

Introduction

Background:

This thesis explores the concepts of tradition, memory and mental health as they relate to individuals who have moved throughout or within their lifetime. Two groups were the focus of this study: Third Culture Kids (TCKs) and migrants to Toronto between 1950-1990.

Terms:

Family traditions are “defined as customs, beliefs, cultural values, ethics, mores, and attitudes established within the parent-child framework and passed along from one generation to the next.”¹

According to Pollock and Van Reken (1999) Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are “individuals from any country who have spent formative years in second or third cultures other than their parents’ first culture.”²

The term migrant often is used for “persons moving within or between countries to improve their economic and social conditions.”³

Research Objectives

1. To explore the statistical implications and changes for immigration in Canada during middle to late 20th century
2. To determine the mental health outcomes of TCKs upon repatriation
3. To understand the experiences of Toronto immigrants in the late 20th century

Methods

Approach + Collection:

Mixed Methods

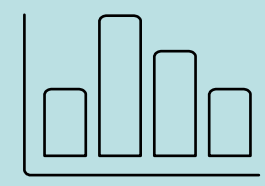
Qualitative	Quantitative
Personal narratives (TCKs + migrants)	Canadian census data from late 20 th century

Data Collection:

primary source documents



Existing statistics



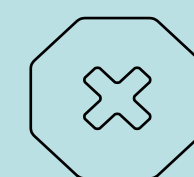
Methods of Analysis

Identify between two groups:

similarities



differences



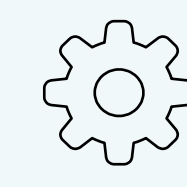
Compare statistics on highest immigrant groups to their experiences/ mental health outcomes

Personal Narrative Inclusion

Included in this thesis is personal narrative or what is known as autoethnography which “allows researchers to draw on their own experiences to understand a particular phenomenon.”⁴

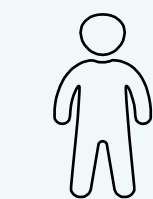
Literature Review

Context:

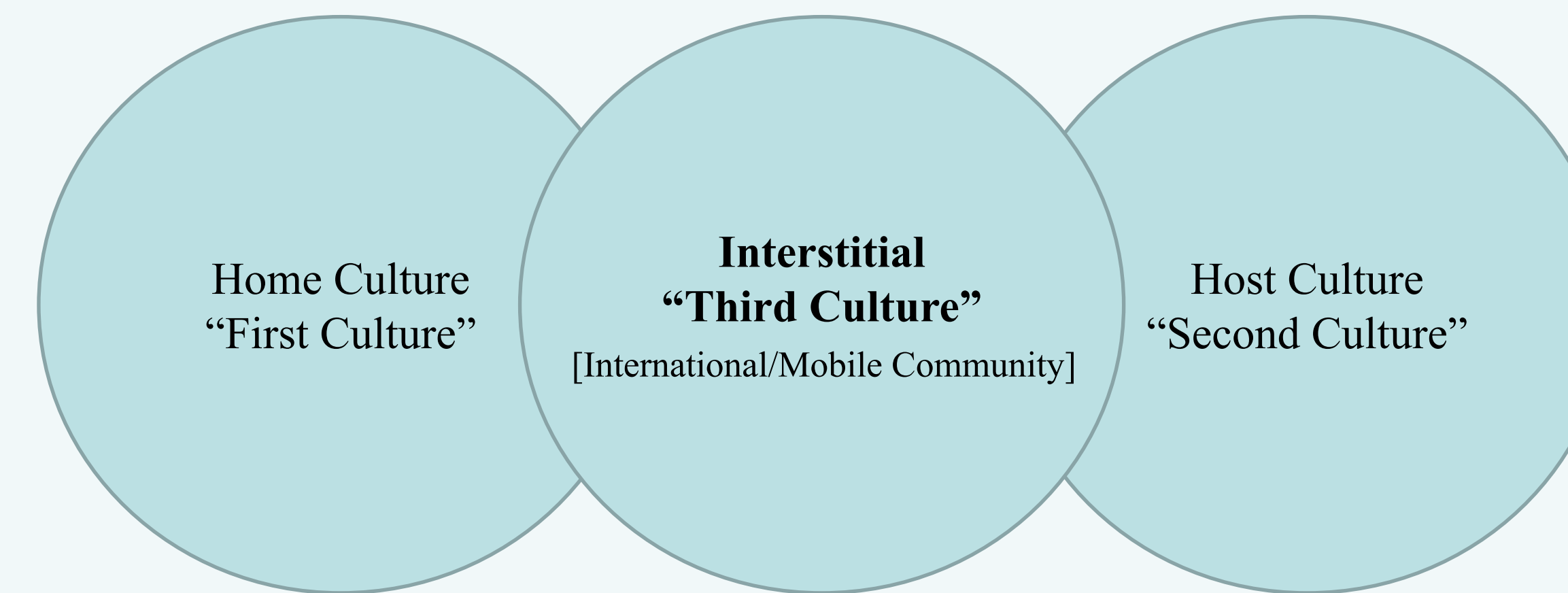


The use of Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined communities gives insight into how TCKs connect to several places or idealized memories of places they have a connection to or where they have lived.⁵ Additionally, the notion of Erin Manning’s rhizomic societies fits well by asserting the multiplicity and underlying connections to place⁶

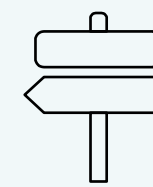
Third Culture Kid Origins:



Much of the literature surrounding the term ‘Third Culture Kid’ pertains to the themes of identity, belonging, international schooling, and post-secondary transition. These individuals “spent a significant part of [their] developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. [. . .] [Their] sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.”⁷

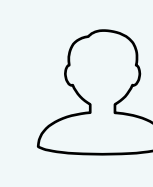


Differentiation:



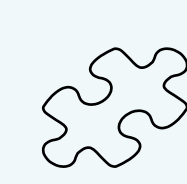
The differentiation between TCK and children of immigrants or refugees, despite often sharing communities, is that TCK or children of sojourners aim to return to their home country and as such repatriate while immigrants or refugees plan to remain in the country after having moved.⁸

Identity:



Place is a key aspect of understanding identity. Due to this strong association with place that forms early in childhood, TCKs are at a disadvantage because of their transient upbringing. As such, “a high mobility lifestyle might cause these individuals to feel confused about which place to call home, and their sense of belongingness is always questioned, which may further lead to the confusion of their identity.”⁹

Belonging:



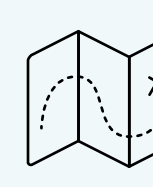
Due to TCKs movement a sense of belonging can be harder to establish. However, “TCKs’ sense of identification with people around them, with the cultures of host countries and schools, and the ties they create with people of different cultures, languages and nationalities are significant factors that can shape their sense of belonging.”¹⁰ Yet, this sense of belonging can be multifaceted.

International Schooling:



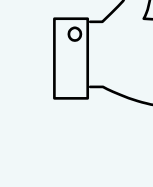
International schooling is a common research topic. TCKs experience of school is alternative to children who remain within one country. Experiences vary but adult TCKs who had attended international schools brought up themes including their negative or advantageous marginality to their surrounding community and reverse culture shock upon repatriation.¹¹

Transition:



TCKs university transition to their home/passport country is also common. Experience vary but many experience culture shock upon returning to their home country.¹² Another common struggle is cultural differences and a disrupted sense of identity.¹³ However, re-entry training could be beneficial in preparing these students and allow for a more successful repatriation.¹¹

Third Culture Kid Benefits:



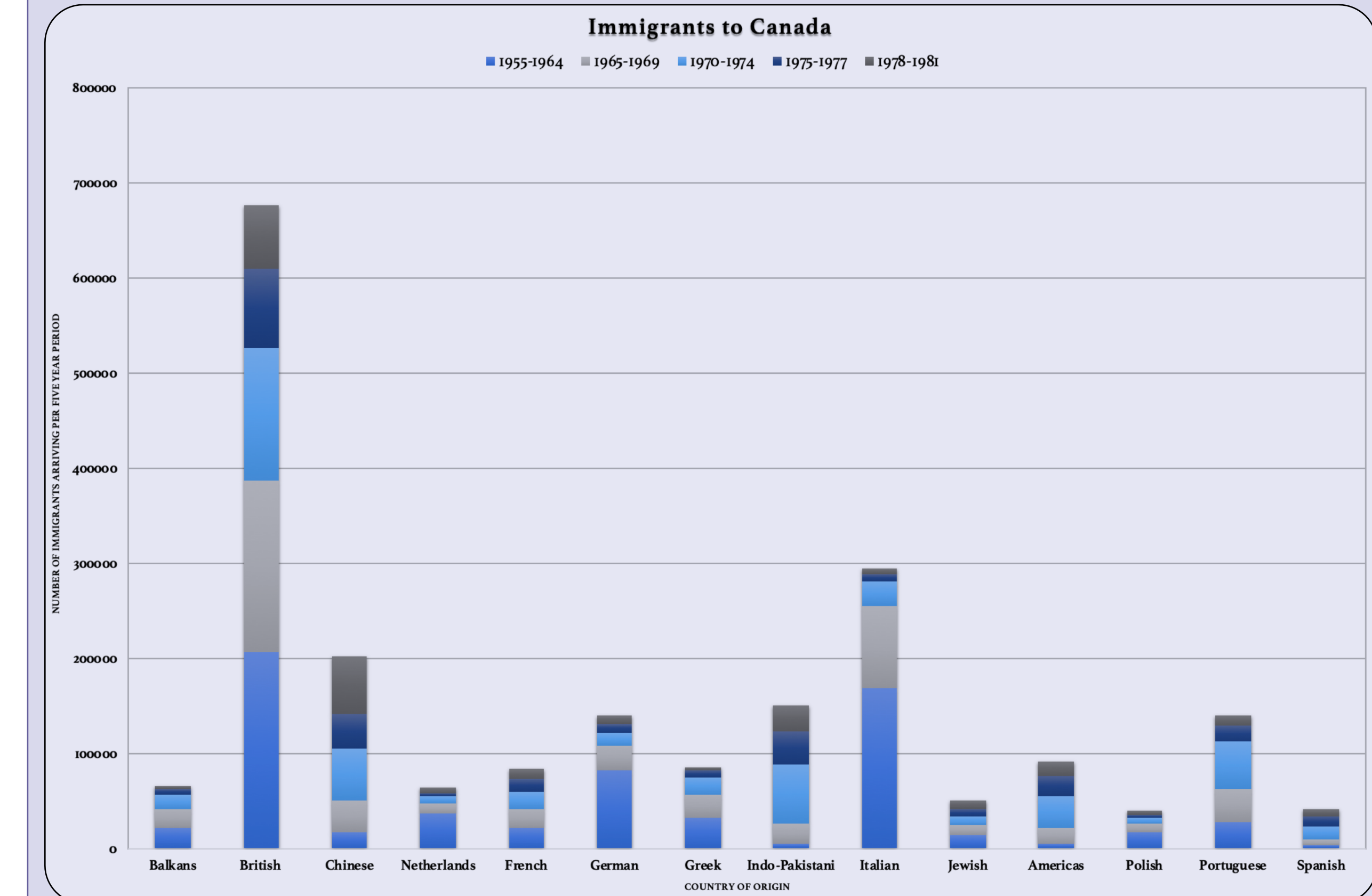
Benefits of TCK upbringing include “biculturalism or identifying with more than one culture [that] positively [affect] psychological and sociocultural adjustment” as well as “adaptability and open-minded-ness.”¹⁴

Third Culture Kid Criticisms:



There is criticism of the focus on western identities as well as “overly binarised cultural understanding, interstitial conception of personal culture, [and] unacknowledged geo-political centrism.”¹⁵

Results & Discussion



Migrants from a Portuguese, Chinese and Italian background were common (1950-90).¹⁶

Mental Health:

TCKs and migrants both tend to experience mental health issues upon moving. However, little data exists during 1950-1990 on the subject for various factors, including a fear of potential deportation and language barriers.¹⁷ Yet, migrants have the advantage of being able to have a single culture—a cultural groups to find comfort in—while processing the move, unlike TCKs.¹⁸

Experiences:

The holding on to of tradition is better researched when it comes to migrants, however, TCKs more so can use objects or personal items to connect them to a sense of home or a lost times prior to their repatriation.¹⁹ Migrants also connect to these feelings of reminiscing home or another time/ place.²⁰

Conclusions

Comparison:

These two groups do share similar experiences regarding mental health and a holding onto a sense of home or place as it relates to belonging or traditions and identity.

Limitations:



time constraints



Covid restrictions



Census confidentiality

Next Steps:

More research needs to be conducted on TCKs and second-generation migrants specifically. Interviews would greatly assist in further understanding the differing or coinciding experiences between TCKs and migrants. Additionally, the methods and findings of this thesis are transferable to further studies on other time periods or migrants communities.