language and culture
- anxiety about friends and family left behind
- cultural identity
- community support
- early fatherhood
- neighborhood safety

Individual Factors

Background

- national origin
- previous schooling
- previous memories and trauma
- previous achievements and failure
- migration circumstances and legal status
- childhood experiences
- age and age at arrival

Abilities (Agency, Competence and Knowledge)

- literacy (home language, dominant language(s) and bilingualism)
- intellectual capacity
- academic, social and cultural competencies

- self expression and style
- resiliency
- knowledge of strategy
- artistic ability and creativity
- physical abilities (sports, dance, tactile)

Physical and Psychological Health

- nutrition and attention to health
- self-esteem
- loneliness and isolation
- anxiety about performance, achievement, expectations
- sense of inferiority and fear
- sense of belonging and identity
- confidence
- depressive affect
- personal adjustment

Behaviors

- shyness and aggressiveness
- substance abuse
- anti-social behavior and conflict with the law
- sexual behavior
- hanging out and socializing

Aspirations

- personal expectations
- ambition
- self-determination

Barriers and Opportunities

- occupational opportunities
- legal immigration status
- added responsibility at home
- new language and culture
- consciousness raising and solidarity

Societal Factors

Societal Barriers and Opportunities

- length of time in Canada
- immigration policy framework
- occupational opportunities
- structural barriers
- returns on education
- anti-immigrant sentiment in general public
- discrimination and racism in general public
- labeling of ethnic minorities
- legal status

Culture and Communication

- misinterpretation of cultural behavior
- differences in communication styles
- maintenance of culture of origin and transnationalism
- acculturation framework (multiculturalism)
- role of media

Social Divisions and Conflict

- "race" and ethnic relations
- gender relations
- racialization
- activism, protest and rebellion
- social stratification
- intergenerational conflict

Context of Transition (Continuity and Change)

- creation of new meanings through play
- integration of experiences across time and space
- migration as a rite of passage
- dominant incorporation framework
- potential for growth and change

402

APPENDIX C: Initial Gaps - Specific

1. The way in which youth from different ethnic backgrounds perceive class, gender and ethnic divisions in the context of their incorporation in Canadian schools.

2. How youth in Canada from different ethnic backgrounds perceive and articulate their own achievements or lack thereof in the context of their incorporation.

3. Perceptions of racialization within the incorporation process in Canada and how it may be linked to social inequality and achievement in schools.

4. How perceptions of the incorporation process may be implicated in notions of collective identity for different generations of immigrants in Canada.

5. Implications of the changing global context and related migration context for incorporation of different ethnic minority youth in different contexts.

6. The relationship between incorporation and social inequality for different ethnic minority youth in Canadian schools.

APPENDIX D: Initial Gaps – General

1. Social incorporation in diverse societies.

2. The role of schools and education in the incorporation process.

3. Differences between Canadian and United States immigrant incorporation.

4. The specificity of immigrant youth incorporation as compared to adults.

5. The influence of contemporary globalization on incorporation of youth.

6. The long-term impacts of immigration and settlement on immigrants.

APPENDIX E: Research, Sensitizing and Theoretical Questions

Research Questions
1. What are the perceptions of Central American youth in the context of their incorporation into Toronto schools?
2. How are perceptions of structural factors and interactional factors linked within the incorporation process for Central American male youth in Canada?
3. How are perceptions of the incorporation process implicated in identity formation and aspirations in Canada for Central American male youth?
Sensitizing Questions
How do Central American male youth perceive schools in Toronto?
How do Central American male youth feel about their overall performance and achievement in Toronto schools?
How do Central American youth perceive the schooling achievement and aspirations of different non-Central American youth, including mainstream "white" Canadians as well as other ethnic-minority youth in Canada?
How do Central American youth account for differences in achievement between themselves and other youth in Toronto schools?
How do Central American male youth in Toronto view the involvement of teachers in their schooling and overall incorporation in schools?
How do Central American male youth relate their perceptions of achievement to their perceptions of interaction with significant others, such as friends, counselors, teachers and parents?
How do Central American origin male youth in Toronto schools relate their perceptions of achievement and inequality to subjective identity and aspirations?
How do Central American youth view their aspirations and achievement in comparison to their parents' level of schooling and schooling expectations of their children?
What aspects of incorporation in schooling do male Central American youth in Toronto find most challenging? How do they account for these challenges and what do they suggest as responses?
Theoretical Questions
How do Central American youth negotiate their identities in relation to their perceptions of social inequality, agency, and achievement in the context of their incorporation into Toronto schools?
How do Central American male youth perceive transnational practices and trends in the context of their incorporation into Toronto schools?
How do Central American male youth perceive marginalization within the school system?
To what and with whom, do Central American male youth try to incorporate themselves within the schooling context?