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Transnational Motherhood and Daughterhood: Reimagining Familial and Gender Roles Across
Borders Through Mexican and Brazilian Women's Oral Histories

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Abstract

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In the 1980s and 1990s, Mexican and Brazilian women began to migrate to the United States in large numbers, with many of them searching for job opportunities. Migrating to a new country is a costly task, so many of these women made the difficult decision of leaving their children in their origin countries which led to them becoming transnational mothers. Transnational mothers are women who reside and work in a different country while their children stay in the mother's origin country. Transnational motherhood developed into an important topic in the study about gendered migration patterns, but these women's roles as daughters are not discussed as often. Migrant women may also fulfill the role of transnational daughters, and they confront unique obstacles in this role. In this thesis, I conducted four oral histories with Mexican and Brazilian women living in Atlanta and Maryland to observe how their beliefs about their mother or daughter roles shift (or not), as well as their beliefs about gender roles, with their transnational experience. I also look at how these women perform their familial role across borders despite the physical distance between families. Oral histories were conducted with the intention of listening and learning from the women that live through the transnational experience. I conclude that these women's experiences with maternal figures throughout childhood informed the ways they perform and think about their roles as women and as mothers or daughters. To practice their roles, the four women rely heavily on technology to maintain their relationships. Despite their differences in language and nationality, the Mexican and Brazilian women interviewed share similar experiences in what they were taught about womanhood, motherhood, and daughterhood.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

Women are the backbone of many families. They raise children, care for everyone in the home by cooking, cleaning, or simply taking family members to the doctor's office; many women also work outside of the home to financially provide for their loved ones. However, women do not receive the proper recognition in their homes or in society for all that they do for others. Why use the word "women"? Are the tasks described above not describing mothers? The truth is, many of these tasks can be shared amongst the women in a household, not just the mother, but one tends to automatically assume these tasks are a mother's responsibility. Sisters, cousins, aunts, and daughters often undertake the tasks that one typically associates with the maternal role as a way to prepare them for motherhood. Depending on the culture, a household may consist of extended family, as is often seen with immigrant families. However, this might not always be the case for many immigrant women, who leave much of their family behind in their country of origin. These women must learn to perform their familial roles across borders, as part of a transnational experience.

This thesis will explore mothers, daughters, and transnationalism specifically through the concepts of transnational motherhood and transnational daughterhood. Transnational motherhood refers to women that work and reside in a country different from their own while their children remain in their countries of origin. The same concept applies to transnational daughterhood but with the parents remaining in their countries of origin. Both concepts will be explored further in this chapter. Through four oral histories collected from Mexican and Brazilian women living in the southeast region of the United States, this project explores how these women viewed and continue to view ideas about motherhood and daughterhood based on

what they were taught, what they saw, or experienced having lived in two different countries. This thesis additionally takes a particular focus on the oral histories of women in Mexican and Brazil because of my personal connection to the Mexican community and an interest in investigating Brazilian women's experience as they are a more recent group to migrate to the United States.

Mexico and Brazil's ideas of motherhood and daughterhood share some similarities with the ideas of motherhood seen in Anglo-American homes, but the differences are shaped by each country's distinct cultures. In Mexico, motherhood is shaped by concepts like "marianismo", an idea modeled after the Virgin Mary that reduces mothers to traditional gender roles in the domestic sphere of society. Mexican daughters are expected to value "familismo," or familism, which prioritizes "family loyalty, family obligation, and family assistance behaviors among family members" (Bravo 171). In Brazil, like in Mexico, women are tasked with the "cuidados cotidianos," the "everyday cares", and are presented with the idea that motherhood is a cultural and biological privilege (Baia 25, 26). Brazilian daughters share similar expectations to Mexican daughters as both are expected to be "cooperative" in their household and tend "to be under close emotional control by their mother[s]" (Dessen 10). The modification of these practices as these women experience transnationalism is an important point of discussion for this study.

The goal of this project is to highlight the ways that migrant women perform their roles as mothers/daughters, to understand changing views of familial roles in a transnational context, and to contribute to the study of transnational daughterhood. There are misconceptions about migrant women and their mothering/ "daughter-ing" styles, and the misconceptions augment if they happen to be transnational mothers and daughters as well. As an effort to diminish these misconceptions, this thesis aims to humanize the narrators featured and other women that

identify as transnational mothers and daughters, while providing new perspectives on how they view their roles. An additional goal of this project is to contribute to the field of transnational daughterhood as it emerges as a counterpoint to studies about transnational motherhood.

Defining the terminology

Before delving into the methodology chapter, it is important to define the terminology, key texts, and authors that informed this research. One term that must be considered throughout this thesis is transnationalism. Sheila Graham's text, *Transnational Motherhood: The Impact of Immigration Related Mother Child Separation on Latina Mothers*, uses a definition previously created and widely accepted by many scholars that describes transnationalism as "the act of maintaining occupations or activities requiring regular social contact across international borders over a long period of time" (Graham 1). This concept expands on the most common definition of "transnational," which Merriam Webster defines as "extending or going beyond national borders." While the dictionary definition provides a broader understanding of transnationalism that may apply to various areas of society, the Graham definition clearly highlights the maintenance of occupations or activities across borders over an extended period. By mentioning these specifications of transnationalism, the reader understands its focus in this thesis to be about maintaining roles, despite physical separation, for a long period of time. These definitions serve as a base when looking at the concept of transnational motherhood and transnational daughterhood.

What is Transnational Motherhood?

Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila were some of the first scholars to define transnational motherhood in their 1997 article "'I'm Here but I'm There': The Meanings of

Latina Transnational Motherhood.” In the context of Latina women, they define the arrangement of transnational motherhood as, “Latina immigrant women who work and reside in the United States while their children remain in their countries of origin” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Avila 548). The authors draw from “a larger study of paid domestic work in Los Angeles County and from interviews conducted in adjacent Riverside County” in California (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Avila 553). This article provided me with insightful information about the struggles of transnational mothers, and the interviews conducted with women from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala, inspired me to adopt a comparative approach between Mexican and Brazilian immigrant women, so as to expand the perspectives of Latinas to include other Latin American countries. Also, the focus on Riverside County excludes a perspective from the U.S. South and Southeast region specifically, another focus of my research. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, the purpose of using this larger study is to analyze how domestic work affects these women’s ability to “mother” across borders. The authors proposed to view transnational motherhood as “circuits of affection, caring, and financial support that transcend national borders [and] provides an opportunity to gender views of transnationalism and immigration” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Avila 550). The authors further suggest that we rethink our ideas about motherhood to include the working mother in the conversation. The authors’ analysis prepared me with vocabulary and concepts, such as “transnational motherhood” and “mothering,” to talk about the familial roles performed by my narrators. However, because this text was published in 1997, it does not offer more recent research and perspectives on mothering that could reflect technological advances and potential shifts in mothering ideas in Latin America that have occurred since then. I reiterate that Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila’s text is crucial to understanding the origins of the study of

transnational motherhood and is cited all throughout the texts written by the authors mentioned in this introduction.

Another foundational text was written by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas at the University of Wisconsin and is titled, “Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and the International Division of Reproductive Labor.” Salazar Parreña’s writing provides additional vocabulary for the discussion of transnational motherhood, and it may be applicable to the discussion of transnational daughterhood as well. The author “examines the politics of reproductive labor in globalization,” and defines reproductive labor as “the labor needed to sustain the productive labor force” (Salazar Parreñas 560, 561). This may include, according to authors Brenner and Laslett, “household chores; the care of elderly, adults, and youth; the socialization of children; and the maintenance of social ties in the family” (Salazar Parreñas 561). The text offers analysis that can be put into conversation with the Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila research because all authors looked at paid domestic work. While the Latina women I interviewed may not all be in paid domestic work, they most likely perform domestic work and gendered reproductive labor in their homes and across borders. The large focus on paid domestic work and Filipina migrants makes it difficult to incorporate all the conclusions drawn by Salazar Parreñas to my Mexican and Brazilian narrators because they vary in professions. There are also differences in culture and language that may not be applicable to my participants. Like the Hondagneu Sotelo and Avila text, this article was published in 2000, marking the beginning of a 21st century marked by many advances in technology and in women’s mothering ideals that may have shifted the perspectives and experiences of the women that I worked with for this thesis.

Lastly, Sandra Castro’s “Tears, Trauma and Transformation: Central American Mothers’ Experiences of Violence, Migration and Family Reunification” is not a foundational text in the

study of transnational motherhood, but it does offer a range of perspectives on motherhood from Central American mothers. For her dissertation, Castro looks at the experiences of transnational mothers from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala with migration, separation, and reunification. There is a range in ages between the women Castro interviews since she chooses to break her subjects' migration patterns into four parts: the civil war period in El Salvador and Guatemala (1976-1993), post war and economic violence in the northern triangle (1993-2000), economic/domestic/community violence (2001-2010), and gang violence (2010-2020). Within these migration patterns, one may observe the differences in perspectives on mothering because each woman's circumstance influenced their decision to migrate differently, and the generation they were born in might have had specific mothering practices. In her literature review, Castro looks at concepts such as migration and gender vs. transnational families, transnational families and ambiguous loss, and enduring multiple forms of violence and living trauma. I drew from the discussion of these concepts to prepare my oral history questions centered around gender and to guide my analysis of the oral histories I collected. Many women experience violence and abuse in various ways solely because they are women, especially women of color in Mexico and Brazil, therefore Castro's text was instrumental for the oral history questions because it prepared me to navigate difficult conversations about traumatic events. Moreover, Castro's text was published in 2021, offering a contemporary perspective that the previous two texts lacked. These three texts serve as the foundation for my investigation of transnational motherhood.

What is Transnational Daughterhood?

While plenty of material exists on transnational motherhood, there are relatively few authors that write about transnational daughterhood. It is expected that children grow up to form their own lives and eventually live away from their parents. However, when one's child migrates

to a new country, it may become difficult for parents and children to physically see each other as often, especially in the case of undocumented status. Therefore, the experience of transnational daughterhood becomes complicated as daughters must perform their roles at a distance and sometimes for an extended period of time. With the lack of research on the topic, there is not an exact definition that can be used to describe transnational daughters, but I craft a definition based on the extensive scholarship on transnational motherhood and particularly Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila's definition of transnational motherhood. Transnational daughterhood can be defined as "Latina immigrant women who work and reside in the United States while their [parents] remain in their countries of origin" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, Avila 548).

One crucial and foundational text on transnational daughterhood is titled, "Love Labour's Lost? Separation as a Constraint on Displays of Transnational Daughterhood" by Hanna Kara and Sirpa Wrede. The authors of this article interview women that migrated as adults to Barcelona, Spain from Latin America, with the intent of examining how these women describe their transnational family bonds and their identities as transnational daughters. Through these descriptions, the authors also intend to further understand how these women make sense of their family relationships, the ambivalence they might feel later in life as adult daughters, and the ways they maintain their familial relationships across borders. Some of the ways that these women maintain their relationship with their families in their home country include phone calls, video calls, and sometimes traveling back home. Traveling back home may not always be an option for women with an undocumented status, and Kara and Wrede did not take this into possibility in their study. This type of transnational relationship may cause conflicting emotions for women that want to be there for their parents but also for their own partners and children. From the interviews that were conducted, the authors discover ways that these women display

and perform acts of love towards their parents, such as omitting certain information during phone calls to avoid causing worry. The authors make a closing remark that “transnational filial relationships” tend to be overlooked by immigration policies; the article includes a call for the recognition of these relationships, which aligns with the goal of my thesis.

Kara and Wrede offer instrumental information on the concept of transnational daughterhood in contemporary times as their article was published in 2021. I hope to apply these concepts to the Mexican and Brazilian communities in the U.S. southeast region to highlight the specificities of their experiences. As previously mentioned, there is very little writing on the concept of transnational daughterhood, so this text is essential to understanding transnational filial relationships. My work contributes to the study of transnational daughterhood from the perspective of Mexican and Brazilian women living in the United States southeastern region.

Gender Expectations for Latin American Women

After defining and exploring transnational motherhood and transnational daughterhood, one must look at the gender expectations for Latin American women, and there are three texts that contributed to my knowledge on the concept. Joanna Dreby’s “Honor and Virtue: Mexican Parenting in the Transnational Context” offers a general analysis of Mexican parenting across borders. Dreby analyzes the experiences of Mexican transnational mothers and fathers in New Jersey and concludes that migration patterns and responses of these parents differ because of “Mexican gender ideology.” Mothers’ roles are often “sacralized,” due to the mother’s role association with the Virgin de Guadalupe, while a father’s role is to provide financially for their families. Dreby makes a great point by stating that parents in different social, historical, and cultural contexts vary in the way that they care and provide for their children; her conclusion is

similar to the one I reached after reading Sandra Castro's article on Central American mothers (Dreby 34). Dreby's essay offers potential research questions for my project such as asking about childcare arrangements in Mexico and how parents feel about living apart. Dreby concludes that "gender expectations are durable in a transnational context," which inspired my main research question and my oral history interview questions (Dreby 56).

Sheila V. Graham's piece titled "Transnational Motherhood: The Impact of Immigration Related Mother Separation on Latina Mothers" provides a deeper look at the concept of "marianismo" which influences much of the gender expectations of Latin American women. Graham specifically looks at mental health to understand the impacts of mother-child separation with Latina immigrants, the factors that influence these women to migrate, and the ways they make sense of their experiences which are later analyzed in the context of "marianismo." "Marianismo" describes a Latina's familial role as a caregiving role, "characterized by self-sacrifice and likened to the martyr-hood of the Virgin Mary" (Graham 9). The author conducts interviews with eleven women from different countries in Latin America, with Mexico being one of them. Some of the most cited impacts of mother-child separation are depression-related symptoms and anxiety. Graham additionally notes the perceptions of childrearing and gender roles in the U.S. in comparison to what Latin American women knew, offering another great point of possible discussion with my interviewees.

Lastly, Daniela R. Ugarte Villalobos ties together the concepts discussed in many of the essays discussed in this introduction with her thesis "Care Roles and Motherhood in Forced Migration: Venezuelan Mothers Living in Lima and New York." Her thesis focuses on concepts like care work, gendered divisions of labor, ideas of what it means to be a good mother, and the feelings that surge after migration in the context of Venezuelan mothers in New York and Lima.

Ugarte defines care work as “all the activities allowing others reproduction abilities to produce societies,” essentially stating that it is the way we care for others, emotionally and physically (Ugarte Villalobos 39). These women assumed care work at home and in the workplace, especially when in the service sector of the workforce. The third section of the thesis concentrates on mothering in a foreign city and explores the cultural clashes and fears that consume the lives of these women. This section also provides examples of what it means to be a good mother and the expectations the women had for themselves. The information for this thesis was gathered through interviews and research, like my method of oral history collection. Dreby, Graham, and Ugarte Villalobos offer various ideas and concepts applicable to the gendered expectations of Latin American women.

Transnational Care Constellations and Caregiving

One last concept that deserves mention is “transnational care constellations and caregiving.” Gabrielle Oliveira works with this concept in her article “Transnational Motherhood: Conceptualizing Ideas of Care Here and There.” Oliveira studies the ways that transnational mothers, specifically Mexican migrant mothers, “reassemble” the meaning of motherhood and redefine what it means to be a “good” mother when there’s physical distance from their children. While discussing Mexican migrant mothers, Oliveira notes that these women construct their definitions of motherhood and their responsibilities towards their children based on religion and “marianismo”. However, transnational mothers must find new ways to perform “the perceived duties” of motherhood, and Oliveira offers the concept of “transnational care constellations” as an example. This concept recognizes the different bodies involved in the caregiving and educating of children, allowing these women to practice a new type of mothering where they can still be involved in their children’s lives. This practice does not disregard the

ideals of motherhood presented in “marianismo” yet makes mothering more flexible for these women and relieves some of the feelings of guilt. Published in 2020, Oliveira’s text presents “transnational care constellations” as a new concept to the conversation of transnational motherhood, which inspired me to incorporate it into my analysis of the oral histories provided by my interviewees.

Mexican and Brazilian mothers and daughters experience transformations in their familial responsibilities and roles because of the physical distance between their families. As a summary, this thesis aims to explore how and what transformations occur and the effects they have on the women that shared their oral histories. Specific attention is paid to gender as their roles are often shaped by gender, whether they recognize it openly or not. The next chapter details the methodology used for collecting and analyzing the oral histories, followed by two chapters in which I describe my interviews and analysis.

Chapter 2:

Methodology

Positionality

Beyond contributing to the study of transnational family relations, the concept of transnational daughterhood holds a special significance for my community and me as it resonates with our own experiences as Mexicans and Mexican Americans living in Atlanta. It is for this reason that I chose to write about this topic for this thesis. As the daughter of an immigrant woman, I am incredibly grateful for our relationship and for the sacrifices my mother made that resulted in her becoming a transnational daughter. I watched as my mother missed birthdays, retirement parties, and funerals to provide my sister and me with the opportunities she wished she had. When I was younger, every Friday we traveled to the Mexican bakery for an international phone call card so we could talk to my grandmother. During the holidays I looked forward to opening letters and cards written in my aunt and uncle's handwriting, later realizing my mother yearned to spend the holidays with her siblings. Today, my mother calls home every day through Whatsapp to keep my grandmother company now that my grandfather has passed.

My mother and various other women in my community endure the pain of leaving their parents and loved ones in their home countries to seek better opportunities. By working with my participants' oral histories, this project centers the importance of their stories and recognizes the individual sacrifices made to create a better life for themselves and for their loved ones. It reminds my mother and my grandmother that their stories and sacrifices matter so much that they inspired the writing of this thesis. Each oral history for this project was conducted with my memories and experiences in mind, alongside the knowledge I read from various authors and

researchers. With the creation of each oral history, I was reminded of the privilege it was to hear these women share their stories and how valuable their words are to this project.

Interviewing Mexican women for their oral histories made sense for this thesis because of my Mexican heritage. Mexicans have a deep history with the land in the Western United States and a vast migration history in comparison to other immigrant groups. Atlanta specifically observed an increase in Mexican migration during the 1980s “due to the strength of the local economy...and the economic depression in California and Texas” (Hirsch 19, 20). Later in 1996, Atlanta needed Mexican and Latin American labor to prepare for the Olympics, increasing the Mexican population in the city. Many of the migrants that labored for the Olympics settled in the city (Singh n.pag). When it came to deciding to include Brazilian women for this thesis, despite my lacking an extensive relationship with the Brazilian community, it felt necessary to include their oral histories because of my dedication to my Portuguese studies and because of their more recent migration to the United States. My introduction to Brazilian culture and community began during my first year at Emory, and since then, I have gained the historical and cultural knowledge to understand the Brazil of today. It was through these studies that I learned about the Brazilian community living in Marietta, Georgia and acquired an interest in where Brazilians mostly migrate to within the United States.

Maxine L. Margolis explores the recent migration to the United States and other countries in her text titled *Goodbye, Brazil: Émigrés from the Land of Soccer and Samba*. In the preface, Margolis shares that when Brazil conducted their federal census in 1990, about “1.3 billion Brazilians had ‘gone missing’” from their data, another way to say that those Brazilians had emigrated (Margolis xi). Like the case of Mexican migrants, Brazilians began leaving in the 1980s largely because of the economic crises occurring post-military dictatorship (Margolis 4).

In 2011, the Ministério das Relações Exteriores found the United States, Paraguay, Bolivia, England, Spain, Portugal, and Japan to be the most frequented countries by Brazilians (Margolis 5). Within the United States, the states with large Brazilian populations are Florida, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington D.C. (this data includes Maryland and Virginia) (Margolis 77).

Many Brazilian women migrated to the United States around the 1990s, like Mexican women. Surprisingly, even though I interviewed Brazilian women living in Maryland, a large population of Brazilian migrants also exists in Atlanta. Once again, in 2011, “fewer than eight thousand Brazilians were counted [in Atlanta] in the 2011 American Community Survey,” but there were “estimates of their actual presence range[d] up to ten times that number” (Margolis 91). Marietta, Roswell, and Alpharetta have some of the largest Brazilian communities in Atlanta. Despite the large Brazilian population in Atlanta, the data about Brazilian presence in Washington D.C was compelling, resulting in the decision to include Brazilian women from Maryland and making this a discussion about the women living in the broader United States southeastern region rather than in one specific location. As we have seen in the introduction, key studies and texts about transnational motherhood and daughterhood often revolve around Spanish-speaking communities and rarely mention Brazilian women’s experiences. This too has encouraged the decision to interview Brazilian women for this thesis. Keeping my positionality in mind, I would like to provide a brief background on the origins of oral histories and typical guidelines for oral histories before discussing my approach for this thesis.

Background on Oral Histories

In *Doing Oral History*, Donald A. Ritchie notes that “oral history interviewing has been occurring since history was first recorded” (Ritchie 1). This section will discuss the origins of oral history in the context of the United States and will also address the skepticism that surrounds the idea of using oral histories in research. First, what exactly is an oral history? There are two working definitions. Ritchie’s definition states, “Oral history collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews” (1). Valerie Raleigh Yow’s definition claims, “Oral history is the recording of personal testimony in oral form” (Yow 3). Both definitions are similar, but I chose to include these two because of their slightly different word choices. The Yow definition lacks the use of “historical significance,” and this is important to highlight because every person has valuable experiences that fit into the history of a place, community, or nation. The Ritchie definition utilizes the words “memories” and “commentaries” instead of “testimony.” I believe both terms relate to the concept of testimony and provide us with specific examples of what can be found in personal testimonies. An oral history contains various pieces, and Yow reminds her readers that those pieces include the recording, the transcript, and “the research method that involves in-depth interviewing” (Yow 3). A revised definition combining Ritchie and Yow’s definitions would look something like this and will be used for this thesis: Oral histories record and collect personal testimonies in oral form which include memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews.

How are oral histories different from journalistic interviews or life histories? A clear point of distinction between oral histories and journalistic interviews is the fact that oral histories do not stick to the questions prepared by the interviewer. A journalist prepares a certain number of questions and expects their interviewee to respond solely to those questions with the goal of

writing about a specific subject. It is much more controlled and defined by the interviewer rather than the interviewee. With oral histories, the interviewer prepares questions, but the interviewee may deviate from those questions because they themselves control what they share about their life narrative. The process is done with some guidance from the interviewer but is ultimately a co-production of a primary source. The interviewer does not seek specific quotes to report on a subject, rather they seek a complete narrative of an individual to understand the ways they view and experience their lives, which contributes to larger histories outside of their own. In my case, I seek to understand changes in perspectives and practices after migration in order to contribute to the larger conversation about transnational family relations. Life histories, on the other hand, are not that much different from oral histories because they only focus on one person, “showing how he or she has experienced or understood wider social change on an individual level” (Hirsch 40). An interviewer tends to devote more time to life histories and conducts various interviews over time, while an oral history collection may interview their participants once or a few times over a shorter period (Ritchie 27). Yow utilizes “oral history” and “life history” interchangeably in her text because both involve an in-depth interview rather than a surface-level interview. The term life history is much more closely related to oral histories than a journalistic interview.

Today, oral histories have come to be a much more accepted and legitimate form of historical inquiry, but this was not always the case. There were various key events and players that developed the concept of oral history and its characteristics into what it is in contemporary times. For example, when one thinks of oral histories, one may think of the recording of a voice that results in an audio product. While oral histories have been around for an extended period, audio was not always recorded. Oral histories grew in popularity in the United States during the late 19th century as a tool to learn about slavery from the very people that experienced it, and

interviewers often recreated the oral histories from notes because recording devices were not as accessible. The histories of former enslaved people were considered “less reliable” in comparison to records kept by slave owners and were essentially disregarded (Ritchie 4). Tape-recorded interviews began to take over after World War II with the increased availability of portable tape recorders and with the creation of the first oral history archive at Columbia University in 1948 by Alan Nevins (Yow 2, 3). A few years before, the term “oral history” came to be associated with interviews with the help of Joseph Gould, who insisted that “what people say is history” (Ritchie 5). He believed in the stories of the everyday people rather than looking towards the elites, but other than making the case for the relationship between oral histories and interviews, none of his work was ever preserved. In fact, much of the first oral histories conducted in the United States focused on interviewing people in power in comparison to Europe where many social historians recorded the everyday lives of the working class (Ritchie 7). Given this story of how the importance of oral history has evolved in the United States, I feel even more confident in my decision to interview working class, immigrant women to expand their representation in the oral history realm.

With all the oral history collections that exist today, it might be difficult to understand the skepticism that still surrounds oral histories. Some historians and researchers claim that oral histories are unreliable because people’s memory might not always remember all the details of a certain event. Researchers seek information that is “unbiased” and “unchanging,” and the uncertainty of memory can not promise this (Ritchie 11). Some historians also believe that because the interviewee has the power to tell their life narrative, it is possible that they might fabricate parts of their lives to make their story more epic or to paint themselves in a better light. These possibilities may exist, but one must remember that any other type of historical source can

be just as fabricated and as vague as an oral history. Ritchie summarizes this point perfectly by affirming,

“Oral history is as reliable or unreliable as other research sources. No single piece of data of any sort should be trusted completely, and all sources need to be tested against evidence” (Ritchie 10).

Even though I only conducted four oral histories for this thesis, the narratives shared by these women will be put into conversation with research about motherhood and daughterhood in Mexico, Brazil, and the United States to “test” the evidence provided against each other.

Guidelines for Conducting Oral Histories

Using Ritchie’s text and the Oral History Association’s website, I compiled guidelines for conducting oral histories, so that the reader may receive a general overview of the oral history process. The reader must keep in mind that these guidelines do not go into extreme detail about the oral history process, and one should consult the Oral History Association, among other sources, for more information. To begin, one should consider the preparation process for an oral history. The first step is to set a range for the number of participants one wishes to interview rather than an exact number because it might create pressure on the interviewer to complete all interviews (Ritchie 36). One of the best ways to begin the recruitment of participants is through informal networks before going through the process of advertising in public. This will allow one to meet for multiple conversations with the participants to see if their experiences are relevant to the subject at hand. Once participants have been selected, there should be at least one meeting to describe the project and process, as well as “securing the informed consent of the narrator” (Best n.pag). Consent may be secured with a signature on a consent form or verbally. The verbal

option exists for participants that may feel uncomfortable signing a legal document. This can be the case when interviewing people with a negative history with interviews or with a vulnerable social position, such as holding an undocumented status. During this time, the approximate length of the oral history should also be discussed, and both parties should consider any potential reasons the interview may be cut short. It is recommended that a second meeting occurs with the participant “to assist in the interviewer’s preparation” and to start building a relationship between the interviewer and the narrator (Best n.pag).

Along with these suggested meetings, the interviewer should participate in informal conversations with the oral history participant and their community to continue building rapport. It is necessary to research the topic and historical context that the interviewer wishes to address in the oral history to prepare for the way that the participant might feel about getting interviewed. The Oral History Association makes an important point on their “Best Practices” page by stating, “Oral historians should recognize that their narrators are not just isolated individuals; they are members of communities, some of whom have historically complex relationships with researchers” (Best n.pag). With the help of the conversations and research, the interviewer may begin to formulate questions or an “open-ended guide” with the topics or themes they wish to discuss with the narrator (Best n.pag). The interviewer should pay attention to word choice and the order of questions or themes to help with the flow of the interview. This is where knowing the participant prior to conducting the interview aids in the planning process. Finally, the interviewer should gather the proper materials to record the oral history. Today, cell phones, laptops, and tablets are capable of recording high quality audio and may be used by new oral historians (Ritchie 45).

The preparation may take some time, but it will aid with the interviewing process. The interviewer and narrator should decide on a quiet location to record the oral history for a high-quality audio recording (Best n.pag). At the start of the recording, the interviewer should provide contextual information for the audience such as the names (or pseudonyms) of the interviewer and narrator, the full date, the location (no need for a specific address), and the topics or themes that will be discussed in the interview. Once both parties transition into the questions or guide, the interviewer must actively listen in order to ask for clarification, reflection, elaboration, or follow-up questions (Best n.pag). The interviewer must additionally learn to be comfortable with silence and pauses throughout the oral history. This “requires some discipline” because the interviewer must learn to be silent when the narrator is speaking and must also be comfortable when it is the narrator’s choice to be silent (Ritchie 83). As the narrator speaks, the interviewer should refrain from speaking or humming to affirm they are listening because these sounds might clutter the audio recording. Instead, it is suggested that the interviewer utilize silent gestures such as nodding or smiling, “not to signify agreement [with the narrator] but to encourage the [narrator] to keep talking” (Ritchie 86). When the narrator chooses to remain silent, the interviewer should interpret this as the narrator collecting their thoughts, reflecting on their lived experiences, or as a sign they may be experiencing strong emotions while recalling their memories. At the end of the interview, the interviewer should thank the narrator for sharing their time and their experiences.

Information on additional steps for preservation of oral histories and who has access to them can be found on the Best Practices pages of the Oral History Association website. For this thesis, only the transcripts of the oral histories will be made available to readers in the Appendix. My specific methodology for this project follows these guidelines, with certain modifications

made to fit the time frame I had for this thesis and for the people I interviewed and will be further explained in the following section.

My Approach to Oral Histories for this Thesis

The decision to work with oral histories for my thesis stems from an introduction to this research method during my sophomore year at Emory. In a class titled “The Latinx South” with Dr. Iliana Yamileth Rodriguez, I learned about oral histories and their importance before I conducted my first one for my final project with a close neighbor. She shared about her experiences with religion and how they allowed her to practice homemaking, which “embodies the processes by which diverse subjects imagine and make themselves at home in various locations” (Ruiz 4). This initial experience conducting an oral history was incredibly fulfilling, but it did leave me with questions and topics I wish I had covered. For example, I did not discuss gender and gender roles in relation to religion with my neighbor, but I knew that I wanted to cover similar topics in the next oral history I conducted. However, I did learn some valuable lessons after this initial experience. It is important to guide one’s narrator through the oral history so that they do not steer away from the topic at hand, but it is also okay when they share information outside of one’s questions because that might lead to certain analysis that the interviewer did not expect. Another lesson learned was that sometimes participants will give very simple or straightforward answers, or they will decline questions that make them feel uncomfortable, so the interviewer must come prepared with knowledge on the topic to guide the conversations down a different path. I took these lessons with me into my next oral history project.

During the spring of 2022, I conducted another oral history interview with my mother for a history course titled, “Migrants, Borders, and Transnational Communities in the U.S. South,” again with Dr. Rodriguez. Leading up to this project, I wrote a primary source analysis essay about an oral history found in Patricia Preciado Martin’s *Songs My Mother Sang To Me*. The oral history I analyzed focused on the life of a woman named Julia Yslas Vélez, who migrated from Sonora, Mexico in the early 1900s and eventually became a prominent member of her community as the first woman to join the South Tucson City Council in Arizona (Martin 36). My main argument for this essay was that migrant women shaped and continue to shape their communities found all throughout the United States, and this argument guided me during my mother’s interview and the interviews for this thesis.

While my mother’s oral history did not focus on her contributions to our local community, the topics discussed in her interview ignited my interest in transnational daughterhood. My mother shared that her migration to the United States caused a strain in her relationship with my grandmother that was only mended after my birth. They mended their relationship and remained connected through letters, phone calls, and with occasional visits from my grandmother. To wrap up the interview, I asked my mother if she believed herself to be a good daughter, and she responded by saying “yes” because “she listens to my grandmother, checks in on her, and respects her space” (Piña n.pag). I concluded that the idea about “respecting one’s space” speaks to the conversations we have about personal boundaries in the U.S. and perhaps speaks to ideas about individualism as well. On the other hand, based on personal experience and the familism concept, respecting family members’ time and space is not a common conversation in Mexico as one is expected to prioritize the family over the self. From these different discussion points, I developed an interest in how transnational mother-daughter

relationships change after migration and how new environments modify one's ideas about motherhood and daughterhood.

Before I could conduct my oral histories, I had to go through Emory's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to receive an exemption from the complete board review requirement because oral histories are typically excluded from the human subjects research regulations. However, because this thesis will be published to an Emory database, I had to go through the process since my research now qualified for the regulations under the "generalizable knowledge" criteria. The IRB process is incredibly detailed, and I had to submit a report detailing the recruitment of my narrators, the process I would follow during and after the interview, and how I intended to use the information. Other details included how I would store the oral histories, how I would receive informed consent, and the "population" I intended to work with. To recruit my narrators, I decided it would be best to utilize my established relationships, as recommended by Ritchie, and ask my neighbor if she would be interested in interviewing with me again. The criteria I used for the oral histories required that all participants be over 18 years of age, be Mexican or Brazilian women, be mothers with children in their origin country, or be daughters with parents in their origin country. Then, I asked my mother if any of her friends were transnational mothers and if she could ask them if they would be interested in participating in the research. With the help of my mother and my neighbor, I found my two Mexican women participants. For my Brazilian participants, I asked my partner's mother if she would be interested in sharing her oral history and if she knew anyone that also might be interested. It was through my partner's mother that I was able to find my two Brazilian participants. This approach enabled the creation of trust between my narrators and I before they fully met me as they heard about my thesis and about me from people that they trusted.

After recruiting my participants, I contacted them through Whatsapp and text messages to set up a time to talk about the project and to introduce myself. Because of busy schedules, most of the communication happened over phone calls and audio messages through Whatsapp. At this time, I noted that my Mexican narrators preferred to communicate in Spanish, and my Brazilian narrators preferred to communicate in Portuguese. I conducted the consent process and the interviews in Spanish and Portuguese. As a native Spanish speaker and Portuguese student, I first translated the English consent form provided by the IRB, and then Dr. Marília Ribeiro performed a back translation to ensure that the original information remained after translation. After an introduction with my participants, I set up time to record the interviews. The two interviews with Mexican women were conducted in person in Atlanta, while the two interviews with Brazilian women were conducted through a phone call because they live in Maryland. Before I began recording, I read my participants a consent script that once again explained the project and their rights. I recorded their verbal consent and began the interview.

Both oral history experiences I previously mentioned, along with my research, served as preparation and inspiration for the questions I formulated for the oral histories found within this thesis. I paid attention to the language I used in my questions; particularly, I aimed to make the language accessible and easy to understand by all, regardless of education. Some of my questions had sub questions or potential topics of conversation that could stem from the main question to prepare for short replies. I revised my questions a few times to ensure that I was not collecting identifiable data in compliance with the IRB exemption requirements. When translating the questions to Spanish, I relied heavily on the language I utilize at home with my parents and with my Mexican community to ensure that the questions were asked in a way that made sense to my participants. With the Portuguese translations, I utilized the writing skills I have gained during

my Portuguese studies and a Portuguese dictionary to translate words I did not know. Then, I sought help from Dr. Ribeiro to make my questions sound a little less formal and a bit more conversational using language that Brazilians understand. The questions below represent the final product and were translated to Spanish and Portuguese (and can be found in the Appendix) for the participants with the help of Dr. Ribeiro.

Oral History Questions

- 1) Please share a little bit about yourself (name/pseudonym, what country you're from, age range, if you're a mother or not) **May decline to answer name and age question*
- 2) Can you tell me a bit about your early life and where you grew up?
 - a. May follow up asking about what the relationship was like with their mother and sisters (if applicable)
- 3) In your opinion/memory, were your early life experiences shaped by the fact that you were a girl? How so, do you recall any examples?
 - a. Were you told that girls were only allowed to do certain activities? What were some of those activities?
- 4) Did your mother or sisters provide you with a model of what a mother does/how a mother should act? If so, could you share what that was?
- 5) Can you tell me how your relationship with your children is similar or different from the one you have/had with your mother? **For the mothers*
- 6) How did your migration to the United States impact your relationship with your mother and/or children?

a. May share how they feel about the situation, how they imagine their mother/children to feel, etc.

7) What are some ways you stay connected with your mother and/or children?

a. Did this change over time?

Once the oral history ended and I stopped the recording, I asked my narrators if there were any parts of their oral history they no longer wished me to use or if they wanted me to delete any parts of the recording. All my participants gave me permission to utilize their oral histories in their entirety. I offered the opportunity to share a copy of their oral history, and they were all interested. I remained in contact with my participants throughout the writing of this thesis and gave them the option to contact me if they no longer wanted me to use their oral history. In the subsequent chapter, I summarize the oral histories of my four narrators before transitioning into my analysis in the fourth chapter.

Chapter 3:

Summaries of Oral Histories

In this chapter, I summarize the oral histories of two Mexican women and two Brazilian women that experience either transnational motherhood or transnational daughterhood. Because of the limited time for this project, I recruited a transnational mother and daughter within the Mexican community in Atlanta and the Brazilian community in Maryland. It is important to remember that these women may belong to various communities, and their identities may intersect. For example, a transnational mother is also a daughter to someone, but perhaps she does not identify as a transnational daughter because her mother lives with her or within the same country. Or, a transnational daughter is a mother to a few children, but she is not a transnational mother because her children have always lived with her. As a reminder, this chapter offers summaries of these women's lives and will not go into excessive detail, but the reader may refer to the Appendix to browse the full transcripts (in Spanish and Portuguese) of these women's stories.

The summaries begin with the transnational mothers and transition to the transnational daughters. In the following chapter, I will highlight and analyze certain aspects of these stories to further my argument of how women's ideas about motherhood, daughterhood, and womanhood shift after living in two different societies, as well as their practices. I chose to separate the summaries from the analysis with the intention of emphasizing the storytelling that occurs during an oral history interview. The women I interviewed are narrators recounting events and experiences in their lives, but sometimes do not share these moments in a chronological way. In the summaries, I organize the material from the oral histories as chronologically as possible, beginning with each woman's childhood before transitioning into their adulthood and

transnational experience. It was an honor and privilege to speak with these women, and I cannot express how grateful I am to have had the opportunity to be in their space.

Doralis¹

Doralis, a mother of six, is from “la costa chica,” the small coast of Guerrero, Mexico. She has four daughters and one son. As a young girl, she spent most of her time with her cousins, playing in the lagoon and in the ocean, while her parents worked at a small store selling food. “They sold a bit of everything,” she shared. Doralis is “la más chiquita,” the littlest of eight siblings, so they often treated her like their own daughter and spoiled her plenty. However, this did not stop her from arguing with her sisters, the way that sisters do, or from being scolded by them as well. She described her relationship with her parents as beautiful, stating that her father rarely punished her and when he did, she would feel a bit emotional about it. Doralis recalled that she did not feel limited by her gender as a young girl, but as she shared the types of activities she took part in, one could conclude that certain gender roles were ascribed to her. For example, she remembered that sometimes her brothers would not let her play with them because, “Of course. [She’s] a girl. What [is she] doing with the boys?” She understood this division between boys and girls and played with girls instead. The girls would play hide and seek, they would jump rope, race each other, and would pretend they were in beauty pageants. Meanwhile, the boys played soccer, basketball, and volleyball, but would also play hide and seek or have a race. Perhaps their activities were not so divided after all.

When she left Guerrero to come to Atlanta 25 years ago, Doralis found it to be the most difficult thing she could have ever done. “You’re with [your children] for a long time and then to

¹ This interview was conducted on March 3rd, 2023.

leave them?” she expressed. She continued by describing it as leaving “half of her heart, or almost her entire heart.” Her reasoning for leaving? She was looking for a better life for her children, but it weighed heavily on her. As she detailed this part of her life, some tears fell out of the corner of her right eye; clearly, this was an emotional memory for her. She emphasized, “I didn’t leave them alone, I left them with my mother” but she felt some type of shame because she knew a daughter “always needed their mother.” Doralis explained to her daughters over the phone that she was here, “echandole ganas,” putting in the work, for a better future. Later, when Doralis wanted to bring her daughters to the United States, it hurt her even more because they resented her. “They resent you...they often state that you weren’t there or that you didn’t give them love or hugs,” she mentioned. She teared up thinking about when she would call her daughters, they would always cry and ask when she was coming back. Doralis would lie to them and say she was coming soon because she knew the truth – she could not come and go as easily because of her undocumented status. “If it was only a bit difficult back then, now it is even more difficult [to cross over],” she voiced. During the times that her daughters reproached Doralis’ attempts to be their mother, she told them that she would always be there for them as their mother.

Reflecting on her role as a mother, Doralis did not believe that her sisters or her mother ever taught her how to be a mother. Those were “los tiempos de antes,” the times of before, essentially implying that her mother and sisters’ way of mothering was different from the way that Doralis mothers or performs her role. One of the practices of “before” or one of the ideas presented to Doralis about motherhood was the idea that one should not be a young mother because one is “practically a girl.” Teen motherhood was discouraged, which seems to still be the case today. Slowly, we shifted into discussing her relationship with her children. Doralis

believed the relationship with her children differed from the one she had with her mother because she tends to be a lot more open with her children and tells things “the way that they should be,” hinting that their conversations are a bit more unfiltered. She provides them with advice and warns them about possible mistakes they can make. She noted that she did this with her daughters in Mexico, too. Interestingly, she did not see herself as a protector, but she “is a mother” that wants the best for her children. Could this be that she associates the protector role with the father?

Here, Doralis transitioned into conversation about what it means to be a good mother. She felt as though she failed as a mother, but notes that she never failed her daughters financially. Perhaps she did not give them the love that they deserved, but Doralis felt as though her money could probably help ease her absence. She would send gifts such as shoes and clothes, along with the money so that her daughters would not feel as though their mother left them and “never gave [them] anything.” When asked about what makes a good mother, Doralis shared that a good mother needs to give good advice because “there are a lot of bad things out here.” She considered herself a good mother, “bien nice” she states, because before anything, she is their friend.

*Lory*²

Lory, a Brazilian woman from Paraná, has lived in the United States for the past six years. She is a mother of two, a son that works as a lawyer in Brazil, and a daughter that currently lives in Maryland. In Paraná, Lory’s father worked as a farmer and provided all the food they ate at home. She rarely mentioned her mother, except for stating that they lived

² This interview was conducted on February 27th, 2023.

together until Lory was 5 years old. Most of the oral history revolved around her sisters, as Lory is the youngest of seven children, and her sisters were the ones that raised her. Lory remembered her childhood as a simple one, stating that she did not have any “electronic” toys and television was still pretty new. Instead, she played with dolls, jump rope, and played “peteca” with her nieces. The second oldest sister in the family was Lory’s first teacher, instructing her from first to fourth grade. For middle school, Lory went to live with a cousin and studied in a different city, and sadly, it was also during this time that her second oldest sister passed away. Lory moved once again for high school and lived with her oldest sister. There, she attended a larger and Catholic school.

Being raised by her older sisters, Lory remembered that she was well disciplined by them and shared some of the “traditional” teachings that her sisters imposed on her. A young girl at this time, according to her sisters, had to sleep early, could not watch television after 7pm, could not watch “novelas,” could not wear short clothes, could not go to the movie theater, and could not wear red nail polish. “It was not the same freedom as the one many children have today,” Lory emphasized as she thought about children’s experiences in the United States. She also recalled well-defined gender roles that were attributed to children. For example, boys played soccer or with any type of ball, while the girls played with dolls, or they played house. “They rarely played together,” she shared. However, boys and girls were allowed in the same classroom and learned the same subjects such as math or science. She described her classroom in detail, emphasizing the humble origins that she came from.

Despite being well instructed by her sisters and her Catholic schooling, she married at fifteen and had her son at eighteen. “Even with my sister’s strict rules, I married young,” she expressed. Perhaps Lory did not marry at the age she and her sisters had wished, but she does

believe that she picked up on and learned other value practices from her sisters. Lory's sisters taught her "simple things," with one example being activities they performed on the weekends. On Saturdays, her sisters taught her to bake a cake, prepare lunch, and clean the house so that it would be ready for Sundays. On Sundays, they would go to church and then head home for the meal that had been prepared the night before. Lory performs these practices to this day and believes that through these activities she learned how to be a mother, a "dona de casa" or a housewife, a student, and a working woman.

Lory then reflected on her relationship with her children and emphasized that it differed from her relationship with her own mother, which one can see was basically non-existent. She summarized the relationship with her son to be a typical mother-son relationship but recognized that their relationship is also professional because they work together. With her daughter, it is much more focused on the mother-daughter aspect of things. Both relationships with her children were and are "good relationships." However, the relationships have both been affected by the distance between Maryland and Brazil. Lory first became a transnational mother with her daughter after Lory met her second husband on the internet. At first, Lory would come to the United States to visit the man she fell in love with and then go back, but eventually she had to make the decision of choosing between her career, her children, and her husband. She knew that she "could not leave her husband" nor could she bring her sixteen-year-old daughter at the same time. Lory was more worried about her leaving her daughter behind rather than her son because he was independent, he already had a career and a family. Finally, Lory made the decision to come to the United States and her daughter stayed behind in Brazil with her father for six months. They were apart from November to March, and they would talk every day on the phone, but it was still difficult for Lory. The wait was the most difficult part, but that longing was

alleviated a bit when her daughter had the opportunity to visit once. Her daughter still had to finish high school in Brazil, and once she did, she desired to live in Maryland with her mother. Lory applied for her daughter's student visa, which was approved, and she has worked and studied here since.

Lory is currently a transnational mother to her son, as she has not seen him for over five years due to the pandemic. Before the pandemic, Lory's son would visit her in Maryland depending on his finances. Currently, she expressed that she misses him, and it is difficult because she still has not met her new grandchild. She perseveres through the feelings of missing her son, through prayer. With both of her children, she remained connected to them through Whatsapp. They sent messages and participated in video calls to talk every day. Lory made it clear that her "convivência," or her interactions, with her children remained and remains the same despite the distance. In thinking about her relationship with her son now, she believed that perhaps that "convivência" is stronger or more frequent because they miss each other and work together. Lory recognized that because of the choices she made, her life story has had a different outcome that led her to Maryland, but this did not and would not affect her relationship with her children. She is very happy with her life and believes that missing her children during their time apart is a natural thing that reminds one of the good things in life. As a mother, Lory feels accomplished in her role because her children love her, and she loves her children. They are a gift from God.

*Francineide*³

Francineide was born in Acre, Brazil and has lived in the United States for the past 20 years. She migrated to Maryland after meeting her husband and giving birth to her first son in Bolivia. She grew up in a small municipality named Plácido de Castro, which at the time only had two roads. Her childhood was “simple,” with few material things, but she emphasized that “nunca nos faltou nada,” they never lacked anything. Francineide described her home full of vegetation and friendly neighbors. They were a loving community where many people owned farms and would share their produce with each other. Because there was no electricity in their town, people would sit outside in the moonlight to share stories. It was a “calm place with no violence,” she recounted. Francineide has five siblings, and she shared her room with her sisters. This allowed for a “typical” sister relationship, where they played together but also argued. Her brothers took on more of a “protector” role in her life, and she stated that “brothers care more for sisters,” hinting at the fact that certain gender roles had been established in her way of thinking. Other ways that gender roles presented themselves in Francineide’s life was through the games children played. Girls played house or with dolls, and she believed that these activities “formed” young girls as they taught girls to take care of their home, to be a good housewife, and to cook, clean, and do laundry. Boys, on the other hand, played with cars, flew kites, played peteca, and played soccer.

There was not much they could do for leisure in Plácido de Castro, so there was a strong dependence on their family relationship. “We did everything with the family,” Francineide explained. When describing her relationship with her mother, Francineide also described it as a “typical” mother-daughter relationship. She recalled her mother placing presents under the bed

³ This interview was conducted on February 26th, 2023.

and saying that Santa Claus brought them, as well as her mother baking cakes for birthdays. Francineide remembered her mother's affection as she would kiss and hug her more than her father. Her father was a bit more "dry," as she explained it, and she credited that to potentially the way he grew up. Both parents worked outside the home as they owned a small store. They would alternate who worked the store throughout the day. Francineide even noted that her mother served as a different role model in comparison to her maternal grandmother, with whom she also spent plenty of time. Francineide's mother served as the model of a woman who worked outside of the home and contributed financially for the family. The maternal grandmother stayed home to care for her husband, her own mother, and her grandchildren. Francineide grew up seeing both types of women as possibilities for when she would become a grown woman and a mother.

As we transitioned to her adult life, Francineide thought about her relationship with her mother and her sons. With her mother, she believed that the move to Maryland did not change their relationship because the love "remained," but perhaps their interactions are different. Today, Francineide keeps in touch with her mother through Whatsapp, but it was unclear if she sends any money or gifts back home. Twenty years ago, Francineide would call back home at the end of the week with an international call card, but it was not the easiest because the call would sometimes fail. She remembered that her mother and the rest of her family were a bit apprehensive at the thought of Francineide leaving Brazil. Francineide had left before at the age of 15 for school and lived with an aunt in a larger city close by. But this was different. They were always worried about whether her marriage was going well, if she was being abused by her husband, and the fact that she was "alone" in another country. "It is not the same as if you leave home within your country," Francineide pointed out. "It is another culture, another country,

another language,” she expressed. She recalled how difficult it was to adapt and that in the first four years, she wanted to go back to Brazil. She had studied medicine, but never had the chance to practice and wished she had the opportunity to expand her profession. However, she chose to stay because she wanted to be close to her sons.

Her relationship with her sons is different from the relationship she had with her mother. Francineide noted that raising children differs from generation to generation. In her efforts to change the way she “mothered,” Francineide tried to be strict, but a bit more loving than her mother. She tried her best not to hit her sons, except for on the hand “when necessary,” and as they grew older, it turned into arguments. “I tried to give them more love,” she said, and dedicated more of her life to them. Her way of doing such was by putting a pause on her career and moving to a new country. Today, she intends to return to her career in medicine, but will most likely attempt to practice medicine in Maryland because her sons are here.

*Gaby*⁴

Gaby grew up in Guerrero, Mexico, and lived with her parents until she was seven years old. She has plenty of happy memories from her childhood, describing that she felt very loved at this time. From her parent’s marriage, Gaby was an only child, but after their separation, each of her parents had two more daughters, making Gaby the oldest sister of five young girls. She only spent time with her sisters on her mother’s side and revealed that she just recently reconnected with her sisters on her father’s side after 20 years. As an only child for most of her youth, she participated in various activities and did not believe she was limited because of her gender. Gaby’s father took her to swim practice, ballet, dance class, and rehearsals for different plays she

⁴ This interview was conducted on March 1st, 2023.

was in. During her teen years, she would play soccer, volleyball, basketball, and participated in her school's "escolta," an imitation of Mexico's military guard. However, Gaby's home life was surrounded by "things for girls," as she stated. She remembered playing with Barbies, owning tea sets, stuffed animals, crafting materials, and a doll house. While Gaby mentioned that she did "things for girls," she also recognized that she participated in activities and dressed in different ways in comparison to other girls. Gaby dressed in pants, shorts, and shirts despite loving dresses because her mother would say that Gaby "did not sit right" and as a precaution because she was a young girl.

As previously mentioned, Gaby only lived with her parents until she was seven years old, and it was at this time that Gaby went to live with her grandmother in "el pueblo," a small town away from Acapulco. Gaby talked about how her grandmother was a role model in her life because the relationship with Gaby's mother was not the most affectionate. Gaby remembered her mother taking care of her, but she also recalled her mother being strict and disciplined. For example, her mother would not allow the children to put their elbows on the table nor were they allowed to talk during a meal. When the girls were walking, Gaby's mother called them out for their posture. "No conseguía la manera de ser mamá para nosotros," Gaby expressed, "She did not figure out how to be a mother to us." This comment hinted at the idea that Gaby had a certain vision of what a mother should do.

Gaby's mother was also and is still not a very expressive woman, which Gaby believed to be a result of difficult life experiences her mother might have undergone. Gaby shared that her mother rarely said "I love you" nor did she hug her children. It is still the same to this day, and Gaby noted that this was one thing she wished to do differently when she became a mother. Despite describing the relationship as difficult, Gaby looked up to her mother in other ways that

did not involve her role as a mother. For example, her mother was a hair stylist, so she was always well dressed and had a clean appearance, and Gaby wanted to emulate this. Gaby also remembered her mother being well organized and informed on her personal finances, another skill that Gaby wished to apply in her own life. Still, Gaby felt as though she did not learn enough from her mother because she was not physically there as much after the separation, and instead spoke more fondly about her grandmother as a role model.

As we transitioned to speaking about Gaby's grandmother, Gaby spoke more about God and His role in understanding her family relationships. She thanked God for her grandmother because she taught Gaby the "basic" activities such as cooking, making tortillas, washing clothes, and cleaning. Her grandmother taught her how to be "a housewife and a stay at home mother," which would be someone that looks after their family, takes care of them, and keeps their home clean. In Acapulco, Gaby had someone that helped clean their home, so when she moved to "el pueblo," Gaby felt as though she did not know anything in comparison to the girls that lived there since they already knew activities such as how to fetch water from the well. Similar to the description of her mother, Gaby believed her grandmother was a bit harsh with her at the time, but she understands that a "woman needed to learn how to do these things."

In Gaby's experience migrating to Atlanta, not much changed with her mother's attitude and affection towards her. "I did not understand why she never called me," Gaby voiced as she talked about her first few years here and her mother not calling. Eventually, her mother would write letters to Gaby and sometimes call from an uncle's house. It sufficed for the moment, but Gaby expressed that sometimes it was not enough because she could not see her family's faces. Surprisingly, Gaby's mother was happy that Gaby was moving to Atlanta because, according to her mother, a wife needs to be with her husband. Gaby imagined her mother might have missed

Gaby after the move, but once again, she never expressed these feelings to her. It was not in the original plan for Gaby to move to the United States, but her husband suggested they move after living and working in Atlanta for a year. Gaby's husband, Marcos, arranged everything for her to come and their son Victor stayed with Gaby's mother. Victor remained in Mexico from May until December, and Gaby felt as though she was here, but "[her] mind was there." She cried a lot because she missed home, her son, and the liberty that came with living in a small town. When her son began attending school, Gaby adapted to her new life as she was distracted by parent volunteering. Gaby's relationship with her son differs from the one she had with her mother. "I hug my son and we have a lot of trust in each other," she smiled.

Today, Gaby's relationship with her mother is stable, and Gaby does everything she can to take care of her mother all the way from Atlanta. Gaby calls her mother about once or twice a week through Whatsapp, sends her gifts, and sends her money. Sometimes, Gaby's mother is not in the best mood, so Gaby refrains from calling to not upset her mother and because she recognizes that both parties should put in the effort to talk to each other. Whether her mother talks to her or not, Gaby completes these practices and only asks that her mother remains comfortable and well. In fact, Gaby speaks more to her sister who lives on the same land as their mother to receive updates on how she is doing. "As daughters, all we can do is pray for [our mother] and love her," she shared, followed by, "No hay barreras para demostrar amor," there are no boundaries that stop us from showing our love. Gaby demonstrates her love through these actions, but also because as a follower of God, one must follow the Ten Commandments. "The fourth commandment states that one must honor their mother and father...If I say I love God, I must follow the Commandments," she stated. She heavily relies on God to show her how to be a good mother and a good daughter. "God put mothers on this Earth because he wasn't going to be

here; She was going to be the angel that took care of his children,” Gaby laughed. Her faith in God has clearly helped her understand the lack of communication with her mother.

Chapter 4:

Analysis of Oral Histories

Doralis, Lory, Francineide, and Gaby presented their oral histories as transnational mothers and daughters, and various similarities and differences appeared when comparing the stories. Although each woman's story is unique, they share similar struggles and perform their roles in similar ways. In this chapter, I analyze the oral histories I conducted to discuss the ideas these women had about motherhood, daughterhood, and womanhood; how were these ideas modified after their migration to the United States; what were the practices of the mothers and daughters and how have they changed over time. I conclude that all the women I interviewed were taught in implicit and explicit manners how to be housewives and stay at home mothers, but some deviated from this idea in their home countries and in the United States. I also conclude that these women's beliefs about their roles did not appear to drastically change with their transnational experiences; rather, their practices shifted because of distance, as well as the efforts in maintaining these familial relationships.

Housewife, Stay at Home Mother, or Working Woman?

From a young age, Doralis, Lory, Francineide and Gaby participated in activities and viewed women in their lives as examples of what a mother and a woman "should" be: a housewife, a stay-at-home mother, or a working woman. Lory, Francineide, and Gaby all shared that growing up, young girls played with dolls and played house but had different responses when asked about these activities. For one, Francineide believed that these activities "formed" or influenced young girls on how to take care of one's home, how to be a good housewife, and how to cook, clean, and do laundry. Here, she talked in the general sense and recognized that this

might have been the norm for the young girls living in Plácido de Castro at the time. However, she did not mention her own experience playing with dolls, which hints at the idea that perhaps dolls and playing house were not her immediate example on how to be a housewife and a stay-at-home mother. Lory also followed Francineide in describing that generally, young girls played with dolls and played house, but never mentioned participating in said activities. On the other hand, Gaby mentioned that she owned and played with Barbie dolls and Barbie's Dreamhouse but did not credit these activities with influencing her in a certain way. Doralis' experience differs from the rest because she did not mention these toys and games. Her only reference to games she played as a young girl was pretending to be in a beauty pageant (this has its own implications about beauty standards for women but will not be discussed here). All three women and Doralis did not rely on their toys and their games to inform their ways of performing their mother or daughter roles. Instead, they looked towards the women in their family, their own experiences with said women, or within their religious teachings.

The main figures in these women's lives that informed their ideas about motherhood, daughterhood, and womanhood were their mothers, sisters, and grandmothers. Francineide and Gaby emphasized that their grandmothers were the women they spent most time with, and Gaby explicitly mentioned that her relationship with her mother was not the most affectionate. Lory lived most of her childhood with her older sisters, and Doralis expressed having a beautiful relationship with her sisters and mothers but recognized that they did not necessarily inform her way of mothering. In Francineide's oral history, she credited her mother and her grandmother as her roles for motherhood. Her mother worked outside of the home and provided for her family financially, presenting the role of a working mother. Francineide's maternal grandmother, on the other hand, "was always home, she took care of the home, her husband and her grandchildren."

Francineide intended to follow in her mother's footsteps of working outside of the home by attending medical school, but this was cut short when Francineide met her husband. She became pregnant with her oldest son and decided to migrate to Maryland to "dedicate more of [her] life to her children" and to provide them with a family and a home.

The decision to move to the United States reflects the influence Francineide's grandmother had on Francineide. The grandmother remained home to care for other family members and to perform "stay at home mother" duties. Francineide followed her grandmother's example of how to be a wife and a mother by following her husband to Maryland. However, Francineide's relationship with her mother also informed the way Francineide performed her role as a mother and a daughter. She remembered her mother kissing her and hugging her, but her mother would often punish her children by hitting them. Francineide aimed to be as loving as her own mother, but intended to not hit her sons, unless it was on their hands and it was "necessary." Because Francineide's mother showed her children affection through hugs and kisses, Francineide maintains her relationship with her mother despite the distance. She claimed that their relationship did not change after moving to Maryland because "their love remains," but perhaps their interactions changed from what they used to be. For example, when Francineide first moved to Maryland, she would call her family in Brazil at the end of the week with an international phone call card. Today, she can call her mother more frequently through Whatsapp and intends to travel to Brazil soon to work on her career and visit her family. The positive relationship with her mother during childhood allows Francineide to perform the role of a caring mother and daughter that attempts to remain connected with family in Brazil.

Gaby also experienced a loving relationship with her grandmother, but the relationship with her mother differed from Francineide's. Yet Gaby still strives to maintain that relationship

because of her faith in God and the love for her mother. Gaby explained that after her parents' split, she went to live with her grandmother in a smaller town and lacked the physical presence of her mother. She thanked God for her grandmother because she taught Gaby the gendered activities: cooking, cleaning, and washing clothes. Reflecting on the experience now, Gaby understood that "as a woman, [she] needed to learn how to do these things." With her mother's absence, Gaby learned the ways of a stay-at-home mother and housewife, and today, she still performs these roles for her husband Marcos and her son Victor. Gaby deviated from the housewife path when she first migrated to Atlanta because she needed to work and save up money to bring Victor. When Victor began attending school, Marcos recommended she remain home and focus on their son's education.

Even though the relationship with her grandmother was stronger, Gaby did look up to her mother as an example for how to be a "good" wife and a "good" woman. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Gaby's mother was a stylist, so she was always well dressed and put together. During the time I spent with Gaby, she was also well dressed, had her hair brushed in a ponytail, and wore some light makeup. She picked up these attitudes about a woman's appearance from her mother and implemented them in her adult life. Gaby also wished to be as educated as her mother which was noted when Gaby shared that her mother took care of her own finances. Gaby's mother's ideas about a woman and a wife also led Gaby to make the life-altering decision of moving to Atlanta. When Marcos suggested Gaby join him, her mother was "happy" because Gaby would be fulfilling her role as a wife. "Wherever the husband is, the wife should be there," her mother would say. Gaby knew that she needed to be with her husband because of what her mother taught her, but she also made sure to emphasize that she followed her husband out of love. "I did not see it as an obligation or commitment [to follow him], I did it out of love for

him,” Gaby expressed. In a rather interesting way, Gaby’s mother offered Gaby the example of a working and independent woman, mixed with the example of a woman that belongs at her husband’s side. In her role as a wife and mother, Gaby has fulfilled both her mother and her grandmother’s ideas of a “good” mother and wife.

Like Francineide, Gaby’s “difficult” relationship with her mother has informed Gaby’s mothering and “daughter-ing” practices. In her role as a mother, Gaby is very affectionate with Victor, giving him the hugs and kisses she once desired, and reminds him that she is his friend. She mentioned that she had lived through various events in her life that her mother still does not know about because she never had the space nor the support at home to talk. In her home, Gaby values the different mealtimes, especially dinner, because they offer her the opportunity to talk about life with her husband and son and to help them in times of need. As a daughter, Gaby leans on her faith in God and her desire to better the relationship with her mother as resources on how to perform her role. “If I say I love God, I must comply with the Ten Commandments,” Gaby emphasized after reciting the fourth commandment that states one must honor your mother and father. She also identified mothers as angels on Earth that take care of God’s children. Her identity as a daughter is very tied to her identity as a follower of Christ, therefore her efforts to maintain the relationship with her mother resemble her practices as a woman of faith. She is respectful, attentive, and loving. Throughout the years, Gaby performed her role as a transnational daughter via letters and phone calls. Now, with Whatsapp at one’s fingertips, Gaby can call her mother once or twice a week, along with sending her money and gifts. The gifts and the money showcase Gaby’s attentiveness towards her mother as she worries about her well-being. The limited phone calls are a sign of respect towards her mother since Gaby is aware that

her mother is not always in the mood to talk. Lastly, the mere efforts of reaching out for a conversation exhibit the love Gaby has for her mother.

The experiences that Francineide and Gaby shared reflect the argument presented by Gabrielle Oliveira in *Motherhood Across Borders: Immigrants and Their Children in Mexico and New York*:

I argue instead that women borrow from emblems and symbols present in the ideologies of motherhood in both Mexico and the United States as a way of creating their own practices of care. They also use childhood memories and experiences with their own mothers to inform the ways in which they practice care for their own children (39).

In Francineide's case, she adopted ideologies from Brazil, and when one compares her experience to Gaby's or even Doralis', one can see that they are very similar. Francineide decided to not physically punish her children, while Gaby made sure to be more affectionate towards her son. Their relationships with their mothers did not change their responsibilities as daughters, but they did influence their feelings and efforts of remaining in touch. Francineide maintains her relationship with her mother almost effortlessly because, from what she shared, they had a "typical" mother-daughter relationship with affection. Gaby, on the other hand, still desires affection from her mother, so she puts more of an effort to maintain the relationship with her mother by sending gifts and money. It is unclear whether Francineide sends her mother gifts and money because she did not discuss it. Gaby also attempts to maintain the connection with her mother because of her religious beliefs. Both women utilize their childhood memories and experiences to inform the ways they currently practice their mother and daughter roles.

As previously mentioned, Lory and Doralis' role models or primary figures in their lives were their sisters. Lory not only lived with her older sisters, but she was also instructed by them

for her elementary and high school career. She proudly claimed that her sisters modeled what a mother and woman were “meant” to do and strongly believed it was through them that she “learned how to be a mother, a housewife, a student, and a working woman.” For one, they instilled certain practices of a stay-at-home mother within Lory’s routine. For example, she continues the practice of cooking and cleaning on the weekends for her family in preparation for mass on Sundays. Lory’s sisters also instilled the idea that a young woman must attend school, be mindful in the way she dresses, and cautious of where she goes out to. These experiences allowed her to become a working mother of two in Brazil and after her migration.

Lory’s decision to migrate was not out of necessity but rather out of her desire to be with her new husband. She needed to decide between her career, her children, and her marriage. Even though Lory did not describe how and if her sisters taught her how to be a “good” wife, it may be implied that perhaps her faith in God played a part in how she performed and performs her role as a wife. She did not describe her relationship with God as much as Gaby did, but the mere mention of attending mass on Sunday and her children being a gift from God, informs others of her faith. The teachings from her sisters paired with the teaching of Lory’s religion led her to become a transnational mother twice. It is necessary to recognize that her experience as a transnational mother differs from other transnational mothers’ experience because she left her daughter when she was a teenager. In most of the research conducted about transnational motherhood, women leave behind younger children. Lory’s daughter was sixteen at the time Lory migrated and left her daughter with her father. It was unclear if Lory heavily depended on a transnational care constellation, since she left her daughter with her father, who is also responsible for caring for their daughter. Nonetheless, Lory still experienced the feelings of longing and despair as she waited for her daughter to arrive in Maryland.

The examples and models of motherhood that Lory encountered throughout her life taught her to be present in her children's lives no matter the circumstance. It is for this reason that when Lory's daughter was in Brazil, they would talk on the phone every day to stay connected. Lory also helped apply for her daughter's student visa and paid for a flight to see her daughter at least once in the months they were apart. Today, Lory and her daughter both live in the same state and see each other often. With her son, Lory is fortunate enough to have a professional relationship with her son, as she may use her law credentials in Brazil remotely and has the opportunity to maintain their mother-son relationship by talking through Whatsapp. Because her son has a career and a family of his own, Lory does not worry as much about him, but as a mother, she misses being able to see him as frequently as she sees her daughter.

In contrast to Lory's experience and the rest of the women in this thesis, Doralis did not have such clearly defined influences that informed her as a mother, a wife, or a working woman. As previously mentioned, Doralis did not express playing with dolls or playing house when she was younger, so perhaps these activities did not have the heaviest influence in how she viewed gender roles or familial roles. When asked about her relationship with her mother and sisters, she described both as a "typical" relationship full of arguments, advice, and love. In comparison to Lory, Francineide, and Gaby, who spoke about their sisters' and grandmothers' impact, Doralis did not speak about the relationships with her mother and sisters with the same tone and detail as the other women. The most Doralis shared about her relationship with the women in her family was the fact that her sisters would spoil her, and their mother would advise against teen pregnancy. However, these small pieces of information can be interpreted as some key lessons in Doralis' mothering practices. From her sisters, Doralis learned to love and be affectionate towards her daughters by letting them know she is there for them. From her mother, Doralis

knew it was acceptable to be a working mother and learned how to share advice with her daughters. Doralis applies these practices to her mothering today. Lastly, I would like to note that Doralis does not mention her role as a wife, and she is the only one out of the four women that did not migrate to Atlanta because of her husband. Despite Doralis not sharing elaborate stories about her experiences with the women in her family, she did learn certain practices from these women even if she did not believe it was the case.

In her experience away from her daughters, Doralis lived through events and emotions typically seen in the experience of Mexican transnational mothers. One prominent experience these types of mothers encounter in the relationship with their children is resentment. Sandra Castro writes that in the cases of reunification, which Doralis was able to achieve many years later, “Children also feel resentment towards their parents and may reject them because they see their mother’s migration and separation as an abandonment” (60). Doralis’ daughters resented her for leaving them in Mexico, and she believes that they might have asked or said to themselves, “My mother was not here with me; She did not give me the love I needed or any hugs.” Whenever Doralis called them, they would often cry, say that they missed her, and ask when she was coming back. In her attempt to alleviate these difficult feelings, for herself and her daughters, Doralis reminded them that she was trying to provide them with a better life, that she was “echandole ganas,” and she would be back soon.

The small lie of telling her daughters she would be back soon also filled Doralis with guilt, another common feeling amongst transnational mothers (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 552). Doralis shared, “Sometimes I feel as though I failed them as a mother, but I never failed them financially. I always provided for them financially.” With this comment, Doralis gave the impression that being a mother and financially providing for her family are two different

responsibilities. She did not see her money as a mother's responsibility, yet she migrated to Atlanta with the intention of working to provide her daughters with a better life. Her way of thinking may reflect the effects of performing motherhood practices learned in Mexico which often teach that it is the husband's responsibility to provide for their family, and the wife's responsibility to care for and socialize their children. Yet, she also contradicts these practices by being a working mother. These opposing ideas are a result of the model she had from her mother and perhaps the model of the working woman that exists in the United States (Oliveira 44).

Lory and Doralis' oral histories about motherhood, womanhood, and transnational motherhood differ in various ways. For one, Lory migrated to the United States because she wanted to be with her husband, and Doralis migrated out of the desire to provide for her daughters. Lory proudly admired her sisters for teaching her how to be a woman and a mother, while Doralis believed she never had that explicit teaching from the women in her family, once again supporting Gabrielle Oliveira's argument that was previously mentioned. Lory left her sixteen-year-old daughter in Brazil, while Doralis left her daughters in Mexico when they were still young girls. Doralis experienced many more of the obstacles that have been found in research about transnational motherhood and was separated from her daughters much longer than Lory. Despite these differences, both women struggled with missing their children, with being removed from the culture and society they knew, and with learning new mothering practices.

The Transnational Experience and Performing Roles Across Borders

In *Corazón de Dixie: Mexicanos in the U.S. South since 1910*, Julie Weise argues that "...migrants' ideas about race, gender, rights, material well-being, and the role of the state in their lives shifted over the course of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, placing the present

in relief against an unfolding past” (7). With this quote in mind, I expected these women’s ideas about gender roles and familial roles to shift after living in the United States, which presented them with a new culture, a new history, and a new society. However, it did not appear that their transnational experience drastically affected their perspectives on their family roles or their gender roles. In the conversation about gender roles, many of these women uphold the roles that they were presented with during childhood, which were discussed in the previous section. All the women grew up with the model of a working woman, and they all ventured into this role at some point in their life. Some of them are still working women that contribute to their families financially. With this model, some of the women also maintained the practices of a stay-at-home mother and a “good” wife. Gaby fulfills both roles as she no longer works and believes these practices to be essential for all women. Francineide upheld the stay-at-home mother role to take care of her sons and complied with the “good” wife requirement of being by her husband’s side. Lory performs certain practices of a stay-at-home mother for her husband and her daughter that live in Maryland, and she followed her husband to the United States in the first place. Doralis did not detail which stay-at-home mother practices she performs, nor did she talk about her role as a wife, but she did share that she has been a working mother since arriving in Atlanta.

Transitioning to the familial roles, the women interviewed maintain their beliefs about their roles regardless of becoming transnational mothers and daughters. With Lory and Doralis, their practices of calling back home every day, sending gifts, or even paying for flights for their children to visit are done with the goal of reminding their children that they love them and are there for them. It is these women’s attempt to be present in their children’s lives, to care for them, and to be aware of their well-being. A present, attentive, and caring mother is Lory and Doralis’ model of a mother based on their own experiences with their maternal figures in their

respective origin countries. These new practices that involve money, gifts, and technology were their ways of mothering across borders since they were not able to perform their roles as if they were physically there. It is important to note that Lory did make a brief reference to the way children are raised in the United States by stating that children here have more “freedom.” This was the only time that any of the women referenced U.S. practices, and it happened to be a comparison to Brazilian customs at the time in Paraná.

Gaby and Francineide also based their roles as daughters on their experiences with their own mothers, but Gaby in particular was influenced by her religion. As children, their roles as daughters did not require the efforts that Gaby and Francineide exude now that they live in the United States. Because of the infrequent in-person interactions with their mothers, Gaby and Francineide must resort to the use of technology like Whatsapp, sending gifts, and sending money to maintain the relationships with their mothers. These practices are similar to the ones performed by the transnational mothers. As daughters, they showcase respect and attention towards their mothers. The key piece to note is that Gaby’s beliefs about her role as a daughter slightly shifted with her transnational experience. She did not mention religion nor a relationship with God during her childhood, and it seems as though she began to take her faith more seriously during her time in Atlanta. She often mentioned that God has helped her understand the difficult relationship with her mother. The strong faith that Gaby emphasized in her oral history was not a result of cultural differences between the United States and Mexico, rather a result of Gaby being away from home and in a new environment that allowed her to view her relationship with her mother from a new perspective. From this new perspective, Gaby follows through with the teachings of her religion to honor her mother and does not allow her mother’s absence during childhood to end their relationship.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I aimed to highlight the voices and histories of four women living in Atlanta and Maryland and their experience with transnational motherhood and daughterhood. I looked at the ways these women might have shifted their ideas about motherhood, daughterhood, and gender roles as they lived through the transnational experience, as well as how the practices for each role changed. While I mostly found that the ideas and practices learned in their origin countries transferred to the United States, there were certain practices that had to be adjusted because of the physical distance between family members. As I reflect on the process of researching and writing this thesis, I recognize that my expectations for the thesis and the oral histories shifted as time went on, as I read more, and as I listened to my narrators' stories. During the initial research period, I tried my best to understand motherhood, daughterhood, and the cultural practices of each country through articles and books as well as through my own experiences. I came into the project with my own preconceptions about motherhood and daughterhood because of the close relationship with my mother. I understood mothers to be independent, hard-working, attentive, affectionate, and involved in their children's education, their social life, and their health. As the oldest daughter, I knew that my responsibilities were to be respectful towards my parents, to stay in school, to help care for my sister, and to help clean around the home. Because my mother had me at a young age, we were also each other's friend and support system. I knew that many of these ideas were also implemented in my mother's home when she was growing up in Mexico and that some of my friends with migrant parents shared these experiences with me. I expected a few of these ideas and role expectations to present themselves in the conversations with my Mexican narrators but was aware and open to the differences that could appear because of our generational differences.

I conducted research on the topic of transnational motherhood and daughterhood and gathered concepts that I believed were necessary to understand these oral histories. Even though concepts like “marianismo,” “familismo,” and transnational care constellations did not manifest themselves explicitly, they were presented implicitly through certain stories or moments in these women’s lives. When speaking about motherhood, I conclude that all my narrators, regardless of nationality or their transnational role, fulfilled my expectations about mothers in their unique ways. We must remember that all the narrators are mothers and daughters to someone, but they might not experience transnationalism in both roles. I believe that all the narrators care about their children’s well-being, love their children, and are involved in their lives, satisfying the expectations set forth by “marianismo.” However, I dislike stating that they fulfilled my expectations about motherhood because this was never the goal of this thesis. My goal with conducting oral histories was to listen to these women’s experiences and to learn from them, not to judge them for their motherhood practices.

In the case of the transnational daughters, I conclude that they also met my expectations of what I believed daughters to do, but of course, the practices that they perform differ from my own because they do not physically see their mothers, nor do they still live with their mothers. “Familismo” stands out in the experiences of the transnational daughters as they put off career goals or set their feelings aside to put the needs of their family members before their own. I would like to reiterate that many of my expectations came from my experience as a Mexican American woman growing up in Atlanta with immigrant parents, so I expected my expectations to be shared amongst my Mexican narrators. I was surprised to learn that some of my ideas and expectations could be shared with my Brazilian narrators. Listening to these women’s oral histories taught me that we share certain experiences because we are women, but our lives take

their own shape based on specific situations that we undergo because of changes in our family structures, our environments, or our personal lives. The practice of listening allowed for a care constellation between the narrators and I as they educated me on the presence of reproductive labor in their lives through our discussion of their familial roles. A combination of research and personal assumptions guided me throughout this thesis, and I expected for these ideas to shift after conducting the oral histories. While most of the expectations for the thesis were met, I was pleasantly surprised to see these assumptions presented in implicit and explicit manners.

In terms of methodology, I recognize that there are certain approaches that I would modify in the case I develop this project more. For one, I would most definitely expand my participant size. I believe that at least six participants (three Mexican and three Brazilian) would have offered me more perspectives of women that perhaps grew up in larger cities than the narrators in this thesis. As a reminder, most of my narrators grew up in small towns. Next, I would develop my questions a bit more to focus on the comparison between U.S. and Latin American culture while keeping in mind the oral history guidelines. I had hoped that my participants would have compared cultural practices between their origin countries and the United States on their own, but that was not the case. I specifically interviewed women in Georgia and Maryland to learn about how each state influences the performance of their familial roles, but only a few sentences or words were shared about these places. Similarly, I would perhaps guide the oral history interview to a conversation about the experience of a mother or daughter that also identifies as a woman of color. All the women I interviewed for this thesis were women of color, but none of them discussed their experiences as such or if it had any effects on their mothering or daughter-ing practices.

Although many aspects can be modified within this project, I will emphasize that my decisions allowed for an opportunity to expand my existing scholarship on transnational motherhood and daughterhood. Notably, the decision to interview Brazilian women not only granted me the opportunity to utilize my Portuguese skills, but it also allowed me to view the similarities between Brazilian women and Mexican women. In the discussions held by my peers and other young adults, a clear divide between Brazil and the rest of Latin America is visible because of the language difference. This raises conversation on whether many Brazilians identify as Latinos/Latinx/Latine or not. The reality is that in the United States, whether Brazilians identify as Latin Americans or not, they will be placed under the “Latino” category. Therefore, there are shared experiences between Brazilians and Mexicans living in the United States, as can be seen with the transnational mothers and daughters in this thesis. Utilizing my Spanish and Portuguese skills and knowledge also allowed me to better connect with my participants because I spoke in a familiar language to them, a language that they grew up with. One may feel gratitude when others attempt to understand one’s culture in one’s native language.

Gaby, Francineide, Doralis, and Lory have allowed me to understand Latin America and the U.S. Southeast region beyond the history that I have learned in a classroom or read in books. They have emphasized that cultural practices learned from our origin countries and our families may also travel with us into new spaces and territories to inform how we practice our roles. They additionally taught me that it is okay to modify and mold our cultural practices and ideas to best fit our needs in a certain time and place. These women might have not reimagined their gender roles, but some have reimagined their familial roles based on their childhood and transnational experiences.

Appendix

A. Oral History Questions in Spanish

- 1) ¿Me puede compartir un poco sobre usted? (Nombre/seudónimo, su país de origen, un estimativo de su edad, si es madre o no) **No es obligatorio contestar a las preguntas sobre su nombre o edad*
- 2) ¿Me puede compartir un poco sobre su infancia y sobre donde creció? ¿Cómo era el ambiente, su ciudad, o pueblo?
 - a) Tal vez preguntar sobre su relación con su madre y hermanas (si tienen hermanas)
- 3) En su opinión o memoria, ¿sus experiencias en su niñez fueron moldeadas/formadas por el hecho de ser niña o mujer? ¿Si sí, tiene algunos ejemplos?
 - a) ¿Por ejemplo, existían actividades que solo las niñas podían o debían de hacer (o no)? ¿Cuáles eran algunas de esas actividades?
- 4) ¿Cree que su mamá o hermana(s) le presentaron un modelo de lo que hace una mamá o de cómo actúa una mamá? ¿Si sí, puede compartir detalles de ese modelo?
 - a) O también: “¿Cree que su mamá o hermanas le enseñaron lo que hace una mamá o como debe de actuar una mamá?
- 5) ¿Cómo es su relación con sus hijos? ¿Es similar o diferente a la relación que tuvo/tiene con su mamá? **Para las madres*
- 6) ¿Cómo fue impactada su relación con sus hijos e/o su mamá cuando se mudó a los Estados Unidos?
 - a) Es aceptable compartir sobre la situación, cómo se sienten ellas mismas, como se imaginan que se sienten sus madres/hijos, etc.
- 7) ¿Cómo se mantiene conectada con su(s) mamá/hijos? ¿Esto ha cambiado con el tiempo?

B. Oral History Questions in Portuguese

- 1) Me conta (informal)/Fale um pouco sobre você (nome/pseudônimo, o país em que você nasceu, se você é mãe, estimativa de idade) **Não é obrigatório responder à pergunta de idade e nome*
- 2) Me conta (informal)/Fale um pouco sobre sua infância e onde você cresceu. (como era o ambiente?)
 - a) Como foi seu relacionamento com sua mãe e sua(s) irmã(s) (se for o caso)
- 3) Em sua opinião/memória, suas experiências como criança foram moldadas pelo fato de ser menina/mulher? Como? Tem alguns exemplos?
 - a) Tem algumas atividades que eram só para meninas? Quais eram essas atividades?
- 4) Você acha que sua mãe ou sua(s) irmã(s) serviram de modelo do que faz uma mãe/filha ou de como uma mãe/filha deve agir? Como foi esse modelo?
- 5) O seu relacionamento com seus filhos é igual ou diferente do relacionamento que você tem/teve com sua mãe? **Para as mães*
- 6) Como é que sua migração para os Estados Unidos impactou/mudou/influenciou seu relacionamento com sua mãe e/ou seus filhos?
 - a) Como você se sentiu com respeito à situação? Como acha que seus familiares se sentem, etc.
- 7) Quais são algumas das maneiras em que você/a senhora se mantém conectada/mantem ligações/conexão com sua mãe e/ou filhos?
 - a) Mudou com o tempo?

C. Doralis' Oral History Transcript

00:00:00

Regina: Entonces...

00:00:01

Regina: ¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre algo que acabo de decir, alguna parte no estuvo clara?

00:00:08

Doralis: No, todo estuvo claro.

00:00:10

Regina: ¿Y acepta formar parte de la encuesta?

00:00:15

Doralis: Sí.

00:00:17

Regina: Muchas gracias.

00:00:20

Regina: Ahora, vamos a empezar con... vamos a empezar con las preguntas. Y la primera pregunta es: ¿Me puede compartir un poco sobre usted, su nombre, su país de origen? Si es madre de cuántos hijos tiene y cualquier otra información que usted quiera compartir.

00:00:43

Doralis: Mi nombre es Doralis y pues, soy de México. Soy madre de seis, de seis. Cuatro niñas y un niño.

00:01:05

Regina: Ahora me puede compartir un poco sobre su infancia, sobre su niñez y un poco sobre donde usted creció. Tal vez como era su casa, la gente con la que platicaba... cositas así.

00:01:23

Doralis: Bueno. Como dije, yo soy de México, de la Costa, chica de Guerrero. Mi infancia fue bonita porque pues. Ah... Porque fue bonita, porque pues... teníamos muchos primos, jugábamos en la laguna, en el mar. Y pues sí, fue bonito. Y pues sobre mi familia, o mi papá o mi mamá, pues ellos tenían una, como una cabañita. Ellos vendían, vendían pescado, vendían de todo.

00:02:08

Regina: ¿Y cómo? ¿Cómo fue su relación? ¿Tiene hermanos?

00:02:14

Doralis: Sí, tengo hermanos. Tengo como ocho, nueve hermanos. Y también fue. Fue bonito con mis hermanos, porque yo soy la más chica de todos mis hermanos. Sí y sí. Pues sí, mientras me trataban...pues cómo te diré. Como si fuera su hija o su niña porque pues era la chiquita de la casa.

00:02:38

Regina: ¿Y cómo fue su relación con con su mamá?

00:02:43

Regina: ¿Con mi mamá? Pues a la vez fue bonito y a la vez, como toda madre que no quiere que hagan esto o el otro, que eso está mal, pero siempre, siempre, siempre dándome consejos, diciéndome no hagas esto, esto está mal. Y pues sí, fue bonito también con mi mamá. Fue bonito con mi papá también fue muy lindo con mi papá porque mi papá me regañaba, yo ya me ponía a llorar como nunca me regañaba. Y pues tú sabes, a veces cuando no te regaña el papá dices...como que te sientes. Sí, sí.

00:03:24

Regina: ¿Y cómo fue su relación con con sus hermanas? ¿Tiene hermanas?

00:03:30

Doralis: Sí, con mis hermanas, las mayores? Pues. Pues con ellas. Pues siempre, como te digo, repito, yo fui la más, la la, la niña más pequeña de ahí de la casa. Pues bien, porque sí me regañaban, nos peleábamos de vez en cuando, pero hasta ahí nada más.

00:03:50

Regina: ¿Y en..en su opinión, o tal vez en su memoria, en lo que usted recuerde, piensa que sus experiencias en su niñez fueron formadas por el hecho de ser niña? O sea, cree que a usted le decían o tú puedes hacer esto porque eres niña o no puedes hacer esto porque no eres...porque eres niña. ¿Usted piensa que tuvo experiencias así?

00:04:23

Doralis: Pues fíjate que no, no tuve experiencias así porque pues bueno, uno de niña pues tú sabes que hay uno juega de como...diciendo como si yo me esperaba mis hermanos [me decían] "no, tú no puedes estar aquí, tú eres una niña. No puedes estar con nosotros." Y pues sí, sí

entendía, entendía toda esa parte, porque claro, soy una niña, qué voy a estar haciendo con los niños? O sea. Pero sí, sí entendía toda esa parte de como jugar con las niñas. Sí.

00:05:02

Regina: ¿Y cuál eran las actividades que usted hacía como niña o con otras niñas que jugaban?

00:05:09

Doralis: Bueno, en ese tiempo de mi niñez jugábamos a las escondidas o jugábamos a quién ganaba...o como correr, quién ganaba. Jugábamos a eso, jugábamos a la...como vez, cuando...a la cuerda a la cuerda, exacto. Y este jugamos también como concurso de belleza. Tú sabes, una niña que...o sea..eso es muy importante.

00:05:45

Regina: ¿Y usted recuerda cuáles eran las actividades que hacían los niños?

00:05:49

Doralis: Pues los niños hacían actividades de jugar fútbol, basquetbol o voleibol. O igual a veces jugaban a las escondidas, también jugaban a las escondidas. O también, que yo recuerde, también jugaban a las carreras. Sí.

00:06:15

Regina: ¿Y usted cree que tal vez su mamá, o tal vez sus hermanas, porque dice que como usted era la más chiquita, tal vez su mamá o sus hermanas le...le enseñaron lo que hace una mamá o como debe de actuar una mamá?

00:06:34

Doralis: Pues, de hecho. De hecho. Pues este de hecho. No, no, bueno, no nos enseñaron como actuar como mamá. Bueno, mi mamá nunca me dijo cuando tengas hijos vas a actuar de esta manera, porque eran los...eran tiempos, tiempos de antes. Tu sabes, cuando tiempos de antes...lo que te estoy dando a entender que ellos tenían otros pensamientos. O sea, ser mamá joven o grande, o sea más joven pues no te lo permitía porque eres prácticamente una niña. entonces pues sino nunca me hablaron de como ser mamá o no.

00:07:23

Regina: Y ahora un poquito más sobre su experiencia como madre. ¿Cómo es su relación con...con sus hijos? ¿Es diferente a la que tuvo usted con su mamá o...

00:07:39

Doralis: Sí, Sí, así fue...Es diferente. Fue diferente. Y es diferente a la relación que ahora tengo con mis hijas. Porque ahora es como...como te diré soy muy, como, muy abierta. No soy cerrada. O sea, con mis hijas les digo las cosas como deben de ser. No cometan este error que este error les va a costar. O sea, no soy protectora tampoco, pero sí les doy como madre. Yo quiero lo mejor para mis hijas siempre una madre quiere lo mejor para sus hijas. Entonces yo hablo con ellas, me siento con ellas en México, con mis hijas también. O sea, esto está mal, no, esto no lo deben de hacer. Los errores de la vida a veces cuestan mucho. Como...como madre, uno no lo quiere para para sus hijas. Al contrario, para una madre quiere lo mejor, para sus hijos siempre.

00:08:47

Regina: Sí. Y ahora un poquito más sobre que tiene hijas en México, ¿no? ¿Cómo...cómo fue impactada su relación con sus hijas cuando las dejó en México y se vino usted para acá?

00:09:05

Regina: Cuando las dejé yo en México pues muy difícil, muy difícil, porque imagínate estar con ellas tanto tiempo y después separarte de tus hijas casi la mitad del corazón o todo el corazón. Dejarlas allá por buscar una, una, una vida mejor para ellas, más que nada para ellas. Es difícil, difícil separarte de tus hijas cuando pues dices no, pues voy a buscar la vida. Y a veces pesa mucho, pesa demasiado. Pesa tanto. No sé cuánto pesa, pero sí, sí, sí pesa mucho.

00:09:52

Doralis: ¿Y no sé si usted quiera compartir un poco más? Pero tal vez, como usted, en el momento que ocurrió...No sé cuánto tiempo lleva usted acá, pero cuándo ocurrió. ¿Cómo...cómo se sentía usted? Y tal vez, ¿cómo se imagina que ellas se sentían?

00:10:11

Regina: Pues ellas se sentían...claro que no las deje solas, las deje con mi mamá y tú sabes que a veces la...la este...¿cómo se dice? La madre para ellas siempre fue lo importante. Pero a veces dije...hablaba con mis hijas. "Mira hija, yo estoy por acá echándole ganas para darle un futuro mejor." Entonces duele porque cuando ya uno quiere traérselas te reprochan. No estuviste conmigo, no, esto no, y las cosas son difícil, difícil porque bueno, yo lo viví. Porque te reprochan muchas cosas, que no estás con ellas, que no les diste ese cariño como madre, que no las abrazaste durante su niñez. Pero cuando yo me vine para acá y hablé con ellas, le digo yo voy por un futuro para ustedes. A veces aquí hay muchos tropiezos, demasiados, y pues bien. está bien, yo me voy, ustedes se quedan. Saben que yo como madre siempre voy a estar para ustedes. Pero sí, sí, fue difícil. Sí. Me da cosa hablar eso porque a la vez siento que tal vez como madre no sé...falle...¿me entiendes? Fallé en esa forma. Pero nunca fallé en no darles y en no...no darles. Tal vez fallé no darles cariño, como yo les dije a ellas. Tal vez no darles cariño, sí, pero en lo económico nunca les faltó nada. Gracias a Dios.

00:12:07

Regina: Sí no, a veces, como dice, uno no entiende las decisiones de un padre. Pero ya cuando uno es padre o madre ya uno se da cuenta que lo que hicieron nuestras madres es para nosotros.

00:12:21

Doralis: Exactamente. Sí, y pues sí, esa es mi experiencia pues de madre. Ahorita pues me vine, ya tengo como casi 25 años que estoy aquí en Atlanta, solamente en Atlanta. Sí, ya mucho tiempo, ya mis hijas ya estan grandes. Ya una tiene 23 y la otra 21. Y pues me las traje para acá y aquí estan ellas. Trabajando también echándole ganas.

00:13:02

Regina: Y tal vez en ese tiempo, en el tiempo antes de que se las trajera para acá, ¿cómo se mantenía conectada con sus hijas? ¿Les llamaba por teléfono o cartas?

00:13:14

Regina: No, por teléfono, porque ya en ese tiempo ya se usaba teléfono. Bueno, menos corriente, pero ya se usaba, ya, ya, sí, por teléfono. Y le hablaba a mi mamá y a mi mamá pues me las pasaba y les preguntaba ¿cómo están? Y cada vez que a ellas le hablaba ellas lloraba y decía "¿Mami, cuándo vas a venir? Te queremos mucho, te queremos ver." Y yo siempre... la mentira ¿verdad? La mentira piadosa. "Muy pronto, hija. Ya voy." O sea, es difícil. ¿Por qué? Porque pues no, no tenemos papeles. Es como decir vamos a ir y venir. No, porque es difícil. Muy difícil venir para acá. Si antes era menos, ahora es mucho más. Mucho más. Pero sí.

00:14:10

Regina: ¿Y usted enviaba regalos o cositas así?

00:14:15

Doralis: Yo les enviaba regalos. Les compraba zapatitos, les compraba ropa, les enviaba dinero también. Todo eso a mis hijas para que ellas a veces no se sintieran que... como dijera... no, pues mi mamá se fue para allá, se fue al norte y no me dio nada, no me enviaba nada. No, sí, eso sí, sí.

00:14:48

Regina: Y bueno, creo que eso es todo lo que tengo. Estoy nada más repasando las preguntas, a ver si...que no me haya faltado una. Ahora, ¿cómo usted...cuál es su idea de una buena madre?

00:15:10

Doralis: Bueno, de una buena madre, pues. Puede ser...no sé. A veces de una buena madre pienso que debe de dar...bueno, dar consejos, los mejores consejos a los niños porque tú sabes que en este país está bien peligroso. Sí. Porque ha visto mucho, mucho desastre. Mucho, mucho. Entonces, como madre, pues uno tiene que darle consejo a sus hijos mejor. Ser mejor, porque pues no, no hay quien...¿si me entiendes? No hay quien no les diga no, "no le hagas caso a tu mamá, tu mamá no, no sabe." Pero yo siempre hablo con mis hijas que eso no se debe hacer. No salir de noche, no. No irse con los amigos. Los amigos es mucho peligro. Pero sí, como madre, como madre me considero que soy como bien, bien nice. Sí. Bien nice como madre. Me considero bien nice porque antes que nada les digo a mis hijas, antes que nada también soy su amiga. Y si les pasa algo claro que me va a doler porque pues son mi vida. Pero sí, sí, sí.

00:16:34

Regina: Bueno, pues muchas gracias. Esas son todas las preguntas que yo tengo. No sé si usted tenga algo más. Otra... otra cosa que que usted quiera compartir antes de acabar esta entrevista.

00:16:47

Regina: No...pues yo pienso que todas las preguntas creo que te las...creo que te las dije. Sí...que se me salieron lágrimas porque pues me recordé. Sí. O sea, ¿me entiendes? Sí, pero sí, son todos y todas las preguntas que tú me hiciste eso fue todo.

00:17:07

Doralis: Pues muchas gracias. Ahora voy a. Ah! Se me olvidó comentar que hoy es el 3 de marzo del 2023. Son casi las ocho, casi 9:00 de la noche y estamos en Atlanta, Georgia. Pero ahora voy a parar la grabación.

D. Lory's Oral History Transcript

00:00:00

Regina: Então, você tem alguma pergunta sobre algo que eu disse? Alguma parte não foi clara?

00:00:06

Lory: Não, tá tudo ok. E uma coisa, eu gostaria de ter o áudio depois.

00:00:13

Regina: Ah ok. Tá bom, eu vou enviar então.

00:00:17

Lory: Você precisa do e-mail ou como é que você....

00:00:21

Regina: Sim. Você pode me enviar seu e-mail depois da ligação de hoje.

00:00:27

Lory: Ok, eu posso enviar.

00:00:30

Regina: Então você aceita participar da pesquisa?

00:00:35

Lory: Sim, aceito.

00:00:37

Regina: Obrigada. Então agora vou...vamos começar com as perguntas que eu tenho preparadas. Você tem o controle de que você compartilha comigo, então lembre isso. Ok?

00:00:56

Regina: Primeira pergunta. Me conta um pouco sobre você. Então, pode ser seu nome. E se não quiser compartilhar seu nome, pode ser um pseudônimo, o país em que você nasceu. E se você é mãe, quantos filhos? Coisas assim.

00:01:15

Lory: Tá. Eu me chamo Lory Inês [REDACTED]. Minha nacionalidade é brasileira. Estou aqui no país há seis anos. Sou mãe de dois filhos. Um, já um moço advogado no meu país, Brasil, e uma mulher que está aqui. E ela também já é mãe. Sou avó de três netos, netos, meninos. Amo os três de paixão. Os dois são brasileiros e um eu não conheço pessoalmente e o outro é americano. Nasceu aqui. Eu sou advogada no meu país de origem e aqui eu trabalho com limpeza.

00:02:06

Regina: Obrigada. Me conta um pouco sobre sua infância e onde você nasceu. Então pode ser coisas como as pessoas importantes na sua vida durante a infância. Como era a cidade onde você morava? Algumas memórias sobre sua infância.

00:02:34

Lory: Falar da minha infância é algo bem, bem fácil de falar. Não é difícil. Eu nasci numa cidade no interior, no município de Pinhão, Paraná, Brasil. Meu pai era agricultor e tudo o que a gente comia era vindo da agricultura. Uma infância bem, bem tradicional. A minha primeira professora foi minha irmã de ensino fundamental assim que fala no meu país. E eu estudei com ela da primeira até o quarto ano. E depois, quando eu fui para o ginásio (assim que falava na época), eu fui morar com minha prima, depois com meu primo e depois voltei a morar com a minha irmã mais velha para estudar numa escola. Esse seria o ensino do high school. Aí quando eu fui fazer o high school, eu fui embora para uma outra cidade, morar num colégio, ter um colégio religioso, um colégio interno. Aí eu não concluí os meus estudos até lá. Depois e já estou indo para a adolescência, eu me casei, eu era adolescente e me casei bem nova, com 15 anos. Eu ainda era adolescente e quando casei. Aí eu tive meu primeiro filho com 18 anos. Minha infância foi bem legal, bem simples, bem legal, bem tradicional. Naquela época não tinha quase nada de brinquedos eletrônicos. Televisão era algo muito, muito raro. Telefone também era coisa rara. A gente brincava com bonecas e... era brinquedos de pula corda...peteca. Esses brinquedos bem simples, coisas da roça.

00:04:46

Regina: Então, um pouco mais sobre isso. Como...como foi seu relacionamento com sua mãe e sua irmã? Você comentou muito sobre sua irmã, então queria saber um pouco mais sobre isso.

00:05:01

Lory: Sim, minha mãe, eu morei até os cinco anos com minha mãe. Aí eu não fui a filha mais velha. Aí eu fiquei até os cinco anos com ela e vim pra cursar. Mas eu morava com a minha mãe e estudava a sendo a outra irmã e a irmã, segunda irmã como professora. E essa professora era minha irmã e uma segunda irmã. A gente estudava até meio dia, aí vinha pra casa e nas férias eu ia ficar na casa dessa irmã mais velha minha. Mas eu não convivi muito com a minha mãe, não. Eu convivia só aos poucos assim. Eu ficava mais com minhas irmãs. Aí quando eu fui para

estudar...o que era interior, não tinha mais. Fui morar com minha prima. Essa minha irmã, que foi minha primeira professora, me alfabetizou. Ela morreu. Ela faleceu. Aí eu estudei um pouco lá e vim morar com a outra irmã. Então eu passei mais tempo morando com a minha irmã mais velha do que com os meus pais. Eu morei mais fora da minha casa, da minha casa com o pai e a mãe do que com eles. Eu tinha um irmão mais velho. Nós éramos sete irmãos. E eu era a última deles. E eu tinha uma sobrinha que eu brincava bastante e depois eu tinha outra e assim. Mas não, o relacionamento era tranquilo, mas a gente tinha muita disciplina. Não podia fazer barulho, não podia. Era privado de muitas coisas. Nós não temos essa liberdade que as crianças têm hoje, não.

00:07:07

Regina: E também você diz que sua infância foi muito tradicional. Que coisas eram tradicionais para você em sua família?

00:07:18

Lory: Tradicional é assim: você dormir cedo. Você não assistir televisão depois das 07h00. A minha irmã não deixava assistir novela aqui no Brasil que temos novela. Não deixava. Não... não deixava usar roupa curta, não deixava. Fazer coisas que as meninas da cidade faziam: ir no cinema, usar esmalte vermelho, passar batom. Não usar roupa curta, não deixava nada disso. Então era bem tradicional mesmo, como coisa do anterior. E mesmo assim, eu casei nova.

00:08:03

Regina: Em sua opinião, sua memória, suas experiências como criança foram moldadas pelo fato de ser menina?

00:08:17

Lory: Desculpa. Eu não entendi sua pergunta.

00:08:21

Regina: Você tem...você acha que talvez suas experiências como criança foram moldadas ou influenciadas pelo fato de ser menina. Por exemplo, existiam algumas atividades que só eram para menina, só atividades para meninos...

00:08:41

Lory: Sim, existia. Menino jogava futebol, brincava de bola e menina brincava de boneca ou de casinha. É isso que menina fazia. Menina raramente ficava com menino, nem na escola. Na escola também era feito assim, era. Era estudado numa classe só todos, meninos e meninas, estudavam numa classe só de primeira à quarta série, ao quarto ano todo junto. Era uma única professora para todos. Eram muito poucos alunos e ela mesmo dava aula de todas as matérias

português, matemática, história. Eram essas três matérias que tinha...era e ciências, quatro. E também ela fazia a merenda que era comida, o lanche e ela mesmo limpava a escola e nós mesmo não tinha água encanada, ou seja, não tinha água na torneira, tinha que pegar água no rio. Não tinha luz. Era usado para iluminar um lampião a gás. A água para tomar banho era aquecida no fogão a lenha. Tinha fogão a gás, mas era usado pouco. As casas eram simples. Tinha os animais que era fazenda, galinha, porco, vaca, cabrito. Todos os tipos de animais, todos os tipos de alimentos plantados pelo meu próprio pai. E a gente deixar de trabalhar para fazer...tinha que limpar a casa, tinha que, que ajudar a mãe sempre. Desde criança.

00:10:45

Regina: Então, obrigada. Você acha que...porque você falou sobre e suas irmãs, você acha que elas serviram de modelo? Do que faz uma mamãe? Uma filha?

00:11:06

Lory: Sim, sim, sim.

00:11:10

Regina: E sim como foi esse modelo? Você acha que agora você segue esse modelo? Tem algumas coisas que compartilha, ideias que você ainda lembra de que elas ensinaram.

00:11:30

Lory: Aí as coisas mais simples. São muito simples. A minha escola é muito pequena, então é... A minha irmã mais velha, sempre quando chegava o sábado, a gente fazia o bolo, fazia um bolo. E fazia...preparava o almoço pra domingo e limpava também toda a casa. Deixava a casa preparada para domingo. Domingo a gente ia na missa e voltava, almoçava. E tinha aquela sobremesa e aquele almoço diferente de domingo. E isso eu aprendi com a minha irmã mais velha e sigo até hoje que é assim que você deve preparar um almoço no sábado para o domingo e a sobremesa também. Isso eu sigo e sigo organizar a casa igual que indica minha irmã. Sigo ser honesta, ser mãe, dona de casa, trabalhar fora, estudar, tudo aprendi com a minha mãe e com a minha irmã. Não, com a minha irmã; não com minha mãe.

00:12:38

Regina: Então agora vamos falar um pouco mais sobre sua experiência como mãe. E seu relacionamento com seus filhos é igual ou diferente do relacionamento que você teve com com sua mãe ou talvez com suas irmãs, como você diz que passou muito tempo com elas?

00:13:02

Lory: Muito diferente porque as coisas evoluíram. O meu filho é advogado. Ele seguiu a mesma carreira que eu. Ele estudou. A gente estudou junto, trabalha junto ainda, porque mesmo eu

estando aqui, eu consigo advogar no Brasil. Então a gente trabalha junto. Então a gente que tem uma, uma comunhão no sentido profissional muito boa. E com minha filha sempre tenho a comunhão de mãe e filha. Com o filho tem a comunhão de mãe e filho, mas também tem a comunhão profissional, cê entende isso? Que nós temos o mesmo ramo. Nós trabalhamos na mesma área pelo fato de ser advogado e eu ser advogada. Eu tive o meu primeiro filho com 18 anos e sempre tive um bom relacionamento com ele. Ensinei os princípios bons da vida. E foi assim por um longo tempo. Aí eu vim pra cá. Deixei minha filha com 15 anos lá no Brasil e depois que ela veio pra cá. Eu não sei se eu já entro nessa agora falando pra você, a história dela. Aí ela veio, foi a hora mais dolorosa que eu tinha que fazer, a escolha de eu vim pra cá porque eu já estava no segundo casamento, eu não poderia deixar meu esposo aqui sem eu e eu não poderia naquele momento eu estar trazendo minha filha. E ela ficou com o pai dela. Então a separação nossa foi muito difícil, muito, muito difícil, porque ela tinha apenas 16 anos e ela ficou lá por seis meses, daí ela veio me visitar, daí eu já apliquei ela pro visto dela, daí ela veio me visitar, voltou a concluir o high school no meu país de origem e aí no final do ano ela veio pra estudar aqui. Aí eu apliquei o visa de estudante dela e ela começou a estudar. Depois ela casou, engravidou, teve que...suspendeu seus estudos por conta da gravidez. E hoje ela tem um bebê de sete meses, que é a nossa razão de viver aquele menino. E é essa mãe batalhou, batalhou, trabalha das 05h00 até as 20h00, muitas vezes para poder pagar os estudos, para poder pagar os advogados para, para o visto dela e poder se manter nesse país.

00:16:16

Regina: Então, acho que falou um pouco, mas gostaria saber um pouco mais sobre como é que sua migração para os Estados Unidos impactou, mudou ou influenciou sua, seu relacionamento, com seus filhos, com sua filha e seu filho? Talvez um pouco sobre como você se sentiu com respeito à situação.

00:16:44

Lory: Porque foi assim. Eu conheci o meu segundo esposo na internet. E eu comecei um relacionamento com ele depois de uma separação. Aí eu namorava, eu vinha passear e voltava, voltava, mas depois de um certo ponto eu não poderia mais deixar ele. Então foi um divisor de águas muito grande. Quando eu tive que decidir entre minha carreira no Brasil profissional, meus filhos e o meu casamento, então esse foi o divisor de águas. Quanto ao meu filho, eu não me preocupava muito, porque ele já tinha constituído a família dele, já era casado e já estava com a vida dele pronta. Agora, quanto a minha filha, foi muito dolorosa essa parte, porque eu tinha que decidir. Só que eu vim com a mente voltada em trazer ela para estudar para cá e já tinha feito toda a documentação dela o passaporte, visto que eu já tinha deixado ela autorizada para viajar e vim até mim e ela fazer a escola se ela queria estudar aqui ou queria voltar para o nosso país. Ela optou por estudar aqui. Aí então, quando ela refletiu, foi algo assim, extraordinário. E aquela dor da circulação cessou. Esse foi o momento bonito na minha vida. Emocionante. E ela está aqui comigo desde sempre. Desde sempre, não. Ah, eu fiquei só um ano sem ela aqui. Mas depois ela

veio e ela tem a família dela, uma família maravilhosa. Que a gente não mora junto mas ela mora em outra cidade, um pouco distante, mas sempre está próxima. Agora, o que está sendo mais difícil é algo bem íntimo. Bem, bem próprio a mim mesmo, que eu estou abrindo meu coração, compartilhando como experiência, é a saudade do meu filho que já faz cinco anos que eu não vejo fisicamente porque ele veio até aqui, mas ele teve que voltar por conta da pandemia, por conta do trabalho, ele não veio mais. Então o que está doendo mesmo é a saudade dele neste momento, do meu filho mais velho. Ele tem 30 anos já e ele tem dois filhos e um dos filhos que eu não conheço ainda, fisicamente, pessoalmente. Então é isso. É a parte emocionante, é a saudade que está cada dia aumentando mais. É algo bem íntimo meu, bem particular, meu. Mas eu autorizo você a você colocar. Então o que é mais, o mais difícil se você perguntasse para mim hoje, o que seria mais difícil, mais difícil foi a hora que eu tive que decidir entre ver e esperar que minha filha viesse, o momento da separação. E agora essa, essa saudade do meu filho que já faz cinco anos que eu não vejo. E esse que tá, que tá, é o momento mais que isso pra mim. É isso aí. Mas com fé em Deus eu estou acreditando que, até o outono, ele, ele vem estar aqui para nos visitar.

00:20:34

Regina: Então, obrigada uma vez mais. Falando um pouco mais sobre isso, a distância que tiveram que experimentar e tudo isso. Como acha que talvez sua filha ou seu filho agora se sentiram que você estava nos Estados Unidos e tinham essa distância. Você....não sei se você consegue talvez pensar em isso.

00:21:11

Lory: Sim, a minha filha, eu vou falar por ela primeiro. E minha filha foi assim. Os três meses foram angustiantes, os 3 primeiros meses que eu cheguei aqui em novembro e até mês de março foi bem angustiante a separação entre eu e ela. Mas a gente conversava todo dia, a gente trocava as ideias. Aí a gente já conseguiu comprar a passagem dela para ela vir o mês de junho. Então ela veio, a gente já tinha aquela perspectiva que ela viesse, que viesse. E ela chegando aqui, ela avistou o país e ficou apaixonada pelo país e já quis voltar. Aí ela voltou consciente que ela ia ficar só seis meses no país, no Brasil, e depois retornaria para cá para dar...para os estudos dela e está mais próximo de mim. Quanto ao meu filho, ele sempre foi convicto que ele viria me visitar de seis em seis meses, de um ano, de dois anos, conforme as condições financeiras dele. Mas por conta da pandemia as coisas se agravaram um pouco e essa distância foi ficando cada vez mais. E o tempo só foi se prolongando, prolongando. Então tem horas que essa distância, essa saudade, é essencial demais. Isso é angustiante. Para superar isso, só posso concluir com oração para Deus que acalente o coração, porque outro meio não tem. Então é muito difícil.

00:22:55

Regina: A última pergunta que tenho para hoje é, quais são algumas das maneiras em que você se mantém conectada ou mantém ligações com seu filho que está no Brasil?

00:23:20

Lory: Conectada, a gente se fala quase todos os dias. Dá um bom dia por mensagem, WhatsApp, por ligações de WhatsApp e por ligações de vídeo através do WhatsApp. E eu consigo conversar com eles, totalmente com ele e com os meus netinhos e com minha nora.

00:23:45

Regina: E mudou com o tempo ou acha que não? No tempo que você chegou para os Estados Unidos já, já tínhamos WhatsApp? Não sei.

00:23:55

Lory: Já tinha WhatsApp aqui. Então acho que a convivência do que você está perguntando nesse sentido tem se a nosso respeito de mãe e filha continua o mesmo, continua. Talvez maior por conta da saudade, por conta da distância, pelos tempos que vieram. Então a nossa relação ela ficou mais calorosa, do que antes, talvez. Também a gente trabalha junto, né? Porque lá eu sou advogada. Pra isso é onde ele trabalha online.

00:24:43

Regina: Então, isso é tudo. São todas as perguntas que eu tinha preparado, mas não sei se você tem alguma outra coisa que, que compartilhar, o que talvez você, não sei, se esqueceu de compartilhar?

00:25:02

Lory: Então, sim, eu só quero fazer um fecho, né? E fechar a nossa conversa e que tudo é possível se você acredita, se você traça metas, você faz planos, tudo é possível. Não tem nada que você não consiga fazer. Você é a única pessoa que... eu sou, a única pessoa responsável de como minha vida vai andar. Se eu decidi que seria traçada assim, ela foi traçada assim, porque Deus dá o livre arbítrio para você. Então, a partir do momento que eu escolhi vir para cá e começar uma vida nova, todas as coisas ficaram para trás. Só não mudou no sentido de filho e mãe nesse sentido, como mãe, não mudou que o meu relacionamento com meus filhos continuou o mesmo, mas a minha história de vida seguiu outra direção. Então eu acredito que quando eu coloquei determinação e fiz os meus projetos e os meus planos, as minhas metas, eu estou no passo a passo, conseguindo concluir elas um a um. E sou bem, bem feliz na vida que eu tenho. Saudade é coisa natural, você só consegue lembrar. É saudade. Você só consegue sentir daquilo que foi bom. Então eu sou bem, bem feliz nesse sentido. Bem realizada como mãe, de que meus filhos me amam e eu amo eles e tenho um bom cumprir com relacionamento são assim. Meus filhos são um presente de Deus para mim. É isso.

00:27:14

Regina: Então isso é tudo. Muito obrigada uma vez mais. Agora vou apagar...ou, não, vou parar a gravação.

E. Francineide's Oral History Transcript

**Francineide' son was given a pseudonym in this transcript to protect their anonymity.*

00:00:00

Regina: Tem alguma pergunta sobre algo que eu disse? Alguma parte que não foi clara?

00:00:06

Francineide: Não. Tudo bem.

00:00:08

Regina: Você aceita participar na pesquisa?

00:00:12

Francineide: Sim, aceito.

00:00:13

Regina: Ok. Obrigada. Sei que é muito, é muito, muitas coisas. Mas, é para o projeto então tenho que fazer. Então vamos começar com as perguntas. Vai ser como a outra vez, mas a... Me conta um pouco sobre você, então pode dizer seu nome, o país em que você nasceu, se você é mãe, e uma estimativa de sua idade. Não é obrigatório responder a todas as perguntas.

00:00:52

Francineide: Ok. Meu nome é Francineide. Sou brasileira, moro nos Estados Unidos há 20 anos. Acho, 21 anos... 21 anos não, 20 anos. E vim para cá, porque na época conheci o meu marido na Bolívia, que eu estava estudando lá, medicina. E daí foi que tive meu primeiro filho e depois eu decidi vim pela família para cá os Estados Unidos e estou aqui até hoje.

00:01:36

Regina: De que parte do Brasil é você?

00:01:39

Francineide: Eu sou do Acre. É o estado que fica perto do Amazonas, Brasil, fica fronteira com a Bolívia também.

00:01:49

Regina: Me conta um pouco sobre sua infância e onde você cresceu. Como, tipo, como era o ambiente, as pessoas na sua vida durante sua infância?

00:02:08

Francineide: Eu cresci em um município chamado Plácido de Castro, que é um município do Acre. Era um lugar muito pequeno na época que eu nasci que eu comecei a entender, né? Era um lugar muito pequeno, só tinha um, na época tinham duas ruas bem pequenas, lembro. Quando eu comecei a ir para a escola, que a escola era, na rua seguinte. E era um lugar bem simples. Eu cresci com muito pouca coisa. Não vou dizer com tanta pobreza porque nunca nos faltou nada, mas a gente era um lugar bem simples, não tinha riquezas, mas era um lugar onde tinha muitas coisas legais. Tinha muitas frutas, as pessoas eram muito amigas, meus vizinhos de sempre era como se fosse família, um ajudava o outro. Todo mundo tinha plantações em casa de frutos, de verdura e uns davam pros outros porque ninguém vendia, a gente dava, né? Os pais, no caso meu, eu era criança e era um lugar muito gostoso, onde eu cresci. Os vizinhos sempre estavam juntos, a noite não tinha luz ainda elétrica, né? Meu pai tinha porque ele tinha um gerador em casa que ele mexia com festa. Então ele tinha um gerador. É tão legal. Enfim, durante a semana a gente se reunia, às vezes com luz, a luz da lua mesmo. Na rua se sentavam e começavam a contar uma história. Então, as memórias que eu tenho da minha infância, de um lugar bem tranquilo, bem gostoso, onde eu cresci, não tinha violência na época. Hoje em dia já tem, né? Porque hoje em dia a cidade está bem grande já. Mas na época não tinha violência e era um lugar bem tranquilo mesmo.

00:04:28

Regina: Obrigada. E como foi seu relacionamento com sua mãe e suas irmãs?

00:04:38

Francineide: Foi bem. Um relacionamento de mãe e filha, mesmo de irmãos, porque nós crescemos, eu e minhas irmãs dividíamos o mesmo quarto que na minha casa era o lugar era pequeno, tínhamos somente três quartos, um quarto meu e das irmãs e outro quarto do meu pai, da minha mãe e o outro dos meus irmãos, que são três, né? Então três em cada quarto e minha mãe e meu pai no outro. Sala, cozinha, banheiro. Lá não é como aqui, geralmente os quartos têm um banheiro. Lá era um banheiro para a casa inteira, compartilhado. Então assim é um relacionamento de família mesmo, né? Um lugar pequeno tinha muita coisa para fazer, então tinha que fazer entre família mesmo, entre vizinhos e entre família. Minha mãe trabalhava com comércio, vendendo em festa também, então praticamente ela tinha que ficar o dia fora, revezando com meu pai. Ela ía, meu pai ía. Vinha um, vinha outro porque não era longe de casa e como uma quadra de casa, o comércio deles. Então a gente ia lá ou eles vinham em casa. Então era isso. Bem gostoso, uma relação de todos, de pais, pais e filhos.

00:06:16

Regina: E você tem alguma memória com suas irmãs ou sua mãe que...que você...Não sei. Você lembra como alguma memória muito feliz ou...Algo assim?

00:06:36

Francineide: Sim, acho que de brincadeira de...de Natal. Minha mãe comprava presente e colocava embaixo da nossa cama. Como é...coisas, coisas simples. Na época ela comprava, eu lembro, de um short que eu ganhei dela embaixo da cama e falava que era o Papai Noel que trazia. Então coisas assim de aniversário. Ela fazia bolo pra gente. E minhas irmãs, brincar né? De ter aquela comunhão, de estar brincando juntas, brigando também. Então eu e meus irmãos ali, sempre também compartilhando. Eles eram mais como protetores da gente. Que os irmãos sempre são mais cuidadosos com as irmãs. É isso. Meu pai era mais, meu pai é mais sério, mas não é muito de demonstrar carinho. Mas minha mãe era mais de abraçar, de beijar. Meu pai é mais, é mais... sim, mais diferente é, o jeitão dele, né? Talvez foi como ele cresceu, né? Não demonstra muito carinho assim, muito de abraçar, de beijar. Hoje em dia ele mudou mais, mas antes era mais...era mais seco, né?

00:08:33

Regina: Em sua opinião ou memória, você acha que suas experiências como criança foram moldadas pelo fato de ser menina? Como? E se você tem alguns exemplos?

00:08:51

Francineide: É porque quando eu cresci, naquela época tinha uma brincadeira de menino nessa brincadeira de menina. É menina, praticamente tinha que fazer coisas de menina, né? Não podia fazer as coisas dos meninos. Não podia brincar de carrinho, de soltar pipa, não podia jogar da peteca, né? Então tinha as coisas de menina, que era brincar de casinha, brincar de boneca. Ou sim, eram bem divididas, né? Essa coisa de menino, coisa de meninas. E acho que é, tipo, não é igual hoje em dia. Hoje em dia vejo que as meninas jogam futebol, né? Jogam um esporte de menino. Antigamente, quer dizer não de menino, esportes, que antigamente era, geralmente tinha...Como é que eu falo? Era determinado o que era de menino, que era de menina. Menina não podia jogar futebol, menino não podia brincar de coisas de menina, né? Então eram coisas bem antes, tipo assim, bem separadas mesmo, e isso te formava para te crescer, né? E cuidar de casa, né, e isso é uma boa dona de casa. Que menina tinha que aprender a cozinhar, a menina tinha que aprender a limpar a casa, tinha que aprender lavar roupas, essas coisas, né? Respondi a tua pergunta?

00:10:52

Regina: Sim, estava lendo as perguntas, mas você acha que sua mãe ou suas irmãs ou alguma mulher na sua vida serviram de modelo do que faz uma mãe ou filha? Ou talvez de como uma mãe e filha deve agir?

00:11:18

Francineide: Se minha mãe, minha mãe ou alguém que eu conheço?

00:11:22

Regina: Serviu como modelo, de modelo, do que fazer o de que faz uma mãe ou filha?

00:11:29

Francineide: Sim, minha mãe e minha vó. Eu gostava muito de estar na casa da minha avó, que era mãe da minha mãe, né? Eu gostava muito de conversar com ela. Ela sempre estava em casa, né? Então, é aquele jeito de porque ela não trabalhava fora, minha avó só ficava em casa cuidando da casa, cuidando do meu avô, fazendo comida, cuidando dos netos quando vinham na casa dela. Como gostava de fazer tudo para agradar, então é como se fosse um modelo para mim. Ela. Minha mãe já trabalhava fora, né, então minha mãe já era diferente. Trabalhava junto com meu pai na loja e à noite trabalhava no clube ao final de semana. Então era um modelo também, mas era um modelo diferente, né? Que já contribuía junto com meu pai. Para casa. Minha avó já não. Minha avó era só uma casa mesmo. Quem cuidava da casa do meu avô e, a mãe dela. A mãe dela era bem velhinha, então ela cuidava da mãe dela também. Então é isso.

00:12:58

Regina: O seu...o seu relacionamento com seus filhos é igual ou diferente do relacionamento que você teve com...teve ou tem com sua mãe?

00:13:18

Francineide: Não é um pouco diferente, porque a criação aqui é um pouco mais...muda um pouco né, de geração em geração. E eu sento tentei ser mais, tentei ser um pouco dura, mas ao mesmo tempo carinhosa, mais carinhosa, né? Minha mãe, ela tinha uma maneira diferente de disciplinar a gente, que era batendo. E com os meus filhos, eu procurei não fazer isso, né? Brigava, mas botava de castigo, batia quando necessário na mão, coisinha um pouquinho mais differ... foi diferente. E procurei dar mais carinho para eles, né? Pude dedicar mais da minha vida para eles porque por isso que eu vim para cá, para dar uma família para eles, para dar um lar, um pai, uma mãe. Um lar em geral, né? E fiquei um bom tempo sem trabalhar na minha carreira, né, porque me formei em medicina e nunca trabalhei, porque pelo motivo de ter vindo para cá com a intenção de voltar, mas nunca voltei para trabalhar, né, porque eu queria estar perto deles, queria estar com eles. Então é. E é isso.

00:14:53

Regina: Como é que sua migração para os Estados Unidos impactou, mudou, ou influenciou seu relacionamento com sua mãe?

00:15:07

Francineide: Um não, não mudou porque o amor permanece, mas a distância afasta um pouco, né? A convivência. Mas eu já tinha saído de casa quando eu...porque a cidade que eu cresci era

muito pequena. Então, quando eu fiz 15 anos, eu fui morar com uma tia em uma outra cidade que era vizinha, que era bem maior. Fui morar porque eu queria trabalhar, eu queria estudar em escolas melhores. Então eu fui para lá, eu migrei para lá e de lá eu nunca mais voltei pra viver, mesmo com a minha mãe, né? Só volto para passear, para passar um tempo com eles. Mas para morar mesmo nunca mais voltei, porque de lá fui pra Bolívia estudar, né? E da Bolívia voltei pro Brasil, fiquei mais um ano e daí vim pra cá. E estou aqui até hoje... pensando em voltar talvez no próximo ano para exercer minha profissão. Mas quero estar entre lá e aqui por causa dos meninos e dos meus filhos. Quero estar perto deles também. Então vou ver como que eu faço para voltar para a minha profissão. Mas ao mesmo tempo. Tenho uma flexibilidade para ir e voltar e dividir. Então.

00:16:39

Regina: E você lembra, talvez, como você se sentiu com respeito à mudança do Brasil para os Estados Unidos?

00:16:53

Francineide: Lembro, na época lembro, me afetou muito, porque é outra cultura, outro país e outra língua. Então não falava nada de inglês quando eu cheguei aqui. Então. Foi muito difícil para mim a adaptação, ainda que eu já tinha um filho que tinha o marido. Mas ainda assim foi bem difícil. Eu não queria ficar aqui no início, fiquei uns três ou quatro anos relutando pra ir embora. Mas depois acabei ficando e estou aqui. Mas foi difícil. No início foi.

00:17:41

Regina: E como acha você que seus familiares talvez se sentiam quando você decidiu ir para os Estados Unidos?

00:17:55

Francineide: Ficavam apreensivo, né, porque os pais sempre ficam preocupados, pensando o que está acontecendo, né? Tipo você sozinha em outro país que não é a mesma coisa de você estar na mesma, no mesmo país, mas em outra cidade. Você está no seu país, você fala a mesma língua, o seu povo. E no entanto, aqui eu vim sozinha com [João] na época, sem conhecer nada. E então é para a família é... Não é fácil, porque eles ficam muito preocupados pensando se vai dar certo casamento, se vai maltratar, se vai isso, se vai aqui ou não. Minha mãe ficava preocupada com isso, mas a gente sempre falava no telefone, né? Era difícil a comunicação antigamente porque tinha que ser nos cartões, era rapidinho que acabava. Não dá para falar muito. Não tinha a facilidade de hoje que tem WhatsApp que tem muito de...hoje em dia tem outros aplicativos que fácil de comunicar. Antigamente era o telefone era mais difícil para a comunicação. Muita gente falava em final de semana e era bem rapidinho, porque era caro, que era por cartão, né. Com

cartão falavam e alguma coisa e caía o cartão e acabava com os. Erqa assim, para eles foi um pouco difícil também por ser outro país, né? Sim.

00:19:46

Regina: Ah, então é isso. Isso é tudo. Quero dar, Quero dar. Quero agradecer por sua ajuda e por compartilhar um pouco sobre sua história. E você, tem alguma outra coisa que talvez quer compartilhar como comigo? Ou alguma coisa que você talvez se esqueceu, mas agora quer compartilhar?

00:20:17

Francineide: Mm, não. Se tu quiser me perguntar mais alguma coisa, eu posso responder.

00:20:24

Regina: Então. Vou parar a gravação, um momento.

F. Gaby's Oral History Transcript

**Gaby's husband and son were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.*

00:00:00

Regina: ¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre algo que acabo de decir o alguna parte no estuvo clara?

00:00:07

Gaby: No, creo que todo estuvo claro.

00:00:10

Regina: ¿Ahora acepta formar parte de la encuesta?

00:00:13

Gaby: Sí, sí, acepto.

00:00:15

Regina: Muy bien. Muchas gracias. Ahora voy a las preguntas. Ok, entonces hoy es el 1 de marzo del 2023. Estamos en Atlanta y vamos a empezar. Tengo su consentimiento de grabar esta conversación?

00:00:42

Gaby: Sí.

00:00:44

Regina: Entonces vamos a empezar con las preguntas. Y la primera es, ¿me puede compartir un poco sobre usted? Entonces su nombre o si quiere un seudónimo, un nombre diferente, puede ser eso. Su país de origen, si usted es madre y un estimativo de su edad. Usted no tiene que dar su edad.

00:01:05

Gaby: Bueno, yo me llamo Gabriela [REDACTED] y soy mexicana del estado de Guerrero. Y tengo 44 años de edad y soy madre de un hijo que tiene 24 años.

00:01:21

Regina: La segunda pregunta es, ¿me puede compartir un poco sobre su infancia y sobre dónde creció? Puede ser, tal vez, como era el ambiente, la ciudad o su pueblo, ¿gente importante en su vida?

00:01:37

Gaby: Bueno, yo crecí en Acapulco, Guerrero, México, y mi infancia fue muy bonita. Sí, tengo recuerdos muy bonitos de este. Yo crecí con mamá y papá. Viví junto a ellos hasta que yo tenía siete años. Pero hasta que la edad que recuerdo fue una infancia muy bonita, me sentí muy querida, muy amada. Tengo muchos recuerdos de paseos, de la escuela y pues de la familia también, sobre todo de de las abuelitas. Ajá, sí, sí, de ellas tengo recuerdos, pero sí, sí, tengo recuerdos, como todos, no bonitos y no tan gratos. Sí.

00:02:24

Regina: Y cómo, ¿cómo era el lugar? En Acapulco, ¿por ejemplo? Pues como era...por ejemplo la playa o cositas que usted veía que, algo bonito.

00:02:38

Gaby: Entonces, bueno, para empezar, mi casa era hermosa, era grande, de dos plantas, teníamos un patio muy grande y teníamos una vista al mar. Sí, porque nuestra casa está cerca de la garita, en las cumbres de Figueroa y los lugares, pues cerca de ahí. Sí, la playa es muy bonita. Este, iba al parque también. Mi papá me paseaba mucho la Cici. No sé si sigue existiendo el Cici ajá, pero sí el lugar es cálido, este a veces sí hace mucha calor, pero es un lugar muy bonito para vivir. Siempre se mira el cielo azul, normalmente durante todo el año. Este casi creo no hay mucho, mucha temporada de lluvia, pero. Pero sí es un lugar bonito para para vivir. Y pues sí, por lo que recuerdo, la playa, la escuela, el mercadito. Ajá, el mercadito, eh? Los paseos por la costera este...con la familia también. Sí.

00:03:51

Regina: ¿Y usted tiene hermanos?

00:03:55

Gaby: Sí, sí, sí. Tengo hermanas.

00:03:57

Regina: ¿O hermanas? Y cuántas son?

00:04:00

Gaby: Tengo cuatro hermanas. Tengo cuatro hermanas y dos hermanas por parte de mi mamá. Y dos hermanas por parte de mi papá. Entonces soy como hija única de padre y madre. Soy la mayor.

00:04:15

Regina: ¿Y cómo fue su relación con, con su mamá? ¿Su madre?

00:04:21

Gaby: Bueno, creo que durante todo el tiempo ha sido buena. Ha sido buena, como todo adolescente, tal vez, de repente como que uno...verdad, era un poco rebelde, pero considero que ha sido, ha sido buena la relación con mi mamá dentro de lo que cabe. Este, de chica recuerdo que ella mucho me, me procuraba, me cuidaba bastante este, pues ya cuando ellos se separaron con mi papá sí fue como ya otra, otro tipo de relación, pero como que yo entendía no por la por el momento que ella estaba pasando. Pero hasta este momento hay veces que sí ha sido un poco difícil, tal vez por la distancia, pero. Pero pues tratamos de sobrellevarlos.

00:05:14

Regina: ¿Y qué tal la relación con sus hermanas?

00:05:17

Gaby: Bueno, con mis hermanas por parte de mi mamá siempre nos hemos llevado bien porque pues crecimos juntas. Por eso siempre hemos tenido una buena relación. Con las, por el lado de mi papá, la verdad no, no hemos convivido mucho porque viven en otro estado, pero pues por mensajes de texto, por llamadas, pero es como muy poco, porque de hecho pues apenas las encontré después de 20 años, apenas las encontré, las dejé de ver como muy chiquitas.

00:05:55

Regina: ¿Mucho tiempo?

00:05:55

Gaby: Sí, mucho tiempo. Y apenas las encontré. Pues solamente las he mirado en fotografías.

00:06:04

Regina: Y la próxima pregunta es en su opinión o en su memoria en lo que usted recuerde, sus experiencias en su niñez fueron moldeadas o formadas por el hecho de ser niña o mujer? Con esto quiero decir, ¿piensa que usted tenía habían actividades o cosas que usted podía hacer porque era niña o cosas que no podía hacer por ser niña o de joven, de mujer? Igual.

00:06:37

Gaby: Yo creo que siempre viví una niñez rodeada de cosas para mujer. Sí, porque yo recuerdo mi cuarto estaba lleno de muñecas. Aún recuerdo que tenía que ser como unas 100 Barbies. Yo tenía una colección de juguetes enormes. Era. Estaba rodeada de cosas para niña, o sea, para mujer. Y yo creo que no me impedía hacer nada, porque, por ejemplo, mi papá me llevaba a cursos de natación. Estuve en el balet, estuve en un club de danza. Entonces yo creo que que por

ser niña no me tocó. No, pues no tuve un obstáculo porque por ejemplo estuve también en un este, ah, en un teatro, participando en una obra y pues ahí había personajes como que como era niña, como de animales, de cosas así, de flores y entonces yo siento que no, nunca tuve un impedimento, no. Y en mi adolescencia yo creo que tampoco tuve un impedimento porque recuerdo que en la secundaria jugábamos fútbol y voleibol, en bachiller también y pues anteriormente tal vez podían decir no es un deporte para hombre, pero no siempre pudimos tener la posibilidad de jugar en el equipo de básquetbol. De estar en poesía coral o participar en la banda de guerra también estuve, de bastones en la escolta. O sea, yo siento que por ser mujer, no...bueno, en mi vida creo que no tuve ningún obstáculo.

00:08:21

Regina: Sí, porque luego existen. Dicen que "ay no, eso es para niños."

00:08:26

Gaby: Sí, de hecho, sí es. De hecho, hasta para vestir nunca tuve. Por ejemplo, yo siempre me han gustado los vestidos. Siempre. Mmmm. Yo no sé si los ame más porque mi mamá siempre me mantenía en pantalón o en bermudas como playerita, pero ella decía que porque a veces uno este no se sentaba bien, decía. O porque jugábamos y decía siempre debe de andar como en short, en short, entonces como que eso me cansó. Y por eso es que a veces yo amo los vestidos, porque yo siempre quise usar mucho vestido, pero entiendo a mi mamá que quizá por precaución, por ser mujer, quiso cuidarme así.

00:09:07

Regina: Y, usted comentó que estaba rodeada de cosas para para niñas, para mujeres. Fuera de las Barbies, ¿qué otras cosas usted recuerda?

00:09:20

Gaby: Como, como...¿A qué te refieres?

00:09:23

Regina: Como otros juguetes fuera de las Barbies. ¿Que otros juguetes?

00:09:26

Gaby: Ah sí. Pues yo tenía pelotas, tenía las hula-hula. Llegué a tener en ese tiempo el Atari...este que tenía muñecas, peluches, juegos de té, este para hacer manualidades como de pintura. Esas son las cosas que me acuerdo. Y juguetes como casitas. Llegué a tener la casa grande de la Barbie, me acuerdo, el elevador que tenía el carro. Siento que en mi niñez en cosas de esas nunca me faltaron. Siempre tuve bicicleta, tuve de pelotas grandes, o sea, me llevaban a patinar, o sea, eran cosas que nunca me faltaban. Me llevaban a natación, me llevaban a danza,

aerobic, siento que no juguetes nunca. Siempre tuve todo eso, pero de carros pues claro, nada más me acuerdo que el de la Barbie. Pero de ahí no me acuerdo que tuve carros de juguete. Sí me acuerdo que tuve muchos peluches, muchas barbies este, muchos cuadernos de aroma o lapicero de aroma que se usaba en ese tiempo, estampitas, cosas así, pero cosas como de otro... no. Ajá.

00:10:46

Regina: Sí. Yo igual tenía los lápices de aroma igual. Y la próxima pregunta tienen que ver un poco más con con su mamá y con su hermana, o sus hermanas, perdón. ¿Usted cree que su mamá o sus hermanas le presentaron un modelo de lo que hace una mamá o lo o cómo actúa una mamá o mujer, por ejemplo? Y si puede compartir detalles un poco. No sé si quiere que le aclare un poco.

00:11:25

Gaby: Cómo que si ellas me pudieron compartir...no entendí. A ver repíteme la pregunta.

00:11:31

Regina: Que, ¿si usted cree que su mamá o sus hermanas le presentaron un modelo de cómo ser mamá? Por ejemplo, usted veía a su mamá y decía ah ella hace esto, esto y esto, y como mamá, yo tengo que hacer eso. O tal vez sus hermanas, ellas hacían esto, esto y esto, y para usted lo usted lo veía y decía ah así debe actuar una señorita o una mujer o una mamá, por ejemplo. No sé.

00:11:56

Gaby: Ah, bueno. Bueno, mi mamá siempre fue una mujer en esa época, este, ella siempre le gustaba vestirse bien, maquillarse, andar siempre bien peinada. Este, ella era estilista entonces ella siempre su trabajo fue cortar pelo, darle belleza a la gente pues. Sí.

00:12:18

Gaby: Y sí. Había cosas que yo miraba en ella que, que yo decía, yo quiero ser algo así como lo que ella hacía. Este, tal vez por su trabajo. Pero había cosas que tal vez no, que tal vez no, porque por ejemplo de mi mamá casi ella no es muy este no, no es expresiva. Ella no expresa cariño, ella casi no nos abrazaba, entonces yo miraba como eso diferente y decía, oh no. Si ella no es así, yo sí quiero ser así. Ajá. O yo veía, por ejemplo, ella siempre se organizaba bien con las cosas de económicas, entonces había cosas que decía oh, yo quiero aprender de ella eso, ajá. Este, ah, eso sí que siempre fue como con las cosas, este. Por ejemplo, al momento de comer, ella no le gustaba ni que pusiéramos los codos en la mesa o que no habláramos en la mesa a la hora de comer. O sea, era muy muy es-- no quiero decir sí disciplinada o muy estricta en ese modo, pero...ella hasta para caminar nos llamaba la atención o ser algo así como como que de repente no entendía la manera de ser mamá para nosotros, pero. Pero ya ahora de grande sí, como que ya

entiendo porque era así. Pero como mamá, como tal, tal vez, quizá por la experiencia que he vivido, tal vez no, no, porque ya cuando ellos se separaron con mi papá, pues ya me llevaron a vivir con mi abuelita. Entonces como que no tuve una buena presencia física de mi mamá en quien ver, en quien decir yo quiero, yo quiero ser así como mamá, entonces como que crecí así, como si en la ausencia, la ausencia de mamá y de papá, entonces nunca miré la manera de cómo iba a aprender. Entonces más aprendí como, para cocinar, algo tan ordinario, de mi abuelita. Ah, yo quiero ser así, o yo me fijaba o para hacer el aseo, porque pues digo lamentablemente porque era una etapa bonita de la niñez, pero yo no hacía nada, o sea porque teníamos quien hiciera el aseo, tenía una persona que me cuidaba, entonces yo nunca hacía, no lavaba ni un traste. Entonces el cambio fue tan rudo para irme al pueblo, porque ya estando allá con mi abuelita, pues allá las cosas son diferentes, yo a la edad que yo llegué allá ya las niñas acarreaban agua, iban al molino y yo no sabía absolutamente nada. Entonces por eso digo, tal vez la crianza fue como, como que mi vida ha sido muy rotatoria, muy así como que he vivido por etapas bonitas y después viene alguna etapa tan dura, entonces como que no crecí con esa, te digo esa presencia física de mamá. Y con mis hermanas, pues como ya tengo ya 20 años acá, entonces yo la dejé chiquitas. La, la que sigue de mí, tiene, tenía en ese entonces que iba a tener diez años. Entonces no la he, no la he mirado como en su etapa de mamá. Pues ahora, ya que estoy acá, pues ella es mamá de dos niños. Entonces lo poco que yo miro, platicamos o compartimos, o en las videollamadas o por foto. Yo miro que ella siempre procura mucho a los niños, siempre veo que siempre son sus hijos, les, los atiende lo poco que yo me doy cuenta de que siempre los procura, los atiende, los cuida, está al pendiente de la escuela, participa mucho en la escuela, como que se involucra por ellos porque a veces comparte actividades o que va a ayudar en esto, en lo otro. Entonces yo esa etapa ya lo viví con mi hijo y pues la oportunidad, cuando tuve la oportunidad sí también participaba en la escuela, o sea yo decía yo así y que bueno que mi hermana asiste, entonces me recuerda a mi etapa cuando mi hijo estaba chiquito.

00:16:47

Regina: Entonces tal vez, no sé, ¿su abuela fue un modelo? Pues dice que su abuela le enseñó como cosas básicas, como cocinar, el aseo. ¿Cree que su abuela también fue como un modelo para usted?

00:16:59

Gaby: Sí, yo creo que fue un gran modelo. Mi abuelita de verdad fue la mamá de mi mamá. Ella ya no está con nosotros. Ya ella está allá en el cielo. Pero de ella sí tengo muchos recuerdos bonitos porque siempre le agradezco a Dios porque ella me enseñó. Yo no lo entendía en el momento, porque ella, por ejemplo, a través de ella yo pude aprender a cocinar cosas como básicas allá en el pueblo a a poner un nixtamal, a moler en el molino de mano, hacer tortillas. El simple hecho de poner un comal, o sea que uno no lo hacía yo, o sea, yo no hacía eso de lavar la ropa en el lavadero, yo no hacía nada de eso. Entonces al llegar al pueblo ella fue como ese modelo a seguir que al principio yo decía ay, mi abuelita es muy dura conmigo. No lo entendía.

Pero ya durante los años entonces sí me percaté de que una mujer tenía que aprender a hacer tantas cosas. Por ella fue que aprendí a hacer manualidades, por ella aprendí a coser a máquina, por ella aprendí a hacer varias cosas. Por ella, por ella, por este. Yo miraba cómo ella acomodaba las camas, como barría, como nos ponía a barrer las calles. Este. O sea, todas las cosas que ella hacía. sí fue como un modelo a seguir. Sí, como que me dejó muy sembrada las cosas, sobre todo como para una mamá, una mamá de casa, ajá, que se preocupa por su familia, por sus hijos, por atender este, por tener todo limpio. Como que siento que ella fue la que por ella tengo todo eso, sí.

00:18:49

Regina: Las abuelas son lo mejor.

00:18:50

Gaby: Sí, la verdad que sí. Por eso le pido a Dios que yo pueda ser una abuela. Una buena abuela.

00:18:59

Regina: Ya está practicando con Thor.

00:19:00

Gaby: Sí, estoy practicando con Thor.

00:19:04

Regina: Y ahora vamos a hablar un poco sobre su relación con con su hijo ahora, y usted. Le preguntó. ¿cómo es su relación con con su hijo? Y, ¿es similar o diferente a la relación que que tuvo con su mamá?

00:19:20

Gaby: Ay no, con mi hijo es otra cosa. Sí, con mi hijo es, es una relación que quizá por lo mismo de lo que yo este...tuve ausencia, yo decidí como, hacer lo contrario. Por ejemplo, mi mamá nunca nos abrazaba, mi mamá nunca no decía un te quiero y hasta la vez ella no es así, es como difícil, pues. Ajá, pero este yo decidí que eso no me afectara o que yo decía, 'cuando yo tenga mis hijos yo voy a ser diferente, yo voy a ser dif," como que yo quise romper ese ciclo, esa cadena. Dije, yo voy a ser diferente, yo le voy a dar mucho amor a mis hijos y este y con la relación con mi hijo es todo lo contrario a como yo la llevé con mi mamá. Como todo, todo lo contrario. Sí, todo lo contrario. Con mi hijo siempre hemos tenido una buena relación, tenemos mucha confianza, mi hijo también no es tan expresivo. Así es su personalidad, pero, pero yo creo que con la mamá siempre son más sueltos que con el papá, entonces conmigo sí ha sido muy

este, platicamos mucho, nos abrazamos mucho, o él llega y me abraza, pues hasta esta edad siempre ha sido así. Pero fue más diferente, fue muy diferente.

00:20:51

Regina: Y ¿cómo es su relación con con su mamá hoy en día?

00:20:58

Gaby: Yo creo que es una relación estable. Es una relación, bueno, de hija a madre, yo creo que es de mucho amor que pues siempre va a ser mi mamá y siempre trato de llamarle por teléfono, de hacerle videollamada, de apoyarla económicamente este, de orar mucho por ella, de preocuparme por ella, pues estar al pendiente. De madre a hija, creo que es diferente. Sí es diferente, casi como que he llegado a pensar que tal vez ella es así porque tuvo vivencias tal vez duras y por eso yo creo que ella es así, no? O sea, no la juzgo, pero siento que por eso ella es así, porque hasta esa, hasta estas alturas uno dice, bueno, ya son tantos años y ya uno es adulto y uno es abuela, ya debería de haber tenido como otro, como otra manera de ser para con nosotras. Digo nosotras porque también es igual con mis hermanas. Ella es muy simple, no, no, no demuestra amor ni cariño. Nada, nada, nada, nada, nada. Por ejemplo, si uno se enferma ya no es como que "hija, ¿cómo estas? Como que es muy así, no sé y al principio sí me dolía mucho y me dolía mucho, siempre me podía y lloraba porque pues si uno dice tú siempre esperas de tu mamá, todo, todo, todo, tu esperas de tu mamá un consejo o un cómo estás o en un cumpleaños y pues en mi caso no es así. Sí, a veces ni en los cumpleaños. Ha sido difícil, pero yo no siento que sea la distancia, no siento que sea...Yo creo que no hay barreras para demostrar amor. Yo siento que aunque estuviera en China y ella en México, cuando uno ama no hay barreras. Yo creo que una palabra, una llamada, un hija, te quiero, pero. Pues no sé. Por eso digo, no sé que ella tenga todavía en su vida hasta estas alturas, porque ya son muchos años. Pero, yo siento que es una relación estable. Estable. Este, quizá no de mucha comunicación, como hablando en general, porque pues de mi parte siempre estoy al pendiente, pero no es así como yo quisiera tener una plática larga con ella. No, no, no, no sea como que yo la mirara, yo quisiera verla así como si fuera mi mejor amiga, pero no, no puedo verlo así, no puedo verla así. Entonces no, no es tan fácil. Pero por ejemplo a estas alturas, pues digo, es muy difícil tener una buena amiga, o sea, llamarle así aparte a alguien de tu mamá, no? Pero pues no, yo. Mi mamá casi no. Pero, sí es una relación estable, pues cuando yo siento que ella tiene, está tal vez de malas y que con escucharla luego yo me percató, entonces digo o parar, no ir más allá, entonces digo bueno mami ya que te desocupes así como que yo busco no para yo evitar eso y digo ok para que ni yo ni ella vayamos a salir mal y pues mejor así ya que esté más calmada. A veces no sé ni por qué pero...

00:24:32

Gaby: Ajá, así porque así ya me evito yo también como hija y como mujer, como persona de faltarle a ella tal vez no, porque pues nunca he sido grosera con hablar, pero digo no vaya a decir algo que la vaya a ofender y yo no lo sienta así, verdad? Por eso a veces cuando es así, es que yo

veo o mi hermana me dice tu mamá anda como de uña. Y así como híjole, le quería hablar, no, no, mejor más tarde yo ok. Es así como me explico, así como que, ajá, sí. Pero si es una relación, pues estable.

00:25:08

Regina: Si a veces uno como hijo no entiende, no entiende todo lo que haya pasado una madre antes de ser madre y todo eso.

00:25:17

Gaby: Sí, yo siento que es eso. Yo bueno, al principio, te digo, yo lloraba mucho porque yo decía cuando llegué aquí yo decía mi mamá nunca pregunta, nunca dice nada. Hay cumpleaños que pasamos que ni me llama así como que. Y tú esperas lo primero de tu mamá porque dice bueno, pues ella me tuvo, verdad? Pero no, no y ya como que un tiempo acá yo creo que Dios me ha ayudado mucho en eso, Dios me ha ayudado mucho a entender, entonces yo he entendido, he aprendido a entender que a lo mejor mi mamá en su etapa anterior de ser madre, vivió muchas cosas que ella no ha sanado, que le duelen o que tiene como mucho rencor a la vida. Entonces, eso no la deja hacerlo como ella tiene que ser como una mamá no? Que por ende siento que todas las mamás demuestran amor a sus hijos sobre todo. Y entonces, este, yo aprendí eso que mi mamá algo tiene y me he dado la oportunidad a veces como, cuando veo que está así, como de buenas, como platicar con ella más a fondo que como sacarle no, la platica. ¿Cómo fue tu niñez mamá? ¿Cómo fue tu adolescencia? Pero no, no se presta porque no lo hago con otra intención, sino como para ayudarla, como porque por ejemplo yo que fui la mayor, yo miraba cómo trataba a mis dos hermanas chiquitas y me dolía porque yo decía pues yo ya lo entiendo, pero mis hermanas chiquitas no. Entonces yo decía o sea, como por lógica no hay edad, que tú sepas que un hijo sabe que la mamá es amor. Entonces yo decía mis hermanas no entienden eso. Y yo decía, este, ¿de qué manera puedo ayudarlas? Sí, y te digo, yo siento que Dios me ha ayudado mucho en eso a entenderla. Entonces siempre he dicho eso a mi mamá, algo pasó difícil que no la hace ser como ella quisiera. Pero bueno, nosotros como hijas siempre la vamos a amar y pues orar mucho por ella para que Dios le sane ese corazón.

00:27:29

Gaby: Sí, porque nunca es tarde. Le digo, algún día voy a escuchar que mi mamá me diga, Gaby, te quiero. Sí, sí, sí.

00:27:38

Regina: Sí, sí. De hecho, ya un poco...había empezado usted un poco a comentar sobre esto, pero mi próxima pregunta es, tal vez, ¿cómo fue impactada su relación con con su madre al usted venirse a los Estados Unidos? Usted ya comentó un poquito sobre eso. Tal vez, cómo, cómo se

sentía ella o como se sintió. no sé si usted sabe cómo se sintió ella o se imagina que ella se sintió cuando usted decidió venirse para acá?

00:28:09

Gaby: Pues fíjate que ella estaba contenta. Fíjate que hasta eso me acuerdo que mi esposo cuando se vino, a los dos años, él decidió, bueno, ni pensamos que nos íbamos a venir, porque él cuando se vino nosotros empezamos a construir nuestra casa allá en Morelos y y pues yo siempre estaba alegre porque siempre [Marcos] me decía, "entre más rápido se haga esto, yo más rápido me regreso." No, yo, pues sí. Entonces yo era de que no gastaba más nada ni en mí, porque yo usaba hasta la ropa de [Marcos]. De verdad. Me ponía sus bermudas, sus playeras. Yo no gastaba en nada con tal de que él se regresara y me apure a hacer la casa, y me apuré a hacer la casa. Me acuerdo que mi abuelita me decía a ti no, "¿tú no tienes ganas de comprarte nada?" Porque siempre me veía con la misma ropa, pero era esa, ese deseo de terminar mi casa y de que mi esposo se regresara. Pero yo creo que mi esposo le gusto acá, porque ya como, ya el segundo año él me empezó a decir, "Chata, mejor se estuvieran aquí conmigo. Aquí se lleva una vida mucho mejor que allá." Y por las experiencias que habíamos pasado anteriormente, entonces decía y yo decía, "¿Y mi hijo?" "No, pues también." Y digo bueno, pues si nos vamos los dos, pues sí, si no, no. Y me acuerdo que le comenté a mi mamá y rápido ella me dijo "No hija, sí. Donde está su esposo debe de estar la mujer." Así me acuerdo que así me dijo y yo hasta me sorprendí porque dije ay mi mamá quiere que me vaya.

00:29:53

Gaby: Pero, o sea, pero sí tenía razón, porque decía ella siempre donde debes, "dónde está el esposo, siempre debe de estar la mujer nunca debe estar solo," porque pues ya sabemos lo que pasa. Y digo ¿sí, verdad? Entonces sí fue algo tan rápido. O sea, [Marcos] consiguió todo lo que se tenía que hacer y pues este mi hijo se quedó con ella seis meses. Sí, seis meses. Porque sentíamos mucho el gasto. Entonces decía él, "Ya llegas, trabajamos y traemos al niño." Y sí, me acuerdo que yo llegué aquí en mayo y ya mi hijo llegó aquí en diciembre y yo decía, "mi hijo en Navidad ya debe de estar aquí." Pero si ella siempre fue este la que me empujó a eso, que si tenía que estar acá. Después de estar acá, me imagino que sí se ha de haber puesto triste, me imagino, verdad? Porque como te digo, ella nunca lo ha expresado ni nunca lo expresó. Fíjate hasta ahorita que me preguntas. Sí, nunca fue para decirme hija, no pensé que estando tan lejos de... no! No, pero me imagino que pues como mamá dentro de su ser sí ha de haber extrañado. Sí, porque pues nunca me lo expresó, pero yo me imagino que sí, que como todo, no teniendo su familia tan lejos a distancia. Y ahora me pongo a pensar yo cuando mi hijo también se llegue a apartar, se va a ir a otro estado, a otro país, digo voy a sentir lo que sintió mi mamá, pero nunca me lo expresó. Pero yo me imagino que sí se ha de haber puesto triste por lo que me platicaba mi hermanita, pues estaba chiquitita, pues ella me decía "no, mi mamá está bien, no." Pues estaba chiquita, diez años entonces pues nunca me lo expresó, fíjate.

00:31:48

Regina: ¿Y su abuela tal vez?

00:31:50

Gaby: No, ya no estaba. No, ya se había muerto mi abuelita. Sí, ya me acuerdo. No, la verdad no. Con mi mamá no.

00:32:01

Regina: ¿Y usted cómo se sintió al venirse para acá?

00:32:05

Gaby: Fíjate que sí extrañé al principio cuando recién llegué. Yo lloraba mucho y eso que me ocupé más porque empecé a trabajar y trabajé los primeros tres años, ya que llegó mi hijo, seguía trabajando y este. Y sí, yo lloraba por las noches, lloraba porque yo extrañaba, yo extrañaba. Yo decía mi mamá, mis hermanas, la casa como que sí, extrañaba mucho. Aunque te digo, mi mamá nunca nos ha expresado un abrazo. Ella es muy simple, no sé ella si es, pero uno deja siempre extraña, como el aroma de su casa, las costumbres de allá, levantarse bien temprano y oír los pollos, los perros, los gallos, como que esas cosas. Yo extrañaba mucho y lloraba así. Al principio siempre lloraba. Me acuerdo que hasta me dio como depresión. Sí, sí, me dio depresión, porque llegar aquí en una casa encerrada, no como allá, la libertad de andar caminando para todos lados, estar en el patio y aquí encerrada sí fue un cambio bien duro, pero yo decía bueno, pues volteaba a ver a mi esposo y yo decía tengo que estar bien porque pues a lo mejor él se va a sentir mal, porque si me lo llego a decir me decía, "Chata, si no está bien, pues regrésate a México," dice, "Yo lo que quiero es que estés bien." Él siempre ha procurado que estemos bien. Entonces él me decía, "Si sientes que no estás bien, no te hallas, regrésate a la casa, a México. Y sí, pues yo me quedo otro tiempo y ya me regreso." Pero entonces yo también decía no, pues debo de tratar porque pues, ya estoy casada, debo estar con él y no lo veía como obligación ni compromiso, sino pues yo también sentía como el amor, ¿no? Para mi esposo. Yo decía no, pues él no se merece que yo esté como de berrinchuda y no era berrinche, pero sí extrañaba mi casa, extrañaba el pueblo, extrañaba a mi gente, mi mamá, mis hermanas, sobre todo. Sí, fue muy difícil el cambio y pues ya cuando llegó mi hijo aquí, pues te digo, tardó como seis meses. Como que, como el trabajo, ni aun así no me entretenía. Siempre estaba pensando allá como que yo andaba aquí, pero mi mente allá. Sí, y ya después que él empezó a ir a la, a la escuelita, al Garden, como que me empecé a involucrar mucho ahí en la escuela, entonces como que también eso me fue como ayudando así. Y ya fue cuando dejé de trabajar, me dijo mi esposo, "No, ya quédate en casa, cuida de tu hijo y mejor haz otras cosas que y pues así." Pero sí, sí se extraña y mucho sí se extraña mucho, mucho se extraña. Yo extrañaba hasta el sillón, la hamaca, porque como que ya tenía esa rutina, ¿no? Allá. O en la tarde platicaba con la familia y en el patio y así. Sí, yo extrañaba todo eso. Sí, mis hermanas.

00:35:23

Regina: Yo igual, así cuando visito a mi abuela, igual lo mismo. Su sillón. Tenemos la hamaca atrás. En la tarde llegan todos del trabajo y uno se sienta a platicar.

00:35:36

Gaby: Sí, sí, es muy difícil hacer esas pláticas. Yo, por ejemplo, aquí en casa, es lo que mucho valoro la sobremesa porque es donde hay oportunidad de platicar. Y recuerdo que con mi mamá, no, con mi mamá es en la mesa, no se habla. Pues no se, no se platica, coman. Y o sea como bien así, era muy estricta ella, me acuerdo bien como acomodaba a los platos, los cubiertos, las copas y los brazos así. Ella no te podía ver hacer cosa diferente porque era una regañada o un jalón de orejas. Sí, y ahora entiendo, ya en mi experiencia que la oportunidad de platicar. Por ejemplo nosotros, así como mi hijo y mi esposo, es el momento oportuno para platicar de las cosas del día o que nos pasa, o así.

00:36:33

Regina: Nosotros también igual, cuando estoy en casa es momento, bueno, ellos lo hacen cuando no estoy en casa, pero cuando estoy en casa igual. Nos sentamos todos para hablar del día, de qué está pasando en nuestras vidas y todo.

00:36:48

Gaby: Sí, es que yo siento que no puede pasar un día sin uno compartir algo, porque a lo mejor puede estar pasando algo y, y ¿quién te va a ayudar sino tu familia? Y entonces es lo que yo no viví como hija, que me pasaba algo y yo decía, "ay, ¿quien me va a ayudar?" No podía, o sea, confiar en mi mamá, o sea, pasé muchas cosas que ni mi mamá sabe. Entonces, imagínate, no había como esa confianza y hasta la ves hasta esta edad. Después yo decía un día voy a platicar con mi mamá, de cosas que viví, que pasé. Pero después digo, ah, ¿ya para qué? Y entonces yo eso veo y digo no, yo no quiero que con mi hijo pase lo mismo. Que yo quiero, obvio que no voy a saber, tal vez todo, nunca voy a estar las 24 horas con él, pero que sienta la confianza de platicar y siento que sí se ha logrado ese cometido de que haya comunicación entre nosotros.

00:37:48

Regina: Qué bien, qué bien. Y la última pregunta que tengo es...bueno, usted igual comentó un poquito sobre esto, pero no sé si tenga algo más que agregar. ¿Cómo se mantiene conectada con su mamá y si ha cambiado en él con el tiempo? Porque ahora tenemos, por ejemplo, WhatsApp ya no puede enviar mensajes así. Pero cuando usted llegó primero, ¿cómo se mantenía conectada? Y sí, ¿cómo ha cambiado?

00:38:17

Gaby: Sí, pues bueno, era por teléfono. Primero era por teléfono y nosotros hasta llegamos a usar las cartas con mi esposo. Sí, él me mandaba cartas, pero sí, con mi esposo nos escribíamos y con mi mamá las primeras veces también fue en carta por correo. Este, pero por llamadas, por llamada telefónica. Ajá. No teníamos teléfono en casa aún. Sí, siempre iban a donde mi tío, a un, ahí en frente. Pero era por llamadas. Era un poco más difícil porque pues escuchabas, pero pues dices no los puedo ver, ajá. Y no, y ahora es diferente. Y ahora ya a cualquier hora puedes hacer una videollamada y ya la miras, ya ¿verdad? Ves? Ahí yo a veces ando viendo qué comen, o el patio, cómo andan, si lo que están haciendo. Y pues el, como no es muy constante la verdad. A veces hablamos una vez por semana, dos veces. Sí, porque pues a veces te digo, no se presta a ella. Es un poco difícil, pero. Pero este, herramientas para comunicarnos tenemos muchos. Pero, pues por ejemplo, yo como hija trato de desde llamarle por teléfono, un mensaje o una videollamada, o a veces hasta con personas que van porque tengo familia que viaja seguido al pueblo. Entonces yo mando así cositas para ella, para que ella sienta, ¿no? de que uno está también pensando en ella o este. A veces le digo hey, dale un abrazo a mi mamá, yo sé que ella lo va a sentir a través de la persona. Sí entonces, pero si ha sido así, como no es muy que diga de todos los días como a mi me gustaría, porque con mi hijo es diferente. Pues bueno por ende que pues está conmigo no todavía, pero con él cualquier cosa, un mensaje, o me llama. ¿No? Entonces no es así como con mi mamá. No es. No es lo mismo. Pues no es como yo quisiera. Yo a veces digo ah, y a mi me gustaría como que todos los días una llamada, o verla ¿verdad? Temprano y en la noche, pero no, ella como que o luego dice estoy ocupada o estoy así, yo, bueno. Pero sí, pero herramientas para comunicarnos hay muchas, pero pues yo creo que debe ser ambas partes. Si, porque por ejemplo, ¿sí uno pone de su parte, pero pues por el otro lado no? Ha sido difícil y sobre todo porque estamos lejos. Con más razón. Uno dice pues si no fue, por lo menos todos los días. Voy a ver cómo está así. Y es más, con mi hermana, la que está ahí y ella vive ahí mismo, en el mismo terreno, la que tienen los niños. Con ella, así casi todos los días, este, videollamadas, o mensajes hasta para qué comieron, como ¿qué vas a comer o cosas así, no? O me dice todos los niños tienen actividad, te llamo al rato. O manda fotos, "mira, los niños hicieron esto en la escuela." Entonces como que, como que miro allá, cómo están viviendo así por medio de fotos, de videollamadas. Pues yo, a veces llaman, "Tía, queremos ver a Thor. Queremos ver los pescados. ¿Y mi tío? ¿Y tú? Y cosas así. Pero con mi mamá es más diferente si es. No digo que es triste, pero pues sí.

00:41:54

Regina: Sí.

00:41:55

Gaby: Sí, sí no, pero bueno, pues digo bueno si.

00:42:01

Regina: Bueno, esas son todas las preguntas que yo tengo, pero no sé si usted tenga algo más que quiera compartir o agregar sobre su experiencia como madre o como hija.

00:42:14

Gaby: Pues. Yo sólo pienso verdad que, que, bueno, como es. Tal vez no entendía las cosas cuando estaba más chica. Y ahora que soy madre, Ahora sí entiendo más, tal vez, puedo ser...tal vez entender un poquito lo que mi mamá sintió en ciertos momentos de nuestra vida. Por ejemplo, cuando nos tuvo, pues yo ya tuve un hijo, ya sé dije no pues. Y es ahí donde vuelvo a decir uno cuando ya es madre dice tuviste a tu hijo y es una cosa que no puedes describir, o sea, es un gran amor que le tienes a los hijos y entonces es ahí donde yo me pregunto, ¿Por qué mi mamá no es así con nosotras? Ahí como que me surgen las preguntas ¿no? O si te enfermas, pues uno por ejemplo, cuando yo estaba allá, yo veía a mi mamá y decía pues te preocupas o aún aquí a la distancia. Pero cuando es viceversa, por ejemplo, en mi caso no, no es que diga, "o voy a preguntar, o voy a llamar." Entonces yo digo que de una u otra manera Dios puso a las madres en la tierra porque Él no iba a estar aquí. Yo siento que Dios puso la mamá en la tierra porque iba a ser ese ángel quién iba a cuidar de sus hijos. Sí, entonces yo siento que ya como mamá, yo le pido a Dios mucho que yo siga siendo una buena mamá, una buena madre, una buena esposa, una buena hermana. Sí, porque, por ejemplo, yo crié a mis hermanas. De hecho, ellas me decían mamá a mí. Imagínate, fue una de las preguntas que hiciste cómo es que ellas tienen? Recuerdan como mamá, a otra persona que a la que era la verdadera mamá? Es duro, es triste, pero pues es la realidad. Porque, bueno, quizá no todas las familias vivimos lo mismo. Verdad que muchos? Yo a veces veo mamás que son muy cariñosas con sus hijos o las abuelas. Y por nuestro caso no. Por ejemplo, mi mamá no habla con mi hijo, imagínate. No, o sea, no es si yo le llamo es muy raro que me diga, ¿y Victor? mmmm. O sea, es algo como y al principio igual me dolía, me dolía porque decía mi mamá no pregunta por mi hijo, o sea su nieto, que ya lo tuvo meses, o sea, nació ahí. Y mi hijo antes decía, "¿Y mi abuelita o mi abuelita? Pero hubo un tiempo que ya no, y aunque yo siempre le he sembrado y él sabe que está mi mamá, que yo hablo a veces, no sé si es obligarlo, pero a veces le digo ven a saludar a mi mamá, mi abuelita, pero ay, no sé cómo decirlo, no sé si...Yo sé que el amor se tiene que dar a quien sea verdad, que se lo merezca o no se lo merezca. Uno tiene que amar y entonces yo eso quiero que mi hijo con su abuela, pero por ejemplo, la comunicación casi es nula, entonces imagínate. O sea, yo a veces digo mis papás están vivos aún, gracias a Dios, los de mi esposo no, o sea los de mi esposo no conocieron a mi hijo, murieron antes. Entonces yo digo si tienen a sus abuelos vivos, ¿por qué no disfrutarlos? A pesar de la distancia no hay impedimento, pero lamentablemente no. Entonces por una parte como madre, yo como que quiero hacer el doble, el triple papel. Me explico cubriendo ese amor, amor de mamá, amor de abuela, amor de tía, porque no lo hay físicamente. Pero como mi hijo es muy tranquilo y el siempre, ¿Y mi abuelita? ¿No has hablado con ella? O sea, como que él así no sé si porque yo así lo he inculcado, así lo hice crecer o siempre cualquier cosa le muestro fotos, pero ellos casi nunca, nunca hablan, no? Entonces yo por eso digo bueno señor, yo entiendo a

estas alturas que tu dejaste a las mamás en la tierra porque tú no vas a poder estar aquí, para cuidarnos.

00:46:31

Gaby: Entonces pues, es valorar a nuestra mamás, valorar y pues yo digo que no hay distancia. No hay distancia. No, no hay excusas. No hay pretexto para demostrar amor. Yo siempre he dicho eso. Digo, no importa. Yo siento que donde estén, no importa este. Que para demostrar amor a una mamá o a una hija o a una abuela, no hay barreras, pues no hay barreras. Pero pues lamentablemente muchos crecimos de diferente forma. De diferente forma entonces. Y pues igual siempre le digo a Dios que me ayude a ser una buena hija y a entender a mi mamá. Sí, porque por ejemplo, al principio sí estaba como resentida porque yo decía ¿Por qué es así? ¿Por qué es así? Pero te digo, yo siento que Dios me ha ayudado mucho en esa parte, en mi corazón, de que yo no tenga rencor, que yo siempre ame a mi mamá a pesar de todo, porque, porque es un mandamiento. Sí, es un mandamiento. Dios dejó como el 4.º mandamiento, Honrarás a tu padre y a tu madre. Y si yo digo que amo a Dios, tengo que cumplir lo que Él dejó, en la Tierra. Sí. Entonces, de igual manera, sea como sea, hay momentos en donde ella a veces no me habla, pero de igual manera yo le mando su dinero con mi hermana, que es la que vive ahí. Y aunque ella no me...yo no pido este como que me de agradecimiento, no pido aplausos, no pido ser adulada, solamente que ella esté bien y a veces mi hermana me dice, "¿Ya te mandó, ya te mandó mensaje que ya le entregue eso? Le digo, no. Y así pasa el tiempo. Pero antes sí me dolía, pero ahora ya no, ya digo que no, ya como que, como quiera, es mi mamá como quiera es mi mamá y yo le agradezco a Dios por ella porque pues a ella me la dio como mamá terrenal, por ella estoy aquí, por ella nací. Y pues, y apenas no tiene mucho que se lo dije, fíjate le dije este ya cuando iba a colgar le digo, "Mamá, te quiero decir algo," le digo, "quizá tú nunca este lo recibe, no sé de qué manera, pero te lo quiero decir otra vez" le digo, "que agradezco mucho a Dios porque me dio una mamá como tú y que siempre hiciste lo posible por porque creciéramos sin padre," porque pues crecimos sin papá. Le digo, y este, "y estoy muy agradecida porque Dios te puso aquí en la tierra para que tú seas mi mamá, le digo y mi ángel." Y no me contestó nada, nada. Quedó serio un buen rato y le digo, "y quiero decirte que te amo mucho y que a pesar de la distancia hay un corazón por acá, este, latiendo por ti," le digo, que siempre, siempre y ya." Este ya quedó seria, sí. Y le digo, "¿Y está bien mamá?" y me dice, "Sí hija, luego nos vemos, bye bye." Y colgó y yo me quedé Ay señor! Pero sí, no es fácil, tal vez y ahorita ya como que estoy más tranquila, pero sí hubo momentos donde fue muy difícil, porque te digo, tú siempre esperas de tu mamá. Siempre esperas de tu mamá, de tu mamá? Porque yo hasta escucho, no, que dicen a mi mamá, mi mejor amiga y pues yo no yo. Entonces yo eso quise hacer un hijo que él viera en mi, una amiga que soy su mamá, soy su madre. Debe haber un respeto también, no este, porque no soy cualquier cosa, pero que me vea como con confianza, ¿verdad? Con ese que puede hacer alguna broma, cosas así. Y si siento que sí, siento que sí, Entonces yo siento que Dios me ha premiado en todo. Sí, como una buena mamá, con un buen hijo. Y pues ahí es tratando de que yo pueda hacer lo mismo también porque uno se equivoca, también. Es rebelde.

00:50:42

Regina: Y sí.

00:50:45

Regina: Bueno, pues muchas gracias. Le agradezco por darme su tiempo y compartir su historia conmigo. Eh? Ahora voy a parar la grabación.

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