

Running head: EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

Examining Acculturation Strategies in Immigrant and Refugee Youth: A Mixed Methods  
Approach to Arts-Informed Research

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ABSTRACT

Extending far beyond migration to a new home, the cultural, emotional, and mental plight of immigration plagues immigrants and refugees of all ages. Nonetheless, immigrant youth are commonly overlooked in acculturation studies. Through the use of participant drawings, the think-aloud technique, and the Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents (AHIMSA) instrument, this mixed methods approach to arts-informed research examined the acculturation strategies adopted by immigrant and refugee youth attending community-based afterschool programs. The findings of this study illustrate that immigrant and refugee youth cope with cultural transitions through varied approaches that integrate expressions of individuality and cultural behaviors. Exploring six key findings, this study contributes to the literature examining acculturation in youth populations as it provides analysis of cultural transitions that expands beyond traditional examinations of cultural behaviors and highlights the importance of expressing individuality, values, and interests.

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ABSTRACT FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE

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## EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

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## Chapter One: Introduction

Extending far beyond the migration to a new home, the cultural, emotional, and mental plight of immigration plagues immigrants of all ages. As adult immigrants remain at the center of discourse regarding resources, public safety, and social services immigrant youth are commonly excluded from these conversations. This trend has extended into social and educational research, while many studies focus on the cultural integration, assimilation, and or adaptation of adult immigrant and refugees, very little empirical evidence has focused on these concepts in the youth community (Yoshikawa & Way, 2008). As the empirical evidence concerning the experiences of immigrant and refugee youth grows, so too does the research related to interventions addressing acculturation in these populations.

New and innovative interventions are being developed, not only to study the process of acculturation in immigrant youth communities, but to also aid in successfully integrating this community into North American culture, while preserving important values and customs from the native homes. A method of particular interest is the use of community-based programs, as therapeutic, community-centered interventions for the various challenges present in international migration for children. Various scholars interested in the acculturation process in children have employed different designs of community-based programming to ease the effects of acculturation stress in immigrant and refugee populations (Berry, 2003; Delacruz, 1995; St. Thomas & Johnson, 2007).

With the growing population of immigrant children and or children of immigrants, scholars in education, psychology, and the social sciences are becoming

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more interested and invested in research addressing how children cope during cultural transitions. To better understand acculturation in youth communities there are several components that must first be examined. This chapter will serve to examine the relevant historical aspects of mass migration in the US, including public policies, government developed programs, academic initiatives, and community-based programs. In addition, the two theories informing this research, acculturation theory and social capital theory, are defined.

### **Risk Factors for Immigrant/Refugee Children**

The migration process is a complex process that can produce increased risk in the social, emotional, and mental development of immigrant and refugee youth (Zhou, 1997). While the reasons for migrating differ, immigrant and refugee children share similar trials and experiences (Fantino & Colak, 2001). Children who migrate, no matter the cause, must restructure and adjust to new physical settings, social and cultural environments, and rebuild their social networks due to separation from peers, and oftentimes, long-term separations from family members (Stodolska, 2000).

Although academic environments have traditionally been seen as the focal point for cultural learning in immigrant and refugee youth populations they also introduce a great deal of challenges for incoming immigrant youths (Tienda and Haskins, 2011). While being educated in the social and cultural school norms of U.S., immigrant and refugee students are subject to bullying, academic failure, and racism (Fazel, Reed, Panter-Crick, & Stein, 2012). Immigrant and refugee students spend a significant amount of time in their school environments, thusly these environments are vital in their cultural transition process.

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Outside of the school setting, immigrant and refugee youth continue to face a plethora of risk if not properly acculturated. Risk of drug and alcohol abuse, manifestation of behavioral problems, academic failure, and mental disorders are all noted consequences of poor acculturation in both immigrant and refugee youth populations (Guruge & Butt, 2015; Beiser, Puente & Hou, 2015; Rousseau et al, 2014; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009). Additionally, Tienda and Haskins (2011) stress that immigrant youth are more likely to live in poverty than U.S. native youth. Adding to that point, children from economically disadvantaged immigrant families are more likely to experience risks associated with negative acculturation than immigrant and refugee students in higher socio-economic group (Tienda & Haskins, 2011).

One of the greatest challenges of migration for immigrant and refugee children is coping with internal and external trials of migrating while simultaneously navigating through the process of building self-identity (Morantz, Rousseau, & Heyman, 2011; Fazel et al., 2012). A part of developing self-identity in children is relying upon their cultural group identity (Cavazos-Rehg & Delucia-Waack, 2009). All of the previously mentioned risks are occurring during a time in which students are exploring and defining themselves culturally and socially, immigrant and refugee students are faced with the challenge of learning who they are and where they belong in a society they are not yet fully a part of (Arronowitz, 1984). Arronowitz (1984) states that the true risk for these students may not be in deciding which culture they belong to, but rather if they belong to any group at all.

### **History of Government Initiatives in Immigrant Education**

Mass immigration has had a profound impact on the educational system of the United States. The diversification of the North American classroom has reached an all-



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time high over the last three decades (Friedlander, 1991). According to Friedlander (1991) in the 1980's an estimated nine million immigrants, representing more than one hundred different countries immigrated to the United States; of those nine million, 2 million were school-aged children. More recent figures suggest that one out of every four students in American schools is an immigrant or child-born to an immigrant. The immigrant/refugee student population is expected to represent a third of all students enrolled in school by 2030 (Pew Research Center).

There is a long history of programs and initiatives designed to provide adequate services to immigrant students, attempting to mitigate the impacts of cultural transitions. It was in the 1970's that the educational administrators and policymakers shifted their focus from acknowledging the issues present in integrating immigrant student to addressing the issues pertaining to the integration of immigrant youth (García-Vázquez, 1995). The most salient of these issues being a need for academic and social programs that encouraged sustainable transitions into the US school systems.

According to Cavazos-Rehg and DeLucia Waack (2009), the initial establishment of cultural aware education can be greatly attributed to the 1974 Supreme Court Case *Lau vs. Nichols*. In the 1974 civil rights case, Chinese American students in San Francisco filed a suit claiming they were not receiving the educational assistance of which they were entitled due to a lack of proficiency in English. Cavazos-Rehg and DeLucia Waack (2009) stress the importance of this case in building momentum behind a movement for creating opportunities for non-English speaking students. Furthermore, Berry (2006), credits the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for highlighting education as fundamental human right as well as a key component of refugee students' rehabilitation.

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Berry further states that education is crucial in rebuilding social and emotional healing in the migrant youth community.

Different regions adopt various programs and initiatives to address the growing cultural and ethnic diversity in educational systems. One program that has been widely used is the Newcomers Program (Chang, 1990; Friedlander, 1991). Friedlander (1991) describes Newcomer Programs as, “cultural and educational shock absorbers” (p.5). Some Newcomer Programs operate as standalone transition schools, while others are in-school programs. Newcomer Programs are purposed as transitional programs encouraging social integration and transitions into US school systems. During their time in Newcomer Programs students are exposed to “...emotionally safe educational atmosphere that bolsters rapid language learning, acculturation and enhancement of self-esteem.” (Friedlander, 1991, p.5). Most government-sanctioned programs have emphasized language learning with a vague emphasis of acculturation (Chang, 1990). The Newcomer’s Programs provide an environment that ideally incorporates a combination of linguistic, academic, and socio-emotional services.

The various initiatives set forth to assist immigrant students and children of immigrants are just as diverse as the population they serve. Whether it was development of testing scales or transition programs, there is a long history of educators, government officials, etc. attempting to ease the challenges of cultural transitions for immigrant students. The one commonality of these programs is their goal to achieve cultural integration, whether it is by acculturation or assimilation, through education and community support. It is for these reasons community based programs have become so vital in the cultural transitions of immigrant and refugee youth.

### **Community Based Programs**

The empirical studies examining social and academic learning through community-based programs is steadily increasing (Lee & Hawkins, 2008). The terms “community-based programs” and “community-based organizations” are used interchangeably across various fields practice, yet the central purpose of these programs are consistently defined as social programs designed by social service providers, organizers, and evaluators to provide personalized services to specific communities within their own environments (Herrera, Sipe, & McClanahan, 2000). In an educational and youth development context, community-based programs are commonly non-profit entities that function outside or and within schools to provide a wide array of services including, but not limited to tutoring, counseling, and advocacy for program attendees (Harris & Kiyama, 2015).

One of the more compelling characteristics of community-based programs is their ability to effectively address a need for multiculturalism pedagogy in communities of need (Naidoo, 2010). This ability has been attributed to the core mechanisms of community-based program. Bloemraad and Terriquez (2016) identify three mechanisms through which community based programs can and do foster healthy communities that encourage mobilization and mutuality. These three mechanisms are:

1. Empowering individuals through civic capacity and personal efficacy
2. Fostering solidarity by building social relations, social identities, and a shared commitment to well-being;
3. And mobilizing people to have agency in the policies and programming that pertain to them. (Bloemraad & Terriquez, 2016, p. 215)

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Following a similar sentiment, Wong (2010) identifies community-based programs as “(comm)unity spaces” (p. 709) that embody three critical concepts; the multiple world model, authentic caring, and culturally relevant pedagogy. The multiple world model suggests that community based programs encourage the examination and connections of youths’ families, friends, and school environments. Youth view their family, friends, and school worlds as distinct units within their lives, yet through participation in community-based programs youth are able to strategically manage the interactions of family, friends, and school (Phelan et al. 1998). The concept of authentic caring traditionally reflects a reciprocal relationship between adults in educational settings and youth that creates a sense of family, community formation, and authentic caring (Wong, 2010). Wong (2010) argues that authentic caring exist in community-based programs through multi-reciprocal caring relationships that occurs between adults and the community of youths. Lastly, the ideal of community-based programs reflects a framework that embraces culturally relevant understanding within academic and social settings (Wong, 2010). Using the framework developed by Ladson-Billings (1995), Wong asserts that culturally relevant pedagogy addresses student achievement as well as youth affirmation in their cultural identity and critical perspectives that encourage students to challenge inequalities perpetuated by schools and other relevant institutions.

The flexibility of community-based programs offers sociocultural benefits not commonly found in school settings. Additionally, the flexible nature of community-based programs promote positive acculturation experiences through culturally sensitive approaches and community building for immigrant and refugee youth. It is important to note that the specific parameters in which acculturation is examined in community-based

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programs change across programs, populations, philosophies, and disciplines. The following section discusses two theoretical frameworks utilized in this study to examine the concept of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth attending community-based programs.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

#### **Acculturation Theory**

Acculturation, in all the various ways it is defined, addresses the individual and communal changes, which occur during cultural transitions. Conceptually, defining culture brings about its own challenges, however as Goldbard (2013) articulates it, culture is:

The fabric of signs and symbols, language and image, customs and ceremonies, habitations, institutions, and much more that characterize and enable a specific human community to form and sustain itself. Culture is an elastic idea, accommodating all that we human beings create. (p. 11)

Goldbard's (2012) definition of culture highlights its importance in all aspects of human life. In part, it is for this reason, learning and understanding cultures is so critical, but also why examining cultural transition or acculturation remains vital in the development of immigrant and refugee youth.

Similarly, to defining culture, finding a universal definition of acculturation is a challenging task to accomplish. One commonly accepted definition of acculturation is presented by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) in which acculturation is defined as a theoretical perspective which presents the phenomenon of acculturation as a result of

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two distinct cultures coming in continuous contact causing cultural changes in one or more of those groups.

Yeh (2003) defines acculturation as how an individual negotiates the integration multiple cultures. As an individual negotiates what aspect of each culture they will maintain, one culture is usually viewed as the dominant culture while the other is assumed to hold less value (Yeh, 2003). Yeh's model of acculturation reflects a widely-used model developed by Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987), where acculturation is defined as the process by which an individual decides how much, if any, of one or more cultures they will maintain. Berry et al.'s (1987) model of acculturation identifies four adaption strategies; assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization.

In Berry et al.'s (1987) model, integration occurs when an individual maintains aspects of their native culture while integrating aspects of the adopted culture. Separation occurs when an individual maintains or participates in the native culture without incorporating any parts of the dominant culture, the dominant culture being the culture of the national community in which the individual has migrated. Assimilation is the opposing concept of separation where the individual takes on the dominant culture, abandoning all aspects of their native culture. Marginalization occurs when an individual rejects all other processes of acculturation and resist participation in the dominant culture and their native culture (Yeh, 2003).

Some studies utilizing this model of acculturation credit integrative acculturation as producing the most positive socio-cultural, emotional, and psychological outcomes in immigrant and refugee population (Tardiff-Williams & Fisher, 2009). Programs designed to ease acculturation stress, aim for an integrative process (Tardiff-Williams & Fisher,

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2009). The limitations in what we know of acculturation may hinder programs' abilities to provide an integrative acculturative experience for immigrant and refugees. The criticisms of how acculturation is studied may help in developing programs that are more adept in providing services that promote healthy cultural integration.

**Criticisms of Acculturation Theory.** The challenges of defining and examining acculturation have resulted in various criticisms of theories and definitions regarding the phenomenon. While scholars and practitioners continue to examine the concept of acculturation, the original meaning has been lost (Skuzza, 2007). This lack of consistency in meaning has led many to associate acculturation with assimilation. Skuzza believes binary perspectives of acculturation rely on a single direction, failing to take into account the possibility for cultural changes within both cultural groups. When acculturation is only studied from a binary perspective, many researchers fail to gain an understanding of how cultural integration impacts dominant cultures. As dominant cultures become impacted by the cultures of immigrants, multiculturalism is likely to occur. Examining acculturation in multicultural environments may blur the lines distinguishing cultural behaviors.

Another criticism is the perspective that cultures, especially American culture, are distinctly independent of each other. Yeh (2003) suggests that technology, globalization of culture, and advance techniques in information dissemination have rendered older models and theories of acculturation irrelevant in the present day. With cultural norms being shared and discussed through these means, more and more immigrants come to United States with a greater understanding of cultural norms. Yeh suggests that contemporary frameworks of acculturation must take these factors into account while

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urging scholars to further explore the psychological and emotional impact of migration, diminishing the need to focus on the sociocultural side of acculturation.

Rudmin (2009) emphasizes a need to adapt acculturation models to examine the role of factors other than sociocultural influences. Rudmin calls attention to examining the role of motivation and how it influences cultural learning, proposing a model that encourages researchers to reassess the role of acculturative stress and focus more on the roles that cultural attitudes, ethnicity, identity, reacting to distress, have on acculturative learning. Additionally, Rudmin's model of acculturation assesses the relationship between acculturative motivations and consequences for success, family, politics, etc.

An additional criticism of acculturation is that it is studied as a concept and or theory and not as a lived experience (Skuzza, 2007). Issues of acculturation are studied on an individual level and on a community level, yet results of these studies are expected to be able to generalize the experiences of acculturation for various diverse communities and individuals. While there are commonalities in how people progress through cultural integration processes, each experience should be assumed to be vastly different from all others. Skuzza (2007) examines acculturation for phenomenological perspective, imploring other researchers to do the same.

### **Social Capital Theory**

Acculturation theory fails to adequately provide causal mechanisms explaining why and how specific strategies of acculturation are chosen; this has resulted in researchers examining the phenomenon of cultural transition in immigrant communities to engage other theories, in addition to acculturation theory to inform their inquiries.

Social capital theory is one of the more prominent theories used alongside acculturation



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theory to examine the complexities of immigrant youth strategizing their acculturation methods. Social capital theory maintains that the actions of rational human beings can be altered and hindered by social interactions as well as the social structures in which an individual is a part of (Raffo & Reeves, 2000). Social capital theory offers insight into how social conditions influence acculturation strategies of immigrant and refugee youth.

**Foundation of Social Capital Theory.** Social capital theory is conceptually rooted in the same framework in which the Marxist notion of capital is derived (Lin, 1999). Lin (1999) describes the Marx's classical theory of capital as a process by which stakeholders invest capital in a process that creates and captures surplus values. In the Marx model, it is the dominant social class that invest in the process of creating and capturing social capital, thus the theory is based on the social relations between a dominate class and a migrating class (Lin, 1999). As Bourdieu (1986) states, "it is impossible to account for the structure and function of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory" (p.15).

Contemporary conceptualizations of social capital move away from social economic factors, which focus on individual navigation through social relations in order to acquire social capital (Naidoo, 2009). Bourdieu (1985) expounds on this point, highlighting the importance of acknowledging differences, specifically cultural and economic ones. The emerges of differences in social spaces reflect life-styles, and the agents who occupy these spaces are inevitably symbols of different lifestyles (Bourdieu, 1985). For acculturating immigrant and refugees, the question becomes what lifestyle the will adopt once engaged in these social spaces.

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**Defining Social Capital Theory.** Social capital theorist posits that in building social relationships an individual gains access to the resources necessary in achieving their goals (Cheung & Ngai, 2016). Ryabov (2009) adds that is not simply social connections that provides an individual with resources or social capital, but rather their membership within a group or community that provides them with social capital. Or as According to tenets of social capital theory, within each community what constitutes social capital will differ. Furthermore, social capital theory suggests that individuals will engage in communities that best reflect their needs in order to obtain the necessary resources for successful goal completion.

There are two core elements comprising social capital theory, 1) social capital and 2) social relations. (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Summating the two elements, social capital is any commodity offered through developing social relations within a community or social structure. Focusing on the first element, social capital refers to the resources available to members of a specific social structure. Providing more insight into the concept of social capital, Ryabov (2009) states that goodwill, sympathy, trust, and forgiveness are general resources gained through building social relations within a community. More specific examples of social capital tend to reflect the desires of those working to obtain a place within a specific social structure (Bloemraad & Terriquez, 2016). For immigrant and refugee youth, the social capital is most likely a sense of belonging and acceptance (Adler & Kwon, 2002). The community that is able to offer this social capital to an immigrant youth will mostly likely be the community in which they attempt to gain access.

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The second element of social capital theory, social relations are the glue that hold communities together (Fernheimer et al., 2009). Social relationships are not just a vital component in building a community, they are essential in establishing individual placement within that community. Fernheimer et al. (2009) state that value is derived from interactions within communities where goodwill, mutual support, shared language, shared norms, social trust, and a sense of mutual obligation are cultivated through interaction. Where some definitions of social interaction posit the concept as an investment in a community for the sake of gaining resources, social relations represent individual investments in community building. With this investment in community building, individuals take on the added responsibilities of maintaining the cohesiveness and stability of said community.

### **Arts Based Research and Art Informed Research**

Though some researchers have gone to great lengths to distinguish between arts based research and arts informed research, arts informed research has also been identified as an “arts-based research practice” (Leavy, 2015, p.4). As an arts-based research practice, arts informed research looks to the arts as an important tool in the data collection, analysis, interpretation, and or representation of social inquiry (Leavy, 2015). While the discourse continues around arts informed research’s place in the arts based paradigm or the qualitative paradigm, this study claims arts informed research as a qualitative method originating from an arts-based paradigm. To explicate this point and clearly distinguish between arts based research and arts informed research, I will discuss the history and paradigmatic beliefs informing both methods of inquiry.

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To simplify, arts based research (ABR) is the systematic use of art making as a method to examine social phenomena (McNiff, 2007). The openness of ABR pushes the boundaries of conventional research in that it is not guided by traditional paradigms, has vague guidelines for the proper applications of the methodology, and does not clearly or neatly fit into the qualitative or quantitative methodologies.

To better understand the uniqueness of ABR, it is important to first examine the origin of the methodology. In the 1970's social and educational researchers began to adopt the practices of artist in their own research, by the 1990's arts-based research had emerged into its own methodology guided by principals of art therapy, scientific inquiry, and the arts (Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, & Grauer, 2006). McNiff (2008) suggests the origins of ABR predate the 1970's, with scholars establishing a basis for examining the cognitive aspects behind artwork as early as the 1950's. Regardless of the actually origin date of ABR, there is congruence between the core characteristics of arts based research. Art based inquiry challenges the traditional conventions of qualitative and quantitative (Leavy, 2015).

While some qualitative researchers view ABR as an extension of qualitative inquiry, arts based methodologist argue that ABR may have emerged from qualitative research practice, but has now developed into its own methodology and paradigm, addressing social inquiry in ways quantitative and qualitative research do not (Leavy, 2015; McNiff, 2007). Arts based inquiry is described as a holistic approach to exploring views of reality and lived experiences, while being emotional provocative and evocation, raising social and self-awareness, and challenging stereotypes and dominate ideologies (Finley, 2008; Leavy, 2015). Most uniquely, arts based inquiry is transdisciplinary (Leavy,

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2015), presenting the opportunity for researchers to develop new conceptual and theoretical innovations which transcend field-specific approaches in order to address a common issue (Harvard Transdisciplinary Research in Energetics and Cancer Center, 2012).

Situated between ABR and qualitative inquiry is arts-informed research. Arts informed research is still very much a method used with qualitative research, but is a method that utilizes components of ABR to conduct more traditional forms of qualitative inquiry (Rollings, Jr. 2010). For the sake of this dissertation study, I identify my research as arts informed research. The purpose of arts informed research is closely related to that of ABR. Arts informed research is designed to explore the human condition through “alternative process and representational forms of inquiry” (Cole & Knowles, 2007, p.59). Arts-informed research can be used to enhance other methodological approaches or as a standalone methodology (Cole & Knowles, 2007). According to Rollings (2010) the most distinguishing characteristic of arts-informed inquiry and ABR is that ABR is a practice-based approach to scientific inquiry whereas arts-informed research is not.

Like ABR, arts informed research can be both descriptive and evocative, but commonly lends towards the evocative nature (Eisner, 2007). As Eisner (2007) articulates:

The evocative has as its ambition the provision of a set of qualities that create an empathic sense of life in those who encounter it, whether the work is visual or linguistic, choreographic or musical. In all cases, emotion and imagination are involved. Art in research puts a premium on evocation, even when it has sections or aspects of it that are descriptive in character. (p. 6)

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Whereas the evocative can connect with the descriptive to create an empathetic experience, the descriptive acts as a means to create a mimetic connection between what is said and what is lived (Eisner, 2007). According to Eisner (2007), the descriptive is representative of more traditional methods within qualitative inquiry, whereas arts informed research can be both or either.

Long before arts and research merged Dewey (1931), stated that the arts were best used to break through convention and move beyond routine consciousness. This is a sentiment researcher using arts informed research continue to perpetuate. As Cole and Knowles (2011) maintain, arts informed research is utilized to generate data through non-conventional means. Furthermore, the intention of this method, is to extend accessibility of the research, while reflecting the multidimensional, complex, dynamic inter-subjective nature of the human experience (Cole & Knowles, 2011, p.124). The very nature of arts informed research is grounded in the philosophies of both qualitative methodology and arts based methodology. Whilst pulling from the tenets of both methodologies, arts informed research bypasses conventions even as it maintains the structure of systematic inquiry.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study is to examine the acculturation strategies of immigrant and refugee youth participating in community based programs through a mixed methods approach to arts-informed research. Understanding the nuances of cultural transitions within diverse youth populations may be vital in informing the policies and practices designed to mitigate risk in immigrant youth populations. Utilizing a mixed methods approach to arts-informed research, allows for a unique and rigorous examination of

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cultural transitions in immigrant youth through the creation of participant art work.

Additionally, this research will add to the understanding of acculturation and empirical studies examining the process of acculturation through unconventional methods of inquiry.

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## Chapter Two: Literature Review

Healthy acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth is contingent upon multiple factors. Interventions addressing the emotional, behavioral, and mental shifts occurring in migrating youth are vital in their successful progression through cultural transitions. With a vast number of interventions being utilized to ease the tensions of acculturation stress, community-based programs are steadily attributed to accomplishing desirable outcomes in immigrant and refugee youth communities. In offering environments that encourage cultural inclusion, creative expression, and cultural learning, community-based programs have been noted to increase academic achievement, promote positive behavioral patterns, and improve intergenerational conflict between immigrant and refugee youth and their parents/guardians.

Whereas the literature pertaining to immigrant and refugee participation in community-based programs provides insight into the benefits of building community, acculturation research adds a broader context regarding the additional factors impacting the cultural transition of immigrant youth. In order to comprehensively examine the phenomenon of acculturation in migrating youth it is essential to examine the theoretical frameworks informing acculturation research as well as how arts based methodologies have been used to examine the various aspects of youth acculturation experiences. This chapter aims to explore these various aspects within youth acculturation research by reviewing empirical studies of acculturation and their use of community-based programs to promote acculturation. Based upon the prevalent themes throughout a review of the literature, this chapter will examine how the following concepts manifested in research pertaining to cultural transition in youth and refugee communities:



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1. The outcomes of community-based programs in immigrant and refugee populations
2. The various conceptualizations of acculturation theory in literature pertaining to cultural transition in immigrant and refugee youth populations
3. The applications of social capital through community-based programs
4. How visual methods and or arts based methods have been used in empirical studies to encourage communication and expression in immigrant participants
5. Concerns regarding thorough representations of all immigrant and refugee populations in cultural transition research.

### **Community Based Programs**

Rousseau (1995) argues that engaging in community-based programs assist in providing an inclusive community for immigrant and refugee youth, easing one of the major causes of acculturation stress in immigrant youth. In providing an amenable and collaborative environment, community based programs provide opportunities for immigrant and refugee youth to integrate into their new communities as they navigate through the complexities of cultural transitions. Furthering this claim, researchers who highlight the capacity of community-based programs help build connections between immigrant youth and their native peers, which in turn eases the potential tensions of cultural integration while engaging immigrant youth in active cultural learning (Rotich, 2011; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009).

Beyond connecting immigrant and refugee youth to the cultures of their adopted communities, one of the foremost attributes of community based programs for immigrant youth is the potential to build a community that embraces immigrant youths' own cultural

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beliefs along with those of their new home. Interventions posed through community-based programs are more likely to be effective because these programs cater their services to a specific group of immigrants, taking into account the social climate, locational impact, and precise needs of the immigrant community being served. The pluralistic nature of community-based programs makes them not only functional and effective intervention for proper acculturation, but also welcoming in vital ways for immigrant and refugee youth.

Discussions of community building and acculturation through community-based programs could be organized in five ways throughout the literature:

1. Community based programs and extracurricular programs as opportunities to build social capital,
2. Community based programs as opportunities for transcultural learning,
3. Community based programs as means to engage immigrant youth in civic and participatory engagement,
4. Utilizing community based programs as a way to building intergenerational bridges between immigrant youths and the adults, including parental figures and educators, directly impacting their transitions and development, and
5. Comprehensive representation of immigrant populations in acculturation literature.

The designs of these community-based programs ranged from arts-based to civic learning focused, with outcomes ranging from individual behavioral and academic improvements to community wide sociocultural learning (Including Table Here). As the innovative designs continue to grow so do their implications for improving the social, behavioral, and emotional state of immigrant and refugee youth (Landrieu, 2014).

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### **Transcultural Learning**

Researchers examining the role of participation in community-based programs on the acculturation of immigrant youth, note the vast opportunities of social and cultural learning through these programs (Naidoo, 2009; Naidoo, 2010; Goksen & Cermilicalar, 2009; Rousseau, 1995; Lee & Hawkins, 2009). The connection made between immigrant youth, native youths, and adult natives provide environments that have benefited the educational, emotional, and mental development of immigrants during their cultural transitions (Naidoo, 2009). Studies stressing the need of mentorship and peer support are the most prevalent in asserting that community based programs promote positive transcultural learning in immigrant youth communities (Rotich, 2011; Rotich & Fuller, 2016).

A large part of the transcultural learning that occurs for immigrant and refugee youth in community based programs is not simply native community members infusing their beliefs in immigrant and refugee youth, but rather helping these youths to build the confidence needed for empowerment in their own transitional processes as well (Rotich, 2011). Community-based programs are conceptualized as a process in which participants are developed into leaders who aim to create positive change in their own lives (Speer, 2008). For immigrant and refugee youth this involves first learning the parameters of the social structure of which they wish to join, then gaining the knowledge and experience to excel within this structure (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002). Furthermore, empowering immigrant and refugee youth through transcultural learning changes a prevalent narrative of immigrant and refugee youth as victims and or societal problems to engaged community partners (Makhoul, Alameddine, Afifi, 2011; Rotich, 2011).

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Beyond building strong relationships with their peers and gaining empowerment within their adopted communities, research shows that through intercultural learning in community-based programs immigrant and refugee youth gain long lasting stable environments outside of their homes and schools. They also gain self-confidence, emotional stability, and adequate preparation for their transition into adulthood (Makhoul et al., 2011; Rotich, 2011; Lee & Hawkins, 2008). Additionally, some programs designed to promote physically and mental health practices utilize the benefits of intercultural learning to enhance participants' perceptions of self-worth (Ferrera, Sacks, Perez, Nixon, Asis, & Coleman, 2015).

Intergenerational learning is only part of the learning that takes places in community-based programs for immigrant and refugee youth. Familial relationships have a significant impact on the acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth, which highlights the importance of research examining intergenerational dynamics. More importantly, research examining intergenerational relationships in regard to immigrant and refugee families' participation in community-based program provides a more complete understanding of the impact of these programs in youth acculturation.

### **Addressing Intergenerational Conflict**

Intergenerational conflict is a prevalent issue within immigrant and refugee populations. The dual demands placed on immigrant youth, as well as the expectations of divergent cultural maintenance produce dynamics that lead to internal conflict in immigrant youth and adults as well as familial rifts (Rotich & Fuller, 2016; Rotich, 2011; Wu & Chao, 2011; Wu & Chao, 2005; Ying & Han, 2008; Ying, 2007; Ying, 1999; Hynie et al., 2013). Immigrant youth often times adapt to new cultures more quickly than

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their parents or parental figures (Ying & Han, 2008). Immigrant youth are expected to maintain the cultural beliefs and practices of their parents; however, most of their social learning is guided by the peers within their adopted homes, altering not only immigrant and refugees' cultural priorities, but also the rate of their acculturation (Kwak, 2003; Ying & Han, 2008). The divergence in acculturation pace and or stages between immigrant youth and their parental figures leads to a power imbalance where the youth must become somewhat of a cultural surrogate between their parent figures and their newly adopted communities. (Hynie, Guruge, & Shakya, 2013).

The impact of parental acculturation is imperative to the cultural transition of immigrant and refugee youth. Variables such as English proficiency, perceptions of closeness or affection, and parental involvement were determined to affect not only parental acculturation and engagement in their children's lives, but also how immigrant youth perceived their parental figures level of interest in their experiences (Ying & Han, 2008; Garcia – Coll et al., 2002; Kwak, 2003). In studies examining familial acculturation, parental involvement in young immigrants social and academic lives were important determinants in how well immigrant youth acculturated (Ying, 1999). As immigrant and refugee youth engaged in transitions of cultural beliefs and priorities, their parent-child relational expectations changed as well.

Stakeholders arguing the use of community based programs to acculturate immigrant and refugee youth have not ignored the need for familial involvement in these transitions. On the contrary, research supports the need for immigrant parents and guardians to engage in the same types of programs as their children in order to develop deeper connections and understandings of the acculturation experiences of immigrant

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youth (Johnson, 2007). Ying's (2007) exemplifies the potential of community-based programs in easing intergenerational conflict. When measuring immigrant children's self-esteem level in connection to their parental figures level of acculturation, the findings of Ying's study suggested that participation in community based programs enhanced parental competence and in doing so increased their children's level of self-esteem. Ying further implicates, that community based programs providing services to both immigrant and child encourage cultural competence, while diminishing the presence of intergenerational conflict.

Ultimately, the goal of familial engagement in community based programming is to diminish the presence of acculturation stress and intergenerational conflict. In accomplishing this, the acculturation process becomes more manageable for immigrant and refugee youth. There is little empirical evidence on the development and impact of family targeted community based programs, however the available studies have strong implications towards how these types of programs can benefit the overall condition of immigrant families, but most important the development of immigrant and refugee youth.

### **Defining and Exploring Acculturation**

To fully understand the literature on cultural transitions in any population it is vital to first examine the conceptual frameworks used to guide and measure these studies. Research pertaining to cultural transitions in immigrant youth communities illuminates several models of acculturation (Naidoo, 2009). While most of the literature defines the process of acculturation as the cultural shift arising following the prolonged interaction between two cultural communities (Berry, Trimble, & Olmeda, 1986), the frameworks conceptualizing this process lack the same continuity. Researchers employing

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acculturation studies present the frameworks as one-dimensional or multidimensional processes, strategies, or results of cultural transitions (Nwosu & Barnes, 2013; Naidoo, 2009).

### **One-dimensional Models**

In the literature, one-dimensional models of acculturation are largely process oriented frameworks suggesting that culturally transitioning people either replace their own cultural behaviors and traditions with those of their host or they maintain their native beliefs (Cabassa, 2003; Rotich, 2011; Birman et al. 2008). Researchers utilizing these one-dimensional models focused heavily on the negative outcomes present when proper acculturation is not achieved in immigrant youths (Thai, Connell & Tebes, 2010; Ellis & Lincoln, 2010; Birman et al., 2008).

Thai et al. (2010) present the framework of acculturation guiding their studies as the process by which an immigrant person or persons adopt the values, attitudes, and behaviors of the host group. The theoretical framework Thai et al. use to frame their work reflects the philosophy on one-dimensional models of acculturation. Expounding upon that philosophy, Thai et al. add the element of cultural transitional rate, or the rate in which an individual becomes acculturated to the dominant society.

Similarly to the findings of Thai et al. (2010), other researchers utilizing one-dimensional acculturation models suggests that failure to adapt to the values and traditions of the dominant or host groups commonly results in negative outcomes for the immigrant youth (Thai et al. 2010). Listing outcomes such as substance and alcohol abuse, threats to the mental health of immigrant youth, and or deviant behaviors (Riggs, Bohnert, Guzman, & Davidson, 2006). Bypassing the concept of cultural maintenance,

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studies utilizing one-dimensional models don't appear to question whether immigrant and refugee should acculturate, but rather how quickly and effectively can they acculturate (Riggs, 2006).

Diverging from other researchers using one-dimensional acculturation models Riggs (2006), reported contrasting findings in both how poor progression through acculturation is defined and in their findings regarding the impacts of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth. Riggs et al. (2006) defined poor acculturation as the over-adaptation of immigrant youths into the dominant culture. The findings of the study suggest that when an immigrant or refugee youth becomes acculturated they are more likely to engage in behavior detrimental to their development. Rigg's (2006) findings highlight the necessity to examine acculturation with greater complexity than what may be offered through one-dimensional acculturation models.

### **Multidimensional Models**

#### **Origin of Multidimensional Acculturation Studies: Assimilation Theory**

The origin of multidimensional models of acculturation has been credited to Gordon (1964) and Park's (1950) original models of assimilation. Ironically, the origins of assimilation theory more closely resemble the tenets of one-dimensional models as assimilation theorist define acculturation as a multifaceted process in which a migrating group takes on the characteristics and values of a dominant group (Warner et al., 2009). Even with their derivation in assimilation theories, multidimensional models of acculturation examine the phenomenon of cultural transition through various phases and or levels of integration (Cabassa, 2003). The core concept of assimilation theories is that a migrant culture group will face a cultural transition when engaging with a dominant



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group. This tenant is the founding principle of multidimensional acculturation models with one vital difference, how will this transition occur?

Whereas one-dimensional models and, in most cases, assimilation theory assert that an individual or community progressing through cultural transition either adopts the cultures of the dominate culture or maintains those of their native culture, multidimensional models of acculturation acknowledge the various ways in which an individual adopts all or some components of multiple cultures, and or abstain from identifying any culture as their own. The biggest difference between one-dimensional model of cultural transition and multidimensional models is the element of all or nothing. Multidimensional models of acculturation acknowledge dimensional develop of cultural identity in youth, shying away from polarities.

Returning to their roots in assimilation theories, studies utilizing multidimensional acculturation frameworks still to support the downward trajectory concept stemming from structural assimilation (Alba & Nee, 1997). The notion of downward trajectory suggests that most immigrant and refugee youth belong to the lower socioeconomic class; they will assimilate to behaviors associated with the lower economic class (Alba & Nee, 1997). Downward trajectory has produced much controversy in studies pertaining to cultural transitions in immigrant and refugee youth communities, and consequentially resulted in scholars looking elsewhere for conceptual frameworks to guide their studies (Alba, & Nee, 1997).

### **Contemporary Multidimensional Acculturation Frameworks**

The vast history of research on the impact of migrating on immigrant youth has resulted in a more complete understanding of the phenomenon as well as the

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development of more complex conceptual models examining the phenomenon of cultural transitions in immigrant communities. Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder's (2006) four-dimensional model of acculturation is widely used in the literature. This model differs from original models of acculturation as it offers four strategies (assimilation, marginalization, integration, and separation) for progressing through cultural transitions. Within these strategies assimilation is one of the four strategies and not the central dimension of acculturation. Additionally, Berry et al. (2006) acknowledge the strategy of abstaining from proclaiming one or any cultural identity. This is notion that was absent in literature pertaining to one-dimensional acculturation models.

Although Berry et al.'s (2006) and Berry et al.'s (1986) model of acculturation is widely used in studies on the impact of immigrant and cultural transitions, the literature offers some additional developments in the conceptualization of multidimensional models of acculturation (Stuart & Ward, 2011). Studies utilizing these multidimensional models tend to stress conscious strategic approaches to cultural transitions by the immigrant populations being studied.

Newer multidimensional acculturation models attempt to highlight the complex and nuanced experiences of these cultural negotiations (Stuart & Ward, 2011; Nwosu & Barnes, 2013; Liu, Fairbairn-Dunlop, & Henderson, 2010.) The research employing multidimensional models of acculturation relies heavily on Berry et al.'s (2006) four-dimensional model; however, there is a clear trend within the literature to expand upon this model in order to address the shortcomings within Berry et al.'s (2006) framework. Researchers employing multidimensional models either examined the strategies identified

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in Berry et al's model or expound upon that model to develop strategies and or stages of acculturation that more contextualized to their specific research interest.

Stuart and Ward (2011) and Stuart (2012) incorporate multidimensional models of acculturation focusing on strengthening an understanding of integration as a strategy of acculturation. Although these conceptual model pulls from Berry et al. (2006) they too bring attention to the shortcomings identified in the literature. For example, Berry et al. (2006) present a model that emphasizes that strategies of acculturation of consciously selected by individuals, groups, and or communities progressing through cultural transitions. Stuart and Ward (2011) argue that Berry et al's model does not account for acculturation stress, adaption problems, and psychological influences. Researchers are avowing the need to develop multidimensional models that acknowledge and focus on positive growth and development (Sirin & Balsano, 2007; Stuart, Ward, Jose, & Narayann, 2010; Stuart & Ward, 2011).

Ward, Liu, Fairburn-Dunlop, and Henderson (2010) developed a new framework founded in the same four-dimensional model as Berry et al. (2006). Examining issues of national identity, ethnicity, native language usage, ethnic and national peer contact, familial values, and attitudes towards acculturation, Ward et al. (2010), developed a model in which the concept of acculturation maintenance is examined through four levels. The four levels include integration, national, ethnic, and diffuse.

Ward et al.'s (2010) model defines integration and the maintenance of an individual's ethnic and national identities while participating in the cultural activities of dominated culture. National is defined as an individual having strong national identity, but a weak ethnic identity. Ethnic strategy occurs when an individual has a strong ethnic

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identity and weak national identity. Diffuse strategy occurred when an individual had a weak ethnic and national identity. These four dimensions were not replacements for Berry et al.'s (2006) model, but rather adaptations of the model that aimed to further explain the differences between acculturation strategies in regard to their impact on immigrant youth behaviors, psychology, and adaptation to their new cultural environments.

The criticism of Berry et al.'s (2006) also addresses the lack of discourse pertaining to why strategies of acculturation are selected. Much of the research pertaining to acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth is framed by acculturation theories, but also employ additional frameworks to explicate why and how youth attempt to achieve an adequate level of acculturation during their transitions. Research pertaining to social capital, a theoretical framework widely used alongside acculturation theory, is examined in the next section. While the literature examining social capital theory is not as vast as that of acculturation theory, the available literature offers a great deal of insight into how community-based programs and acculturation informed community building and a sense of belonging in immigrant and refugee youth.

### **Social Capital Theory**

Much of the research surrounding immigrant youth participating in community-based programs in guided the concept of building social capital (Naidoo, 2009, 2010; Im & Rosenberg, 2016). Social capital enables immigrant youth to engage in their community, building the stakes in which they hold in that community as well as connecting them to it. The development of social capital is noted as being dependent upon both the parental and youth participation in the community. Social capital is not directly linked to any one acculturation framework, however some researchers (Goksen

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& Cermilicalar, 2009) note that proper acculturation is contingent upon an individual's ability to build capital.

Naidoo (2010) examined the development of social capital and cultural redevelopment in African immigrant students arriving in Australia. The lack of capital limits these youths' ability to succeed in the society of the dominant culture. Naidoo (2010) suggests that in participating in community programs, these marginalized youths are able to build social capital through small group interactions, cultural literacy development, and informal opportunities to discuss the importance of social capital with community stakeholders. Naidoo (2009) reached similar conclusions in an earlier study examining immigrant youth attending an after-school program in Australia. The findings of this study showed that on an individual basis, the impact of habitus of marginalized people was diminished when they actively engaged in the community based programming offered through their schools.

Goksen and Cermilicalar (2009) also emphasized the gains of social capital in their study on Turkish immigrant youths attending community programs. In this study, Goksen and Cermilicalar (2009), suggest that community based programs aid immigrant youth and families in building social capital simply through providing meaningful interactions with their communities. Furthering their discussion on the importance of social capital, Goksen and Cermilicalar note that an immigrant's ability to obtain social capital is vital in rebuilding relationships with the community that were lost during the migration process.

**Civic Engagement.** Knight and Watson (2014) and Tong (2010) are aligned in the arguments for increased civic engagement by immigrant youth to build social capital

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and self-empowerment in their new communities. The sentiment regarding civic engagement suggests that having solid roots in the community will increase immigrant youth and families' personal investments in their new communities. Where most of literature focused on immigrant youth as recipients of community support as a means of community engagement, building social capital, and socio-cultural learning, some scholars suggest immigrant involvement in community service and civic engagement produce similar outcomes (Tong, 2010). These studies still have a central focus on cultural transitions through community based programs, the approach places the immigrant youth in the position of giver while still promoting social learning, social capital, and benefiting their experiences of acculturation (Knight & Watson, 2014; Burke & Greene, 2015; Duncan, 2010).

### Examining Criticisms in Acculturation Literature

With a vast amount of literature pertaining to the acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth, criticism surround how researchers examine the somewhat nuanced experiences of immigrant populations and refugee populations as well as how adequate all immigrant and refugee populations are represented in scientific inquiry were prevalent throughout the literature. Some researchers suggest that the issues of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and refugee status are commonly overlooked in the literature diminishing the ability to produce comprehensive studies on acculturation in youth communities. This next section will examine the literature discussing these criticisms.

### **Distinguishing Acculturation Experiences of Refugees and Immigrants**

Natural, political, and economic disasters have resulted in increased displacement of various migrant people (Winslow & Renzaho, 2015). The growth in the number of

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immigrant and refugees has resulted in the increase in empirical studies examining the phenomenon of cultural transitions, economic migration, and refugee migration (Qin et al, 2015). Although the terms immigrants and refugees are commonly used alongside each other in research studies, as they are in this study, a review of the literature highlighted important and vital differences in experiences between immigrant youth and refugee youth populations (Cortes, 2004).

As previously stated, it is common for immigrant and refugee to be used simultaneously. This is especially true in studies examining the acculturation experiences of immigrant and refugee youths (Cortes, 2004). Researchers engaging in studies examining immigrant and refugee youth as one population can do so because of the developmental, cultural transitional, emotional, and psychological similarities in experiences faced by immigrant and refugee youth as the progress through acculturation (Gibson, 2001).

Though immigrants and refugees share similar risk regarding consequences of negative cultural transitions, some of the interventions and approaches to examining the experiences of immigrant and refugee populations differ. Due to the different causes behind immigrant and refugee youth migration and the ability of non-refugee immigrants to return home, some researchers stress the need to examine the acculturation experiences of immigrant and refugee youth separately (Cortes, 2004; Hollander, Bruce, Burstrom & Ekbald, 2011). Reflecting that argument, research focused solely on refugee youth experiences highlights nuanced elements of acculturation that have yet be found in literature combining the two populations such as the role of religiosity in the

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acculturation process (Qin et al., 2015) and refugee youth actively and consciously working to maintain their connections to their native cultures (Gomez, 1999).

Akinsulure-Smith, Dachos, and Johns (2013) note that while refugee youth focused research is vital and must be examined as a separate entity, the current research is not comprehensive. Akinsulure-Smith et al (2013) stress that some of the most prominent ethnic groups finding refuge in the United States, for example African refugee populations, are still not adequately represented in the literature on forced migration, migration in general, or acculturation. Until the research is able to reflect the most prominent groups of refugee populations, combined research of immigrant and refugee experiences may offer the most complete examination of cultural transitions in immigrant and refugee populations, especially those that currently marginalized and or overlooked by scholars examining the phenomenon.

### **Representations of SES and Risk in the Research**

Acculturation literature has been criticized in several ways, including the lack of ethnic diversity of the populations examined in the research. The issue of accurate representation in literature pertaining to immigrant and refugee youth participating in community-based programs had a small, but relevant presence in the literature. If not all, most studies support the notion of positive development of immigrant youth through participation in community based programs, only a few questioned the issue of representation in research sample groups (Lee & Hawkins, 2009; Riggs, Bohnert, Guzman, & Davidson, 2010). This examination of representation poised the question of how the level of risk may influence the reports benefits in immigrant youth populations.



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Lee and Hawkins (2008) report similar findings as other researchers regarding the benefits of immigrant youth participating in community based programs, but their study on Hmong immigrant students brings attention to an important aspect of the research regarding representation. Lee and Hawkins's (2008) study proclaims that most immigrant students attending after school programs are in the middle socio-economic class and not members of the higher risk, low socioeconomic immigrant groups. Diverging from most literature pertaining to immigrant and refugee youth in community-based programs, Lee and Hawkins argue that not addressing the issue of diverse representation within immigrant youth populations will result in a failure to examine how low income immigrants acculturate through their participation in community based programs.

Riggs, Bohnert, Guzman, and Davidson (2010) state a similar sentiment regarding representation in their study of Latino youth participating in youth development community programs. Riggs et al. (2010) argue that the literature examining Latino youth in community based programs is not complete because much of the data is nested in studies focused on general populations of low income students attending community based programs. Similarly to Lee and Hawkins (2008), Riggs et al. argue that in not distinguishing Latino immigrant at risk youth from other at risk populations, researchers fail to gain a full understanding of the nuanced experiences of immigrant youth participating in community based programs furthermore, these studies fail to examine immigrant youth acculturation.

### **The Arts as Method**

Studies utilizing the arts as means of interventions in immigrant and refugee communities are not uncommon (Rousseau et al., 2007; Cheong-Clinch, 2009; ter Maat,

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1997; Rousseau, Lacroix, Bagilishya, & Heusch, 2003). The trend of arts-informed methods has yet to translate to inquires examining the experiences of immigrant and refugee youth. Even with few examples of these methods being utilized in immigrant and refugee populations are currently available (Cerecer, Cahill, & Bradley, 2013; Yassi et al., 2016; Cerecer, Alberto, Cahill, & Bradley, 2011), the aforementioned research and discourse pertaining to arts-based interventions may shed some light into how the arts encourage communication and engagement in immigrant and youth populations.

### **Arts-Informed Research**

Arts-informed research is the use of an arts-based method in a qualitative or mixed method study as a central means of data collection. This method differs from arts-based research as it is not guided by the same paradigmatic beliefs grounded in arts-based research (Leavy, 2015) Arts-informed methods allows research to maximize participant engagement and disclosure through various arts forms while utilizing more traditional forms of qualitative and quantitative methods to complement and or analyze the arts-informed methods (Leavy, 2015).

### **Arts-Informed Research in Marginalized Populations**

Didkowsky, Ungar, and Liebenberg, L. (2010) state that visual methods in marginalized communities and populations address three major issues pertaining to cross cultural research: (a) Power imbalance between the researcher and the participant; (b) Youth participants' lack of engagement in the research process; and (c) Language barriers between the researcher and the participant(s). This sentiment reflects what some researchers utilizing visual and arts informed methods argue as the justification for

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employing these methods in their work (Quijada, Alberto, Cahill, & Bradley, 2011; Guruge et al., 2015; Cerecer, Cahill, & Bradley, 2013).

The ideal of moving towards methods that fit the needs and characteristics of participants (Chin, Sakamoto, & Bleuer, 2014) is reflected throughout most studies utilizing arts informed methods. Researchers utilizing the arts to engage their participants note a need to provide an empowered voice to their participants in order to gain as much wisdom from the community as possible (Smith, Bratini, & Appio, 2012).

Photo-voice methods dominate the research. Photovoice is an arts-based or arts-informed method in which a person examines, identifies, represents, and enhances their communities through visual methods (Wang, 1997). Researchers engage participants in photovoice in order to utilize visual images to collect the expertise and knowledge of members of the community in which they are studying (Wang, 1997). With the origin of photo-voice being credited to a study of culture within a rural Chinese community (Madrigal et al. 2014), the method has a strong history within immigrant and refugee populations. Rotich (2014) study of physical activity in middle school immigrant youth populations utilized photo-voice method to break through communication barriers, empower participants, and absolve the limitations of traditional method in qualitative inquiry to research a new level of research intimacy with the participants.

### **Goal Oriented Designs in Arts Informed Methods**

The ideal of moving away from what is referred to as the oppressive nature of traditional research methods (Chin, Sakamoto, & Bleuer, 2014) is reflected throughout most studies utilizing arts-informed methods. Researchers utilizing the arts to engage their participants note a need to provide an empowered voice to their participants in order

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to gain as much wisdom from the community as possible (Smith, Bratini, & Appio, 2012).

Guruge et al (2015) work examining issues of mental health in immigrant and refugee adolescents exemplified the practice of using creative methods to maximize participant engagement. Additionally, Guruge et al. was the single example of researchers utilizing an arts informed approach that did not include photography. In engaging their participants to draw their response and discuss them with other participants, Guruge et al. aimed to connect adolescents to their community, promote critical consciousness, encourage civic and social engagement and build upon the wisdom of the research through participants' work.

The multifaceted nature of arts-informed research allows for those utilizing it to develop multipurpose studies. Quijada-Cerecer, Cahill, and Bradley (2011), engaged high school students in a project that was reflective, informative, and promoted civic engagement. The project acted as both research and intervention, as immigrant students and their native cohorts were asked to reflect upon the educational rights of undocumented students to and discuss the various issues facing immigrant students in general. Quijada-Cerecer et al. (2011) stated their overall purpose as one of transformative resistance through the arts. The method and results were somewhat vague; however the utilization of the method highlights additional application in which arts informed practices can be utilized.

With vague distinguishing characteristics between arts informed and visual methods, it is difficult to account for an accurate number of studies utilizing arts-informed methods to examine immigrant and refugee youth's experiences of

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acculturation. Studies such as Sirin et al. (2008) can find creative ways to utilize tools such as concept maps, and that can arguably become examples of ways in which artistic expression is used to elicit participant engagement and collect creative expressions of data. Photo-voice is noted as its own method, but clearly has grounding in the arts. As clearer definitions of what constitutes arts-informed methods are conceived, the literature utilizing these methods should continue to grow. More specifically, the empirical evidence examining the potential of arts-informed methods and or visual methods should continue to manifest in communities where gaining verbal articulations of experiences, and or traditional forms of data collection are off-putting for participants.

### **Conclusion**

As the literature illustrates, there is great complexity in how acculturation progresses in immigrant youth and how researchers of various fields examine that progression. While acculturation has become a widely-examined component of the social, emotional, and mental development of immigrant youth, the connection between acculturation and youth development still lacks some clarity (Riggs, 2006). The various ways in which acculturation frameworks are utilized in this area of research provides a great deal of insight into how researchers conceptualize cultural transitions in immigrant youth populations. Furthermore, the literature on acculturation in immigrant youth populations suggests that there are substantial benefits to the socio-cultural development of immigrant youths as well as immigrant families through their participation in community based programs and civic engagement (Sherrod et al., 2002). As noted in the literature, more empirical evidence is needed to fully understand the connection and relationship between social capital and acculturation; however, the available literature

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provides some insight into how social capital positively influences immigrant youth and families active and conscious engagement in their own processes, experiences, and strategic transitions through acculturation.

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## Chapter Three: Research Methods

### **Introduction**

Eisner (2008) suggests that the arts have historically been assessed as an emotive tool of expression, lacking any real connection to more logical areas of study, or more specifically scientific inquiry. While there are a growing number of researchers utilizing artistic methods in qualitative inquiry, the connection between epistemological components and the arts has not been strong (Eisner, 2008). With this growth, the discourse surrounding the arts has shifted from the arts being merely an exploration into the emotional expressions to a legitimate means of exploring social phenomenon. Arts informed approaches to research methods and methodologies provide additional and varied means for participants to express themselves, as well as additional methods through which to examine social inquiry (Leavy, 2015). Arts informed research is not a method that ratifies the shortcomings of other methods, but rather offers a new way to navigate through data collection, analysis, and interpretation. A mixed method approach to arts informed methods was utilized in this study to provide more flexibility for the expression of participants while utilizing the strengths of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

The participants of this study were adolescent immigrant/refugee students with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and reasons for migrating to the United States. Basic components of communication may differ across the various cultures that were represented in this study. Using the arts as the main method of data collection allowed the participants to engage in the research and enabled the participants to express themselves in a manner that was designed to diminish communicative barriers (Leavy, 2015).

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Findings from previous studies suggest that arts-informed research practices have been particularly beneficial in immigration studies as they encourage participants to integrate their emotional embodied and psychosocial perioperative experiences (Lapum, Church, Yau, David, & Ruttonsha, 2012).

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological design used in this study to examine strategies of acculturation among immigrant and refugee youth attending two community based after-school programs. I outline the purpose of this study along with the research questions, the program selection, and participant inclusion criteria along with the steps taken to obtain IRB approval and the sampling procedures.

The qualitative phase of data collection and analysis were divided into three stages outlining participant observations, two drawing sessions, and the think-aloud technique. The quantitative phase is comprised of a brief summary of the use of the acculturation scale with youth populations. In the quantitative phase of this document, I discussed the Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents (AHIMSA) scale, and highlighted how I scored the scale and analyzed it using a frequency count. The quantitative phase is followed by details regarding the second integration phase of the qualitative and quantitative strands. I end the chapter with discussions of trustworthiness, authenticity, and the potential limitations of this research study. A portion of the discussion of trustworthiness and authenticity was dedicated to the execution of a pilot study. Prior to data collection, a pilot study was conducted as a trial run of the research procedures identified in this chapter.



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### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

This mixed method study using a sequential exploratory design examined acculturation in immigrant and refugee K-12 students attending community-based after school programs. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine the strategies of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth attending community based programs as well as how these strategies are communicated through arts-informed methods. The qualitative phase of the study was based on an arts-informed method used to examine the strategies of acculturation adopted by immigrant and refugee K-12 students attending community-based afterschool programs. Participant drawings were collected from the participants at the Center for Community Based Programs (CFCBP).

The quantitative phase was purposed with comparing and exploring how students' strategies of acculturation were conveyed through their works of art and how they were represented in a standardized scale of acculturation. In the quantitative phase, the Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents Acculturation Scale (AHIMSA) (Unger et al., 2002) was used to collect data from the participants at the CFCBP(s). This study was guided by the following questions:

1. In what ways do immigrant youth depict themselves in drawings?
2. Are there differences in the ways immigrant youth depict themselves between acculturation levels?
3. How do community-based programs contribute to acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth?
4. Does the arts-informed approach produce information about experiences that contribute to acculturation not produced through the AHIMSA scale?

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Exploring the role of community-based youth programs in immigrant and refugee communities is a vital step in better understanding the process of acculturation in youth immigrant communities. For this reason, this mixed methods study was conducted with the intention of adding to the literature, providing empirical evidence examining the impact of immigrant and refugee youth's participation in community programs as well as the execution of arts-informed research in scientific inquiry conducted in culturally diverse communities.

### **Selection of Location and Programs**

As immigrant and refugee populations in the United States have grown, so have the programs, services, and initiatives designed to aid them. Local, state, and federal initiatives have been set in place to address the various needs of immigrant communities (Van Ngo, 2009). While many of the programs are designed to provide family services to immigrant communities, few of these programs cater their services to immigrant youth (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). Diverging from this trend, the CFCBP, offers multiple community-based programs for immigrant and refugee students. With each of the afterschool programs providing varied services for multiple populations within the immigrant community, a clear criterion was identified to select the appropriate program for inclusion in this study. The inclusion criteria for the center/program were as follows:

1. Program must provide services to immigrant and refugee youth populations.
2. Program must offer multiple recreational program types to students (i.e. arts, sports).
3. Program must be a community-based program that is not affiliated with a school.

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4. Program must provide services to multiple age groups.

### **Participant Selection**

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

This research was designed to examine the acculturation strategies of immigrant and refugee youth. More specifically, this research aimed to explore how community-based programs contribute to acculturation strategies for immigrant and refugee students. Participant selection was based on a detailed inclusion criterion, which supported the overall purpose of the study. Through collaboration with the CFCBP(s) director, volunteer coordinator, and the center director, I engaged in a screening process to identify potential participants based upon the following inclusion criteria:

1. **Participant should be fluent in both written and verbal English.** Participants should be able to understand both written and verbal instruction. Participants are asked to complete a written assessment and thus need to understand the questions asked on this assessment. Screening for English proficiency occurs prior to the data collection stage of the research. In collaboration with CFCBP administrators, English proficient students will be identified for inclusion in the study. Following the initial stage of screening, students identified in the first stage will be asked read an assent form detailing the steps required of participants of the study. Participants will be asked to verify their understanding of the study.
2. **Participant must be first generation immigrant.** Participants must be first generation immigrants. In this study, first generation is considered to be any immigrant who migrated to the United States from another country or was the first generation of their family born in the United States to newly arriving

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immigrants. Center administrators will be relied upon to assist in identifying individuals fitting this criterion.

3. **Participant must have attended the center(s) for at least one year.** The participants must have participated in the program for at least one year. This inclusion criterion ensures that participants have been residents of the United States for at least one year. Additionally, the criteria are established to ensure participants have had a reasonable amount of time to become acclimated to the CFCBP.

### **IRB Consent/Assent**

The age of the target population of this study required that both the informed consent of the parents/guardians of the participants and the informed assent of the participants. An informed assent/consent form was developed to outline the purpose of the study as well as the expectations of all participants in the study. The following steps were taken to obtain and maintain informed consent and assent throughout the study.

1. In collaboration with the Center for New North Carolinian administrators (center director, volunteer coordinator, program director) consent and assent forms are drafted to ensure the language is the appropriate for the reading level of the participants and the parents and or guardians of the participants.
2. In collaboration with the Center for New North Carolinian administrative staff, interpreters are selected in order to ensure clear communication between the researcher and the parents/guardians of participants.
3. The Center for New North Carolinian's director contacts parents and or guardians of potential participants to introduce the research project and the researcher.

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4. The researcher schedules a meeting with the parents/guardians of participants and participants to initiate the informed consent and assent process.
5. During the initial meeting, the researcher, with the assistance of an interpreter where needed, reviews the assent and consent forms, detailing the expectations and rights of the participant during the duration of the study.
6. The researcher gives potential participants a copy of the informed assent and consent forms for review.
7. The researcher schedules a meeting to be held the week following the initial meeting to address questions and or concerns pertaining to the informed assent and consent.
8. During the second meeting, all questions pertaining to informed consent/assent and participation in the research are addressed. If needed, the interpreter and CFCBP director or representative are present.
9. If needed, additional time of no more than five days will be given to parents and participants. The additional time is used to address any further questions and concerns participants and/or the parents/guardians have pertaining to the research and participation in the research.
10. Upon completion of the five-day period, the researcher requests consent from parents/guardians and assent from participants willing to participate in the study.
11. Following receipt of signatures, original copies of the informed consent forms will be placed in a locked file box only accessible to the researcher. Copies of

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informed consent and assent forms will be provided to the participants and their parents/guardians.

### **Sampling Technique**

Purposeful sampling is a technique commonly use in qualitative research. As stated by Palinkas et al. (2015), purposeful sampling involves selecting participants who are particularly knowledgeable or experiences with the phenomenon of interest. Additionally, availability and willingness are also important principals of purposeful sampling. Sampling methods in qualitative and or quantitative studies are intended to maximize efficiency and validity while adhering to the assumptions and aims of both methods (Morse & Nieshaus, 2009; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Purposeful sampling was used to select students who both agree to participate and have parental consent, as a method to maximize the selection of participants who best support this research. Participants were selected based upon their ability to meet the inclusion criteria. With the aid of the center director, among the student participants meeting the criteria, 15 to 20 participants were selected to participate in the study.

### **Demographic Information**

Upon inclusion in the study, demographic data was collected from all participants. The demographic data served as a means of verifying participant's eligibility for inclusion in the study and provided the necessary data to organize participant information for analysis in the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research. I collected information that identifies participants' nationality, age, grade level, gender, length of residency in the United States, school attended while in the United States, and participant

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duration group, more plainly, the length of time each participant attended one or more of the CFCBP's community programs.

### **Phase I: Qualitative Phase**

The qualitative phase of this study was composed of three stages. There were two data collection phases involving a participant observation and drawing construction phases and an analysis phase, which were conducted in three stages.

#### **Participant Observation**

Participant observation is a method in which the researcher immerses themselves in the population of interest. These observations are aimed at grasping the participants' point of view and relation to life by thinking, seeing, feeling, and adopting behaviors of the population of interest (Tedlock, 2010). In this study, the participant observations were aimed at observing participants' behaviors and actions while at the after-school programs. Participant observations were a vital tool in developing a contextual understanding of the data collected in all stages of the research.

Spradley's (1980) nine dimensions of descriptive observations protocol were used to conduct the participant observations. Spradley (1980) identified nine areas of focus when engaging in participant observations: space, actors, activities, objects, acts, events, time, goals, and feelings. Space defines the layout of the physical setting. These spaces include the location, space, and orientation in which the phenomenon is being observed. Actors defined who the people involved in the study are. Additionally, the dimension of actors requires that observers record any relevant details that can provide insight into who the actors are. Activities encourage the observer to record details regarding the activities in which the actors engage. The objects dimension identifies the physical elements of the

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setting. These physical elements include items such as furniture and other inanimate objects in the setting that contribute and/or impact the activities in which the actors are engaged. Acts are specific individual actions taken by the actors. Events build up acts. Events are specific occasions that occur within the setting within the duration of the observations. Time refers to the sequence in which the events occur. Goals are the interpretation of what the actors wish to accomplish. Feelings are the emotions exhibited by the actors as they engage in activities and events.

Participant observations were conducted at each of the centers selected for inclusion in this study. Each participant observation lasted for the duration of five days. During the initial two days of each observation, I observed the ongoing activities at the center. During the last three days of the observations, I participated in activities that are pre-approved by the CBC director such as: tutoring, playground supervision, arts and crafts, and reading time with students. Fieldnotes were taken with an emphasis on recording activities and behaviors the participants included in this study. The purpose of these observations and fieldnotes were to gain contextual understanding in order to better analyze participant drawings and think-aloud responses.

### **Drawing Sessions (Arts-Informed Research)**

The arts-informed stage of this research study was designed to identify participant strategies of acculturation through the construction of artwork. The qualitative data collection was conducted in two, 90 to 120 minute sessions at each CFCBP community program. During these sessions, participants were asked to construct a drawn response to the following prompts:



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1. Draw a portrait of yourself. In this portrait include some of your favorite things (hobbies, foods, music, television shows) and some of things/people that are most important to you.
2. Draw a picture to show what the kinds of things you do at the center. Think about the people who are at the center, the activities (things like games, reading, sports, art) you do, and how you feel when you are at the center. You can include anything and everything you think is meaningful.

### **Think Aloud**

The think aloud (TA) method is the concurrent verbalization of cognitive process occurring while a participant engages in a task or any activity resulting in some form of cognitive stimulation (Fonteyn, Kuipers, & Grobe, 1993). TA is built upon three assumptions

The cognitive processes that generate verbalizations are a subset of the cognitive processes that generate any type of recordable response or behavior; human cognition is information processing, a sequence of internal states successively transformed by a series of information process; and information recently acquired and currently being concentrated on is directly accessible as verbal data, using the TA method. (Fonteyn et al, 1993, p. 431)

The assumptions guiding the think aloud method highlight the importance of probing human cognition during the development of a skill, a product, and/or problem solving process. More importantly, the articulation of meaning, emotion, and perceptions provides vital verbal data (Nielsen, Clemmensen, & Yssing, 2002). In this study of acculturation strategies utilized in immigrant and refugee students attending community-

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based afterschool programs, the think aloud method provided preliminary interpretations from the participants. Incorporating this method enabled participants to meaningfully contribute to the analysis of their own works.

Visual methods can provide a rich source a data, but also a great deal of room for error in researcher interpretation. As Cross, Kabel, and Lysack (2006) write, the use and interpretation of visual methods are optimized when used with a researcher alongside the participants who construct them. In accordance with the philosophy of Cross et al. (2007), I engaged the participants in the think aloud process in order to maximize clarity and understanding of the meaning communicated through participant drawings. I expected that through the think-aloud process participants would offer further explanations regarding the items included in the pictures as well as the reasons these items were included. More specifically, participants may have offered insight into color selection, settings, meanings behind the items such as clothing and figures in the participant drawings.

The think-aloud method focused on two phases of participant drawing construction. The first phases focused on the construction of the participant drawings. To understand the construction of the drawings, participants were encouraged to discuss their initial ideas regarding the drawing they construct.

The second phase of the think-aloud method focused on the participants completed drawings. Participants were asked to discuss their completed drawings, highlighting what each participant perceived to be the most important aspects of the drawings. In addition, the participants were asked to explain any imagery of the drawing, which lack clarity. The think-aloud process was guided by the following questions:

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1. What are the most important aspects of your drawing?
2. Is there anything you would add to your picture?
3. What were you thinking when you drew your picture?

### **Analytical Memos**

Methodologically, analytical memos are most closely associated with grounded theory; however, all qualitative inquiries can be enhanced by the use of analytical memos (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). Memo writing enables researchers to connect developing concepts, thoughts, and theories that are generated from raw data and analysis (Birks, Mills, Francis, & Chapman, 2009). Glaser (1978) encourages researchers to engage in memo writing throughout the progression of a research study to document ideas and developing concepts that may be lost to the researcher otherwise.

I utilized memo writing throughout the three stages of qualitative data collection and analysis as well as during the integration stage. As per the guidelines defined by Birks et al. (2008), each memo was labeled and dated to organize and detail the progression of analysis. The focus of the memo writing in the qualitative phase of this study was to extract meaning from the data. More specifically, through memo writing I documented my initial analysis regarding the data gathered from participant observations, the participant drawings, and the think-aloud method. Additionally, I engaged in analytical memos to connect developing themes between these three stages of data collection, highlighting common threads and connecting concepts.

I also engaged in memo writing during the integration of the qualitative and quantitative phases. Memo writing was vital in documenting connecting themes between the AHIMSA scale and the qualitative stages. More specifically, memo writing was used

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to document initial categories developed from the integration of the qualitative and quantitative data. This aided in determining the consistency between acculturation strategies communicated through qualitative measures and quantitative measures. During this stage, my memo writing was focused on developing definitional statements. Birks et al. (2008) assert that definitional statements in memo writing assist in identifying the parameters for each group of data, providing a useful tool to conduct comparative analysis. This approach aided in determining the consistency and or inconsistencies between the acculturation strategies communicated through qualitative measures and quantitative measures.

### **Phase II: Qualitative Analysis**

#### **Initial Coding**

Initial coding serves as a means to identify conditions, while highlighting regularities in participants' participation of a phenomenon (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). In this study, initial coding was the first analytic technique utilized. Participant drawings, think-aloud responses, and fieldnotes were coded with initial codes. Participant drawings were coded first. Following the initial coding of drawings, think-aloud responses and fieldnotes were coded. Member checking were conducted during the initial stages of coding to verify that the researcher's interpretation of drawings and think-aloud responses are in line with those of the participants.

#### **Focused Coding and Theoretical Coding**

Focused coding is the sorting of large amounts of data based upon the most prevalent initial codes (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2002). As stated by Charmaz (2014), focused codes tend to be emergent codes that are used to analyze, synthesize, and

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conceptualize large data sets. Theoretical codes are a form of focused codes that draw from prior theories and analytical frameworks that are used to integrate categories (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical coding allows for a new and fresh way of connecting codes and categories while maintaining connections to previously established theoretical frameworks (Charmaz, 2014).

Initially, I used a focused coding approach to develop categories. These preliminary categories were numerous and reflected loose connections to concepts related acculturation. To development more conceptual sound categories and examine possible connections the concepts of acculturation measured the AHIMSA instrument and those emerging from the qualitative data, I employed theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2014). As the AHIMSA scale was constructed based upon the framework presented by Berry et al. (1986), I used the same theoretical framework to inform the theoretical coding process used in this analysis. I recoded the categories developed through the initial focused coding based on codes that more clearly reflected the conceptual framework of acculturation theory. Once all of the relevant initial codes were categorized through theoretical coding, the remaining codes were categorized inductively. The new category was developed from the most prevalent theme(s) that emerged from the initial codes. This result in one additional category. While this category was not identified through the acculturation framework, the category emerged from concepts that proved to be relevant to the acculturation of the participants in this study.

### **Axial Coding**

Axial coding is an analytical method used to examine relationships between categories, sub-categories, and codes. Starks and Trinidad (2007) define axial coding as

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the reassembling of data into groups based on patterns and relationships occurring within and across categories. Axial coding was used in this study to further explore relationships between categories developed in two of the qualitative strands (participant drawings and observation fieldnotes). From the axial coding process, themes were developed. Themes are statements used to describe the integration of relational ideas emerging from the data (Patton, 2005). Identifying key themes through axial coding was vital in distinguishing and reporting key findings.

### **Phase III: Quantitative Phase**

#### **Instrument**

Due to the growing interest of quantifiable acculturation measures, various scales have been developed to measure acculturation through areas such as eating habits, television viewing habits, preferred language, peer groups, and familial behaviors (Barry, 2005; Marin & Gamba, 1996; Barry, 2001; Marin, Marin, Otero-Sabogel, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Very few of these scales are multicultural, and/or designed to measure acculturation in youth communities. While many of these scales measure the same constructs, they use ethnically and culturally specific terminology as well as constructs that may not be relevant or appropriate in youth communities (Unger et al., 2002).

The AHIMSA (Unger et al, 2002) youth acculturation scale is a behavior focused cultural scale. This scale draws from four central themes; ethnic identity and classification, cultural heritage, ethnic behaviors, and ethnic interactions. The final scale is an eight-item scale, with four response options associated to a level of acculturation, for example, “1. I am most comfortable being around people from...”, a. The United

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States (assimilation), b. The country where my family is from (separation) c. both (integration), d. neither (marginalization).

### **AHIMSA Scale**

The AHIMSA scale was administered to participants during one session for each CFCBP community program. Students were provided with the AHIMSA scale and pencils to complete the form. Following the completion of the AHIMSA scale, the demographic information sheet and the completed AHIMSA scale was collected, collated, and assigned ID numbers to ensure the privacy and security of participants and any personal information.

### **Phase IV: Quantitative Data Analysis**

The scales was hand scored. Scores will be calculated by first recoding each response to the corresponding acculturation level. “A”, responses are recoded to assimilation, “B” response are recoded to separation, “C” response are recoded to integration, and “D” responses are recoded to marginalization. Following the recoding process, each item response was assigned a value of one. The frequency of each was calculated and documented for input into a SPSS data file. Higher frequencies of a response indicate prevalence of the corresponding acculturation level (Unger et. al., 2002). The frequency of responses was calculated for; 1) all participant responses 2) responses of immigrant participants 3) responses of refugee participants 4) responses within each cultural domain examined in the AHIMSA scale (Social Relationships, Pop Culture Preferences, Food & Holiday Preferences, Overall Way of Thinking).

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### **Phase V: Integration**

Following the analysis of the AHIMSA scale, the data from the qualitative phase (drawings, participant observations, memos, think-aloud protocol) and the quantitative phase were compiled for comparative analysis. In the initial step of this analysis, participant drawings, AHIMSA scale responses, and demographic information from each participant were grouped together. The data from the individual participant AHIMSA scale and the drawing sessions were compared to examine the consistency of acculturation strategies communicated through the participant drawings with the results of the AHIMSA acculturation scale. The purpose of this stage was to examine if young immigrants/refugees express consistent strategies of acculturation across various measures.

### **Authenticity and Trustworthiness**

#### **Cultural Learning**

In an attempt to increase the authenticity and trustworthiness of this study I engaged in various activities to increase my knowledge and awareness of the CFCBP programs and cultural backgrounds of the participants of this research study. I met with the director of programs, volunteer coordinator, and directors of the CFCBPs to discuss the purpose of the centers, the populations served by the centers, and the activities offered through the centers. In addition, these meetings provided some safety guidelines for each of the CFCBP's community centers.

These meetings increased my preparation for engaging with the participants as well as my ability to interpret the data collected in this study authentically. Most



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importantly, the training program enabled me to increase cultural competency and ability to understand the impact of cultural context when analyzing data.

### **Pilot Study**

Another step taken to increase authenticity and trustworthiness of this study was conducting a pilot study. Prior to the data collection for this study, I conducted a pilot study to examine any methodological issues in the research design. In collaboration with the after-school center director, ten students were selected to participate in the pilot study. I followed the methodological procedures outlined in this chapter.

The data collected from this pilot study was not used for publication nor was it included in the results of this dissertation study. The pilot study was constructed for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of data collection and analytical methods through integration and feedback from a sample population representative of the research target population. Any issues of clarity, issues regarding the prompts, or the think-aloud methods that were present during the pilot study will be adjusted and reexamined before they were utilized in this dissertations study.

### **Think-Aloud Method**

The think-aloud process is a method integrated during the drawing construction stage of the data collection. Think-aloud served as a secondary method of data collection and a preliminary method of analysis. During the initial drawing session, participants were asked to discuss how they planned and constructed their drawings. During the final drawing session, participants were asked to discuss any feelings, thoughts, and or their overall interpretation of their drawings. The think-aloud process allowed for further

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analysis of the drawings constructed by participants with a clearer understanding of context and meaning (Cross et al., 2006).

In addition, engaging in the think-aloud process encouraged authenticity in interpretation. Through the think-aloud method the final interpretation of the drawings built upon the verbal data provided by the participants (Nielsen, Clemmensen, Yssing, 2002). This aided in ensuring authenticity and trustworthiness are maximized during this stage of analysis.

**Member Checking.** According to Carlson (2010), member checking allows the researcher to find out whether the data analysis is congruent with the experiences of the participants. Throughout this process participants were asked to clarify, edit, and elaborate on any and all aspect of the data analysis that do not coincide with their experiences. Member checking was utilized in this study to enhance interpretative authenticity while enabling participants to contribute and evaluate the interpretation of their work.

### **Peer Review**

The final measure utilized to enhance trustworthiness and authenticity was the use of a peer reviewer. Peer review is a method useful in ensuring confirmability and accountability in research (Seale, 1999). Creswell and Miller (2000) state that a peer reviewer pushes the research to new methodological levels by questions, supporting, exploring different explanations, and challenging the researcher. By enlisting the aid of a peer reviewer, researchers add credibility to their work (Creswell & Miller, 2009). In this study, my dissertation chair acted as the peer reviewer. My peer reviewer was consulted throughout the data collection stages; however, the most critical role of my peer reviewer

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was the collaboration and guidance provided during the analysis stage. More specifically, my peer reviewer assisted in guiding the development of a coding dictionary, as well as, reviewing the codes. Working with a peer reviewer during the analytical stage of my research increased the trustworthiness of the research, the researcher, and the findings of this study.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The concept of a paradigm is the worldview, which informs a researcher's approach to not only seeing the world, but also constructing knowledge (Heron & Reason, 1997). As researchers, the paradigmatic approach guiding our work influences how we understand the construction of knowledge as well as how we approach our research practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). To promote transparency researchers are expected to identify their research-based beliefs that may influence the execution of their work.

I identify as both a constructivist and as well as with the arts-based paradigm. The constructivist paradigm asserts that while researchers are tools for collecting data and conveying knowledge, the lens through which we see the world impact our understanding of knowledge (Carr et al. 1994). The arts based paradigm asserts that not only is knowledge co-constructed between the researcher and the participant, but that this knowledge can be created and disseminated through the arts (Leavy, 2015).

In both qualitative and art-based methodologies, the researcher is expected to convey the subjectivity, which could arise during their research. While I do not attempt nor do I believe I can achieve complete objectivity, I do believe in researcher transparency. In addressing my own possible subjectivities regarding my research I hope

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to maximize the transparency and trustworthiness of this work. My previous experiences within the immigrant and refugee community, specifically the community at the center included in this study is important to address in engaging in this research.

My connection to this particular population steams from a desire to work with youth how are identified as at-risk or underserved. My research and personal interest aim to reflect ideals and practices that promote social justice. As a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro I spent more than three years working within immigrant and refugee youth populations at the CFCBP. In this previous experience, I was tasked with the role of creating and executing conflict resolution interventions within this population. From that experience, I became aware of a natural inclination to attempt to “fix” arising problems within this community. As a researcher, it is my hope that the results of my work can provide insight for the community leaders to influence positive change within the community through scientific inquiry. Part of accomplishing this goal is acknowledging my new role in this environment as a researcher, allowing the participants to provide the necessary knowledge and experience to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

Additionally, I believe to best serve the purpose of this research, I must recognize that the previous knowledge gained from my work at the center may provide some context in understanding the phenomenon of acculturation in youth communities, but should be used to replace the knowledge and experiences of the participants of this study.

### **Limitations**

The nuanced experiences of immigrant and refugee youth progressing through cultural transitions highlights a need to use caution when interpreting the findings from

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any single study, as well as, the magnitude of influence any one intervention may have on the acculturation of culturally transitioning youth. Based on the complexities of cultural transitions and interventions addressing these cultural transitions, there are some limitations that may impact the generalizability as well as the interpretation and analysis of this study.

The first limitation of this study is the generalizability of the findings due to the small sample size of immigrant and refugee participants. This study examined immigrant and refugee youth from various nationalities, while the diverse backgrounds of these participants can add a more in-depth understanding of acculturation strategies in various immigrant and refugee communities, this study does not directly examine acculturation strategies across different ethnicities and nationalities. In not addressing issues of race, ethnic, and or nationality directly, this study cannot account for the cultural differences that may impact the acculturation process. Additionally, immigrant and refugee populations may require different interventions based on their cultural beliefs, histories, and communities, the results of this study cannot account for the needs of all immigrant and refugee communities. The purposeful sampling method and diversity of the sample population can aid in diminishing the aforementioned limitations. Furthermore, the findings of this study may prove useful in assisting community-based programs that serve populations that are ethnically and nationally similar to the participants of this study.

An additional limitation that may present itself in this study is self-report bias. Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002), assert that research participants tend to respond to measures in ways that make them appear favorably to the researcher. In engaging in self-report bias, participants may underreport certain behaviors deemed social unacceptable

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and over-report behaviors viewed as favorable in order for the participant to be deemed as social acceptable (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Both the participant drawings and AHIMSA scale used to examine acculturation strategies in this study are self-reported measures. In using these methods to examine acculturation strategies in immigrant and refugee youth, there is a risk of self-report bias. The use of an arts-informed method was utilized, in part, to encourage free and authentic expressions by the participants and diminish participants' desire to report favorable responses. Additionally, the confidentiality upheld throughout this research study, more specifically, students not being identified on the scales, may have helped in diminishing self-report bias on the AHIMSA scale.

Lastly, the inability to account for participant engagement in additional programs and interventions encouraging acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth is another limitation of this study. Programs such as New Comer Schools or other initiatives designed to ease acculturation stress may have influenced the strategies adopted by the immigrant and refugee students attending this CFBCP. To identify participants who engaged in other programs influencing acculturation strategies, a question regarding participation in other programs was included in the demographic information requested from the participants. The purposeful sampling method utilized in this study aimed to reduce the number of participants attending additional intervention programs.

### **Conclusion**

This mixed methods approach to arts-informed research aimed to examine the acculturation strategies of immigrant and refugee students attending community-based afterschool programs. The methodological approaches in this study were specifically

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designed to maximize our understanding of immigrant and refugee children's acculturation strategies. Integrating arts-informed, qualitative methods, and quantitative methods ensured that the complexities of this phenomenon can be examined through a variety of purposeful and effective research methods.

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## Chapter Four: Findings

### **Introduction**

The complex nature of cultural transitions in youth populations cannot be understated. With the added complexities of biological and cognitive development, acculturation in youth populations is a particularly challenging phenomenon to comprehensively examine. Previous studies (Unger et al., 2002; Berry et al., 2006) examining the cultural adaptations of immigrant and refugee youth have stressed the use of acculturation strategies that reflect the adoption, rejection, or balance of one or more cultures. The findings of this study suggest that youth who have experienced cultural transitions may adopt the theorized strategies of acculturation to cope with cultural transitions, however, they may also cope by developing culturally ambiguous strategies that promote their unique interest and individuality.

The purpose of this mixed methods approach to arts-informed research was to examine acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth attending community-based after school programs. The methods used in this study were purposefully employed to examine multiple aspects believed to influence the acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth. Furthermore, this mixed methods approach to arts-informed research allowed for a deeper exploration into how immigrant and refugee youth communicate their experiences of acculturation as well as their own cultural paradigms. Although originally employed to examine comparable aspects of acculturation, the participant drawings and AHIMSA scale measured different domains of culture. Emerging findings from participant drawings suggest that participants focused heavily on personal values and interest. Unger et al. (2002) describe the AHIMSA scale as an instrument designed to examine the



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cultural behaviors and attitudes and immigrant children. The incorporation of data emerging from participant drawings and AHIMSA scale results provide a more complete examination of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth. As Cabassa (2003) contends, acculturation can be observed across various domains such as attitudes, behaviors, and sense of cultural identity. The addition of personal interest is a nod to a lesser examined element of acculturation, one that eludes to the emergence of individuality as an approach to acculturation.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. In what ways do immigrant youth depict themselves in drawings?
2. How do community-based programs contribute to acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth?
3. Are there differences in the ways immigrant youth depict themselves between acculturation levels?
4. Does the arts-informed approach produce information about experience that contribute to acculturation not produced through the AHIMSA scale?

This chapter reports the research findings emerging from the analysis of two drawing prompts, think-aloud responses, and results of the Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents developed by Unger et al. (2002). Two participant observations were conducted at each of the two participating after school programs or Center for Community Based Programs (CFCBP). Participant observations involved one-on-one tutoring with participants as well as observations of participants with CFCBP tutors, volunteers, and staff. As part of the participant observations, I also conducted and analyzed environmental observations of each site. These observations

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focused on the physical settings of the community-based afterschool programs, such as educational materials, decorations, and classroom layout.

### Findings

#### Research Sites

Table 1

#### *Participant Demographic Summary*

Characteristics	CFCBP1		CFCBP2
	Refugee (n=6)		Immigrant (n=9)
	Nepali	Karen	Mexican
Sex			
Boy	1	0	5
Girl	0	5	4
Age Range	9-11		6-11

This research study was conducted at CFCBP1 and CFCBP2. I alternated weekly between each site for 12 weeks. CFCBP1 was an after-school program providing various social, health, and educational services to refugee children and families predominately from Karen, Nepal, Burma, Iran. Some U.S. born children living in the nearby community also attended CFCBP1 for their after-school tutorial services. CFCBP1 had three staff members working at the afterschool program as well as volunteers from local colleges and universities. The number of volunteers working at CFCBP1 varied each day. On Fridays, CFCBP1 offered participants the opportunity to attend a soccer-based sports program at a local university.

CFCBP2 was an afterschool program providing educational and social services to immigrant families and some U.S. born children. At CFCBP2, participant's

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parents/guardians waited at the center while participants were tutored. CFCBP2 had two onsite staff members working at the afterschool program in addition to volunteers from local colleges and universities. The number of volunteers differed each day. Several volunteers at CFCBP2 were fluent in Spanish. On Fridays, CFCBP2 offered participants the opportunity to attend the same soccer-based sports program attended by CFCBP1 participants.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Population**

Between CFCBP1 and CFCBP2, 22 participants volunteered to participate in this study. Five participants did not receive parental consent. Two participants' data were omitted from this study as they did not complete the think-aloud interview or the AHIMSA scale.

Participants included both refugees (people forced to migrate from their native countries due to political, religious, and or economic persecution) and immigrants (people who voluntarily migrate to another country). Of the refugee participants, there was one male participant and five female participants. The refugee participants were of Karen or Nepali heritage. While both from Burma, the Karen and Nepali people represent different Burmese ethnicities. There were nine immigrant participants included in the study. All nine of the immigrant participants reported being of Mexican heritage. Five of the immigrant participants were male and four were female. Participants were all between the ages of 6 and 11.

### **Drawing sessions**

The two participant drawings were a central source of data in this research study. The prompt for the first drawing asked participants to draw a picture describing

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themselves. The purpose of prompt 1 was to examine participant's values, interest, and depictions related to cultural practices. Prompt 2 asked participants to identify the reasons they come to the CFCBP1 or CFCBP2. In the prompt, participants were encouraged to include specific things they liked and disliked about the center. The purpose of this prompt was to elicit specific features of each program that contributed to participant acculturation.

Participant drawings were completed in one-on-one sessions with each participant. I read both drawing prompts to participants and asked them to complete both drawings before engaging in the think-aloud sessions. I provided markers, color pencils, crayons, multi-colored construction paper, and plain white drawing paper to each participant. While no time limit was established for participant sessions, I attempted to complete each session within one hour.

In total, 34 participant drawings were submitted. Nineteen drawings were submitted in response to prompt 1 and 15 drawings were submitted in response to prompt 2. Three participants submitted two drawings in response to prompt 1.

### **Classification of the Drawings**

Participant drawings for the drawing prompt 1 and prompt 2 varied in use of color, focal point of the drawings, detail, and skill. To aid in the analysis of the drawings, I classified the drawings into one of three groups that made it possible to make comparisons across the two drawings. These classifications included:

1. Story Oriented Depictions: Through story oriented drawings participants focused on depicting an event, activity, or environment. These pictures may have included depictions of the participant, however self-depictions were included with other

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- individuals and or included as part of the “story” being expressed through the drawings. Story oriented drawings also included depictions of landscapes or characters from videogames, folklores, or books.
2. Self-Portraits: Self-portraits are participant drawings in which the participant is clearly the central focus of the drawing. In these drawings, the participant is the only individual depicted in the drawing. While other items may be included in the drawings, self-portrayals most often focused on the facial features of the participant.
  3. Interest Portraits: Interest portraits had all of the same characteristics as the self-portraits with the added attribute of depictions of multiple included activities, interests, and or thoughts and ideas valued by the participant.

Story oriented depictions were the most common classification of drawings submitted by participants. There were 25 story-oriented drawings submitted. In addition, story-oriented drawings were the only classification of drawings submitted by both immigrant and refugee participants. Four participants submitted self-portraits and five participants submitted interest portraits. All of the self-portraits were submitted by the refugee participants while all of the interest portraits were submitted by the immigrant participants. The story-oriented depictions were submitted by both immigrant and refugee participants.

### **Think-Aloud Sessions**

Following the completion of their drawings, I engaged each participant in a think aloud session. In each session, I asked participants the following questions:

1. What are the most important aspects of your drawing?

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2. Is there anything you would like to add to your picture?
3. What were you thinking when you were drawing your picture?

The purpose of the think-aloud sessions was to expound upon and or clarify the data collected from the participant drawings. The participants were asked to respond to each question for the drawings they produced in response to prompt 1 and prompt 2. These think-aloud sessions typically lasted for about 30 minutes to one hour and were not record. I wrote down participant responses and engaged in memoing during the think aloud sessions as well as directly afterward each session.

With the exception of one session, all think-aloud sessions were conducted in English. One participant preferred to respond to the think-aloud questions in Nepali. During this session, another participant was asked to translate for the participant. On two occasions the participant interrupted the interpreting participant to correct inaccurate interpretations.

Following the think-aloud sessions, participants were given the AHIMSA scale to complete. While participants complete the AHIMSA scale I wrote memos about the preliminary connections or differences between participant think-aloud responses and drawings. Memoing at this stage was helpful in the construction of initial codes.

### **Prompt 1 Drawing and Think-Aloud Responses Findings**

In the initial drawing session participants were asked to complete a drawing responding to the following prompt:

***Draw a portrait of yourself. In this portrait include some of your favorite things (hobbies, foods, music, television shows) and some of things/people that are most important to you.***

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The purpose of the first drawing session was to examine the cultural depictions participants included when asked to express themselves through an artistic medium. Subsequently, the think aloud method was used to clarify and expound upon the data generated from the drawings.

### **Prompt 1: Codes**

Prompt 1 participant drawings and think aloud responses went through two stages of coding; initial coding and categorical coding. Initially, I coded the participant drawings. After coding the participant drawings, I coded the corresponding think aloud responses. The initial coding process followed the grounded theory approach to initial coding (Charmaz, 2014). Following the grounded theory approach to initial codes, these codes were purposed with identifying and summarizing fragments of data from the participant drawings and think aloud responses in a highly descriptive manor. Using NVivo for Mac software, I combined the initial codes produced from the prompt 1 drawings and think aloud responses. 125 codes emerged from the initial coding process. After merging overlapping codes, 99 initial codes remained. Thirty-seven of the initial codes were generated from the participant drawings. An additional 62 codes were generated from the think aloud responses. The 105 codes were organized into five categories (Appendix H). After the categories were developed, I recoded the participant drawings and think aloud responses in NVivo for Mac software.






### **Prompt 1: Categories**

I developed categories through a combination of theoretical coding using existing theory and an emergent approach. Theoretical codes are codes that a researcher draws on

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Table 2

*Drawing and Think Aloud Findings Summary Table with Themes*

Categories	Participants	Codes from Drawings	Codes from Think Aloud Method	Total Codes	Percentage of All Codes	Excerpts from Think-Aloud Interviews	Participant Drawing
<i>Maintaining Aspects of Native Culture</i>	RPB01GH, RPB02OW, RPB03OW, RPG01GH, RPG02OW, RPG10OW, RPG06OW, RPB05OW, RPG06OW, RPG08GH	9	9	18	18.18%	“Mexico is important because it is where my family is from”	
<i>Familial Influence and Demands</i>	RPB02OW, RPB01GH, RPG10OW, RPG06OW, RPB05OW, RPG07OW	6	14	20	20.20%	“My dad taught me to like soccer. Barcelona is my favorite team. I like Barcelona because that’s my dad’s favorite soccer team. I like watching the games with him”	
<i>Representations of Self-Image Perception through Self-Portraits</i>	RPB03OW, RPB04OW, RPG01GH, RPG04GH, RPG10OW, RPG07OW, RPG03GH	7	10	17	17.17%	“I drew a picture of my beautiful face”	
<i>Culturally Absent Depictions</i>	RPB02OW, RPB03OW, RPG01GH, RPG10OW, RPG09GH, RPG06OW, RPG08GH, RPG07OW	9	16	25	25.25%	“I drew the kissing emoji because it is my favorite emoji”	
<i>Assimilation Adaptation/Cultural Shedding</i>	RPB04OW, RPG02OW, RPG03GH, RPG06OW, RPB02OW, RPG01GH, RPB06OW	6	13	19	19.20%	“It’s Christmas time. This is when I decorate with my family. Some Nepali people don’t celebrate Christmas, but we do.”	

Note: Coding totals have been controlled for repeat codes between drawing and think aloud responses.



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that lacked conceptual depth with regard to acculturation. I used theoretical coding to refine the categories produced through focused coding. Through theoretical coding, more conceptually sound categories emerged. However, some initial codes were inconsistent with the categories developed through theoretical coding. From the initial codes that were not categorized through theoretical coding, an additional category developed based on one prevalent theme regarding participants' self-image. This category illustrated aspects of acculturation that were not addressed on the AHIMSA instrument nor in acculturation theory (Berry, 2006).

Using the variables theorized to contribute to the acculturation of youth (Berry et al., 2006; Unger et al, 2006) the following categories were developed: Demands of Parents, Development of Individual Identity, Cultural Shedding/Assimilation, Connections to Native Countries (see Table 2). Connections to Native Countries was renamed to Maintaining Aspects of Native Culture to reflect a more deliberate intention by the participant to maintain the customs of their native country. This label better reflects the initial codes in this category (Appendix H). From the Familial Demands category two subcategories were developed, Familial Influence and Familial Demands. The subcategory Familial Demands identifies instances in which a participant states that the demands of a parent or family member directly impact the participant's actions and or behaviors. The subcategory Familial Influences identifies instances in which participants state the influence of a parent or family member impacts the participant's actions, behaviors, interest, and or values. The influence differs from the demand as the influence suggests that the participant has a certain degree of autonomy regarding the aforementioned aspects of their behavior.

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One additional category was developed inductively. The category Representations of Self Image/Perception Through Self-Portraits was not easily coded or categorized in the aforementioned categorical codes. Representations of Self Image/Perception Through Self-Portraits differs from the others as it addresses the visual aspect of self-expression. It focuses more on categorizing implicit depictions of self and culture than the other categories. More specifically, this category tended to represent the codes produced from drawings that had one central focus, i.e. a self-portrait of the participant.

After recoding the participant drawings and think aloud responses, I wrote memos regarding any differences and or connections I observed between the categories. These memos were useful in identifying emerging themes. From an analysis of the initial codes and categorical codes generated from participant drawings and think aloud the following four themes emerged:

1. **Participants depict culturally ambiguous components of their identity that reflect individuality.** This theme was a result of the emerging pattern of participants depicting or communicating interest, values, and behaviors that do not explicitly reflect a single culture. Additionally, this theme reflects a pattern in which participants communicate aspect of their physical appearance that they value or identify as being important.
2. **Personal relationships influence the ways by which immigrant and refugee youth engage with their native cultures.** This theme was a result of the emerging patterns of participants communicating that personal relationships with friends, non-adult family members, and adult family

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members, especially parents, influenced participants' connections to aspects of their native cultures.

3. **Participants express the maintenance of their native culture through language folklore, and observation of holidays.** This theme was a result of the emerging patterns concerning the ways in which participants expressed their connections to behaviors, practices, and values related to their native cultures.
4. **Immigrant Participants Were More Likely to Communicate a Desire for Culture Shedding.** This theme was a result of the emerging pattern of immigrant participants communicating a desire to abandon certain cultural practices from their countries of heritage.

Through the maintenance of specific cultural practices and their relationships with family members and close friendships, participants engaged in behaviors that demonstrated connections to their native cultures. In engaging in such behaviors, participants demonstrated the separation strategy to acculturation. Participants communicating a desire for cultural shedding could have been adopting assimilation or marginalization approaches to acculturation. Based on the framework introduced by Berry (1986), the presence of cultural shedding is indicative of assimilation if the native cultures were replaced with those of the dominant culture and marginalization if the native cultures and cultures of the dominant culture were both rejected. Each of these themes are discussed in greater detail in the next section of this document.

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### **Prompt 1 Emergent Themes**

#### **Participants Depict Culturally Ambiguous Components of Their Identity That Reflect Individuality**

The most prevalent theme that emerged from the qualitative data was self-expression absent of clear cultural connections. This theme emerged from the patterns identified in the Culturally Absent Depictions and Representations of Self-Image/Perception Through Self-Portraits categorical codes. These two categories were coded in the drawings and think aloud responses of 11 participants and represented 40% (see Appendix J) of the codes generated from prompt 1's participant drawing and think aloud responses. This theme suggests that through self-portraits, culturally ambiguous depictions of hobbies, individual values, and interests, some participants highlighted various aspects of their individuality while refraining from adopting any clear cultural paradigm.

Self-portraits and the think-aloud responses regarding these drawings commonly reflected the participants' culturally ambiguous depictions of individuality. In three of the four self-portraits submitted, participants excluded any obvious depictions of cultural components focusing solely on depictions of themselves. Furthermore, the participants communicated positive perceptions of themselves. In their think-aloud responses, participants tended to provide more details about how they felt about their facial features, clothing, and themselves in general. Comments like, "I am beautiful" or "I love myself" were commonly used when I asked participants to explain their pictures. This sentiment is represented in the following excerpt from the:

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“Look at my beautiful face and my beautiful hair. My rosy cheeks and my nose and my beautiful eyes”, participant appears to place value in their physical appearance. Depiction of heart on participant’s shirt suggests that they value/love themselves, possibly beyond physical appearance. When I ask participant why they drew a heart on their shirt participant states, “I love myself.” (Think Aloud: Memo1\_ RPG04GH)

Self-depictions were an aspect of the drawings that were not overtly cultural. In addition, self-portraits highlighted how some participants felt about themselves and possibly their overall morale. Participant RPG01GH’s drawing and think-aloud response suggest that that this participant had appreciation and self-love for who they are and what they look like. While physical features can have cultural implications, the absence of any clear references to cultural representations may be more suggestive of how the participant valued them self as an individual. Participant RPG01GH’s think aloud responses added clear context to the meaning behind their self-portrait, in some other self-portraits the drawings were more clear assertions of the participant’s individuality.



*Drawing 1. Refugee participant self-portrait*

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Two participants submitted self-portraits in which the physical features in their drawings were not consistent with their real life physical features. For example, participant RPG03GH, a participant with dark brown hair drew themselves with blonde hair (see Drawing 1). The think-aloud responses provided little explanation as to why the participant chose to depict themselves in this way. The self-portrait conflicting with the participant's real-life appearance may further suggest that the participant is attempting to depict themselves as unique individual or at least their desire to be seen as a unique individual. There was not enough evidence to support the rejection of cultures, however findings may indicate that in remaining culturally ambiguous in their depictions and think-aloud responses, participants prioritized a desire to reflect their individuality over a need to commit to a cultural paradigm.

While the self-portraits exemplified culturally ambiguous depictions of individuality, some interest portraits and think-aloud responses reflected a similar trend. For example, in their think-aloud response participant RPG07OW stated, "I am in the recycling club at school. I think learning about recycling is fun. It is important to the environment." In this statement, the participant expressed an interest in a club and ideology that exemplifies cultural ambiguity. Again, this is not an overt rejection of the native or adoptive culture, but rather an emphasis of individual interest and values. Other participants noted similar culturally ambiguous activities and interest such as painting, singing, reading, and listening to music. Arguably, the cultural ambiguity of these hobbies affirmed some participants' inclinations to communicate their individual values over the value of their adoptive and native cultures.

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Although, the theory of acculturation suggests that individuals not adopting, maintaining, or balancing the cultural practices of their adoptive or native cultures are actively rejecting these cultures through the strategy of marginalization, the results of this research study suggest otherwise. To the contrary, the data informing this emergent theme suggest that participants did not consciously reject any cultural paradigm. Participants communicating their individual interest tended to remain culturally ambiguous in their depictions. This could have indicated that some acculturating youth cope with cultural transitions by adopting values, behaviors, and interest that don't require them to commit to any one culture, but rather to the development of their own individuality.

### **Personal Relationships Influence the Ways by Which Immigrant and Refugee Youth Engage with Their Native Cultures**

Another prevalent theme was found in the story-oriented drawings and the subsequent think-aloud responses. This theme was the importance of close familial and social relationships on the maintenance of participants' native cultures. This theme emerged from patterns observed in the Familial Influence and Demands category and the Maintaining Aspects of Native Culture category. These categorical codes were observed in 11 participants think-aloud responses and drawings and represented 36% of all the codes for prompt 1.

In drawings from these categories, participants included images of family members, specifically parents, siblings, or cousins, and/or of friends (see Drawing 2). These relationships were particularly important in the examination of acculturation as the participants indicated that through close relationships with family members and friends

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they maintain connections to their native cultures. This was especially true in familial relationships.



*Drawing 2.* Immigrant participant playing outside with her mother and father

The perceived dynamic of these relationships appeared to be a factor influencing participants' desire to maintain aspects of their native cultures or shed aspects of their native cultures. Participants who communicated positive familial dynamics seemed to voluntarily engage in cultural behaviors from their native cultures. Participants who communicated familial relationships where they had less autonomy, most often in parental-child relationships, indicated that some of the native cultural behaviors they exhibited were due to familial demands. This was particularly true for the immigrant participants, especially those who had parental figures present with them at the center.



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The subcategories identified in this theme reflect the aforementioned dynamics. Friendships and Non-Adult Family Members described how intracultural relationships with peers impacted participants' maintenance of their native culture. Familial influences and familial demands describe the cultural impact of the relationships between participants and their parents. The data suggest a distinct difference between familial demands and familial influence. As there was no question pertaining to familial dynamics on the acculturation scale, the development of this theme was based solely on the think-aloud responses and participant drawings.

**Friendships and Non-Adult Family Members.** In participant drawings with depictions of people participants identified as friends, the friends were depicted with similar physical features as participants or identified as being of the same cultural background (See Drawing 3). Continuing the pattern of



*Drawing 3.* Participant drawing of she and friends in her home.

culturally similar friendships, some participants identified non-adult family members such as cousin as being their friends. In their think-aloud responses participant RPB06OW reflected this sentiment in the following statement, “I was thinking about playing with my cousins. I like playing with them because we are nice to each other. We treat each other like we want to be treated”. This participant focused on the positive nature of the interactions between the participant and their family members. Positive interactions appeared to be factor which encouraged the participant to spend time with their cousins. This trend was predominately observed in the immigrant community.

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Participant RPB01GH was the sole refugee participant to identify their non-adult relatives as friends. In the think-aloud session participant RPB01GH stated, “My friends are my cousins. They live in Karen, though”. In this statement, the participant not only acknowledges a connection to their cousins as friends, but also a lack of people they perceived to be close friends in the United States. Attending the CFCBP1 with culturally similar peers while lacking close friendship with peers from the United States may influence the participant’s maintenance of the native culture. A lack of intercultural friendships decreases the opportunity for immigrant and refugee children to learn cultural behaviors from their peers. Although the participant did not indicate close friendships within any community outside of their native community in Karen, interacting with culturally similar peers at the afterschool program may have encouraged the participant to maintain the customs of their native culture.

Other participants identifying family members, in all cases cousins, as friends indicated that they spent their spare time with their cousins by choice. In maintaining close relationships with these family members, participants were engaging in same culture interactions. The participants were likely to engage in similar cultural practices as their peers. At CFCBP1, refugee participants commonly used their native languages when speaking to their peers and English when speaking to English speaking adults. Immigrant participants exhibited a similar practice when interacting with siblings, however, it appeared to more common when a parent was present. Parental presence may have impacted the participants’ cultural behavior through familial influence or familial demand.

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**Familial Influence.** Familial influence reflected familial dynamics in which the child has more autonomy regarding their own cultural expression. A majority of the codes identified in familial influence suggest that positive familial dynamics encouraged participants to maintain connections to aspects of their native cultures. In regular positive interactions with family members, participants appeared to be encouraged to remain connected with aspects of their native cultures while adopting and or exploring aspects of their adoptive culture and individuality. When discussing the influence of their father versus the demands of their mother, Participant RPG07OW reported contrasting feelings regarding cultural behaviors. An example of the influence of the participant's father was exhibited in the following statement, "My dad taught me to like soccer. My favorite team is Barcelona. I like Barcelona because that's my dad's favorite soccer team. I like watching the games with him". The positive interaction between the participant and their father influenced the participant's interest in soccer. The participant not only maintained the same interest in sports as their father, but also the same team. The participant's drawing and think-aloud responses indicated the willingness and excitement of the participant to share this interest with their father.

Additional positive interactions included activities such as family walks, cooking together, watching sports events together, and receiving support from family members for school events and activities. A majority of the codes identified in familial influence suggest that positive familial dynamics may encourage participants to maintain connections to aspects of their native cultures while allowing these participants the freedom to explore aspects of their individuality.

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**Familial Demands.** Familial demands reflected dynamics in which parents or adult family members direct the behaviors of participants through more authoritative approaches. For example, familial demands presented themselves in how participants engaged in their schoolwork, the games participants played, and where and when participants played outside. RPG07OW stated that their mother felt it was important for them to learn, "...the way she (their mother) wanted to teach me. She thinks I need to do the math her way." The participant indicated that her mother's desire to manage the way in which she did her homework impacted the frequency she attended the center as well as how often the participant was able to interact with her friends at the center.

Familial demands reflected a pattern of conflicting social, educational, and behavioral desires between participants and family members that may have impacted their cultural practices. While participants may have adopted specific cultural behaviors due to familial demands, these behaviors did not seem indicative of how the participants wanted to express themselves.

The impact of familial demands appeared to be more prevalent in the immigrant population and in most cases centered around speaking Spanish. The refugee participants commonly switched between languages when communicating with their peers. Furthermore, there were no indications of familial demands on the refugee participants in their drawings or think-aloud responses. When the participants engaged in aspects of their native cultures it appeared to be influenced by their personal desires to do so. It is important to note that at the center providing services to the refugee population (CFCBP1), parents were rarely present at the afterschool program. This was not the case at CFCBP2, which provided services to the immigrant population. It was not uncommon

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for parents of the CFCBP2 participants to stay at the center while participants were tutored. If their parents were present, some immigrant participants may have chosen to speak in their native tongues to fulfill familial demands. They may have also been encouraged to practice their native languages by the environment as most of the children and adults spoke Spanish as their first or second languages.

### **Participants Demonstrate their Connections to Culture (Adopted and Native) Through Language, Folklore, and Observation of Holidays**

The construct of culture can be presented through various aspects of behaviors, values, and traditions (Swidler, 1986). Practicing native languages, observations of holidays, and native folklore were all present in the findings of this study suggesting participants maintained facets of their cultures through these practices. The use of native languages was only discussed in the immigrant participants think aloud sessions. Refugee participants commonly switched between speaking their native languages and speaking English. In addition, one refugee participant requested to conduct their think aloud session in their native language. Observations of holidays from their native cultures were present in both immigrant and refugee populations, however the “attachment” to native folklore was only communicated in the refugee population. The difference between how the immigrant and refugee participants demonstrated connections to their native cultures may be attributed to both the duration of their time in United States and their rationale from migrating. All of the immigrant participants reported being born in the United States or immigrating to their United States as infants. Conversely, the refugee participants reported being in the United States for less than five years. The forced migration of the refugee participants may have explained why the refugee participants communicated

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connections to folklore as refugee participants had more direct engagement with the cultures of their native countries.

### **Language**

Practicing native languages may be one of the more accessible and visible elements of cultural maintenance. In this study, it was also one of the more overt ways in which the maintenance of native cultures was observed. Although practicing their native languages demonstrated the maintenance of native culture, immigrant and refugees communicated different motives for this particular cultural behavior. For example, an immigrant participant discussed their parents' insistence for them to speak their native language while at home. During the think-aloud session I asked participant RPG07OW if they were fluent in their native language, participant RPG07OW stated:

I speak Spanish. I really only speak it at home. My mom wants me to speak to her and my dad in Spanish and my brother. Sometimes me and my friends here speak Spanish, but most of the time I like to speak English. (Think Aloud: Memo1\_RPG07OW)

The conflicting desires between the participant and their parents indicated that the practice of speaking in the native tongue is based solely on the demands of the participants' parents. Although the practice may have been due to the influence of parental demands, maintaining the ability to speak their native languages is one way in which the participants remained connected to their native cultures. It provided them the ability to communicate with family members and others with similar cultural backgrounds.

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The refugee participants also spoke in their native languages. When speaking with their peers, refugee participants would commonly switch between speaking English and their native languages. One participant requested to conduct their think-aloud session in their native language with a peer as their interpreter. The motive for speaking their native language appeared to differ from the immigrant participants as their parents were not present at the center and did not seem to influence the use of native language in the same way as immigrant parents. This could be due to differences in immigrant and refugee cultures.

### **Folklore**

Folklore is the oral learning and expression of the speech, tales, songs, dance and customs of a specific group of people (Bronner, 2016). It exemplifies the maintenance of cultural values and traditions across generations (Bronner, 2016). As folklore exemplifies cultural expression through verbal communication, it inevitably signifies a connection to the culture from which the folklore is derived. The presence of folklore manifested in the refugee community in two ways: 1) Folklore pertaining to specific customs and behaviors; 2) Folklore that communicated a story such as a fairytale or fable.

The presence of folklore as a way of defining a belief, custom, or practice was demonstrated in one of the refugee participant's think aloud responses. The participant's comments regarding a medicinal necklace were the result of me prompting the participant about a necklace made from what appeared to be a blue leaf bound together by string. Although the participant did not include any depictions of the necklace in their drawings, they discussed it in during their think aloud responses, which is summarized in the following excerpt:

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RPG01GH states that the boy with blue leaf/possible hemp string necklace was probably sick. The boy's mother or grandmother (practice may be gender specific) would have made the necklace and wrapped herbs in leaf for medicinal purposes. RPG01GH states, "A lot of Nepali people do it instead of taking medicines" (Memo 2\_RPG01GH)

While it is unclear rather the custom of making necklaces for medicinal purposes was taught to the participant verbally or by the participant observing the custom, their knowledge regarding the necklace's purpose in their community and the participant's ability to communicate this custom illustrated the presence of folklore. More importantly, it demonstrated the participant's knowledge and maintenance of the customs held in their native cultures. This participant demonstrated folklore as an understanding of cultural customs, another participant demonstrated a connection to native folklore through a fairytale or fable told them by their mother. The following describes the participant's think aloud session:

RPB01GH stands to act out the fairytale about the Karen princess. Participant states: that their mother tells the story, "...of the beautiful princess, the most beautiful princess in the land...", participant emphasizes the beauty of the princess by slowly outlining the shape of their face with their hand. Participant continues to tell the story of the Karen princess while standing and emphasizing certain points of the story through dramatic body movements and facial expressions. The participant says the story ends with the princess eating poisonous fruit, which causes her death. Participant's first drawing includes poisonous fruit trees. May be connection between poisonous trees in drawing and the story. Possibly a story



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used to discourage children from eating fruit on trees in village. (Memo 1\_RPB01GH)

The participant's story reflected a connection to their native culture through folklore. Through storytelling, the participant's mother passed down a story that appeared to have some cultural significance as it connects the participant to a Karen fairytale or fable. Additionally, the poisonous fruit mentioned in the think aloud session may have been the same fruit depicted in the participant's drawing of their home village, which suggest the fairytale or fable may have been told to convey a lesson regarding the dangers of the trees in the village. While folklore was not a prevalent component of cultural maintenance in the refugee or immigrant populations, the ways in which it was presented in the refugee population imply that it was a significant aspect of the transmission of culture within this population of participants as it connected the participants to behaviors and customs unique to their native cultures.

Unlike immigrant participants, the refugees were forced to leave their countries of origin. As refugees, these participants may have had a greater desire to maintain, remember, and or connect to the customs of their native cultures as they progress through the acculturation process. Additionally, the refugee participants all reported being born in their countries of origin and migrating to the United States within the last five years. The youngest refugee participant was 10 years old, therefore all of the refugee participants had direct contact with the native cultures in their countries of origin. Conversely, the immigrant participants reported being born in the United States or migrating to the United States as infants which indicated that they had very little direct contact with customs and traditions from the native cultures in their countries of origin. While this

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may not have indicated that the transmission of folklore isn't present in the immigrant population, it may have offered some explanation as to why folklore was not present in their data.

### **Observation of native holidays**

Holidays are direct representations of the events, religious affiliations, and traditions valued in a community. Similarly, to folklore, holidays carry a significant implication regarding one's cultural values. As it pertains to acculturation, the observation of holidays for those engaging in cultural transitions can be seen as one of many indications of their acculturation strategy.

While discussions of holidays were rare in both the immigrant and refugee populations, three participants discussed observing specific holidays. Two participants, one immigrant and one refugee, noted that they celebrate holidays from their native cultures as well as holidays from the United States. It is important to note that the participants made the distinctions between the origin of holidays. One refugee participant depicted images related to Christmas.

There were clear difference arising between immigrant and refugee participants regarding the degree to which they engaged in the holidays from the native culture. Again, the refugee participants communicated a greater degree of engagement with the holidays of their native culture than the immigrant participants. The magnitude of engagement was measured by the level of detail used when describing holidays as well as the number of holidays discussed or depicted. The following excerpt addresses participant RPG01GH comments regarding the holidays they observe:

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“It is Christmas time. Time to decorate with family. Santa Claus. Some Nepali families celebrate Christmas. Some don’t. Some families celebrate Dashai, Thair, Teej.”

**Dashai:** Every family in the community comes together and says something nice to each other. (Excludes Christians). Families wear new clothes, give each other money, food (fruits) This is celebrated in October. **Teej:** Some non-Christians. Only girls. Go to parents’ house and eat special food (dhar). Wear or green.

**Thair:** Only brothers and sisters. Brothers put tika on their Bhaitika. Sisters, put yellow flower on their ring fingers.

(Memo 1\_RPG01GH)

The participant discussed celebrating Christmas, yet, the participant spent more time and detail discussing the Nepali holidays celebrated in their community. The participant's observation of holidays celebrated in the United States as well as from their native culture suggests an integration of cultures, however, the participant’s focus on their native holiday alludes to a deeper connection to the participant’s native customs. An immigrant participant demonstrated a similar balance of observing holidays from their native culture as well as holidays they were exposed to in the United States. For example, an immigrant participant discussed the observation of Dia De Los Muertos, but only in relation to the activities held at the community-based afterschool program.

The difference in how participants integrated holidays from their native countries and adopted countries may be accounted to the length of time immigrant participants have been in the United States. As immigrant participants reported being in the United States for most of their lives, it would be likely that they observed holidays for their

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native cultures and their adopted cultures early. The refugee participants were likely to observe holidays from their native cultures as they were raised in environments where their cultural practices were the dominant culture. Additionally, refugee participants may have been more likely to hold on to their native cultures because their migration from their native countries were the result of forced migrations.

### **Immigrant Participants Were More Likely to Communicate a Desire for Culture Shedding.**

The concept of cultural shedding is defined as an individual shedding the cultural practices of their native cultures (Berry et al., 2006). The act of cultural shedding may be in favor of assimilation, marginalization, and at times, some forms of integration.

In this study, the theme of cultural shedding was informed by the assimilation/adaptation category; however, a participant was only identified as culturally shedding if they communicated taking on or desiring to take on cultural behaviors of their adopted culture while omitting the same behaviors from their native culture. For example, a participant discussed celebrating Christmas, but also celebrating various holidays from their native cultures. This was not considered cultural shedding, as they did not replace a native cultural practice with an adopted cultural practice.

Cultural shedding was rare in the refugee population. Only one refugee participant depicted a drawing and provided think-aloud responses that suggest that they were consciously adapting to the cultures of their adopted culture while shedding those of their native culture. In their think aloud response, participant RPG08GH communicated a form of cultural shedding when asked about the clothing depicted in their drawing:

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Participant states that their favorite dress is Nepali dress (native culture), but did not WANT to include depiction of Nepali dress in drawing. When I ask why, participant shrugs. Later in session participant discusses singing in front of people on stage and says the clothing in picture is what they want to wear when they sing. (Memo 1\_RPG08GH)

Not only did the participant demonstrate cultural shedding, but also a conscious effort to omit aspects of their native culture from their drawings. The cultural shedding described in the example suggest that the participant may have perceived the clothing from their native culture would not be seen as favorable by the audience. This participant communicated a connection to their native culture, specifically clothing, but also communicated a willingness to omit components of their native culture in order to achieve their goal of singing in front of people. The participant appeared to connect the success of their performance to how they look and were willing to adjust their look to fit in. While they demonstrated cultural shedding in their drawing and think-aloud response, the participant also insisted on conducting the think-aloud interview in their native language with a peer translating. The desire to speak in their native language as well as identifying Nepali clothing as their favorite suggest that the participant desires to maintain some aspects of their native culture.

Cultural shedding in the immigrant population manifested in various ways. For example, immigrant participants commonly noted the affinity for “American” food and television shows, yet, an implicit denial of their native language was a common way in which cultural shedding was exhibited. Immigrant participants discussed the demand made by their parents to speak Spanish when at home, nevertheless, immigrant

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participants demonstrated a desire to speak English when not in the presence of their parents. Only one immigrant participant explicitly stated the preference for speaking English, however while observing the participants within this population a pattern emerged suggesting that they tended to avoid and even deny speaking Spanish while at the center.

As stated previously, the immigrant participants reported being born in the United States or coming to the United States as infants. The immigrant participants may have felt a closer connection to “American culture” as they reported being in the United States for the majority of their lives. However, their older relatives and parent’s connections to their native cultures may have increased the familial demands experienced by immigrant participants. In complying with familial demands to maintain their connections to their native cultures, immigrant participant may have felt as though they were being forced to deny part of their cultural identity. The cultural shedding could have been a response to the familial demands as well as the participants’ desires to acculturate in a way that best reflected their own cultural identities. While some participants in the immigrant population replaced native cultural practices with customs their attributed as “American”, cultural shedding was more likely to done in favor of developing culturally ambiguous individuality.

### **Findings from Participant Drawings and Think Aloud Interviews:**

#### **Drawing Prompt 2**

In the second drawing session, participants were asked to draw a picture in a response to the following prompt:

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*Draw a picture to show what the kinds of things you do at the center. Think about the people who are at the center, the activities (things like games, reading, sports, art) you do, and how you feel when you are at the center. You can include anything and everything you think is meaningful.*

Table 3

*Prompt 2 Categorical Codes*

	TOTAL CODES	THINK ALOUD	DRAWINGS	TOTAL PERCENTAGE
ACADEMIC RESOURCES	17	13	4	36.96%
CONVEYING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS	4	3	1	8.70%
ENGAGING IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	6	3	3	13.04%
FOCUS ON PHYSICAL STRUCTURE	5	3	2	10.87%
MULTI-CULTURAL	3	1	2	6.52%
VALUING SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES	11	5	6	23.91%

The purpose of this drawing session was to examine how participants expressed their experiences and perceptions of the CFCBP in order to gain insight about how such programs might influence the acculturation process. In addition to the think aloud method the data emerging from the participant drawings provided insight into specific characteristics of the CFCBP that influence acculturation.

**Codes and Categories**

Similarly, to the Prompt 1 drawings, these participant drawings and think aloud responses went through two stages of coding; initial coding and categorical coding. For this stage of analysis, both the think aloud and the selective participant observations were used to expound upon the codes emerging from the participant drawings. As in the first

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stage of analysis of the drawings, the initial coding process focused on identifying and describing fragments of data. Theoretical coding was not used in this stage of analysis. 80 codes emerged from the initial coding process. After identifying repeat codes, there were 45 remaining codes. The 45 codes were organized into six categorical codes, Academic Resources, Conveying Emotional Connections, Engaging in Extracurricular Activities, Focus on Physical Structure, Multi-Cultural Exposure, and Valuing Social Opportunities (see Appendix I). After the categorical codes were developed the pictures and think-aloud responses were recoded. Eighteen codes were coded through the participant drawings and 28 codes were coded through the think aloud responses (see Table 3). Following the categorical coding stage, I engaged in memoing to establish preliminary connections between my categories that would aid in identifying emerging themes. Inductively, the following two themes emerged from the data:

1. **Participants view the centers as a medium for academic assistance and extracurricular activities.** The findings from participant drawings and think aloud responses indicated that participants primary reason for attending the center is to engage in extracurricular activities and get assistance with their homework. Codes from Academic Resources, Focus of Physical Structure and Extracurricular Activities informed the emergence of this theme.
2. **Participants value the positive intercultural interactions at the center.** This theme emerged from the patterns observed from the codes Multi-Cultural Exposure and Valuing Social Opportunities, and Conveying Emotional Connections



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The themes emerging from the participant drawings and think-aloud responses suggest that the participants do not perceive the after-school programs of as cultural-based centers, but rather opportunities to socialize, engage in extracurricular activities, and receive academic assistance. The lack of culturally relevant depictions and descriptions in the participant drawings may further the argument that the participants were acculturating through cultural ambiguous approaches and view the centers as safe-havens to do so. The following section will discuss these findings in greater detail.

### **Emerging Themes**

#### **Participants view the centers as a medium for academic assistance and extracurricular activities.**

**Homework.** The most dominant theme to emerge from the second drawings and think aloud responses was the theme of the CFCBP1 and CFCBP2 as tools for completing homework. 12 participants discussed homework or reading as one of the key reasons they attended the CFCBP(s). With the exception of one participant, none of the parents or guardians of the participants were fluent in English. Participants relied on the centers to provide academic assistance when needed, so in many ways the centers were cultural liaisons intervening between participants' school lives and home lives. This was more obvious at center CFCBP2, the center serving immigrant participants; however, volunteers and staff at CFCBP1 commonly interacted with participants' parents to address academic issues and concerns.

Center CFCBP2 served the immigrant population. It was common for parents to stay at the centers while their students were tutored. Many of the volunteers were Spanish speakers and either assisted the parents in helping their students complete their

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homework or helped the participants complete their homework and reported back to the parents a summary of the assignment or participant's progress. In taking this approach, the center engaged both parents and participants in a cultural integration. Parents were not excluded from the participant's learning process and participants were immersed in an environment that encouraged cultural integration through the tutoring process.

Parents were not present at the CFCBP1 nor did the volunteers speak the native languages of the participants. The absence of the parents is most likely a reflection of their cultural practices, just as the presence of the immigrant parents at CFCBP2 is a reflection of the immigrant participants' cultural practices. Even with the absence of their parents at the centers, refugee participants tended to voluntarily switch between their native languages and English, which is a display of maintenance of the native cultures. CFCBP1 staff did not discourage the practice, but did have to interact with participants in English. The ability to adjust to the environment and the audience, suggest that the refugee participants were also being engaged in a cultural integrative environment at CFCBP1.

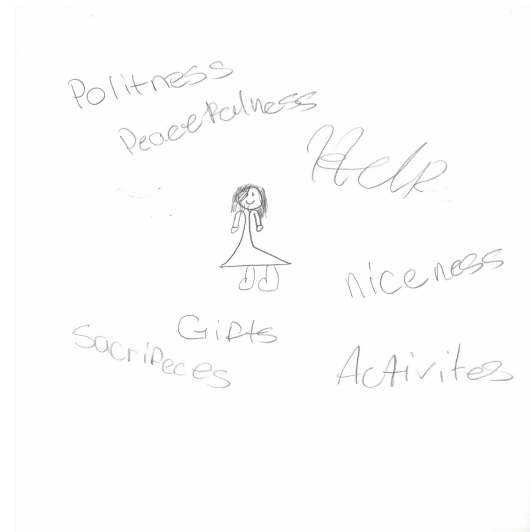
**Extracurricular Activities.** For the immigrant participants, extracurricular activities were important component reason for attending the center. These activities appeared to exemplify the CFCBPs' dedication to exposing the participants to activities and communities outside of their native cultures while still encouraging them to maintain and engage with their native cultures. While both centers offered programs like Girl Scouts, sports club, and at times took field trips, participants attending CFCBP2 depicted or discussed these activities in their drawings. Only one refugee participants discussed or depicted any reference to extracurricular activities. The difference in participation in

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extracurricular activities between immigrant and refugee participants may have been due to the immigrant desire to participate in culturally ambiguous activities absent of familial demands.

### **Participants Value Positive Intercultural Interactions at the Centers**

Having positive interactions with adults outside of one's native culture is a highlighted as a necessary component of positive acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth (Bornstein & Cote, 2006). While conflict was present at times, the positive dynamics between the participants and the adult staff and volunteers at the CFCBPs was well documented in participant drawings and think-aloud



*Drawing 3. Immigrant participant illustrates qualities of staff and volunteers at the centers*

sessions. Additionally, the participants acknowledged their positive interactions with the directors of the CFCBPs. When describing the attributes of the CFCBP they most valued, participant RPG06OW stated that they, "I know they (CFCBP staff) don't have to help, but they are kind to us anyway." The participant presented a sentiment that was prevalent throughout many of the think-aloud responses. The way the CFCBP staff treated participants or made them feel appeared to be an important and vital aspect of the participants continued engagement with the CFCBP.

Participants who discussed interactions with staff, volunteers, and CFCBP directors tended to focus on how they were asked to help their peers by adults working within the CFCBP. Two participants stated their continued attendance at the CFCBP was

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due the CFCBPs' director entrusting them to help other students. One participant said, "it makes me feel good when she (CFCBP director) asks me to help." In the refugee population, participants were asked to help other Nepali speaking students. When they engaged in tutoring they usually spoke in their native languages. In encouraging student-to-student mentoring, the center director encouraged participants to interaction with peers of the same culture. This may have indirectly encouraged a connection between participants' and their native cultures.

One aspect missing from the participant drawings and think-aloud responses was that of shared language. At each CFCBP2, there were multiple adults who spoke the native languages of participants. While these adults were not all from the countries of origin as the participants, they were fluent in these languages and made attempts to engage the participants in conversations in their native languages. Participants appeared to be receptive to this practice, yet no participant documented or discussed their ability to speak to some CFCBP staff/volunteers in languages other than English. This diverged from earlier trends as participants noted their appreciation for being able to speak in their native tongues with their friends. That appreciation did not extend to adults. This includes parents, family members, and CFCBP staff and volunteers. This may have reflected the emerging trend of participants desiring to adopt or appear to be culturally ambiguous even if it is not reflected in their actual behaviors.

### **AHIMSA Scale Results**

#### **Data Analysis**

Using Unger et al's (2002) model as a framework for analysis, frequencies of each strategy (Assimilation, Separation, Integration, Marginalization) were calculated for

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each AHIMSA item. Frequencies were calculated for all participants then for immigrant participants (n=9) and refugee participants (n=6). Frequencies were calculated in order to determine the most commonly selected strategy among all participants as well as the most commonly selected strategies among immigrant and refugee participants. Following an analysis of the combined items on the AHIMSA scale, frequencies were calculated for each of the three cultural domains identified on the AHIMSA scale. These domains were categorized based upon the aspect of culture they addressed. Table 4 provides an outline of each domain and the items included in each domain.

Table 4

*Cultural Domain Classification Table*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Item</b>
Social Relationships	1	I am most comfortable being with people from . . .
	2	My best friends are from . . .
	3	The people I fit in with best are from . . .
Pop Culture Preferences	4	My favorite music is from . . .
	5	My favorite TV shows are from . . .
Food & Holidays Preferences	6	The holidays I celebrate are from . . .
	7	The food I eat at home is from . . .
Overall Way of Thinking	8	The way I do things and the way I think about things are from . . .

### **Summary of Results**

When examined as a group, the results of the AHIMSA indicated that participants' preferences for cultural integrative practices (see Table 5). Separation was the second most frequently selected approach among all participants. In an examination of each cultural domain (Overall Way of Thinking, Food and Holidays, Pop Cultural

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Preferences, Social Relationships), integration was the most frequent approach selected (see Table 6). Assimilation was the second most frequent selection. The inconsistent results between total frequencies and frequencies between cultural domains was most likely due to the larger number of immigrant participants than refugee participants. Immigrants more frequently selected integration and assimilation as their responses. Examining each cultural domain as an independent entity of the AHIMSA scale highlighted this pattern.

Table 5

### *AHIMSA Scale Results: Frequency of Participant Responses by Population*

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<u>Percent of Selection by Acculturation Strategy</u>				
<u>Population</u>	<u>Integration</u>	<u>Separation</u>	<u>Assimilation</u>	<u>Marginalization</u>
Total Population (N=15)	46.60%	28.45%	21.60%	3.45%
Immigrant (n=9)	57.36%	11.76%	25.00%	5.88%
Refugee (n=6)	31.25%	52.08%	16.67%	0

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*Note:* Percentages for immigrant participants are calculated based on total responses of immigrant participants. Percentages for refugee participants are calculated based on total responses of refugee participants.

Diverging from the findings of the drawings and think-aloud responses, participants indicated social relationships as the most prevalent cultural domain in which they engaged in cultural integration. This suggest that participants perceived themselves to be most comfortable and engage in relationships with individuals from their native countries and the United States. The questions pertaining to social relationships were ambiguous regarding the types of relationships (i.e. familial, social). Consistent with the findings in of the arts-informed methods, participants also indicated a preference for cultural integrative approaches to holidays. The category including holidays on the

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AHIMSA scale included food practices as well. Pop culture and overall way of thinking continued the pattern of integrative dominated approaches followed by assimilation.

Table 6

### *AHIMSA Scale Results by Cultural Domain*

<u>Total Population (N=15)</u>				
<u>Cultural Domains</u>	<u>Integration</u>	<u>Separation</u>	<u>Assimilation</u>	<u>Marginalization</u>
Social Relationships	40.00%	35.60%	20.00%	4.40%
Pop Culture Preferences	40.00%	23.33%	30.00%	6.67%
Food & Holidays	53.33%	30.00%	16.67%	0
Overall Way of Thinking	72.72%	9.09%	18.19%	0
<u>Immigrant Participants (n=9)</u>				
	<u>Integration</u>	<u>Separation</u>	<u>Assimilation</u>	<u>Marginalization</u>
Social Relationships	55.56%	14.81%	22.22%	7.41%
Pop Culture Preferences	50.00%	5.56%	33.33%	11.11%
Food & Holidays	61.11%	16.67%	22.22%	0
Overall Way of Thinking	80.00%	0	20.00%	0
<u>Refugee Participants (n=6)</u>				
	<u>Integration</u>	<u>Separation</u>	<u>Assimilation</u>	<u>Marginalization</u>
Social Relationships	16.67%	66.67%	16.66%	0
Pop Culture Preferences	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	0
Food & Holidays	41.67%	50.00%	8.33%	0
Overall Way of Thinking	66.67%	16.66%	16.67%	0

*Note:* Percentage scores for immigrant and refugee participants were calculated by using the total number of responses by immigrants or refugees within a single cultural domain. Percentage scores for total population were calculated by using the total number of responses by immigrant and refugee participants.

Marginalization was the least selected response in the scale and across all cultural domains. This is consistent with the theory that participants conveyed culturally ambiguous portrayals of individuality and did not reject cultural connections, which is

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indicated by the marginalization approach. Most interestingly, participants perceived themselves to enact cultural behaviors. As suggested by the results of the scale, even in expressing culturally ambiguous components of individuality participants developed or identified a cultural paradigm.

### **Immigrants Participants**

Similarly to the findings emerging for the drawings and think-aloud responses, immigrant and refugee participants showed distinct differences in their acculturation approaches. The results of the AHIMSA scale imply that immigrant participants favored integrative approaches across all cultural domains. In the immigrant population, assimilation was the second most frequently selected response. This suggest that while immigrant participants favored integration, some behaviors were more reflective of culture perceived to be related to the United States. As the third most frequently selected response, the frequency of the separation responses suggest that immigrant participants are less connected to cultural behaviors they perceive to be related to their native cultures. This was consistent with the findings that emerged from the drawings and think aloud responses.

### **Refugees Participants**

Consistent with the findings emerging for the drawings and think-aloud responses, refugee participants conveyed a preference for the cultural behaviors of their native cultures. The most frequently selected response was separation. Integration was the second most frequent response. The results of the scale confirmed that refugee participants maintained connections to their native cultures, but also perceived themselves to be multicultural.



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In an examination of each cultural domain, the responses of refugee participants allude to the presence of uneven acculturation. As reflected by a frequency count of all responses, most cultural domains reflected the primary connection to native culture with a secondary preference for multiculturalism. However, when responding to the question pertaining to overall way of think, refugee participants selected integration more frequently than any other response. This was a surprising result, as overall way of thinking is thought to reflect values and interest (Unger et al., 2002), yet participant drawings were dominated by expressions of culturally ambiguous individuality and connections to their native cultures. Consistent with the results of immigrant responses, marginalization was the least selected response on the scale. Again, this confirms the assertion of this study that participants did not reject culture, but rather, valued the ability to express culturally ambiguous expression of themselves.

### **Highlighting Multiple Domains of Culture Through Multiple Methods**

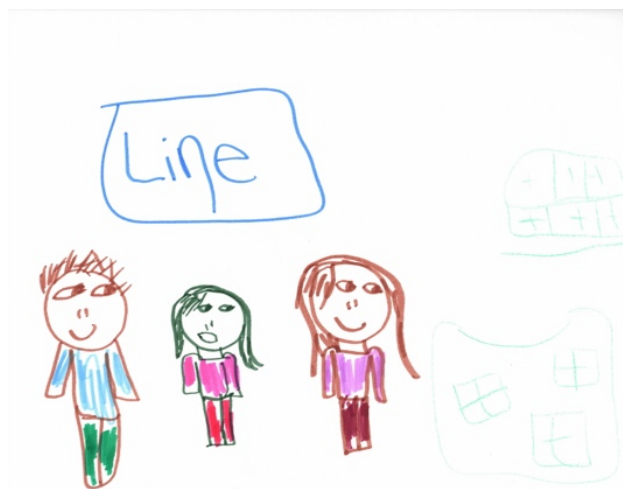
Although originally employed to examine comparable aspects of acculturation, the participant drawings and AHIMSA scale measured different domains of culture. Emerging findings from participant drawings suggest that participants focused heavily on personal values and interest. Unger et al. (2002) describes the AHIMSA scale as an instrument designed to examine the cultural behaviors and attitudes and immigrant children. The incorporation of data emerging from participant drawings and AHIMSA scale results provided a more complete examination of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth. As Cabassa (2003) contends, acculturation can be observed across various domains such as attitudes, behaviors, and sense of cultural identity. The addition of

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personal interest is a nod to a lesser examined element of acculturation, one that eludes to a presence of expressions individuality as an approach to acculturation.

While the arts-informed methods and AHIMSA scale seemingly examined different aspects of culture, there was overlap in the area of social relationships. Additionally, it is in the area of social relationships that cultural behavioral patterns of participants appeared to conflict between what participants illustrated in their drawings and what they reported through their AHIMSA scale responses. This was especially true with immigrant participants as refugee participants did not depict images of friends or family members.

### **Conflicting Trends: Culturally Similar Friends**



*Drawing 4. Immigrant participant standing in line with friends*

On the AHIMSA scale, 60% (9) percent of all participants expressed their comfort with intercultural social relationships. Although participants conveyed their preference for multicultural relationships on the AHIMSA scale their drawings demonstrated a conflicting trend. All participants who included drawings of friends depicted these friends as being physically similar to themselves. As depicted in Drawing 4, the participant drew a picture of themselves with their closest friends. Both the

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participant and their friends were drawn with dark hair and dark eyes. In a think-aloud session with another participant, the participant indicated they spoke their native languages with their friends. This further demonstrated that while participants indicate a preference for multicultural relationships, they appeared to emphasize relationships with individuals from the same or similar cultural backgrounds. While the depiction of physically similar friends most likely did not imply the participants' engagement in solely intracultural relationship, it did suggest that these participants placed value in these relationships. This was further implied by the omission of individuals with physical characteristics that differed from the participants.

### **Insight Added Through Arts-Informed Method**

The differences portrayed between acculturation strategies would be difficult if not impossible to examine without the integration of the participant drawings, think aloud, and AHIMSA scale. Each of these methods of data collection assisted in strengthening the weaknesses of the others. The AHIMSA scale was designed to be a comprehensive tool to measure the acculturation strategies of immigrant and refugee youth, however participants clearly conveyed aspects of culture that they valued that were not covered in the scale. More specifically, familial dynamics and culturally ambiguous individual interest were key aspects missing from the AHIMSA scale. There was a strong presence of these aspects of culture in the participant drawings.

### **Familial Dynamics**

The AHIMSA scale asked questions pertaining to the social relationships of participants. These questions may have been implicative of relationships participants had with family members, however these relationships were never explicitly addressed in the

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scale. In participant drawings, six (40%) of the participants discussed or depicted family members. In all of these depictions or statements, the participants noted positive dynamics with these family members. As mentioned earlier, some participants even recognized their family members as friends. In their ability to share cultural values and experiences, these relationships are vital in the maintaining native cultural practices (Bornstein & Cote, 2006). Three (20%) participants conveyed such relationships in their drawings and think aloud responses. One of these participants stated that their parents encouraged them, “to only speak Spanish at home and English at school”. It could be argued that in encouraging the participant to culturally adapt to the population and culture reflected in the environment, the participant’s parents were encouraging the participant to adopt an integrative approach to acculturation. This is not an aspect of acculturation that was or could have been addressed in the AHIMSA scale, yet it clearly impacted the cultural behavior of participants.

### **Expressions of Individuality**

Studies of acculturation make the assumption that individuals must adopt a cultural paradigm which reflects a community or reject all cultural paradigms. This may be because balance of culture and individuality is difficult to examine. Even in being an individual, one is presumed to take on some cultural behaviors. The participant drawings reaffirmed this. While many, if not all of the participants, conveyed a sense of individuality, they also expressed the presence of some form of cultural adaptation. This could only be seen through the analysis of the participant drawings as the AHIMSA scale was informed by the theory of acculturation (Berry et al., 2006). This theory suggest that an individual will adopt one method of acculturation, rejecting the others and the

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corresponding cultures. The analysis of the participant drawings suggest a more complex process than that proposed by acculturation theory.

The drawings suggest that the participant interests, hobbies, and values did not overtly reflect any one culture. However, through their drawings participants conveyed the maintenance and or adoption of US cultures as well. These drawings suggest that participants did not reject cultural practices when they embraced their individuality, but rather strategized acculturation by balancing their cultural paradigms and individuality.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study suggest that a comprehensive examination of cultural transitions in immigrant and refugee youth requires multiple research methods. Utilizing a mixed methods approach to arts-informed research allowed me to explore the various aspects influencing acculturation, as well as examine the consistency in the ways in which youths strategized acculturation and communicated these strategies. While the arts-informed methods, think-aloud techniques, and AHIMSA scale all provided vital insight into the phenomenon of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth, each of these methods had their own limitations. It was through the integration of these methods that the most insight was gained and the weakness of the individual methods were offset. In addition, the integration of methods created an opportunity to cross examine the complex elements of acculturation that emerged from each method.

The findings of this research study suggest that immigrant and refugee youth engaged in cultural transitions may adopt one of the strategies of acculturation (Berry et al., 2006) to cope with cultural transitions. However, maintaining cultural ambiguity in favor of individuality may also be a strategy adopted by this population. More

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specifically, the findings of this study suggest the acculturation of immigrant and refugee is multidimensional involving both the expression of individuality as well as the adoption of an acculturation strategy.

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## Chapter Five: Conclusions and Discussions

### **Introduction**

As the social climate, surrounding immigrant and refugees continues to shift, it has become more pertinent to examine the acculturation process of these communities, especially the youth of these communities. Empirical studies examining acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth populations have commonly focused on the potential negative outcomes associated with poor acculturation. With little empirical evidence supporting any one acculturation strategy, an examination of the nuanced experiences of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth populations seems to be an important step in better understanding the strategies adopted by these youths. The complexity of examining acculturation in such a young population calls for a multifaceted research approach. This mixed methods approach to arts-informed research was designed to take on these tasks.

Employing a sequential exploratory mixed methods research approach, this study integrated arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative research methods in order to explore the nuanced experiences of acculturation from multiple perspectives. The results of the AHIMSA scale suggest that immigrant participants most commonly adopted the integration strategy. Refugee participants were more likely to select the separation strategy. However, through the drawings and think-aloud technique, participants emphasized interest that were culturally ambiguous and reflect a desire to express individuality. Expanding upon this point, I argue that themes of individuality and integration/separation acculturation are representative of a cultural integration that differs from the framework presented by Berry et al. (2006). Through this proposed

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conceptualization of cultural integration, participants integrate expressions of individuality as part of their acculturation strategies. In addition, participants' engagement in the community-based after school programs supported this form of cultural integration by providing activities that support individual interest as well as integrative cultural practices, and building supportive intercultural relationships with participants.

These findings were informed by the results of the Acculturation, Habits, and Interest Multicultural Scale for Adolescents Acculturation (Unger et. al., 2002) as well as five themes that emerged from the drawings and think-aloud responses:

1. Participants demonstrated their connections to culture through language, folklore, and observations of holidays.
2. Familial relationships influenced the ways by which immigrant and refugee youth engage their native cultures.
3. Participants depicted culturally ambiguous components of their identity that reflect individuality.
4. Immigrant participants were more likely to communicate a desire to culturally shed.
5. Participants viewed the centers as mediums for academic assistance and extracurricular.
6. Participants valued the positive intercultural interactions with center volunteers and staff.



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### **Background of Immigrant and Refugee Populations**

The participants in this study come from vastly diverse cultures, yet, much of what emerged indicates a common integration of culturally ambiguous individuality with more finite expressions of cultural behaviors. The findings generated from this study suggest subtle differences in the ways immigrant and refugee participants communicate their values, beliefs, interest, and cultural practices. These differences may be attributed to the rationale behind participants' migration.

#### **Mexican Participants**

The immigrant participants were all of Mexican heritage and represented 60% of the participants included in this study. The findings emerging from the immigrant participants may provide deeper insight into the cultural experiences and expressions of the largest immigrant population in the United States. As stated by Matsunaga (2010), Central American immigrants represent the greatest percentage of all immigrants in the United States as well as the fastest growing ethnic community. Mexican immigrants are often identified as migrants who come to the United States in order to obtain better educational, economical, and social opportunities (Zloliniski, 2006). Though their transition to the United States is a result of voluntary migration, previous studies have focused on the high risk associated with the immigration of Mexican youth (Edwards & Lopez, 2006).

#### **Nepali Participants**

In 1990, in a government attempt to homogenize Bhutanese national culture, Nepali people were forced to leave Bhutan (Schappi, 2005). Prior to the ban, the civil rights of Nepali people in Bhutan were stripped. As a result, many Nepali fled to

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neighboring countries and lived as refugees for over a decade. Adding to their strife, these refugees were denied citizenship in the neighboring countries for which they fled (Gerber et al., 2017). According to Gerber et al. (2017), the United States led seven other countries in the resettlement of Nepali Bhutanese refugees. In 2015, the United States resettled more than 200,000 Nepali Bhutanese refugees.

### **Karen Participants**

The plight of Karen refugees is similar to that of the Nepali people of Bhutan. Originally from Burma, a country engaged in a civil war since 1938, many Karen Burmese people were forced to flee to Thailand (Bartholomew, Gundal, & Katamneni, 2015). Karen people were faced with challenges in obtaining permanent citizenship in Thailand and many of them were placed in refugee camps where they faced harsh conditions (Bartholomew et al., 2015). According to Bartholomew et al. (2015), the United States provided asylum to numerous refugees experiencing harsh conditions in Thai refugee camps. It was reported that between 2005 and 2011 the United States resettled more than 70,000 Karen refugees (Bartholomew et al., 2015). The conditions by which the refugees migrated to the United States may influence their desire to maintain their native cultural practices.

Although their reasons for migrating differ, immigrant and refugee youth often face similar challenges in their acculturation processes. Transitioning from one cultural climate to another, no matter what the cause, necessitates strategies for adopting, shedding and or balancing divergent cultural paradigms. The findings of this research study highlight the various aspects contributing to the acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth.

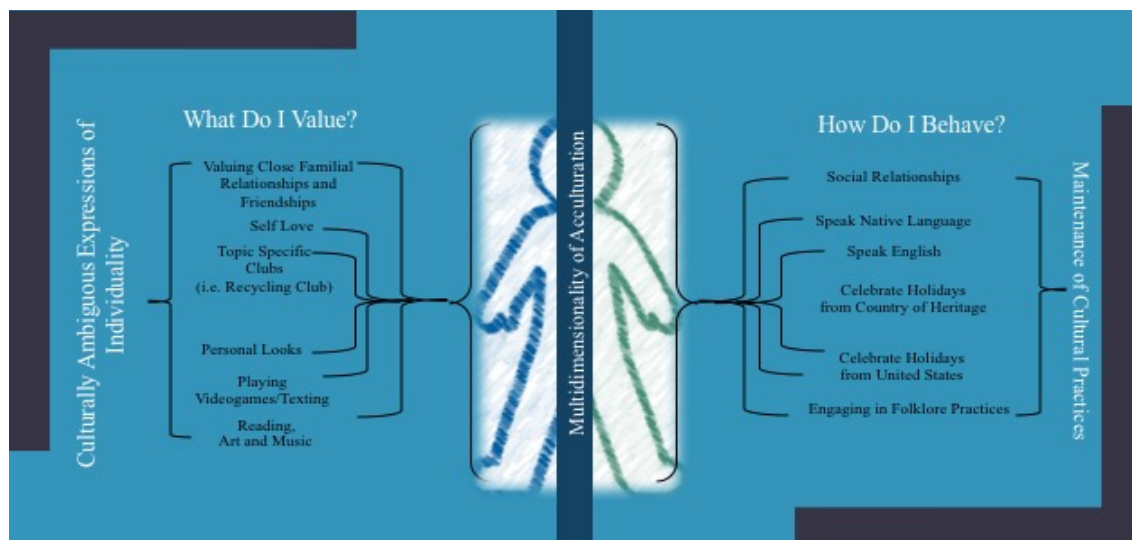
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### Discussion of Findings

Although, this study appeared to produce divergent findings, when integrated, the arts-informed, qualitative, and quantitative methods highlight the complex interplay between expressions of individuality and culturally specific behaviors. Through an integrated analysis, the findings suggest that the drawing and think aloud methods evoke the individual values and interest of participants while the AHIMSA scale identified specific behavioral patterns of participants. Figure 1 was developed to illustrate this interplay.

Figure 1

#### *Integration of Cultural Domains Across Research Methods*



In Figure 1, “What Do I Value?” identifies participant values (Valuing Close Familial Relationships and Friendships, Self-Love, Topic Specific Clubs, Personal Looks, Playing Videogames/Texting, Reading, Art, and Music). These values were identified through the drawings and think aloud responses. While the drawings contained aspects of culture, the majority of the drawings were culturally ambiguous and focused on communicating individual interest, hobbies, and self-images. “How do I Behave”

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summarizes the cultural behaviors examined through the AHIMSA instrument (Social Relationships, Speaking English, Speaking Native Language, Celebration of Holidays, Transmission of Folklore). Through the AHIMSA instrument, participants communicated the specific cultural behaviors they maintained. This pertains to cultural behaviors from participants' countries of heritage, adopted countries, or some balance between both.

Cultural behaviors have been vital in the study of acculturation. However, the focus on observing cultural behaviors may have resulted in oversimplified measures of acculturation, especially in youth populations. The findings of this study, illustrate that immigrant and refugee youth assign value to cultural ambiguous expression of individuality. Yet, participants still engaged in cultural specific behaviors. This suggest that the acculturation process may involve an interplay between the expressions of individuality and culturally specific behaviors. In accordance, youth development of individuality is believed to shape their choices, interests, and values as well as their ability to function within a culture other than their own (Reitz et al., 2014). Furthermore, cultural learning through the acculturation process may enhance youth behavioral repertoire, which strengthens their abilities to define self and identity (Oppedal, 2006; Reitz, Motti-Stefanidi, & Asendorpf, 2014).

### **Participants Demonstrate their Connections to Culture (Adopted and Native) Language, Observation of Holidays, and Folklore**

Even with finding nuanced ways to cope with cultural transitions, immigrant and refugee children are believed to have a diminished cultural connection to their countries of heritage (Gans, 1992; Portes 1995; Zhou, 1997). Diverging from the literature, the findings of this study suggest that immigrant and refugee youth maintain connections to

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their native cultures through a range of cultural behaviors. For immigrant and refugee participants, practicing their native languages, observing holidays from their countries of heritage, and folklore were all ways in which native cultural behaviors were maintained.

### **Language**

In line with Jiang (2000), this study identifies language as a reflection of culture that is simultaneously shaped and influenced by it. Crozet and Liddicoat (1997) identify language as a key component of teaching culture. However, studies examining language as a tool for teaching culture have commonly focused on teaching the language and practices of the dominant culture (Liddicoat & Crozet, 1997; Cara, 2010, Olson, 2012). This is not to say that researchers aim to find evidence of assimilation, but rather focus their studies on participants' abilities to become culturally integrated. For immigrants and refugees, being multicultural often involves the prioritization of the dominant culture's values. This includes linguistic behaviors.

Based on the findings of this study, I argue that in acculturating youth populations, the maintenance of native languages is a vital component in examining the process of acculturation. How, when, and why immigrant youth choose to practice their native languages may reflect their acculturation strategies as well as their attitudes and desires regarding the maintenance of their cultures of heritage (Zagefka & Brown, 2002). For some immigrant participants, the maintenance of native languages seemed to be a negotiation aimed at balancing familial demands and the demands of living in a multicultural environment. For refugee participants, the practice of speaking their native languages appeared to be a demonstration of agency and cultural preservation.

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**Immigrant Lingual Practices.** In line with findings of previous studies (Booth & Anthony, 2015), the demands of parental figures influenced some immigrant participants to speak their native language, although, they communicated a preference for speaking English. The presence of parental figures at the center serving immigrant participants may attribute to the participants use of their native languages. However, the participants also lived within a small community with a large population of Hispanic residents. Being in a community in which their native language is the preferred language may have also influenced the participants' language practices. Nonetheless, by continuing to speak Spanish, participants were enacting behaviors reflective on their native cultures and thus maintaining connections to these cultures. As Jordan de Caro (1972) articulates, it is impossible to maintain a language without maintaining the cultural orientations represented by that language.

When familial/parental influence specific cultural behaviors, such as language, examining the interplay between these behaviors and expressions of individuality become vital in examining acculturation. As a result of parental/familial demands, immigrant youth may continue to speak their native language although they desire to speak English. This confirms the belief that acculturation in immigrant youth is conceptually multidimensional and involves both the individual desire for expression and the enactment of cultural behaviors.

**Refugee Lingual Practices.** Refugee participants more commonly switched between English and their native languages. This did not appear to be influenced by parental demands, but instead by the environment and community in which they were involved. Similarly, to the immigrant participants, the refugee participants lived in a

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small community with peers from similar cultural backgrounds. In a community dominated by multicultural influences, the comfort and seemingly voluntary practice of speaking in their native tongues appeared to be a demonstration of cultural agency.

Whereas immigrant participants appeared to view speaking their native languages as a behavior outside of their individual interest, refugee participants appeared to embrace speaking their native languages as both expressions of individuality and cultural behaviors. While refugee participants conveyed cultural ambiguity in their drawings, language was the one cultural domain in which individuality and enactment of cultural behaviors seemed to intermingle. As refugees, these participants may also have a greater desire to maintain connections to their native customs as their migration was not voluntary.

### **Observations of Holidays and Folklore**

Two lesser examined aspects of culture in acculturation studies are the observations of holidays and folklore. These two domains of culture seem to be overlooked in acculturation studies. However, they were vital aspects of cultural maintenance for the participants in this research study as they not only connected participants to history, stories, and customs from their native cultures, but they also connected them to family and communities with which these customs are shared.

**Folklore.** Cultural practices such as folklore reflect how people think (Bronner, 2016). As Bronner (2016) states, “Even if transitory, folklore produces lasting effects, and can have a tremendous impact on politics, society, and environment at the macro level” (p.143). As (Bauman, 1992) asserts, the transmission of culture through verbal practices is an important method of maintaining connections to one’s heritage. This

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sentiment is confirmed by the findings of this study. In participants who discussed folklore, there appeared to be an emotional connection to the stories, the cultural symbolism in the folklore, and the history conveyed through these stories.

Immigrant and refugee participants communicated knowledge of cultural folklore. However, refugee participants communicated a deeper connection to the folklore of the cultures of heritage. Refugee participants' shared examples of folklore that illustrated a connection between the stories they told and various other aspects of culture, such as holidays, food traditions, and cultural significant fairytales. When sharing folklore with me, refugee participants did not appear to be simply sharing stories, but passionately sharing parts of their culture. Conversely, one immigrant participant used folklore to explain the difference between the Day of the Dead and Halloween. Although the presence of folklore was not as prevalent in the immigrant population, cultural maintenance is still illustrated through the transmission of folklore.

**Holidays.** In previous studies the connection between culture and holidays have focused on the ethnic segregation resulting from celebrating native holidays outside of their countries of origin (Mooses, Silm, & Ahas, 2016). Participants in this study did not appear to suffer from the same consequences of observing their native holidays. Conversely, celebrations of holidays from their cultural heritages seemed to be encouraged by the surrounding communities and embraced by the participants. This was evident in both immigrant and refugee participants.



**Parental Relationships Influence the Ways by Which Immigrant and Refugee Youth Engage Their Native Cultures**

Familial dynamics play vital roles in the acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth (Rotich & Fuller, 2016; Rotich, 2011; Wu & Chao, 2005; Wu & Chao, 2011; Ying & Han, 2008; Ying, 2007; Ying, 1999; Hynie et al., 2013). However, familial desire for the cultural expression of immigrant and refugee youth may differ from the desires of the youth. As Zhou (1997) states, while parents maintain stronger connections to their native countries and cultures and desire that their children maintain similar connection, immigrant youth are more likely to evaluate themselves based on the standards set by their adoptive countries. For this reason, immigrant youth are more likely to acculturate before their parents (Ying & Han, 2008). As demonstrated by the findings of this study, the rate at which immigrant and refugee youth acculturate did not negate the impact of familial demand and influence on the acculturation of these youth. To the contrary, parental demands appear to influence cultural behaviors while parental influence appears to impact both expression of individuality and cultural behaviors.

**Parental Demands**

The findings that emerged in this study illustrate some magnitude of transgenerational conflict and peer influence, yet, participants did not communicate these conflicts as being as severe as the literature implies. Participants communicated their compliance with parental demands, however, they also communicated their desire and in some cases the enactment of conflicting behaviors when their parents were not around. Intergenerational conflicts were limited to parental demands regarding language. This

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was unique to the immigrant population where there was more parental involvement at the afterschool program.

Ying (1999) found that parental involvement in young immigrants' academic and social lives were determinants in how well immigrant youth acculturated. However, identifying successful acculturation is highly subjective and dependent on social norms, parental desires, and desires of the immigrant youth. In this study, demanding parental involvement appeared to influence cultural behavior, in most cases, the maintenance of native cultures. Though parental involvement was not directly measured in this study, themes related to parental involvement emerged. While it cannot be determined if parental involvement influenced positive acculturation, the findings of this study are in accordance with literature suggests that parental involvement impacts the acculturation of immigrant youth (Ying, 1999).

### **Parental Influence**

In this study, I define parental influence as the voluntary cultural practices engaged in by immigrant and refugee youth as a result of parental influence perceived as positive by the participant. For example, a participant began watching soccer and supporting the Barcelona soccer team because it was an activity they enjoyed with their father. On the other hand, parental demands are the behaviors enacted by the participant due to the perceived authoritarian influence of the parent. With the literature heavily focused on the demands of parents who have close ties to their native cultures, it seemingly ignores a positive dynamic of parental influence. In this interpretation, the participant has more agency in the choice of what cultural practices they maintain.

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The perceived differences between these two dynamics and the ways in which participants react to them may be a result of participants' developmental stage.

Alternatively, since participants perceived parental influence as voluntary actions, they may have been more likely to adhere to these influences because they allowed them to express both cultural behaviors and behaviors that reflected their individual interest.

Just as the findings of this study have highlighted the multidimensionality of acculturation, it too illustrates the multidimensionality of parent involvement in youth acculturation. As mentioned, parental demands appeared to influence the maintenance of cultural behaviors. More specifically, parental demands appeared to influence the lingual practices of immigrant participants. Conversely, parental influence appeared to impact both the cultural behaviors and expression of individuality in immigrant participants. These behaviors appeared to be behaviors participants felt they could share with their parents.

### **Participants Depict Culturally Ambiguous Components of Their Identity That Reflect Individuality**

Berry et al.'s (1986) conceptualization of acculturation offers strategies by which people engaging in cultural transitions manage the stressors related to cultural transition. These strategies are largely focused on how individuals balance or cultural behaviors between their native cultures and/or adopted cultures (United States). Criticism of the acculturation theory has long focused on the framework's inability to adequately explain acculturation differences between groups or individuals (Rudmin, 2003). In addition, the acculturation of individuals demonstrating differences across cultural domains (i.e. pop culture, social relationships, language preferences) has yet to be explored.

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The phenomenon of demonstrating different acculturation strategies across cultural domains is identified as uneven acculturation (Berry et al., 1986; Neto, 2002). Uneven acculturation is noted as an atypical approach to the cultural transition process (Berry et al., 1986). Neto (2002) theorized that uneven acculturation may occur in adults who desire to maintain native cultural aspects, but may feel the need to adapt to the dominant culture in specific domains to be successful in environments such as the workplace or education. Neto's (2002) theory applied to adults attempting to survive in contexts relevant to adults. In youth populations, the concept of uneven acculturation may explain the presence of expressions of individuality in acculturation strategies.

The integration of drawing and the results of participant AHIMSA scales suggests that while immigrant and refugee groups demonstrate consistent acculturation strategies across most domains, both groups conveyed diverging strategies in at least one cultural domain. When examined on an individual level, uneven acculturation was present. This demonstrates that participants are not rejecting cultural practices, but rather integrating cultural behaviors that best fit their own values and interest. This was further demonstrated in participant drawings where the focus was placed on depictions of self-images, personal interest, and hobbies.

As developing youth, it may be natural for the participants to separate their individual values from their cultural beliefs. They may understand culture as the findings suggest, patterns of behaviors that are not always congruent with individual values and interest. Alternatively, the presence of uneven acculturation may be the result of ongoing acculturation.

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### **Cultural Integration Redefined**

Studies examining the impact of acculturation on the development of culturally transitioning children assert that success is contingent upon their ability to acculturate properly, most often meaning through an integrative approach (Berry et al., 1986). While Berry et al.'s (1986) theory of acculturation offers a somewhat fixed definition of cultural integration, the findings of this study suggest a new more abstract form of integration. This form of integration needs to make affordances for cultural ambiguity and acknowledge individuality and agency.

Culture is defined as, “the everyday practices through which individuals and groups manifest a set of shared values, beliefs, languages, and customs” (Ungar, 2011, p.9). The role of individual values may seem irrelevant within the examination of acculturation. However, acculturation is a means for measuring how an individual interacts and strategizes their cultural environment (Berry et al., 1986). Thus, the expression of individuality is imperative as it not only illustrates cultural practices, but also cultural ambiguity. More importantly, individual values can impact cultural expression.

Based solely on the confines of Berry et al., (1986) theory of acculturation, the presence of cultural ambiguity may be suggestive of the marginalization approach to acculturation. As defined by Berry et al., (1986), marginalization is the rejection of both the adoptive or dominant culture and the native culture. Garcia, Manongdo, and Cruz-Santiago (2010), identify youth assimilation to culture within the United States as the placement of high value on independence and individual rights. Although, Garcia et al.'s (2010) interpretation of culture in the United States lacks specificity regarding specific

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behaviors and customs, this conceptualization of assimilation has been reflected in previous studies (La Voy et al., 2002).

If applied independently, the concepts of marginalization or expressions of cultural ambiguous individuality as cultural expression in the United States could provide valid explanations for the cultural behaviors observed during this study. However, the integration of data from the AHIMSA scale and the participant drawings nullify any suggestion that culture was rejected or predominantly reflective of U.S. culture. When analyzed together, the data highlight participants' inclination towards integration or native culture behavioral patterns and values that reflect individuality. Through the integration of these personal values and cultural behaviors, these participants are navigating through the acculturation process.

### **Immigrant Participants Were More Likely to Communicate a Desire to Culture Shed.**

Cultural Shedding is a key component of acculturation (Berry, 2006). According to Odeti (2009), cultural shedding involves selective, unintentional or deliberate adopting or loss of certain cultural behaviors. Though most participants were more likely to communicate areas in which they maintained culture practices from their countries of heritage, many immigrant participants communicated a desire for cultural shedding. Although some participants discussed a preference for "American" television shows and food, cultural shedding was most prevalent in immigrant participants' lingual preferences. While participants' parents stressed a desire for participants to speak the language of speak Spanish, the language of their heritage, numerous participants voiced the desire to speak only English.

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Literature addressing cultural shedding and or the acculturation of Latino youth, in general, is heavily focused on the negative impact of acculturation (Pasch et al., 2006). It has been suggested that cultural shedding in Latino youth populations is a major contributor to their poor acculturation. In spite of this, the desire to culturally shed is an understudied aspect of youth acculturation. Subsequently, examinations of acculturating youth who maintain cultural behaviors they may wish to shed is also understudied. As suggested by the findings of this study, familial dynamics may be a vital key in explaining this phenomenon. Conversely, familial dynamics that extend beyond parent/child dynamics may explain why participants who desired to cultural shed maintained the behaviors instead.

In this study, familial demands and influences have been identified as key factors in immigrant participants maintaining native cultural behaviors. However, the cultural significance of family connections, in general, has yet to be discussed. The impact of what is known as familismo in Latino culture is believed to be an imperative value that is not impacted by acculturation. Familismo describes the importance of extended family connections and identifications in Latino families (Edwards & Lopez, 2006). According to Edwards and Lopez (2006), the concept of familismo includes family as referents, perceived familial support, family obligations, solidarity, and reciprocity.

Familial demands and influences may intersect with the concept of familismo, but they appear to lack the same cultural significance. Familial demands and influences, as defined in this study, are more reflective of traditional parent/child relationships. Familial demands and influences do not extend to cultural implications explained through familismo.

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The fact that familismo is not believed to be impacted by acculturation suggests that it is a deeply ingrained value in Latino and Hispanic individuals. While it may not be impacted by acculturation, it may have an impact on acculturating youth. Adherence to familismo suggests that the maintenance of cultural behaviors one wishes to shed, may be the result of a personal value as much as a compliance with familial demands.

### **Cultural Shedding Differences Between Immigrant and Refugee Participants**

The desire to culturally shed was a key difference between immigrant and refugee participants. Only one refugee participant communicated cultural shedding in their drawing and think-aloud. Additionally, refugee participants were less likely to select assimilation or marginalization in the AHIMSA scale responses. Contrasting from immigrant participants, it appeared that the refugee participants who communicated cultural shedding desired to maintain their native cultural practices, yet, they engaged in cultural shedding to better fit in.

Refugee participants' lack of expressed desire to culturally shed may too be explained by their familial dynamics. Previous studies have suggested that Nepali families, especially mothers and children, commonly lean on each other as they progress through acculturation (Thomas, Roberts, Luitel, Upadhaya, & Tol, 2011). According to Thomas et. al. (2011), support from close relations eases the stressors related to acculturation. Additionally, these supportive relationships with culturally similar family members may offer an explanation for refugee participants' general preference to maintain their native culture practices.

The complexity of cultural shedding is rarely examined in acculturation studies. This is a seemingly important aspect of youth acculturation as individual desire may be



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commonly negated in favor or opposition of cultural maintenance. This reaffirms the notion that certain aspects of individuality should be examined in studies of acculturation, especially those focused on youth.

### **Community Based Programs**

The noted benefits of community-based programs have led to an increase of empirical studies examining the benefits for diverse populations (Lee & Hawkins, 2008). As mostly non-profit organizations operating outside of school systems, community-based programs offer social and educational services to a wide array of populations (Harris & Kiyama, 2015). As an entity operating outside of school systems, it should be expected that these programs are structured to provide aid to specific communities, yet flexible enough in their approaches that their services can be delivered in meaningful and impactful ways.

Two community-based programs providing services for immigrant and refugee youth were examined in this study. Participants overwhelmingly identified the centers as settings to complete homework, engage in extracurricular activities, and gain access to computers. As it pertains to acculturation, these aspects of the center would appear relatively inconsequential. What few participants noted, was both centers dedication and encouragement in providing activities and staff that encourage both self-expression, cultural learning, and cultural maintenance. Larson and Ngo (2017) theorized that community-based centers are most likely safe havens for youth because they provide spaces in which the can separate themselves from school, family, and neighborhood. The two centers examined in this study appeared to be designed to do the exact opposite. They provide a space where parental involvement was encouraged and each center was

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located in the participants' neighborhoods, providing easy access for participants and willing parents. Although the centers are designed for youth participants, the encouragement of parental involvement may be to diminish the emergence of imbalanced power dynamics. If parents are encouraged to help their students with homework, they are more aware of their academic progress. The centers may act as a cultural medium between youth who are becoming Americanized and parents who are still heavily connected to their native countries and customs. Alternatively, involving parents may also be an attempt at parental acculturation.

Although the centers did not appear to be very intentional about promoting acculturation, participants were encouraged to engage in both multicultural and culturally ambiguous activities, promoting the integration of cultural maintenance and individuality. For example, the centers offered Girl Scouts, soccer club, environmental conservation clubs, and art clubs as well as given space to celebrate their native holidays. In line with the findings of Ngo's (2017) study, these centers were most likely effective in their objectives because they were staffed by adults who were open to understanding the social context of the immigrant and refugee community and offered opportunities for development most likely not available through participants' schools and families. I speculate that the level of comfort felt by participants while at the centers has led them to take these particular aspects of the centers for granted, which is why their responses regarding the center were largely focused on the homework aspect.

### **Value Added by Arts-Informed Research**

The examination of acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth populations necessitates flexibility in approaches and methods. Furthermore, conducting research in

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these populations requires methods that diminish the imbalance of power between the participant and the researcher. The specificity of verbal/traditional forms of qualitative data collection can oftentimes limit the expressions of the participant. This is especially true when the participant's first language differs from that of the researcher. Employing an arts-informed method moderated many of the aforementioned challenges. In addition, it provided a medium for expression that was appropriate for the various developmental and skill levels for which I encountered during this study. The value of participant drawings was not limited to just methodological values.

The insight gained through participant drawings was invaluable to this examination of acculturation. In their drawings, participants conveyed the values and interest that could not be communicated through more traditional means. As La Voy et al. (2002) suggest, children's drawings are believed to include drawings that are both familiar to them and demonstrate their culture's values and preferences. In this case, the drawings demonstrated both cultural values and individual values. These contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the acculturation strategies of immigrant and refugee youth.

### **Valued Added by Mixed Methods Approach**

The examination of culture involves a review of not just single components, but the culmination of behaviors, values, and customs. The complexity of examining a phenomenon like acculturation requires an approach that will accommodate and generate different perspectives. The mixed methods approach exemplifies a research approach capable of this task. As Creamer (2017) states, the mixed methods approach goes far

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beyond combining qualitative and quantitative methods, it “engages complexity and multiplistic mental models” (p. 667).

The mixed methods approach employed in this study was vital in conducting a multifaceted examination of acculturation. Through individual analysis of each data source, it became clear that no one source would provide the adequate amount of insight into the acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth. Only through the integration of the drawing method, think aloud approach, and acculturation scale would this analysis be possible.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The limitations of this research study provide guidance for future research pertaining to the both the methodological design as well as the population and phenomenon. The first limitation of this study was my lack of knowledge regarding the specific cultural histories and backgrounds of the Karen, Nepali, and Mexican participants. As a U.S. native, I have very little insight into the customs, behaviors, and traditions of the participants in this study. As a result of this, I was limited to analyzing overt depictions and communications of culture. I attempted to mitigate this limitation through member-checking, but future research should involve a research team member or consultant with greater knowledge of these cultures for a more comprehensive analysis.

The second limitation of the study was the analysis of participant drawings. The analysis of these drawings was based solely on my observations as the researcher and the participants’ explanations of the drawings. In future research employing a research or professional trained in analyzing children’s drawings may provide an opportunity to explore the aspect of the drawings through a psychological perspective.

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Another limitation of this study was the imbalance of refugee and immigrant participants. With more immigrant participants, I gained more insight into their experiences of acculturation. Having additional refugee participants would allow for a deeper exploration into the experiences of this population as well as the opportunity to corroborate emergent trends within the refugee youth population.

The last limitation of this study was the small sample size. A larger sample size would allow for a statistical analysis of the AHIMSA scale with greater statistical power. Additionally, the AHIMSA scale was designed to examine multiple domains of culture, however there was no clear method in examining the overall acculturation of individual participants.

### **Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study hold implications for researchers and practitioners examining acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth. The findings of this study suggest a need to explore individuality as a key aspect of acculturation. Acculturation theory (Berry et al., 1986) indicates that an individual experiencing cultural transitions will mitigate the experience through by adopting, balancing, or rejecting certain cultural behaviors. The influence of expressions of individualism have yet to be examined. This is especially true in youth populations. To maximize understanding of the experiences of acculturation in youth populations, examinations of individuality balanced with cultural expressions should be considered.

An additional implication of this study pertains to the design of instruments aimed at measuring acculturation in immigrant and youth populations. Researchers and practitioners attempting to measure acculturation in youth populations may use the

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findings of this study to develop a more comprehensive instrument for a fuller examination of the phenomenon. As indicated by the findings of this study, instruments designed to measure acculturation should examine both the individual desire to engage in cultural behaviors as well as the engagement in these behaviors. Cultural behaviors such as language and folklore are important aspects of culture that should be added in measures of acculturation. Additionally, instruments designed to examine acculturation in youth populations should include measures of individuality. These measures could include items pertaining to individual desire to participate in certain culturally specific behaviors, personal interest, and values.

The findings of this study highlight the potential of arts-informed methods in illustrating the experiences, values, and interest of immigrant and refugee youth. The approach may have implications for practitioners and researchers interested in examining the acculturation strategies of immigrant and refugee youth. Lastly, the findings of this study have implications for community-based programs aiming to design programs that provide positive integrative environments for this environment.

### **Conclusion**

A great deal of focus has been placed on the acculturation of immigrant and refugee youth in distress. This is likely due to the various consequences associated with poor acculturation. As the literature pertaining to the consequences of poor acculturation in immigrant and refugee youth continues to grow, empirical studies examining the general experiences of immigrant and refugee children is still lacking. This mixed methods approach to arts-informed research was purposed with examining these experiences as well as their connections to community-based after-school programs.

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The implications that expression of individuality, close personal relationships, and maintenance of specific cultural practices have on acculturation strategies was reviewed in chapter one and supported by this research. Likewise, community-based programs examined in this study have contributed to the acculturation strategies of the immigrant and refugee participants by developing a space where the two dimensions of acculturation identified in this study can be expressed. Based upon the findings of this study, participants were able to pursue their individual interests while engaging in culturally specific behaviors.

Most likely fueled by the encouragement of multiculturalism and exploration of personal interest found in the environments of community-based afterschool programs, the participants in this study communicated strategies of acculturation that merged individual expression with integrative or separation approaches of acculturation. Participants demonstrated agency by the way they responded to parental demands. The key finding of this study was the emergence of individual expression as a value held within both immigrant and refugee participants. Acculturation frameworks and measures are commonly designed to examine group responses to cultural transition on an individual level. However, these instruments have failed to examine the role of individuality in managing cultural transitions. In addition, these scales do not tend to offer a method for calculating acculturation across all domains. Uneven acculturation is probably a reflection of the complexity of the acculturation process and the difficulty of basing a score on a single domain.

The navigation of acculturation through cultural integration blended with expressions of culturally ambiguous individuality reflects not only the importance of

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understanding individual experiences of acculturation, but more importantly, respecting the individual experiences and expressions of youth. The findings of this study suggest that through balance of culture and self-expression, immigrant and refugee children may find ways to navigate through the challenges of acculturation. This is true whether their migration was forced or voluntary.



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Appendix A

Informed Assent Form



**What is a research study?**

This form talks about our research and the choice that you have to take part in it. We want you to ask us any questions that you have. You can ask questions any time.

Research studies help us learn new things. First, we ask a question. Then we try to find the answer.

Important things to know...

- You get to decide if you want to participate.
- You can say ‘No’ or you can say ‘Yes’.
- No one will be upset if you say ‘No’.
- If you say ‘Yes’, you can always say ‘No’ later.
- You can say ‘No’ at anytime.

**Why are we doing this research?**

We are doing this research to find out more about how kids around your age adjust to moving a new country.

**What would happen if I join this research?**

- Draw Picture: You would draw picture about yourself
- Talking: A person on the research team would ask you questions about your drawings. Then you would say your answers out loud.
- Survey: You would take a short survey about some of the things you do at home, at school, and while you are with your friends
- Could bad things happen if I join this research?

We do not believe any bad things will happen to you if you join this research. We do our best to make sure that no bad things happen.

**What else should I know about this research?**

If you don’t want to be in the study, you don’t have to be.

It is also OK to say yes and change your mind later. You can stop being in the research at any time. If you want to stop, please tell the research doctors.

You would not be paid to be in the study.

## EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

You can ask questions any time. You can talk to **Cherie Edwards ([cherie87@vt.edu](mailto:cherie87@vt.edu))** or **Dr. Elizabeth Creamer ([creamere@vt.edu](mailto:creamere@vt.edu))**. Ask us any questions you have. Take the time you need to make your choice.

### **Is there anything else?**

If you want to be in the research after we talk, please write your name below. We will write our name too. This shows we talked about the research and that you want to take part.

***Name of Participant*** \_\_\_\_\_  
(To be written by child/adolescent)

**Printed Name of Primary Researcher**  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Primary Researcher**  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
***Date***

\_\_\_\_\_  
***Time***

## EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

### Appendix B

#### Parental Informed Consent Form

#### **Examining Acculturation Strategies in Immigrant and Refugee Youth: A Mixed Methods Approach to Arts-Informed Research**

Your child has been invited to join a research study to look at how children adjust to moving a new country. Please take whatever time you need to discuss the study with your family and friends, or anyone else you wish to. The decision to let your child join, or not to join, is up to you.

#### **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?**

Your child would be asked to draw a picture about themselves and to take a survey about how they behave at school, home, and with their family.

They would be asked to:

- Draw a picture about anything they feel is important to their move to the United States. In the drawings, your child may draw things that involve your family and home.
- Take a survey that asks questions about what languages they speak at home, school, and with friends.
- Talk about their pictures with a researcher

A researcher would also watch students at the center for one week to see what types of things they do when they are at the center.

We think it will take them two weeks to complete the study.

Your child can stop participating at any time. If your child stops he/she will not lose any benefits. You can stop your child from participating at any time. You will not lose any benefits.

#### **RISKS**

We do not believe any bad things will happen to you if you join this research. We do our best to make sure that no bad things happen.

#### **BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?**

Your child can receive a copy of their artwork if they would like a copy. However, we can't guarantee that your child will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information we find in this study.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your child's name will not be used when data from this study are published. Every effort will be made to keep clinical records, research records, and other personal information



## EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

confidential. Only members of the research team will have access to the information. We will take the following steps to keep information confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage:

- We will be used pseudonyms to identify the center
- Your child would be identified by a participant number
- File will be kept in a password protect computer only accessible by the principal researcher.

### INCENTIVES

Your child would not receive any incentives for their participation

### RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your child has the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is entitled, and it will not harm his/her relationship with the center.

If your child decides to leave the study, the procedure is:

1. Inform the principal researcher
2. Request any and all materials created during the study they do not want included in the research.
3. They are formally released from the study.

### CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

Email Cherie **Edwards** at [cherie87@vt.edu](mailto:cherie87@vt.edu) or Dr. Elizabeth Creamer at [creamere@vt.edu](mailto:creamere@vt.edu) if you have questions about the study, any problems, if your child experiences any unexpected physical or psychological discomforts, any injuries, or think that something unusual or unexpected is happening.

**Permission for a Child to Participate in Research** As parent or legal guardian, I authorize \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) to become a participant in the research study described in this form.

Parent or Legal Guardian's Signature

Date

Upon signing, the parent or legal guardian will receive a copy of this form, and the original will be held in the subject's research record.

# EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

## Appendix C

### The Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents Acculturation Scale (Unger et al., 2002)

#### **Circle the answer that is most true for you**

1. I am most comfortable being with people from...

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

2. My best friends are from...

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

3. The people I fit in with best are from...

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

4. My favorite music is from...

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

5. My favorite TV shows are from . . .

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

## EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

6. The holidays I celebrate are from...

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

7. The food I eat at home is from...

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

8. The way I do things and the way I think about things are from...

- a. The United States
- b. The country my family is from
- c. Both
- d. Neither

EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

*Only answer the questions with GREEN lines. If you do not know the answers or cannot answer any of the questions leave them blank, you can come back to them later.*

1. What is your grade level in school? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What school do you attend? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How long have you attended the center? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where were you born (the country)? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How long have you lived in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

***Circle your answers***

Do you go to other after-school programs/activities for fun or help with your homework?  
(Yes/No)

Do you or have you ever attended the Newcomers School? (Yes/No)

Are you in any clubs or sports teams at school or anywhere else other than the center?  
(Yes/No)

Are you a: Boy/Girl/Other?

If you answered YES to any of the above questions, what type of activities do you do in these programs?

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# EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

## Appendix E

### Participant Observation Protocol

Participant Observation Protocol

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Duration: \_\_\_\_\_ Hrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Mins. Observation Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Questions		ACTORS (Participants):		Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
1. What structured activities are CFCBP attendees engaged in while at the CFCBP?	Events (Activities)	ACTS:			
2. Who participates in these activities?	Space	OBJECTS:			
3. What types of interactions do CFCBP attendees have with program teachers and volunteers?	Activities	ACTORS:			
		GOALS:			

# EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

## Appendix F

### Think Aloud Protocol

#### Think Aloud Protocol

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Participant Number	
--------------------	--

<p>What are the most important aspects of your drawing?</p>	<p><u>Important Aspects:</u></p> <p><u>Reflective Notes:</u></p>
<p>Is there anything you would like to add to your picture?</p>	<p><u>Additions:</u></p> <p><u>Reflective Notes:</u></p>
<p>What were you thinking when you were drawing your picture</p>	<p><u>Thoughts:</u></p> <p><u>Reflective Notes:</u></p>

EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

Appendix G

Coding Dictionary: Prompt 1

Themes		Categories	Definitions	Initial Codes
Participants express the maintenance of their native culture through language, folklore, and observation of holidays.	Personal relationships influence the ways in which immigrant and refugee youth engage with their native cultures.	Maintaining Aspects of Native Culture	Participant includes specific aspects from the native culture in their drawings.	Playing Soccer
			Participant depicts social relationships with children from the same cultural background	Watching Barcelona Play Soccer (TV)
				Showing Excitement While Watching Soccer

EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

			or depictions regarding how family members influence participant interests, actions, and or beliefs.	Regulating VG Play by Parents
				Familial Influence Over Outside Play (Clowns)
Participants depict culturally ambiguous components of their identity that reflect individuality	Representations of Self Image/Perception Through Self-Portraits	Participant’s self-portraits and or think-aloud interviews reflect positive images of themselves. Specifically focused on explicit statements regarding facial features and symbols included in pictures to express self-love.		Expressing Self Love
				Appreciating Facial Features
				Appreciating Facial Features
				Love Own Facial Features
				Symbolizing Self Love with Hearts
				Portraying Self as Smiling
				Appreciating Facial Features
				Highlights Accurate Portrayal of Self
				Depicted with pink “rosy” cheeks
				Portrayed with Dark Hair/Dark Eyes
	Implicit portrayals of self-acceptance. Focused on participant’s depictions and explanations of their physical features (hair, eyes, etc.)		Portrayed with Brown Eyes	
			Depicted with Black Hair	
			Depicted with Black Eyes	
			Depicted with Black Hair	
			Depicted with Brown Eyes	
			Depicted with Brown Hair	
			Depicted with Brown Eyes	
			Depicted with Black/Brown Hair	
			Stressing the Presence of Glasses	
		Participant depictions do not represent the actual features of the participant.		Portrayed with Blonde Hair
	Portrayed with Makeup On			
	Depicted with Blue Eyes			
	Struggling to Explain Self Portrait (Eyes)			
Culturally Ambiguous Depictions	Depictions of activities and interest that do not clearly reflect any culture.		Struggle to Explain Self Portrait(Hair)	
			Ambiguous Landscape	
			Playing Videogames	
			Listening to Music (NS)	
			Watching Television	
			Watching Television	
			Painting Pictures	
			Reading Books	
			Watching Television	
			Self-Reflecting with Emoji	
	Favoring Kissing Emoji			



EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

				Detailed Depiction of Videogame
				Detailed Depiction of Videogame Characters
				High Familiarity with VG (Minecraft)
				Depicting Videogame (Feed Him)
				Enjoying Videogames
			Participant's representation of self-interest that do not appear to reflect any cultural beliefs.	Imaging Self Singing on Stage in Dress
				Desiring to Doing Well in School
				Hearts on Shirt
				Lips on Shirt
				Jumping on Bed
		Pink Cat Pillow		
		Wearing Colorful Stripped Dress		
		Includes Heart at the bottom of picture		
		USA as Home		
		Identifying USA as Home		
Participants express the maintenance of their native culture through language, folklore, and observations of holidays	Assimilation Adaptations		Participant depicts images reflecting their images as American citizens. This includes specific images, statements, and general comfort regarding their immigration story.	Forthcoming Regarding Family History
			1 Participant depicts musical and or television preferences from the United States. This includes music, games, film, and or television shows that may be available in other countries, but originated and reflects the culture of the United States. 2 Participant shows a preference for foods from the United States 3 Participant includes	Enjoys Watching Andy Griffith
				Highlighting Specific TV Characters (Spongebob, Mr. Krab, Squidward, Patrick)
				Playing Grand Theft Auto
				Eating Cheese Pizza
				Red and Green Stars (Christmas Time)
				Preferring Cheese Pizza
				Observing Christmas

## EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

			holidays from their native country and the United States	
			Participant shows apprehension regarding discussions about their native culture and or country	Omitting Native Dress Favorite
				Omitting Familial History
				Inconsistent Resident Story
				Denying Ability to Speak Native Tongue
				Admitting Desire to No Longer Speak Native Tongue

EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

Appendix H

Coding Dictionary: Prompt 2

Themes	Categories	Definitions	Initial Codes
Participants Value the positive intercultural interactions at the centers.	Valuing Social Opportunities	Participants communicated their pleasure in spending time with friends while at the after-school program.	Being with Friends
			Being with Sister
			Grateful for People at Center
			Helping Smaller Children
			Smiling on Prize Day
	Multi-Cultural Exposure	Participants describe activities or research observes activities that reflect the presence of multiculturalism at the after-school programs. This includes activities designed to promote participants' cultural practices as well as those of other children attending the after-school programs.	Incorporating Multicultural Learning Tools
			Volunteer Speaking Arabic
			Celebrating Day of the Dead
			Involving Parents
			Close to Student Homes
			Celebrating Christmas
	Conveying Emotional Connections	Participants communicate positive interactions with center staff and volunteers. This also includes relationships center volunteers and staff may have with participant parents.	Receiving Help from Tutors
			Thinking about People in the Center
			Appreciating Center Volunteers
			Building Relationships with Parents
Participants view the center as a medium for academic assistance and extracurricular activities	Academic Resource	Participants communicated their perceptions of the after-school programs as an environment in which they could complete and receive assistance with homework and academic projects	People in the Center
			Depicting Self Smiling
			People Smiling
			Depicting Self Frowning
			Depicting Happy People
			Liking Time at the Center
			Happy at the Center
			Doing Homework
			Prioritizing Homework
			Playing in Homework Haven
			Doing Math
			Helping Friends do Homework
			Students Helping with Homework
			Thinking About Doing Homework in the Center
Reading			
Valuing Books			
Playing on computer			
Working on Computer			

## EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

	Access to Extracurricular Activities	Participants identify specific activities they are engaged in through the after-school program that are not related to academics. These activities tend to reflect hobbies or interests of participants	Offer Extracurricular Activities
			Going to Sports Program
			Participating in Girl Scouts
			Going on Field Trips
			Playing on Playground
			Going Outside
			Winning Costume Contest
			Reading Books
	Focus on Physical Structure of the Building	Participants communicate aspects about the center that focus solely on the physical structure of the building	Prize Day
			Drawing the Center
			Identifying Key Physical Features of the Center

# EXAMINING ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

## Appendix I

### Coding Patterns Within Emergent Themes

	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Total Codes</i>	<i>Percentage of All Codes</i>
<i>Participants Depict Culturally Ambiguous Components of Their Identity That Reflect Individuality</i>	RPB03OW, RPB04OW, RPG01GH, RPG04GH, RPG10OW, RPG07OW, RPG03GH, RPB02OW, RPG09GH, RPG06OW, RPG08GH	42	40%
<i>Personal relationships influence the ways by which immigrant and refugee youth engage with their native cultures.</i>	RPB01GH, RPB02OW, RPB03OW, RPG01GH, RPG02OW, RPG10OW, RPG06OW, RPB05OW, RPG06OW, RPG08GH, RPG07OW	38	36.19%
<i>Participants display components of cultural shedding while adapting to adopted culture (Working on the wording of this)</i>	RPB04OW, RPG02OW, RPG03GH, RPG06OW, RPB02OW, RPG01GH, RPB06OW	19	18.10%
<i>Participants express the maintenance of their native culture through sports, folklore, and observation of holidays.</i>	RPB01GH, RPB02OW, RPB03OW, RPG01GH, RPG02OW, RPG10OW, RPG06OW, RPB05OW, RPG06OW, RPG08GH	18	17.14%