

The Role of Canadian Laws and Social Policies in Perpetuating
Intimate Partner Abuse against Newcomer Women
in Manitoba

by

Janine Bramadat

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

Department of Sociology

University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

Copyright © 2015 by Janine Bramadat

Abstract

Domestic abuse against women has been a concern among feminist theorists, scholars, and activists. Although the issue of domestic abuse is a popular research topic, what is often neglected is an analysis of how the experiences of newcomer women differ from other women who experience partner abuse. While domestic abuse is inflicted upon women of all cultures and from all economic classes, the experiences of newcomer women are unique. While there are many research initiatives that investigate the complexities of domestic abuse, one area that is less researched is that of domestic abuse as experienced by newcomer women. Examining the data collected from semi-structured interviews with Winnipeg police officers, social service providers, and survivors of intimate partner violence, this study explores the questions: ‘What layers of vulnerability do newcomer women face when trying to extricate themselves from abusive partnerships, and how may Canadian laws and social policies exacerbate their susceptibility?’

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my thesis committee member's Dr. Jane Ursel, Dr. Kendra Nixon, and in particular my incredibly supportive and encouraging thesis advisor Dr. Lori Wilkinson. Your commitment and dedication to the students you teach continues to inspire others and encourage learning.

Thank you to my parents who support me in all that I do and set an amazing example of what you can achieve when you set your mind to it. To my husband, who encouraged me to pursue Graduate Studies, thank you for being such a positive and inspirational person in my life. Your humor, advice, love and motivation mean the world to me.

Finally, I wish to thank all the participants who trusted in this research and provided in-depth insight into the issues intimate partner violence.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	viii
1. Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.1. Identifying Newcomer Women	1
1.2. What is Intimate Partner Abuse?	3
2. Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.....	8
2.1. Intimate Partner Abuse: An International Perspective.....	8
2.2. Prevalence of Intimate Partner Abuse in Canada	10
2.3. Intimate Partner Violence Against Newcomer Women	14
2.4. Provincial Legislation: Manitoba Context	20
2.5. Immigration in Canada	25
2.6. Immigration in Manitoba.....	25
2.7. The Impact of Canadian Policies on Newcomer Women’s Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence.....	26
2.8. Social Assistance Policies in Manitoba.....	28
2.9. Theoretical Framework	29
2.9.1. Structuration Theory.....	30
2.9.2. Intersectionality Theory	33
3. Chapter Three: Methodology.....	39
3.1. Qualitative Research Methods.....	39
3.2. Interviews with Newcomer Women.....	41

3.2.1. Recruitment.....	42
3.3. Possible Limitations: Newcomer Women.....	44
3.4. Ethical Concerns: Newcomer Women	45
3.5. Interviews with Social Service Workers and Police Officers.....	46
3.5.1. Recruitment.....	46
3.6. Limitations: Social Service Workers and Police Officers.....	48
3.7. Ethical Concerns: Social Service Workers and Police Officers.....	48
3.8. Development of Tools.....	49
3.9. Data Analysis.....	49
4. Chapter Four: Findings: Barriers Faced by Newcomer Women	52
4.1. Newcomer Women, Social Service Providers and Police Officers	
Definition of Intimate Partner Abuse.....	55
4.2. Commonalities in the Experiences of Newcomer and Canadian-born Women	58
4.2.1. Major Barrier #1: Financial Dependence.....	59
4.2.2. Major Barrier #2: Isolation.....	62
4.2.3. Major Barrier #3: Distrust of Authorities.....	64
4.2.4. Major Barrier #4: Fear of Losing Children.....	66
4.3. Unique Barriers as Experienced by Newcomer Women.....	68
4.3.1 Unique Barrier #1: Cultural Barriers.....	69
4.3.2. Unique Barrier#2: Religious Beliefs.....	74
4.3.3. Unique Barrier #3: Social Stigmatization	78
4.3.4. Unique Barrier #4: The Influence of Gender Roles	80
4.3.5. Unique Barrier #5: Limited English Language Skills and Access to Translators.....	81
4.3.6. Unique Barrier #6: Limited Knowledge related to Canadian and	

Provincial Systems.....	84
4.3.7. Unique Barrier #7: False Information Perpetrated by Abusive Spouse.....	87
4.3.8. Unique Barrier #8: Limited Social Network.....	87
4.3.9. Unique Barrier #9: Past Exposure to Violence as Acquired through the Migration Process.....	89
4.3.10. Unique Barrier #10: Concern for Family Members Overseas.....	89
4.3.11. Unique Barrier #11: Difference in Experience between Immigrant and Refugee Newcomer Women.....	91
4.3.12. Unique Barrier #12: Reluctance to Access Resources Marketed as ‘Free’.....	92
4.3.13. Unique Barrier #13: Underutilization of Resources.....	94
4.3.14. Unique Barrier #14: Access to Social Assistance and Housing	96
4.4. Demonstrated Perseverance by Newcomer women, Social Service workers and Police Officers.....	99
5. Chapter Five: Policy Implications	101
5.1. Provincial Policies.....	101
5.2. Immigration Policies.....	106
5.3. Regulations surrounding Social Assistance.....	112
5.4. Structuration Theory.....	116
5.5. Intersectionality Theory.....	120
6. Conclusion.....	124
6.1. Summary of Findings.....	124
6.2. Summary of Recommendations.....	128
6.3. Limitations of the Study.....	130

6.4. Concluding Remarks.....	131
References.....	133
Appendix.....	156

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Similarities/Differences of the Experience of Intimate Partner Violence between Newcomer and Canadian-born Women

<u>Similarities in Experience</u>	<u>Similarities in Condition but Different Response</u>	<u>Differences in Experience</u>
1) Lack of Trust	I) Fear of Accessing Resources II) Fear of Authorities	Cultural and religious barriers
2) Financial Dependence	I) Lack of work experience because of immigrant status	Social stigma
3) Isolation	I) Limited social network II) Language Barrier (as it relates to isolation)	Traditional gender roles
4) Control of the Abuser	I) Lack of external family support due to migration	English Language barriers
5) Self-Esteem	I) Language barrier (as it relates to self-esteem issues)	Separation from family and lack of social support
6) Fear of the Unknown	I) Limited culturally relevant resources II) Lack of knowledge of resources	Changes in family dynamics due to migration
7) Concern over Losing Children	I) Prior separation due to migration II) Higher expectation of two-parent household III) Lack of knowledge: CFS System, Canadian Criminal Justice System, Immigration System etc.	Obligation to family overseas
		Perceived/ Actual threats to family in home country
		Immigration Status

Chapter One: Introduction

When we hear the words ‘gender-based violence’, many people may think about the attention-grabbing articles that depict highly horrifying accounts of rape and murdered women in India, the Congo, and other parts of the world. Rarely do we think this happens in Canada, causing us to frequently ignore the prevalence of violence against women in Canada. In believing that violence happens elsewhere, a practice called ‘othering’, we ignore responsibility for the violence that occurs at home, and we fail to take action. Ambitiously, many strong, courageous, forward-thinking women have paved the way to begin a serious conversation about gender-based violence. Manitoba-based immigrant-serving agencies and women’s crisis organizations have spent over two decades collecting information and working with community organizations, police and justice officials, along with health care practitioners, governments and many others to bring attention to violence against newcomer women in Canadian society. My study contributes in one small way by examining the experiences of newcomer women who have survived intimate partner violence. It considers the questions, ‘What layers of vulnerability do newcomer women face when trying to extricate themselves from abusive partnerships’, and ‘how may Canadian laws and social policies exacerbate their susceptibility?’ This thesis examines the data collected from semi-structured interviews with police, social service providers, and survivors of intimate partner violence. Two theories, Anthony Giddens’ Structuration Theory and Intersectionality theory helped me to organize and understand how the multiple layers of vulnerability are allowed to develop and be sustained, and how the social structures of Canadian society help continue to exacerbate the situation.

1.1. Identifying Newcomer Women

In Canada, a segment of the population that is one of the most vulnerable to partner abuse and who may experience unique and multiple barriers in exiting abusive relationships are newcomer women (Alaggia et.al., 2009; Wilson, 2007). While domestic abuse is inflicted upon women of all cultures, and from all economic classes, the experiences of newcomer women are in many ways unique. Vulnerability for newcomer women may be caused by migration, change in socio-economic status, differences in culture, language barriers, perceptions of masculinity and traditional gender roles, lack of resources, and further structural barriers. We are not as informed about the experience of intimate partner violence as it pertains to minority groups and as such, abuse is enabled to continue in private, leaving these women with very few resources of support (Hester et al., 1996; Hyman, 2006; McDonald, 1999; Sullivan, 2005). This inequality follows in the research focusing on vulnerable minority groups, which is, with some exceptions, largely neglectful of racialized newcomer women (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Mosher, 2009; Pan, 2006; Rana, 2012).

Who is a ‘newcomer’? While ‘newcomer’ is defined by Statistics Canada (2012) as *recent* immigrants who have arrived within the last five years, this study broadens the definition to include those who *identify* as a newcomer. This means that while some ‘newcomers’ may have landed in Canada more than five years ago, they still may consider themselves new to the country and feel and/or believe themselves to be ‘newcomers. This term is meant to encompass all the women who arrived to Canada as immigrants or refugees and who would consider themselves to be new to Canada. It also gives a much-needed voice to the newcomer women and their choice to be identified as immigrants. They may have arrived on their own or with family members and they may be principal applicants or dependent spouses who are sponsored by a

family member. The newcomer women in my study were deemed eligible if they had immigrated to Canada as adults. This is because exposure to the Canadian education system may have significant differences in how women interpret the experience of intimate partner abuse, as socialization into the receiving countries culture is more readily acquired for children who immigrate as opposed to those who immigrate as adults (Coll et al., 2014). Both newcomer women who participated in this study had been in Canada less than 10 years, and are visible minorities.

This thesis includes interviews with various persons as it chronicles the experiences of front-line workers (including police) who encounter survivors of intimate partner abuse in their work, and of newcomer women who arrived to Canada as adults (over the age of 18) and who are survivors of intimate partner violence. Important to note is that while physical and sexual assaults are offenses described under the *Criminal Code* of Canada, psychological, emotional, or financial forms of abuse are not specifically defined. For example, threats (section 423), intimidation (section 423) and harassment (section 264 (1)) are offenses for which charges may be laid in cases of psychological or emotional abuse (Canadian Department of Justice, 2010). For the purpose of this thesis, the three terms ('abuse', 'violence', and 'intimate partner abuse') serve to speak to all aforementioned forms of abuse including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse.

1.2. What is Intimate Partner Abuse?

As Anderson (1997) argues, feminists maintain that gender and power is at the root of intimate partner violence. A definitive characteristic of an abusive relationship is the exercise of power and control by the abuser over his intimate partner (Mosher, 2009). Intimate partner abuse has been referred to in previous studies terms that include, but are not limited to, 'spousal abuse',

‘spousal assault’, ‘battering’, ‘intimate partner assault’, ‘relationship abuse’, ‘domestic abuse’, or ‘family violence’. While it may be problematic to use such terms interchangeably as various terms may influence what is being measured, studied and analyzed, for the purpose of this study ‘domestic abuse’ and ‘intimate partner abuse’ will be utilized to describe

the attempt, act or intent of someone within a relationship, where the relationship is characterized by intimacy, dependency or trust, to intimidate either by threat or by the use of physical force on another person or property. The purpose of the abuse is to control and/or exploit through neglect, intimidation, inducement of fear or by inflicting pain. Abusive behaviour can take many forms including: verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, spiritual, economic and the violation of rights (Sevcik et al., 2010, pg.1).

An intimate relationship may be defined as a relationship between opposite-sex or same sex partners, and include current and former dating relationships, current and former common-law relationships, current and former married relationships, persons who are the parents of one or more children, regardless of their marital status or whether they have lived together at any time (Jones, 2011).

This research is sociologically relevant and relates to contemporary issues in several ways. First, as the rates of immigration in Canada continue to rise (Statistics Canada, 2013), so should concern over newcomer women’s successful settlement and well-being. In 2012, Canada admitted 257,887 permanent residents, and 51% were female adults, the largest gender and age group (Statistics Canada, 2013). Second, Manitoba has one of the highest rates of police-reported violence towards women in the country (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2014). In 2011, Manitoba’s rate of violent crime towards women was 2, 191 victims per 100, 000 people, when

the national rate was 1, 207 victims per 100, 000 people (Statistics Canada, 2012). Other research indicates that most violent crimes against women in Manitoba result from domestic situations such as intimate partner violence (Santin, 2013). Third, decades of strong neo-liberal government have decimated social assistance and support system funding for many issues, particularly involving social and family problems (Nafstad et al., 2007). Concern over programs and services needs to be addressed as programs directed towards helping women have faced significant budget cuts. One major foci of funding loss involved poverty-fighting initiatives. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives released a report finding that

(i)n Canada, the groups most vulnerable to poverty are Canadians from racialized communities, recent immigrants (many of whom are also from racialized communities), Aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities, and... that in all vulnerable groups, poverty rates for women are higher than those for men (Townson, 2009, p. 10).

Federally, Townson (2009) demonstrates that since 2006, the Conservatives have deterred progress made towards achieving equality for women in several ways: 1) by withdrawing the Status of Women Canada's mandate to promote women's equality, which reduced government-funded research that looked at gender-based violence; 2) the Law Commission of Canada was eradicated, consequentially greatly reducing its important contributions to various social justice issues; 3) the Court Challenges Program used to help finance women to take legal action to secure equality rights was abolished; and 4) the National Association of Women and the Law that helped women with legal issues also closed. While these cuts occurred at a federal level and the 'trickle-down' effect at the provincial level is difficult to accurately quantify, the message sent is that women's rights are no longer as important (Townson, 2009).

A fourth way this research is sociologically relevant relates to how knowledge can be used as a key tool used to empower newcomer women transitioning out of intimate partner abuse. Just as there are factors that increase the risk of violence, there are also factors that can protect women and knowledge is one of them. Studies have found that when women have authority and power outside the family, abuse in intimate partnerships is lower (Mitchell, 1999). Having a strong social network where family members and friends are there to prompt intervention also appears to reduce the likelihood of domestic violence (Choi et al., 2012). Fifth, while research related to intimate partner violence has increased in more recent years, little is known about how newcomer women perceive it and what determinants contribute to its continuation (Hyman et al., 2011). Finally, educating young girls and boys from all cultures, ethnicities and societies, on the importance of gender equality is required if we want to deter gender-based violence. We need to send the message to the next generation of children that deprivation, humiliation, abuses, and violence against women is not to be tolerated.

For Canadians who are fortunate enough to have grown up in an environment free of abuse, it is difficult to understand the routinized fear instilled in those living in violent households. While not everyone will be able to understand from a first-hand perspective what victims of abuse withstand, we do have an obligation to pursue further knowledge of this issue, and strive for empowerment of women.

Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter provides a brief review of the current research on gender-based violence and intimate partner abuse, and the two theories from which findings will be analyzed are discussed. Chapter 3 provides a description of the methodology adopted for data collection and outlines the characteristics of the participants involved. Chapter 4 describes the findings that derived from participant interviews. Chapter 5

gives an overview of the policy implications as they relate to the findings discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of the findings and recommendations while providing suggestions for future research and development.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Violence against women continues to be a concern among feminist theorists, scholars, and activists (Reese & Pease, 2007). Although intimate partner violence overall has been widely researched, the specific experiences of newcomer women has been historically less common (Bell, 2000; Burman et al., 2004; Fong, 2010). One limitation that restricts research is that newcomer women may be reluctant to participate in such studies, perhaps fearing the researcher, questioning their intention for conducting such research and refraining from engaging with the researcher. Furthermore, some minority cultures may refuse to speak about abuse, having deemed this taboo and against cultural norms. Furthermore, as argued by Burman (2004), domestic abuse among minority groups may be overlooked at a societal level because of ‘cultural reasons’, with reasoning being that outsiders should not intervene if there is a ‘cultural problem’. Another reason for our reluctance to engage in this subject is that people are often uncomfortable to discuss violence in general, but particularly confused about how to intervene when the family member(s) are from a minority religion and/or culture. Consequentially, experiences of partner abuse perpetrated against minority women are often left understudied, rendering the issue less visible.

This chapter serves to outline current research on intimate partner abuse as it pertains to newcomer women in Canada; provincial legislation on domestic abuse in Manitoba; and recent immigration statistics in Canada and Manitoba. Also outlined are the theoretical perspectives of Structuration Theory and Intersectionality as both theories provide the framework used to decipher and organize the findings, which are presented later in this thesis.

2.1. *Intimate Partner Abuse: An International Perspective*

Gender-based violence has been defined as,

(v) violence that is directed at a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2003, p. 10).

Gender-based violence is a human rights and public health concern that is internationally recognized as a social and political problem. As argued by Russo and Pirlott (2006), the term 'gender-based' can be used when describing intimate partner violence because it is shaped by gender roles and status in society which includes combined influence of cultural values, norms, beliefs, and social institutions that implicitly and explicitly support intimate partner violence. Gender-based violence serves the deliberate social function of asserting control over women (Bunch, 1997). Violence within the home is the most common form of violence against women because it is often kept hidden from public view (Bunch, 1997).

As Radford and Stanko (1996) propose, patriarchy crosses through, and interacts with other power structures that make patriarchy possible. This patriarchal order perpetuates violence against women. In order to challenge this order, patriarchy must be challenged, confronted, and resisted. As such, women must be made autonomous through support networks that work to liberate and improve their lives (Radford & Stanko, 1996). It is important to examine domestic abuse in order to analyze various dimensions of how patriarchy feeds into incidents of intimate partner abuse and affects the lives of newcomer women. The importance of this research lies in becoming knowledgeable about this issue as experienced specifically by newcomer women, so we can begin to determine adequate and efficient treatment options for newcomer women in domestic abusive partnerships. Menjivar and Salcido (2002) argue that it may not necessarily be the case that the incidence of intimate partner violence is higher for newcomers than it is for

Canadian-born women, but that experiences of newcomer women in domestic violence situations are aggravated by specific conditions that are superimposed by other systems of oppression such as class, race, and culture/ethnicity. Such experiences are further complicated through the resettlement process. As Cottrell and her colleagues (2009) argue,

(t)he Canadian cultural framework transforms the particular ways in which violence is perpetrated, but does not stop it, nor does it necessarily lead to a contestation of patriarchy (p. 83).

Further efforts are required to investigate the prevalence of intimate partner violence in Canada as experienced by those who are distinct populations, often separate from the ‘mainstream’ population (Sherkin, 2004). One such ‘distinct population’ requiring greater attention from researchers and those responsible for policy development, are newcomer (immigrant and refugee) women. With the rising numbers of newcomers to Canada, a closer examination of some demographic information is necessary to contextualize intimate partner violence among newcomer women.

2.2. Prevalence of Intimate Partner Abuse in Canada

Intimate partner abuse is not isolated to one specific culture. It occurs cross-culturally and within non-industrialized countries and industrialized countries like Canada and makes up a significant proportion of all reported crimes. Between 2000 and 2009 in Canada, there were 738 spousal homicides, representing 16% of all solved homicides and 47% of all family-related homicides. Women have historically been more likely than men to be victims of spousal homicide and in 2009 the rate of spousal homicide against women was approximately three times higher than that men, with a rate of one woman being killed by her intimate partner every six days (Statistics Canada, 2011). Similarly, in 2010 females had more than double the risk

compared to males of becoming a victim of police-reported family violence (407 victims per 100,000 population versus 180 victims per 100,000). To put these numbers into perspective, in 2010, women aged 15 and older accounted for 81% of all victims of police-reported spousal violence (Statistics Canada, 2011).

In 2010, there was over 102,500 victims of intimate partner violence, (including spousal and dating violence), a rate of 363 per 100,000 populations aged 15 years and older. Police-reported rates of intimate partner violence tend to be highest among female victims and among those aged 25 to 34 years (Statistics Canada, 2011). This in contrast to non-intimate partner violence, where the victims are predominantly male and the rates are highest among those aged 15 to 24 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2010). The Department of Justice (2003) states that,

(a)lthough both women and men experience spousal abuse, the nature and severity of the spousal violence suffered by women is much worse, with the result that spousal abuse remains predominantly an issue of male violence against women (p. v).

The Canadian Women's Foundation (2009) reports that half of all Canadian women have experienced physical or sexual violence one or more times in their life; that sexual assault and intimate partner violence costs the country over \$9 billion in lost productivity and family wages per year, and that 3,000 Canadian women stay in shelters nightly to escape abuse. Furthermore, women in Canada are 11 times more likely to be the victims of sexual offences as compared to men and 83% of all police-reported domestic assaults are against women, a pattern that is consistent among all provinces and territories (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2009).

Statistics highlight the need for research that looks into issues of gender-based violence, violence against women, and intimate partner violence. Findings derived from recent Canadian statistics indicate the need for research that confronts gender-based violence. Within one year,

427,000 women over the age of 15 in Canada reported being sexually assaulted (recall that only 10-20 % of all sexual assaults are reported to the police), and 67% of all Canadians report that they personally know least one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2013). Furthermore, while the GSS does account for accounts of intimate partner abuse both reported and non-reported to police, it does not draw out rates of violence against women who are newcomers to Canada. As such, there are very few ways to know what patterns exist among this group or how prevalent intimate partner abuse may be among newcomers.

Provincially, Manitoba and Saskatchewan consistently have held the highest provincial rates of police-reported violent crime, and in 2011 were about double the national rate (Statistics Canada, 2013). In 2013, Manitoba had the second highest rate of intimate partner violence nationally (Statistics Canada 2015). Looking at intimate partner violence against women in Manitoba, we find that in 2010, 40% of all calls to the Winnipeg Police Service were categorized as domestic disturbances (Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters, 2012). In 2013, CBC News (utilizing Statistics Canada numbers) reported that Manitoba has almost twice the national rate of cases of violence against women with the provincial rate of 2, 191 per 100,00 as compared to the national average of 1, 207 victims for every 100,000 (CBC News, 2013).

The General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization and police-reported data are two major tools used to measure family violence in Canada. As stated by Statistics Canada (2015), the two primary objectives of the GSS are to gather data on social trends in order to monitor changes in the living conditions and well-being of Canadians over time; and to provide information on specific social policy issues of current or emerging interest. While the GSS is useful in obtaining national statistical information regarding victimization in Canada, one

limitation of the GSS and other surveys of victimization is that statistics are generated only from reports of incidences of abuse, including self-reports. While these measures are useful, it should be recognized that the statistics do not represent all incidents of intimate partner violence. For instance, in 2009, only 30% of spousal violence was reported to police (Statistics Canada, 2011). The GSS uses two data sources for collecting information on domestic abuse, police statistics and victimization surveys, therefore, capturing more accurate data than police-reported incidents (Statistics Canada, 2012). While the GSS provides a broader measure than police-reported statistics, it too has its own drawbacks. For instance, there is still reliance on self-reporting, information is only collected every five years, and the GSS is administered in French or English, therefore, precluding the participation of those who speak another language from participating. Currently, there is no national level database that describes the prevalence of intimate partner abuse as experienced by newcomer women. The 2009 GSS did include questions on birthplace, year of arrival in Canada, if the respondent is a landed immigrant in Canada, and how long he/she has been a landed immigrant. Important items excluded from the GSS are questions regarding refugee, family class, dependent and economic status.

Prevalence rates of intimate partner violence against newcomer women is difficult to assess as self-reported data may be further influenced by limited language skills, cultural and/or religious restrictions that prevent the victim from talking about the abuse, and socio-demographic characteristics such as no access to a phone, characteristics that may be a bit different from other women experiencing violence. While it is difficult to ascertain statistics from recently arriving immigrant women, some studies demonstrate that violence increases among those who have been living in Canada for longer (City of Toronto, 2011). One study conducted by Statistics Canada assessed the risk factors associated with violence against women

and found that spousal violence is less prevalent among immigrant women than Canadian-born women. Using the 2009 GSS, this study determined that immigrant women had a lower risk of reported/admitted spousal violence compared to Canadian-born women, citing that 4.9% of immigrant women self-reported being a victim of spousal violence in the previous five years, compared to 6.8% of non-immigrant women (Statistics Canada, 2013). Other research studies have found that recent immigrant women (0-9 years in Canada) are more likely than non-recent immigrant women (10+ years in Canada) to report IPV to police, but less likely to access social services (Hyman et al., 2006). Another study (Guruge et al., 2010) finds that “older immigrant women experience emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse, and threat and control from their husbands, children and/or children-in-law” and it is indicated that “care, respect and status older women experience within the family diminishes after immigrating to Canada” (p. 4).

2.3. *Intimate Partner Violence Against Newcomer Women*

There is no one causal explanation for domestic abuse as it “crosses cultural boundaries and religious affiliations” (Jackson, 2007, p. 21). In many cultures, however, violence against women is sustained through universal patriarchal values and policies (Dupont, 2005; Fischbach & Herbert, 1997; Sharma, 2001; Sokoloff). As argued by Jackson (2007),

(a)ny strategy to end violence will have to deal with eliminating ...social causes that support and condone violence against women. This means challenging the underlying attitudes that support male aggression, renegotiating the meaning of gender, and redefining the balance of power held between women and men at all levels of society (p. 240).

Newcomer women in intimate violent partnerships often experience exacerbated susceptibility due to their positions as vulnerable newcomers (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002).

Characteristics such as limited host language skills, isolation from contact with family, friends and community members, lack of access to adequate jobs and income, lack of foreign credential recognition, changes in economic status, traditional understanding of gender roles and the family unit and past traumatic experiences play a role in newcomer's acculturation process (Kasturirangan et al., 2004; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002; Pan et al., 2006, Reese & Pease, 2007). Furthermore, uncertainty and confusion over Canadian laws, including immigration, family, civil and criminal laws may affect abused women's ability to seek resources that may help them transition out of abusive partnerships.

Early on in the settlement process, newcomers may be confronted with changes in the family dynamic, including role reversals between men and women, which may include women entering the work force (Harris et al., 2005). Religious, cultural, and social institutions also affect the way one perceives abuse (Liang et al., 2006). The interaction of culture and gender, therefore, affect ways women may view abuse in terms of how they regard power differences between the sexes. Traditional gender roles may be challenging for newcomer men who struggle with masculinity as it is expressed in Canada. The perceived breakdown of masculinity, which may contribute to violent behaviors as men try to 'regain' power in the relationship, may be partially attributed to the acculturation process (Hester, 1996). Understanding the construction of masculinity, particularly how masculinity is perceived by men from various cultural backgrounds, where there is still deeply entrenched identities of 'male' and 'female' roles, and the acculturation process is crucial if social service providers are to implement adequate tools of intervention and knowledge building skills for newcomer men (Tranter, 2005).

A further consideration relates to the possible parallels of growing up with abusive surroundings, be it within ones' community environment or immediate family, and how likely

one is to commit violent acts against female partners. For the newcomer men who have been exposed to war and violence, issues of trauma, loss, anger, sadness, depression and anxiety may emerge (Reese & Pease, 2007). Reese and Pease (2007) find a relationship existing between mental health and violence, and argue that when men became depressed they are more likely to become violent. Their study also finds that men who are affected by war and trauma may turn to violence rather than leniency with partners when confronted with family problems. Awareness of this is important when assessing treatment programs, as it is just as important for men to be able to seek help as it is for women to be able to access resources.

The Canadian Council on Social Development (2004) reports that abused newcomer women often express concerns over sponsorship arrangements if they decide to leave an abusive relationship. This report indicates for those newcomer women, who are visible minorities, concern over racial discrimination in the judicial system may be an issue. In addition to these barriers, there may also be anxiety over immigration and refugee services and lack of access to adequate programs and information, which may cause newcomer women to stay in abusive partnerships (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004). Experiences of racism in Canada may also prevent abused newcomer women from accessing service providers because of distrust or fear of being misunderstood and furthering negative stereotypes about their culture (Cottrell et al., 2009). Cultural tension and marginalization as a result of social and cultural blind policies negatively impact the health and well-being of newcomer families (Riley, 2011). As Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) state,

When oppression and violence occur in communities of color or immigrant communities, culture is often alleged to have a particularly influential explanatory power.

Specific cases are not conceptualized as reflecting individual behavior; instead, entire groups are stereotyped (p. 46).

Women may also feel pressure from their own community and do not want to leave their spouse or report their spouse to the authorities because of fear of rejection or isolation (Riley, 2011). As argued by Riley (2011), this could be more significant among minority community members whose culture and/or religion is stereotyped as violent.

Another major concern for newcomer women is that their abusive partners may misinform them of their legal rights in Canada in order to deter them from leaving or seeking help (Burman et al., 2004). This tactic is also a means to further establish their domination. Implications of Canadian refugee and immigration laws and the *Criminal Code of Canada* have far reaching effects in the lives of newcomer women. Abu-Laban (1998) found that legal status is a concern for newcomer women who worry that if they are to report abuse to the police they and/or their partner will immediately be deported. Some women are also led to believe that because their immigration status is dependent upon their spouse that if their partner is deported, they too will be deported (Fong, 2010). Abusive partners may tell women that they will be deported if they report the abuse, an effect known as ‘sponsorship abuse’ (Fong, 2010). Along similar lines, the ‘sponsorship effect’ refers to circumstances in which as a woman’s immigration status is dependent upon the status of their husband, and they feel indebted to them (Fong, 2010). Since the majority of refugee and immigrant women enter Canada as a sponsored ‘spouse’ (Abu-Laban, 1998), the assessment of newcomer women needs to be critically viewed and its effects evaluated. Information and knowledge of individual rights needs to be made available to these women.

Existing Canadian laws and policies, including social policies, may exacerbate susceptibility for abuse. Recent Statistics Canada (2011) numbers indicate that women are most likely to enter Canada as members of the family class, sponsored by their husbands and tied to them financially for a period of up to 10 years. In 2011, the total number of arriving permanent residents entering Canada under the family class was 56, 446, making up 22.7% of total permanent immigrant residents that year (Statistics Canada, 2012). Nearly 43% (n=24,000) of the 56, 446 permanent residents were male, while 58% (n= 32, 682) were female. However, 70% of females are spouses and partners rather than principle applicants (Statistics Canada, 2012). If the application and processing occurred while the woman was abroad, they enter with permanent status. A less common and but more vulnerable situation is when the application for permanent residence and sponsorship under the family class is initiated from within Canada. Prior to 2005, this would entail a ‘humanitarian and compassionate’ application (also known as an ‘H&C’ application) seeking exemption from the usual application process that occurs when temporary residents seek permanent status. However, the ‘spouse and common law partner in Canada class’, formerly available only in situations where the person to be sponsored had temporary legal status in Canada, was extended in 2005 to all spouses and common-law partners of one-year duration, irrespective of whether that spouse/partner has temporary legal status. This means that people who would not normally be eligible to become permanent residence of Canada are able to apply on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, but that permanent residence are approved on a case-by-case basis (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2012). Factors that are considered when the case is being assessed include how settled the person is in Canada, general family ties to Canada, the best interest of any children involved, and what could happen to the applicant if the request is not granted. The negative effect is that providing this information risks

putting newcomer women in a more vulnerable position to experience abuse, as they may be without status for a significant period of time. This also means in situations where there is sufficient evidence, many are without work or study permits until they are ‘approved in principle’ (Mosher, 2009, p. 47). Furthermore, if the male spouse withdraws his sponsorship, the woman sponsored must initiate an application of humanitarian and compassionate grounds if they wish to remain in Canada. Support systems and more timely assistance are needed to help newcomer women to complete the paperwork necessary to initiate a humanitarian application.

Newcomer women may not be familiar with how Canadian social services operate, nor are they always aware of services or programs available. The GSS indicates that 70% of respondents do not use resources because they feel that there is another way to deal with the abuse (Statistics Canada, 2004). For newcomer women who may have had to wait numerous years to migrate with their families, the thought of permanently or even temporarily leaving an abusive partner may be too overwhelming, and without alternative options, they may be more likely to remain in abusive partnerships for prolonged periods of time. Many women who stay in abusive relationships do so because of the inadequacy of social assistance, health, and other social support benefits. There is also the potential for an abusive spouse to manipulate the criminal justice system through heightened knowledge and English language skills (Mosher, 2009). Access to language learning and translation assistance is one of the biggest barriers immigrant women face. For instance, recent research reveals that 7.5% of women need language services but do not have access to them (Wilkinson et al., 2014). Furthermore, programs available may be streamlined for mainstream public and not culturally appropriate to some minority cultures. Neo-liberal agendas are leading to decreased funds, which translate, into a

depletion of resources (Coburn, 2000; Larner, 2000; Olsen, 2007)¹. Lack of funding means many newcomer women who seek specific programs, including therapeutic resources, may be unable to access support due to funding cutbacks. For instance, on April 1, 2006, the Conservative government announced it was closing 12 Status of Women offices across Canada in an effort to save \$5 million in its budget (Fong, 2010). Such cutbacks affect all women's organizations across Canada, and often it is the more specific and less 'mainstream' programs that are terminated first (Fong, 2010). Additionally, every year since 2010, immigrant settlement agencies have experienced budget cuts (Vice Canada, 2014). For example, in the same year the two-year conditional sponsorship measure was enacted, 15 immigration agencies in Toronto were defunded completely (Canadian Immigrant, 2011). While Ontario has experienced the largest reduction in funding (\$31.5 million from immigrant settlement services), Manitoba agencies also rely on federal funding, which means the overall decrease in funds allocated to province-wide immigrant resource centers threatens to reduce ground-level capabilities of organizations (Pagliaro & Mahoney, 2010).

2.4. Provincial Legislation: Manitoba Context

Domestic abuse policies are fragmented in Canada, as provincial and territorial governments make their own civil laws for addressing incidents of domestic violence. Although

¹ Neo-liberalism is a "theory of political economic practices that propose that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade" (Harvey, 2005, 6). For neo-liberalism to function, the role of the state needs to guarantee that the institutional framework is structured in a way that allows private property rights and the market to dominate. Neoliberalism believes that markets have a way of regulating themselves, the state should have minimal intervention, rather allowing for hegemonic discourse to weave its way through society as a function to ensure people act in regulation. Neo-liberalism discourse relates to the "(n)ature of rule as a set of practices that facilitates the governing of individuals from a distance" (Larner, 2000, pg. 6).

provincially controlled, it can be argued that the criminal justice system, regardless of province, generally promotes a pro-arrest and pro-charge policy (Greaves et al., 1995; Paterson, 2009) for domestic abuse. Paterson (2009) discusses this political framework by noting,

(i)f police are called to a scene and there is evidence that a domestic incident has taken place, they are obligated to arrest the offender and, once arrested, the Crown is required to place a charge. Once the alleged offender is charged, the abused is relegated to the role of witness, and only the Crown can drop or stay charges (p. 122).

Federal legislation directed at addressing family violence in Canada outlines the ‘acts’ of family violence that are considered crimes, and includes “offenses related to the use of physical and sexual violence”, “the administration of justice”, “offenses related to some forms of psychological or emotional abuse within the family that involve using words or actions to control, isolate, intimate or dehumanize someone”, “offenses related to neglect within the family, and offenses related to financial abuse within the family” (Department of Justice, 2013, p. 1).

Manitoba’s legislation on family violence is called the *Domestic Violence and Stalking Act*, which was introduced September 30, 1999. Subsection 2(1) of this *Act* describes the relationship of a domestic partner as:

- persons who are cohabiting or have cohabited in a spousal, conjugal or intimate relationship,
- persons who have or had a family relationship in which they have lived together,
- persons who have or had a family relationship in which they have not lived together,
- persons who have or had a dating relationship, whether or not they have ever lived together, or
- persons who are the biological or adoptive parents of a child, regardless of their marital status or whether they have ever lived together (Manitoba Justice, 2014)

The *Act* provides victims of stalking and domestic violence with the ability to seek a range of civil protections. The *Act* creates two different types of orders: Protection Orders and Prevention Orders (Manitoba Department of Justice, 2012). A Protection Order is a legal option for those who are experiencing abuse. This is a court order, granted on urgent basis by a judicial justice of the peace, which forbids the respondent from having contact with the applicant. A Prevention Order is also a court order, but usually takes longer to obtain, as there are multiple requirements of the Court of Queen's Bench that must be met (Manitoba Department of Justice, 2012). Both orders serve to prevent the respondent from having contact with the applicant, but there may be more conditions imposed when a Protection Order is used.

The implications of these orders have many complex and far-reaching effects. Paterson (2009) contends that the focus in the Canadian criminal justice system is to 'protect', which often means that for violence to end, women have to be able to live independently away from her abusive partner. As Paterson (2009) argues,

(b)y not problematizing gender inequality and the structural causes of violence, the Canadian anti-woman abuse policy framework limits the choices of many women (p. 124).

Additional policies that pose potential concerns in relation to responding to abuse, relate to pro-arrest policies. For instance, in past years there has been concern that police across Canada have developed pro-arrest policies when responding to intimate partner violence, which have led to an increase in the number of women arrested for IPV in circumstances where they are defending themselves rather than partaking in spousal abuse (Fraehlich & Ursel, 2013). Mandatory arrest laws follow a zero-tolerance policy, stating that officers "must make an arrest if (s)he finds probable cause to believe that an offense has been committed, a preferred arrest law

instructs the responding officer that arrest is the preferred response” (Hirschel et al., 2007, p. 255). Dual arrests, defined as the arrest of both parties in an incident involving intimate partner violence (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002), are the unintended result of mandatory arrest laws or zero-tolerance policies cases of IPV (Fraehlich & Ursel, 2014; Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002). In a recent study Fraehlich and Ursel (2014) finds a “significant decline in dual arrests in Winnipeg after primary aggressor training and policy development by the city police services” and that this “indicates(s) that such changes do dramatically reduce the number of dual arrests” (p. 516).

The judicial structural system in Canada is separated between the federal and provincial governments, allowing that provincial administration of justice in the provinces, including the organization and preservation of the civil and criminal provincial courts and civil procedure in those courts (Department of Justice, 2013). This means that while the Supreme Court of Canada is federally controlled, provincial courts try or administrate most criminal offenses. The application of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, although maintained predominantly the same way across Canada, is largely provincially enforced through the provincial court system. While the Department of Justice helps inform the federal government in developing policy and reforming laws, it is accountable for the public safety and security of citizens, including the court system (Canadian Judicial Council, 2014).

One example of a provincially developed response to domestic abuse is the Winnipeg Family Violence Court. In 1990, the Winnipeg Provincial Court was the first court in Canada to develop a specialized response to family violence cases, known as the Winnipeg Family Violence Court (FVC). This court hears all cases involving individuals who are in a trust dependency and/or kinship relationship with their assailant (Ursel, 2013, p. 7).

The development goal of the Winnipeg Family Violence Court was to: 1) increase case processing time, targeting a 3-month average from first appearance to disposition; 2) enhance victim/witness collaboration and information gathering while simultaneously reducing ‘case attrition’; and 3) provide consistent and appropriate sentencing in order to better protect the victim, enhance appropriateness of mandated treatment for the offender, and increase surveillance of the offender while reinforcing zero tolerance for violence against women (Ursel, 1998). This specialized court system has had positive effects on a reduced dual arrest rate and higher convictions rates, however has had little effect on recidivism rates. External collateral agencies such as treatment programs must work with the specialized court system to ensure response to community needs (Ursel, 2014).

In 2001, *The Victims’ Bill of Rights* was introduced as Canada’s first enforceable rights document directed specifically at victims of crime. This legislation strengthens victim’s rights, especially as they relate to court proceedings, police involvement and prosecution. Under the Criminal Justice Victim Services Branch in Manitoba, the Victim Rights Support Services was established for those victims involved in serious criminal cases as stipulated in *The Victims’ Bill of Rights*. In 2011/2012 the Manitoba Department of Justice stated the victim service workers assisted 579 victims, an increase from 492 in 2010/2011 (Manitoba Department of Justice, 2013). Manitoba Justice Victim Services helps victims of the most serious crimes including victims of domestic abuse, child victims and witnesses, provides information on courts and the criminal justice system, counseling referrals, prepares and guides victims for court appearances, promotes safety and protection planning, and assists them with preparation of financial assistance forms, Victim Impact Statements, and offenders sentence information if convicted.

This brief overview demonstrates that family violence laws in Canada, although developed nationally, are generally monitored and implemented at the provincial level. Also observed are developments in specified approaches to domestic violence, and a movement towards protecting the rights of the victim.

2.5. Immigration in Canada

Immigration has changed the demographic composition of Canadian society. Picot and Sweetman (2011) argue that competing humanitarian, social, cultural, and economic issues at both the federal and provincial levels frequently influence the Canadian immigration system. Canada has one of the highest levels of immigration rates among Westernized countries. Our immigration system has three main categories of entry: economic, family reunification and refugee, with each class having dozens of subcategories. In 2012, 65.4% of immigrants arrived under the economic class (which includes the ‘skilled worker’ and ‘principal applicants’ subcategory along with spouses and children), 21.8% were included in the family class (which includes the family reunification subcategory) and 9.1% were refugees (Statistics Canada, 2012). In 2010, Canada admitted 280, 636 immigrants, the highest number of in 50 years. In 2012, 257, 887 permanent residents arrived (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2012).

2.6. Immigration in Manitoba

In 2010, 15, 809 permanent residents migrated to Manitoba marking a 16.9% increase from 2009 (Statistics Canada, 2012). Since 2000, Manitoba has welcomed over 97, 000 immigrants. In 2010, 84% (n=13, 277) immigrants arrived under the economic class, 8.8% (n= 1, 390) arrived under the family class, and 6.5% arrived as refugees (n=460 government assisted and 514 privately sponsored) (Manitoba Labour & Immigration, 2011). In 2013, the total number

of permanent residents dropped slightly to 13, 092, with 11, 093 residing in Winnipeg (Statistics Canada, 2013).

The Manitoba Provincial Nominee program (MPNP) is one of the most successful provincial immigration streams in the country. The MPNP is intended to select skilled workers and entrepreneurs who have potential to contribute to Manitoba's labour market. The MPNP has grown; in 2001, Manitoba received less than 2% of all immigrants to Canada. By 2010, our share had increased to 5.6% (Manitoba Labour & Immigration, 2011). Because immigrants entering under the MPNP program are the most numerous, it is not surprising that newcomers to Manitoba contribute to the labour force and the population growth; they are young (a median age of 28 years) with 68% of women being between the ages of 15-49.

2.7. The Impact of Canadian Social Policies on Newcomer Women's Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence

Although many laws and legislation *appear* to function in society, in *reality* they do little in terms of mobilizing newcomer women into independent living, in some cases even causing further marginalization (Alaggia et al., 2009; Merry, 2003; Sullivan et al., 2005). One example relates to how Canada's refugees are stereotyped with regards to the belief that some newcomer women are economically and socially dependent upon a male spouse; this may initially begin with the way they are defined in terms of legal status according to Canadian refugee policy. In 2011, there were 25, 311 refugee claimants; 13, 816 were male and 11, 495 were female (Statistics Canada, 2011). There are two ways refugees can apply for resettlement in Canada. One includes applying at a visa office abroad (which is described as the 'overseas determination process'). A second option is to arrive at the Canadian border and within 30 days of arrival, claim refugee status (which is described as making a refugee claim) (Moussa, 1994). Because

women are often identified as ‘dependents’ (or those whose refugee status is contingent on their partners) when they arrive at the border or apply for humanitarian status, they are much less likely to be identified as the ‘principal applicant’. This not only reflects the stereotype that women are dependent upon their spouse which reinforces traditional gender roles, but also puts women at risk for being threatened by their partners with forced deportation. What is also concerning in terms of the current state of Canadian immigration policy, is that a woman cannot get landed status if they are on social-assistance or are otherwise unable to support themselves, which is more likely to occur if they leave their abusive husbands (Fong, 2010).

As previously mentioned, diminished funds allocated to social services as a result of neo-liberal movements have severely undercut resources for some immigrant-serving agencies. Furthermore, there are several ways neoliberal policies have influenced newcomer women who are victims of domestic abuse. The most evident is the reduction of funds allocated to social programs. On June 30th, 2012 the federal government made cuts to health care services for refugees in Canada. Among the health care services to be cut was prenatal care for pregnant women, child-care and access to mental health care in a proclaimed effort to save the federal government \$100 million over five years (Winnipeg Free Press, 2013). Denial of health care is a humanitarian concern, and the amendment has and will continue to affect women in abusive partnerships. The average length a refugee spends in refugee camps before arriving in Canada is 17 years (World Relief, 2013). Many refugees arrive with little education and English language skills. If a medical professional is one of the first contacts made in Canada, when that contact is removed, it is very difficult to know where to look for services.

One final example of a Canadian social policy that may be a detriment to newcomer women who are involved with abusive partners falls under the *Immigration and Refugee*

Protection Act. In October 2012, conditional permanent status measures were enacted under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* in an effort to deter marriages of convenience whereby sponsored spouses marry Canadian citizens in order to gain entrance into Canada (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2012). Under this new measure, sponsors are required to financially support their spouse for three years, even if the relationship deteriorates and are also required to live together for two years from the day permanent status is granted. Furthermore, if a spouse accesses social assistance, the sponsor is required to repay the money and if unable to do so is restricted from sponsoring anyone else. Although the intent is to deter people from marrying Canadian citizens in order to fraudulently obtain Canadian citizenship, in reality this amendment will have an adverse effect for newcomer women living in an abusive relationship of which is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.8. Social Assistance Policies in Manitoba

Social policy entails the study of the social relations necessary for human wellbeing and the systems by which wellbeing's may be promoted (Alberta's Social Policy Framework, 2013). Social policies may be developed within various sectorial arenas and appear in the form of informal and formal regulatory policies that govern human interaction; guidelines; principles; and laws (Alberta's Social Policy Framework, 2013). Social policies in Canada can be defined to include income support such as unemployment insurance, tax credits, education, health and social housing, and social services (Hicks, 2008). The two social assistance policies that will be discussed in this paper are Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) and Manitoba Housing.

EIA in Manitoba is intended to provide financial assistance to Manitobans who have little means by which to support themselves. For those individuals who are able to work, EIA will

help them go back to work by providing supports to employment (Government of Manitoba, 2015). To be eligible for EIA, the financial cost of ones' family's monthly basic needs and housing costs must exceed ones' total financial resources, and must reside in Manitoba. Financial resources are based on ones' income and assets (Government of Manitoba, 2015). To apply for assistance, one must be a landed immigrant, and for those who do not have permanent status, accessing social assistance is more difficult. Sponsored immigrants are encouraged to access assistance from their sponsor and there are restrictions around if a sponsored applicant can utilize income assistance (Government of Manitoba, 2015).

Manitoba Housing offers a multitude of subsidized housing throughout Manitoba, and partners with other governments, community organizations and private groups to create affordable and safe living accommodations (Government of Manitoba, 2015). To be eligible to apply for Manitoba Housing one must be a Canadian citizen, landed immigrant or refugee (Government of Manitoba, 2015).

2.9. Theoretical Framework

Given how integral it is for this research to investigate the structural and social policy decisions, a theory that integrates analysis of structural barriers, and the role of sexism, racism, and classism is critical. In an effort to adequately analyze the effects of Canadian policies such as immigration and refugee laws, the criminal justice system, and the social assistance system, Anthony Giddens (1984) structuration theory is utilized. While this theory is useful for looking at elements of power and agency in the face of structural barriers, a theory that considers the intersection of race and gender and their relation to inequality and oppression is also needed to balance the prospective. To account for this, feminist intersectionality theory is also used in order to better understand dimensions of gender, inequality, and identity as experienced by newcomer

women. In the following section, characteristics of these two theories are discussed in relation to how they each contribute to the exploration of the research questions: 1) What layers of vulnerability do newcomer women face when experiencing domestic abuse; and 2) How may Canadian laws and social policies exacerbate their susceptibility?

2.9.1. Structuration Theory

A major consideration of this project is to examine how the current system prevents newcomer women from reporting and leaving abusive intimate relationships. Anthony Giddens (1984) structuration theory, utilized in interpretive sociological research, focuses on the notions of structure and agency in social life, discussing what is involved in the production of social structures. Where rules may be viewed as prescriptions for behaviour that generate certain practices, resources are vehicles of power that both constrain and enable agency (Lamba, 2002). Giddens views people as rational, active agents who are capable of producing and reproducing systems or regularizing social practices that situate activities of human agents across time and space (Giddens, 1984). However, the inability to act because of constraints imposed by the system is a significant deterrent to individual agency. This means that some people may be more able and less constrained but for others, there is constraint and restricted ability. According to Giddens (1984), “(w)hat is at issue is how the concepts of action, meaning and subjectivity should be specified and how they might related to notions of structure and constraint” (p. 2).

Giddens (1984) argues that every human has the capability of acting, he calls ‘agency’. He distinguishes between the intention of acting, and the act itself giving way to a sequence of actions that could be otherwise acted or not acted upon. Actions are thought to be inseparable from the body, and a flow of constitutive acts rather than a single action. Although actions may have unintended consequences, the acting self is continuously involved in a reflexive process of

rationalization in which humans monitor their activities. According to him, this reflexive monitoring not only influences how one thinks of one's own activities as well as the activities of others, but also impacts surveillance of social and physical contexts (Giddens, 1984).

Structuration is grounded in knowledgeable activities of human actors that produce and reproduce the conditions that govern diversity of human agency (Giddens, 1984). To understand the unique position of newcomer women, we can use his theory to better comprehend and illuminate the structural barriers that both enable and restrain newcomer women's mobilization out of abusive relationships.

Newcomer women occupy a unique position in Canadian society. They are new to the country with often little knowledge of how the Canadian system works, which may be further complicated by limited English language skills, they may also be racially discriminated against, and are more likely to be victims of gender-based violence than males (Crenshaw 1991; Kasturirangan et al., 2004; Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). These collective characteristics put newcomer women in a structurally vulnerable position, making it plausible that while in theory, many of the existing Canadian immigration, criminal and civil laws and policies appear to be just, upon further exploration, they may in fact exacerbate women's susceptibility to victimization. Multiple structural barriers (for instance, being an immigrant or refugee with little social and economic capital, being female rather than male, and possibly a visible minority) may make it difficult for abused newcomer women to leave an abusive relationship. Moreover, those able to leave often face additional and compounding barriers. The question that this theory helps me answer is, 'How do structural barriers impede newcomer women's 'agency' when they are trying to exit violent partnerships?'

How may current laws and social policies in Canada, and Manitoba specifically, influence the societal position of newcomer women? Do they help or hinder their ability to transition out of violent partnerships? In what ways may human agency be reduced for newcomer women involved in intimate partner violence? For instance, how might the role of language, economic status, legal status, discrimination, and societal norms play a part in inhibiting or promoting opportunities for abused newcomer women? Giddens structuration theory facilitates further analysis into policy and procedural concerns when considering the structural barriers that exist for newcomer women in Canada. Paterson (2009) argues that “(w)hile there is a tendency to hold abused women accountable for their situation...resistance is not a question of women’s agency, but rather a question of policy” (p. 122).

Structuration theory allows us to look both at agency and policy within the context of domestic abuse. Structuration theory aids this analysis by allowing me to examine how agency and power is influenced by current policies among newcomer women in abusive relationships. For example, a question I asked of social service workers and police officers was: ‘How do domestic abuse policies in Manitoba affect newcomer women’s decision to call the police if they are being abused?’ I asked police about their opinions on current policy (i.e. zero tolerance policies, Domestic Violence and Anti-Stalking legislation, child welfare policies) and to identify the positive and negative consequences of such policies. I ask both groups how do Canadian immigration and refugee laws affect newcomer women’s feelings of agency and ability to navigate the system. The intention behind asking questions such as these is to obtain insight into what ‘gaps’ between ‘theory’ and women’s experiences and/or perceptions may exist.

The interpretive and reflexive nature of structuration theory contributes to the investigation of how human behaviour may unintentionally cause certain structural barriers to

remain intact. By using guiding proponents of structuration theory, I can assess how it is that policies operate and, therefore, how they may be broken down through dialogue, knowledge building, and future research. Although Giddens theory is useful in contextualizing structural barriers that newcomer women may face as they try to change or leave intimate violent relationships, it has been criticized for operating at a high level of abstraction and for being difficult to empirically apply (Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2005). In other words, although the theory is very plausible, it is difficult to prove that existing social structures are directly related to social inequalities. Despite its limitations, however, it is my intention to utilize Giddens structuration theory to incorporate analysis of the extent to which structural inequality affects newcomer women because of the significant influence that policy and social structures have on regulating their lives in Canada.

While structuration theory is useful in assessing issues of agency, structural barriers, interpretation and reflexivity, what is also required is discussion of how identity roles (i.e. class, race, and gender) specifically interact with structural barriers. Paired together, intersectionality and structuration theory provide the tools to examine intimate partner violence against newcomer women.

2.9.2. Intersectionality Theory

On April 23, 2002 at the 58th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the decree on the human rights of women stated that it

(r)ecognized the importance of examining the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, including their root causes from a gender perspective (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 198).

Sokoloff (2005) argues that, although domestic violence affects individual women and often occurs in private homes, it is culturally produced and emerges from the interaction of culture, class, and gender. There is a need to challenge the primacy of gender to the exclusion of other influences as an explanatory model of domestic abuse. Initially introduced in the 1960s and 1970s (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008), intersectionality theory endorses the idea that inequality is the result of various interactions of organic, cultural, and social characteristics that collectively contribute to systemic inequality. For instance, abused newcomer women have historically been viewed as 'secondary' to men, are often visible minorities (non-white, non-English speaking), and are suppressed by male domination through various forms of abuse. As opposed to only looking at gender as the single category of analysis, intersectionality theory allows me to view how a single individual may fit into various groups of subordination, and how this leads to inequality and oppression. Crenshaw (1991) argues that

(t)he violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class. Moreover, ignoring differences within groups contributes to tension among groups, another problem of identity politics that bears on efforts to politicize violence against women (p. 1242).

Samuels and Ross-Sheriff (2008) further argue that

(i)ntersectionality proposes that gender cannot be used as a single analytic frame without also exploring how issues of race, migration status, history, and social class, in particular, come to bear on one's experience as a woman (p. 5).

The use of intersectionality theory helps me analyze the potential of racism, sexism, and classism in current Canadian policies and practices that may exacerbate newcomer women's susceptibility to intimate partner violence.

Mann and Grimes (2001) propose that race, class, and gender perspectives address social problems and represent the interests and voices of marginalized people. The guiding principle of intersectionality theory is that race, class, and gender intersect and allow for different and unique struggles to be experienced by marginalized women (Mann & Grimes, 2001; Sokoloff, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). For instance, how do gender and class oppression, combined with racial discrimination, affect newcomer women's experiences with intimate partner violence? Under this framework, new approaches question the monolithic nature of woman abuse, expand the definition of woman battering, call for greater emphasis on structural causes of battering, caution against disempowering representation of marginalized battered women and explore the complex role of culture (Sokoloff, 2005). Whereas feminist approaches to domestic abuse emphasize common experiences of battered women, the intersectionality perspective promotes the belief that there is a need to recognize and give voice to marginalized women. Furthermore, the intersectionality approach questions traditional methods of defining and measuring domestic violence, as different cultures define violence differently (Sokoloff, 2005).

The use of intersectionality theory allows me to consider not only the role of gender and class, but also the role of race and how these three characteristics intersect to produce a heightened vulnerability. This theory allows me to address more than one issue, as multiple issues are viewed as overlapping and as equally important (Hancock, 2007). Intersectionality theory is also useful when examining current programs designed to help abused women. Future research may benefit from using intersectionality theory to assess current programs for newcomer women who may possess different needs and attention depending on what stage of acculturation they are in, what culture they are from, their perceptions of traditional gender roles, and their migration history.

As Krahn and his colleagues (2000) point out, we must be careful not to essentialize people according to race, gender, and class. In other words, one thing we must remain cognizant of when utilizing intersectionality theory is not to *presume* what roles individual people may identify with, but to look at how *possible* identity roles interact to promote inequality and/or oppression. For instance, a common definition of ‘newcomer’ may be someone who has not been born in Canada. However, if a newcomer arrived in Canada at a young age, or otherwise no longer views themselves as newcomers, we must remain aware of that identity. Similarly, the definition of abuse is ever-changing and differs from woman to woman. We cannot presume what they perceive as abusive behaviour, nor can we assume whether or not they identify with being a visible minority. For instance, some newcomers may consider themselves a visible minority if they appear ‘white’ in skin colour but have an accent or wear non-western clothes. Other’s may have immigrated a long time ago, and although may appear to be a visible minority, do not consider themselves a minority. Categories are social constructions, and as such we must remain aware of certain stereotypes and assumptions that comprise various categorical divides.

Intersectionality theory is criticized for being methodologically challenging and difficult to apply in practice. One response to this is that intersectionality theory poses new methodological problems and that the range of methods available to use mirror the complexity of everyday life, calling for diversity in methodological application (McCall, 2005). As stated by McCall (2005), “(t)he potential for both multiple and conflicting experiences of subordination and power require a more wide-ranging and complex terrain of analysis” (p. 1780).

By deconstructing the boundaries that define identity, and looking at identity collectively rather than distinctly categorical, there is opportunity to research how an individual may experience multiple areas of subordination. My goal is to use intersectionality theory as a framework from

which to understand collective as well as individual issues experienced by abused newcomer women by looking at race, class and gender collectively rather than one characteristic independent of the other.

Through use of intersectionality theory and structuration theory, I can observe both the potential agency in newcomer women as they seek methods to move out of violent partnerships, but also the limitations placed on them by existing policies, as it relates to their particular structural position in society. Stemming from this perspective, I can begin to look at how race, gender, class, economic status, immigration and legal status, and cultural or ethnic background may promote and/or limit perceived agency of abused women.

Using Giddens' theory, I am also able to observe how routinized behaviours located in time and place may have regularized social practices that impede newcomer women's ability to successfully exist abusive relationships. For instance, general acceptance of policies (that may be typically 'approved' by mainstream society) have a counter-effect on those not often considered (i.e. newcomer women); what are the effects of the perpetuation of certain policies on newcomer women in abusive relationships? However, as Giddens argues, the power to 'act otherwise' is not to be lost or forgotten when we consider forms of institutions. The 'duality of structure' refers to the ability of human agency to both lead to certain social systems and the simultaneous ability of agency to intervene in otherwise routinized behaviors. From this perspective, I am able to view how newcomer women's ability to make choices is infringed upon in terms of their potentially vulnerable positions, but also the potential for empowerment to challenge not only their abuser, but also the structural system.

We ought to remember the issues that relate and interconnect to the topic are diverse, complex and ever changing. How we define and understand 'abuse', for instance, determines to

some extent how we view the issues that are an extension of abuse. We must understand the issue of abuse against newcomer women from within an interlocking framework that looks at race, status, class, structure, culture, and religious background. We must be cautious to not speak for victims of abuse, but rather to listen to their stories and learn what policy and program initiatives need to be developed in order to better assist survivors at a personal, structural and institutional level.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1. Qualitative Research Methods

The main objective of this research study is to explore the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and perceptions of individuals who have insight into the experiences of newcomer women who endure intimate partner violence. The most effective strategy for which to obtain such information is through qualitative methods.

As stated by Foster and colleagues (2013), (q)ualitative methods (i.e. in-depth interviews), attuned to people's understandings of their own lives, can shed additional light on the social gears at work underneath the events and relationships in quantitative models...such perspectives can aid greatly in the development of policy and social work responses (p. 2).

The intention of this research is not to generalize or replicate previous findings, but to explore the various experiences of newcomer women in abusive relationships given that there is little direct information about this group. Representatives from the criminal justice system, social services and not-for-profit organizations, along with newcomer women who have been victims of partner abuse have an opportunity to discuss their experiences so I can understand the situation in a holistic manner and from a sociological lens. To answer the research questions, 'What layers of vulnerability do newcomer women face when trying to extricate themselves from abusive partnerships', and 'How may Canadian laws and social policies exacerbate their susceptibility?' The study methodology consists of three parts: 1) semi-structured interviews with two newcomer women who have previously experienced one or more forms of intimate partner violence; 2) semi-structured interviews with three social service workers working in inner-city Winnipeg and five police officers from various police units; and 3) secondary analysis

of current social policies that may affect newcomer women trying to leave abusive partnerships. My choice to pursue qualitative interviewing reflects the interpretive, reflexive nature of this research project and the importance of recognizing the voices of newcomer women who have experienced abuse and has been used as a methodology among experts in this field (Bosworth et al., 2005; Bryman & Teevan, 2005).

Semi-structured interviews are useful in feminist research. Feminist researchers promote a framework for conducting interviews that establishes a high level of rapport between interviewer and interviewee, a high degree of reciprocity on the part of the interviewer, and a non-hierarchical relationship (Bryman, 2005). Given the sensitive nature of intimate partner abuse and also how various experiences of abuse differ from woman to woman, semi-structured interviews are used to illuminate the multi-dimensional effects of abuse on newcomer women. Semi-structured interviews are also useful in gathering thick, rich data, which is appropriate given your focus on exploring an under-explored area.

Attempting to diminish the ‘power relationship’ often observed in interviewer-interviewee relationships, semi-structured interviews allow me to ask prepared questions in an interview guide, but also permit additional questions to follow up on unanticipated responses, and variations in the order they are asked (Bryman, 2005). This type of interview allows participants to answer on their own terms and encourage various responses while permitting them to fully explore the topic using their own words and ideas. This interview process allows for interviewees to frame and understand issues and events related to intimate partner abuse.

The first part of my research concerns learning about the various experiences of newcomer women in abusive relationships, not only to further expand discussion on the topic of intimate partner violence, but also to gain a sense of the gaps in policy and services for these

women. In order to adequately understand the effects of certain Canadian policies (i.e. immigration laws, criminal justice policies, social assistance policies, and provincial criminal justice and civil policies surrounding domestic abuse) and the varying situations, it is also important to capture the thoughts, values, and opinions of those who work most closely with newcomer women and are familiar with their experiences (i.e. police and social service workers). Each interview offers a new perspective related to the indirect and direct effects of certain policies. Opinions captured through the interviews are important if we are to understand current policies. Interviews also contain information on how classism, sexism and racism play a role in abuse. By interviewing these two groups, I have collected information from diverse people who have varying opinions, suggestions, ideas, and innovations regarding newcomer women's experience with abuse. The next two sections outline the procedures for the interviews, first with newcomer women, then with the persons who work with them.

3.2. Interviews with newcomer women

Phase one consists of interviews with newcomer women who had previously been involved in a domestic abusive partnership. Talking directly to women who have experienced abuse provides insight into the unique challenges they personally face when deciding whether to leave an abusive partnership and how these challenges differ from Canadian-born women in similar partnerships. While there is a large body of research concerning the experiences of Canadian women, less is known about the unique challenges newcomer women face. Newcomer women face significant barriers when exiting an abusive relationship including concerns over their legal immigration status and knowledge about how to navigate the criminal justice system, among others. The questions asked during the interview did not pertain directly to incidents of abuse, but rather to the barriers they faced when leaving, and issues related to access to services.

3.2.1. Recruitment

I recruited participants by providing an initial letter of introduction to several service agencies working with newcomer women in Winnipeg, asking for permission to distribute or post recruitment notices that explain the study and that contain my contact information (See Appendix E1). Interested participants were asked to contact me directly to set up an interview. Interviews were approximately 60-90 minutes and participants were over the age of 18 and not currently in abusive relationships. Interviews were held either at the participants' home or in a private office at the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba, and both participants were given an honorarium. Before commencing the interview with all participants, I described the project and asked for written consent (through the consent form) to audio-record the interview. I transcribed the audio-recorded interview verbatim, and interview transcripts are stored on a password-protected laptop. Particular attention was paid to ensure the participant would not be identified in the thesis. Measures taken to secure confidentiality included using pseudonyms for each participant, choosing a location to conduct the interview that was removed from the participant's former neighbourhood, removing any potential identifying information from the transcripts, and dissemination of results in aggregate form only.

Newcomer women who participated in the study had resided in Manitoba for less than 10 years, and had been removed from the abusive partnership for at least one year. Although five women contacted me, only two were eligible for the study. The main reason why the majority of interested women were excluded was because they were Canadian-born women or had been in Canada longer than 10 years. Although it was my goal to have five newcomer women, I faced several problems. First, although I have volunteered for various non-profit organizations who are dedicated to working with newcomer families, getting newcomer women who are survivors of

abuse to trust in the research process poses a challenge, a fear that other researchers in this field also face. Secondly, many organizations were leery of the study subject and had policies that prevented recruitment (for instance, some organizations state that recruitment for studies cannot be posted). Third, while newcomer women may trust me in an informal setting such as daily interactions and disclose stories of abuse and other challenges encountered through the migration process, they are not willing to participate in research studies. Some reasons include confusion over the purpose of research, wariness of what will happen if they disclose information, religious, and cultural restrictions that prevent them from disclosing certain information due to the belief that talking about the abuse is ‘taboo’, and that they may not want to revisit the victimization.

The two newcomer women interviewed for this study were recruited from different locations: one from a local newcomer women’s resource center and the other, a former employee at an inner-city newcomer’s organization. In terms of demographics, both women are close to the same age (in their early thirties), are racial, cultural and religious minorities and are currently separated from their abuser. A few differences between the participants interviewed that are important to note are that there is an approximate \$40,000 variance in terms of earnings between both women, one participant had been divorced once before marrying the spouse who committed abusive acts against her, and the other participant had children with her ex-spouse while the other one did not. In regards to education, one participant had completed post-secondary technical schooling and the other had attended some post-secondary university. Participants interviewed spoke at length about the abuse they endured and their experiences of getting assistance in Canada. Their description of stages from which they transitioned out of the abusive relationship and the coinciding barriers they faced both personally and structurally helped me gain a sense of

what many women in similar circumstances must face. While the feedback provided to me by them was invaluable, this type of research does not exist without ethical considerations and limitations.

3.3. Possible limitations: Newcomer Women

Ethical and methodological considerations exist in all research studies. One methodological drawback to this project is that the sample is very small (two experiential women), meaning that results are not generalizable because of the narrow range of perceptions obtained through feedback (Patton, 2001). A further limitation may be that I am only conducting interviews with women who have been married, or in a common-law relationship. This would exclude those who experience dating abuse from participating. Another limitation may be that newcomer women who experienced abuse are not willing to discuss their experiences.

Newcomer women participants were recruited through formal support organizations, therefore precluding those who did not access support services from being included in this study. It is difficult to predict or assess which victims of abuse are willing to participate in one-on-one interviews. Ultimately, while it is nearly impossible to account for all variations of experiences, this study does aim to include as many diverse experiences as possible.

A further methodological issue has to do with the type of information disclosed. This often depends upon the study design, what kinds of questions are being asked, whether questions are asked clearly and how many times during the interview a woman is asked about their experiences (Ellsberg, 2001). In this study, participants were not currently in an abusive partnership and had been removed from the abuse for at least a year. Therefore, recall could pose an issue. While recall is a possible concern to obtaining information, there are several ways to reduce this risk. First, questions addressing their thoughts on services and policy in relation to

domestic abuse are asked several times throughout the interview. By asking questions about violence in several different ways throughout the interview, recall is attained. Secondly, I asked specific questions rather than general questions to help focus on individual experiences.

Newcomer women may be particularly reluctant to disclose information regarding their past experiences with abuse. Because they are new to the country, they may be suspicious of my intent and my role as a researcher. By providing detailed information regarding the intent of this project, why I am interested in the topic and how it may help other women in the future, along with debriefing following the interview, the participants were able to trust me to respectfully use their information. Language knowledge is also an issue to accessing information from some newcomer women whose limited English language prevented interviews from taking place. Furthermore, the inability to access interpreters due to confidentiality issues prevented me from interviewing women who did not speak English which is a restriction of this study, as there is no way for participants who do not speak English to participate. The result is that those who do not speak English are subsequently unrepresented in this study.

3.4. Ethical Concerns: Newcomer Women

There are ethical concerns to conducting this type of research, especially given that vulnerable abuse victims are being interviewed. As argued by Bosworth et al., (2005), (t)he collective failure of scholars to acknowledge the pain their questions may evoke in their participants reveals a continuing, albeit unacknowledged, tendency to objectify our research participants (p. 258).

Hlavka (2007) points out that there is a connection between victimization and mental health; for instance, experiences of interpersonal abuse are associated with depression, nervousness, a tendency to be re-victimized, experiences of phobias, substance abuse issues, an

exaggerated startle response and aggression. There is a chance that disclosing interpersonal violence may elicit a negative response from the victim participant. However, studies have demonstrated that while a few respondents do report distress from victimization research, a greater number of participants report significant gains from participation (Ellsberg, 2001; Hlavka, 2007; Kohler, 2002). Qualitative research such as this focuses on exploring, examining and describing societal issues from the individual's perspective. Without the use of face-to-face interviews, much of what needs to be discussed (and furthermore, much of what participant's may want to and be willing to share) becomes ignored and brushed aside. Without attempting to speak with victims of abuse we may be guilty of denying autonomy and freedom of choice to those who want their stories to be heard, consequentially denying potential participants an opportunity to choose for themselves what they wish to be heard (Orb et al., 2001). Please note that the general ethical considerations for all study participants are discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

3.5. Interviews with Social Service Workers and Police Officers

In phase two of the interview process, I conducted interviews with three social service workers, two of whom were social workers and the third who was an outreach worker; and five police officers, in an effort to gain insight into challenges they experience when assisting abused newcomer women. Because the challenges social service workers and police are confronted with may differ depending upon their occupational and professional position, it is important to interview a variety of service providers to have a better understanding of their perceptions of abuse against newcomer women, knowledge of the complex criminal justice policies, immigration policies, and social assistance programs.

3.5.1. Recruitment

I recruited social service participants with a letter of introduction to the head of each organization (see Appendix E2). Upon gaining approval from the head of the organization, I posted recruitment notices that described the study and provided my contact information (see Appendix G). The interviews for service providers were approximately 45-60 minutes. Interviews with service providers took place at a location of the participant's choice. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. Two interview guides were developed: one for social service workers and a second for police officers (as their work with newcomer women is significantly different than other service providers). For the purpose of transcribing, service providers were assigned codes that allow for their profession to be noted (i.e. social worker #1; police officer #1).

There was minimal risk of physical, psychological, and/or emotional distress involved for these participants during the study interview. The head of the organization was aware that participants were being recruited (as they had to grant me permission), but they were not aware of who participated in the study. In order to protect social service worker participants from being identified, specific questions regarding their job responsibilities and the unit where they work were not asked. If information was disclosed throughout the interview that had the potential to identify the participant, the information was omitted from the transcripts.

Three social service workers and five police officers were interviewed. Among the social service worker participants, two are social workers working as counselors and the third participant is an outreach coordinator, all for whom worked for different not-for-profit organizations. All of the social service workers are immigrants themselves, allowing them to have a potential insight into the struggles, barriers, and experiences of newcomer women. The

outreach coordinator interviewed was working in her position for two years and worked predominately with newcomer families and women. The counselors interviewed had worked an average of five years, primarily with underprivileged women in the north end of Winnipeg. The three social service workers had different levels of education and held various jobs, but their experiences and perceptions were similar.

Cross-sectional unit and department representation among police officers guided how many interviews were conducted. For instance, all five officers interviewed had worked in different units and held positions that would differentiate their work duties from one another so I could attain a variety of perceptions and observations. The five police officers interviewed currently worked or previously worked in various units including but not limited to the Sex Crimes unit, the Child Abuse unit, the Domestic Abuse Unit, the Diversity Relations Unit, and had performed the function of Domestic Violence Investigators. Police participants interviewed had worked for the Winnipeg Police Force for a minimum of 13 years and a maximum of 27 years.

3.6. Limitations: Social Service Workers and Police Officers

One limitation with regard to interviewing service providers is that only a small number of interviews were conducted and involved only those persons living in Winnipeg. Given the time and financial limitations of this project, I could only conduct a small number of interviews in a single geographical area. Although not a limitation, the site selection of Winnipeg cannot be generalized to other jurisdictions due to differences in the availability of services for newcomers (these differ by province) and because the implementation of the *Criminal Code of Canada* varies provincially.

3.7. Ethical Concerns: Social Service Workers and Police Officers

In contrast to interviews conducted with newcomer women who have been victims of abuse that may pose some potential ethical issues, interviews with service workers do not pose direct ethical issues. Participants were not required to answer all questions asked, although all did. I paid careful attention not to reveal identifying information of these participants. All participants were debriefed following the interview.

3.8. Development of Tools

Before this study was initiated, approval to conduct research was obtained the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board (REB). Abiding by the University of Manitoba REB protocol, all documents were approved prior to distribution. Documents included three sets of questionnaires; one for newcomer women (Appendix A1), one for social service workers (Appendix A2), and one for the police officers interviewed (Appendix A3). One demographic fact sheet (Appendix A4), which was only distributed to newcomer women interviewed, also required approval. There were two consent forms, one for newcomer women (Appendix B1) and one for the people who worked with domestic abuse survivors (Appendix B1). Further documents included the introductory scripts (Appendix C1 and C2), telephone scripts (Appendix D1 and D2), initial letters of introduction (Appendix E1 and E2), and a list of places where the letter would be sent was also approved (appendix F). The recruitment poster (Appendix G), the debriefing script for newcomer women interviewed (Appendix H), and a list of resources that were developed in order to distribute to participants (Appendix I) were also included in materials approved by the REB prior to the study commencing.

3.9. Data Analysis

Upon transcribing all interviews, I separated the interviews into three groups: 1) interviews conducted with newcomer women; 2) interviews conducted with social service

workers and; 3) interviews conducted with police officers. As previously stated, each interview was coded accordingly with newcomer women being presented as 'E001' and 'E002'; social service workers presented as 'SS001' to 'SS003'; and police officers presented as 'P001' to 'P005'. I began first by conducting a thematic analysis of each distinct group, which allowed me to identify similar themes that exist within each cohort. Thematic research in qualitative research allows the researcher to identify recurrent issues that derive from participant feedback by identifying categories that express similar meanings (Creswell, 1994; Holloway, 1997; Patton, 2002). I then created codes and categories that were colour-coded to represent each cohort (i.e. one legend for newcomer women participants, one legend for social service workers, and one legend for police officers, each that broke down every theme derived from the interviews and that identified what colour represented each theme). After constructing three legends, I manually cut and pasted the codes to create one document that contained quotes from all the interviews and named the document the broad theme that was represented by participant comments (i.e. barriers encountered by both newcomer and Canadian-born women; barriers unique to newcomer women; and information related to resources). By transferring the original information from the transcript to the 'thematic' document, I was able to identify similarities between the three cohort groups and where they deviated. Once I had the comments divided into the broad thematic categories, I was then able to break the information down further into sub-themes. For example, 'What types of barriers unique to newcomer women were identified by police officers? Newcomer women? Social service workers?' While all three cohorts identified many of the same sub-themes, maintaining each group's feedback as distinct but within the same document helped me point out areas of difference, which became particularly important when analyzing the

challenges social workers/outreach workers and police officers are confronted with when trying to help abuse survivors.

Thematic analysis aided me in identifying the connecting themes of sub-themes that were presented by participants in this study, and was utilized to produce descriptions and interpretations of individual, subjective experiences and perceptions (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Ensuring that the findings remained rooted to the participants' beliefs, feelings and perceptions, I coded each comment with the identifying 'E', 'SS' or 'P' with the corresponding number that identified who said what. I also added comments within the document based off of the notes I took at the time of the interview. Once the data had been methodically reduced into themes and subthemes, I was able to begin to describe what findings originated from the data collected.

Chapter Four:

Findings: Barriers Faced by Newcomer Women

In order to answer the question, ‘How may Canadian laws and social policies exacerbate newcomer women’s susceptibility to intimate partner violence’, we must first identify what makes newcomer women vulnerable to intimate partner violence. Although the individual cases of partner violence are independent from one another, with each woman encountering unique barriers, there are similarities that we can identify to gain a broad perspective of the challenges faced. In this chapter, my goal is to discuss these themes as they derived from feedback provided by police officers, social service workers, and survivors of abuse. Members of the three stakeholder groups (the police officers, social service workers, and newcomer women) interviewed have varying observations on intimate partner violence, some through their jobs and others personally, yet there are consistencies related to the surrounding issues, themes, and sub-themes. This chapter discusses such themes as they relate to each respective stakeholder group. Figure 1 provides an overview of the themes and subthemes that are discussed throughout this chapter and shows the similarities between Canadian-born women and newcomer women with regard to their experience with abusive partners. While there exist similarities between newcomer women and Canadian-born women in relation to their experience with intimate partner violence, there also exist unique barriers that only newcomer women would experience. There are also overlapping similarities between newcomer women and Canadian-born women that for newcomer women may be exacerbated due to their societal position. Therefore, while distinct differences between newcomer women’s experience and Canadian-born women’s experience cannot be determined or measured, it may be helpful to think about the differences as ‘degrees’ of difference rather than ‘definitive’ or ‘complete’ differences.

While Canadian-born women were not interviewed for this study, existing literature helps me define what similarities, and comparatively, what differences exist between newcomer and Canadian-born women. Figure 1 depicts the major themes derived from my interviews with all three cohorts. Figure 1 also demonstrates that while there are overarching themes may be similarity experienced by Canadian-born women, there are unique features that contribute differently to newcomer women's experience. After the unique barriers are discussed, I explain how intersectional and structuration theories can be applied to understanding the situation faced by newcomer women as survivors of intimate partner violence.

Figure 1: The Similarities/Differences of the Experience of Intimate Partner Violence between Newcomer and Canadian-born Women

<u>Similarities in Experience</u>	<u>Similarities in Condition but Difference in Response</u>	<u>Differences in Experience</u>
1) Lack of Trust	I) Fear of Accessing Resources II) Fear of Authorities	Cultural and religious barriers
2) Financial Dependence	I) Lack of work experience because of immigrant status	Social stigma
3) Isolation	I) Limited social network II) Language Barrier (as it relates to isolation)	Traditional gender roles
4) Control of the Abuser	I) Lack of external family support due to migration	English Language barriers
5) Self-Esteem	I) Language barrier (as it relates to self-esteem issues)	Separation from family and lack of social support
6) Fear of the Unknown	I) Limited culturally relevant resources II) Lack of knowledge of resources	Changes in family dynamics due to migration
7) Concern over Losing Children	I) Prior separation due to migration II) Higher expectation of two-parent household III) Lack of knowledge: CFS System, Canadian Criminal Justice System, Immigration System etc.	Obligation to family overseas
		Perceived/ Actual threats to family in home country
		Immigration Status

4.1. Newcomer Women's, Social Service Providers', and Police Officers' Definition of Intimate Partner Abuse

Before describing the major themes that emerged when looking at elements that make newcomer women susceptible to IPV, one preliminary finding was the inconsistency in how IPV is defined among the study participants. When asked to define intimate partner abuse, most of the police officers stated that while there is a standard operational definition used in the police department, it is inadequate as it does not capture the full range of experience. The police definition according to the Winnipeg Police Service website is as follows:

(d)omestic violence/partner abuse is defined as violence, threats of violence or other acts of a criminal nature that may include elements of emotional and psychological abuse committed against a person by that person's spouse, common-law spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend or other intimate partner, past or present (Winnipeg Police Service, 2015, p. 1).

Unlike the Winnipeg Police Service definition, there is no specific offence of family violence in the *Criminal Code* the following offences fall under the *Criminal Code* and relate to the use of physical and sexual violence: assault; kidnapping and forcible confinement; trafficking in persons; abduction of a young person; homicide; and sexual assault (Government of Canada, 2015). Some participants also interpreted the term to encompass understanding that one person has power and control over the other person. Further understanding of the term considered verbal and non-verbal threats and financial abuse. Participant feedback indicates that intimate partner violence entails threats of violence and/or assaults, psychological intimidation, actual assault in the form of physical, sexual, financial and social abuse, isolation of a partner, and control over

social interactions. When asked to clarify what is meant by ‘social abuse’ a police officer responded,

“(s)ocial abuse is someone who is in a relationship and their partner is attempting to control who they see when they see them, and their ability to interact with other people of their own free will within the community. There are situations where phones have been taken away or locked up when they are gone. I would view that as social abuse, trying to control effectively their social interactions.” (P002)

One police officer reported that the violence they respond to is more often against a female partner rather than a male partner (one participant did use the term ‘gender-based’ violence in their definition of intimate partner abuse), but that when a male partner is the victim of abuse, the “circle of violence” (P003) is the same. When asked to further explain what is meant by ‘circle of violence’, the participant replied,

“...it happens usually during, obviously, a fight or an argument or sometimes just kind of out of the blue. But when that gentleman...not gentleman, but the accused or assaulter, then comes back and says 'I am going to change, and I won't do this again, and I love you' or, 'I am sorry', or they can also say, 'hey, this is how it is. You are my wife, you are my girlfriend'. Um, the victim then almost forgives. And then it happens again, and kind of the same thing. 'Oh I am sorry'. The steps usually for us, is, ok she has him arrested but then she lets him back in or he convinces her to come back. And continuously that way, escalating usually. A push usually turns into a punch, you know, and so on and so on. So for me that is the cycle of violence. You can't get out, or things are...I am going to hit you...I am sorry, I am sorry, things are going to get better. Oh I slipped up and I am sorry...” (P003)

Officers viewed intimate partner abuse as a continuum of abusive behaviors rather than a single act. Frequently mentioned was the escalation of violence, from a minor act to one more severe. As one police officer said,

“We are fortunate right, we grew up in ‘normal’ homes, but there are people who just believe that this is an acceptable way to live. You know, you will find it difficult to change that. And you know, in the worst case, you know, we came across and it was degrees of abuse. She had been in a really abusive relationship and then all of a sudden this one is not quite so bad. And it is hard to believe.” (P003)

Participants indicated that generally understood definitions of intimate partner abuse, including the official police definition, do not capture the essence of the problem. When asked to define intimate partner abuse, the newcomer women identified many of the same things as the police and social service workers, but provided a more detailed personal account. For instance, one woman stated that feeling free to express herself was important in a healthy relationship. She recalled that being able to make friends was something she was not permitted to do while in her abusive partnership. This isolating behaviour was not explicitly expressed, but her account of not being permitted to have friends speaks to the social control aspects of this type of abuse. The women also knew that they were not in a healthy relationship, but could not always identify the ways they felt that it was unhealthy. They knew what had happened to them was an injustice and an unhealthy partnership. As one participant states,

“I think a healthy relationship with someone is a relationship in which both partners can feel free to express themselves and to be themselves and to grow together and to grow individually... I was not in a healthy relationship at all because, I didn't know (who) he was...he used to always put me down. He used to always call me fat. He had these names for me that he always used to call me in a certain way, you know? He always put me down. He never once made me feel good about myself. He was very controlling, and that was extremely unhealthy.” (E001)

The other newcomer participant recalls,

“I mean I haven't seen yet a healthy partner. I mean in my life whatever I see, whatever I got, whatever chance I got was like all that like hurting. I pass through the hard way. But

what is inside my heart, what is in my mind, is like a healthy relationship means like, when you are loved to each other, when you love each other and when you care for each other, when you think for each other, when you worry for each other. All good parts, right? And then this does not matter if you are sick, if you are healthy, whatever you are, if you love each other I mean you have to take that.” (E002)

To fully understand newcomer women’s experience of intimate partner violence, identifying the barriers experienced by both newcomer and Canadian-born women is necessary. While the events that lead to intimate partner violence may differ by social context, there are some commonalities in the experiences of Canadian-born and newcomer women. The next section will discuss the layers of vulnerability newcomer women face when trying to extricate themselves from abusive partnerships.

4.2. Commonalities in the Experiences of Newcomer and Canadian-born women

Most of those who are victims of intimate partner violence independent of their place of birth, gender, immigrations status, cultural background, religion and demographics, experience various barriers when exiting abusive relationships. A barrier may be defined as something that causes concern, complicates or prevents a victim from leaving an abusive relationship. The barriers presented in this section speak to the major themes that emerged from the interviews conducted, and are barriers that may apply to both newcomer women and Canadian-born women.

Some of the barriers mentioned by all participants in this study include concern over whom to trust, financial dependence on their partner, social isolation, control by the abuser, self-esteem issues, and fear of the unknown. For some women, a primary concern may also be fear of losing custody of their children. These issues concern all women, but the social context that newcomer women experience may exacerbate these issues. For instance, participants indicated

that while both Canadian-born and newcomer women may face isolation, financial burdens and fear of the unknown, the severity of these problems may be greater for newcomer women.

Further explored in the following section are how different perspectives and understandings of the abuse give rise to similar challenges and barriers experienced by both newcomer women and Canadian-born women who experience intimate partner violence.

4.2.1. Major Barrier #1: Financial Dependence

One barrier many newcomer and Canadian women experience when trying to leave an abusive partner is financial dependence on the abusive spouse. When asked what factors prevented her from leaving the abusive partnership, one newcomer women responded,

“Money was a big factor. I didn't know if I would be able to manage on my own, let alone support my, take care of my kids. I didn't know where I would go. I think it was financial reasons were like the most difficult to figure out. And, later it was to have to confidence and to think that you can do something on your own. Because abusers know how to break your confidence. You don't know what you can do. So I think that financial first and foremost” (E001)

Many factors contribute to financial dependence such as a desire to maintain the same lifestyle or the inability for the person to earn enough money on their own. Both Canadian and newcomer women may also experience the fear of not being able to obtain a job, or not being able to obtain an adequate job that will provide the income necessary for them to sustain themselves or their children. Some newcomer women may lack the education and training needed to obtain a higher paying job. For instance, the family investment model demonstrates that typically it is the female spouse who takes on low-paying jobs to finance their husband's investment in human capital (Baker et al., 1997). This is a common settlement strategy that results in leaving newcomer women without the higher and recognized Canadian credentials

necessary to obtain a high paying, self-sustaining job should she leave her partner. The family investment hypothesis argues that newcomer families who struggle with foreign credential recognition are compelled to elect one member of the family as the initial ‘primary worker’. This person invests in the ‘Canadian’ human capital (i.e. obtaining adequate credentials required to get a designated job), while the other spouse takes on work that will finance the activities required by the ‘primary worker’ (Cobb-Clark et al., 2011). Women usually become the providers at this time and working at low skilled, low wage employment may prevent newcomer women from obtaining a higher paying position or entering a post-secondary or language training course that would enable to her to take care of her children independently. When asked if they think newcomer women’s experience with abuse is different from Canadian-born women, one social service worker responded,

“Immigrant women are at a more vulnerable position...economic dependence on their spouse because often those women are coming from more traditional countries where males are considered the breadwinner of the family and often women stay at home, care for their family and depend on their spouses... And often if they are newcomers they may lack training or they have language issues so they are unable to find jobs right away. Often those are jobs that they do find are low paying jobs so they are unable to pay for child care, for school, food, rent, everything they need.” (SS001)

Women than men experience the immigration and integration process differently. Because women are working to sustain the family while the male upgrades his education, women are often further behind in learning English, developing a social network, and acquiring Canadian experience/education themselves. They may never have the opportunity to upgrade their skills or language, resulting in greater financial dependence on their violence partner.

The vulnerable situation of newcomer women who are experiencing domestic abuse is compounded by the immigration class. Women who are sponsored by family members (family

class immigrants), those who arrive as refugees, especially refugee claimants, or who are sponsored dependent spouses (economic class) are in the most precarious situations financially as they do not have access to the same training and language courses as those who arrive as principal applicants. Data shows that women are most likely to arrive in Canada under these precarious immigration categories. In 2001, there were 39,700 recent immigrants (defined here as immigrants who have lived in Canada 5 years or less) in Winnipeg, making up 6% of Winnipeg's total population. At this time, there were also 800 more women than men and 29% of total recent immigrants had arrived through the family class. Recent immigrants were also much more likely than Canadian-born families to have children at home and there were fewer lone-parent families among recent immigrant families than among Canadian-born families. Furthermore, the average employment earning potential for those migrating under the family class was far below the Canadian average employment earning (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2005). Nationally in 2001, 22% more women than men (26,043 males vs. 40,743 females) immigrated to Canada under the family class rendering them subject to sponsorship rules (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2012). Furthermore, men were more likely to immigrate as principal applicants in the refugee, business, and skilled worker classes (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2013), meaning they have better access to skills and language training than the rest of the family unit and that women came as sponsored dependents in these categories. This is a long-standing trend in migration statistics. Between 2002 and 2012, 61% of women entered Canada in the family class, immediately placing them at an economic disadvantage for higher earnings (Wilkinson, 2014). Those migrating in the family class or who are sponsored have significant limits on their ability to access social housing, receive social assistance and other resources for periods of between three and 10 years. This

means that women are often dependent on their partners for a long period of time. Because women are more likely to be sponsored by her spouse, thus financially tying her to her husband for up to 10 years post-arrival, her ability to support herself and cut ties from her abuser is reduced. The financial commitment that comes with being a dependent spouse is what differentiates newcomer women from Canadian women. The result is that if the perpetrator is the principal applicant, the victim can feel powerless to leave abusive situations due to the sponsorship clause and fear of being deported. Additionally, under the *Criminal Code of Canada*, lawyers who prosecute offenders have to provide that he or she committed the offence beyond a reasonable doubt. This requires evidence of the abuse and a formal charge to the offender if legal action is to be taken (Legal Resource Centre of Alberta, 2013). Furthermore, if the accused does not plead guilty, a trial date has to be set and the person claiming to be abused must provide evidence (Legal Resource Centre of Alberta, 2013). The *Criminal Code of Canada* dictates that the abuse must be proven in court, meaning that in conjunction with immigration laws, the time period an abused spouse must remain financially dependent or responsible for (depending on her immigration status) her spouse, is prolonged.

4.2.2. Major Barrier #2: Isolation

There are other issues beyond the financial that make the experience of abuse slightly different for newcomer women. Isolation may prevent all women, both Canadian and newcomer, from reaching out to a social network such as friends and family, therefore making it impossible for them to construct any form of safe exit plan. For newcomer women, isolation leaves them more vulnerable as their social circles are likely to be much smaller than Canadian-born women given they are new to the country and likely have fewer family and friends. Many women have difficulties obtaining a clear perspective on asking for assistance because their trust in others has

eroded, therefore rendering them more susceptible to further victimization. One of the most common forms abuse experienced by victims of intimate partner violence is control of the abuser who inflicts isolation over their spouse. Control of an abuser over a victim can lead to other issues such as lack of self-esteem and isolation. As one survivor of abuse says,

“I didn't know much about what I was supposed to do, so I let him dictate everything and I thought that was the norm. And what I let him do in the beginning, later on that became like, I had no choice but to do just that. For example, he is telling me what to wear, who to talk to, what food to cook, how to talk to people, and how to laugh even. Where I can go or not, I had to get his permission.... He was controlling everything. And even when I was working, I didn't have the freedom to stand on what I wanted. It was always like him, he would tell me ok I could have this, but this...you know.”(E001)

Isolation of a person not only restricts their ability to interact with people outside of their household, but it also renders the survivor vulnerable to further dependence upon their abuser. Participants all noted isolation as being a barrier to exiting abusive partnerships. As mentioned by several participants, isolation may occur in the form of deprivation of money, food, goods and items necessary to live and thrive in society. When asked to identify the major barriers that impact newcomer women's ability to leave the abuse, one participant said,

“...isolation, lack of money, pier support are also faced by these women but then those are often tactics that perpetrators that mainstream women, you know the same sort of tactics. Once you get past those initial differences, I think the tactics of abusers are the same in Africa, you know...you want that person controlled. There are only so many ways to control a person effectively and isolation is one.” (P003)

It may also occur in the form of threatening behaviour, control over possessions such as withholding identifying information and passports, credit cards, and other important documents. Isolation restricts women's access to programs, services, authorities, and obtaining knowledge of

possible exit strategies. As one survivor explained, when people experience situations of isolation, often it is the case they do not realize how horrendous and abusive that situation was.

“Yeah, very isolating. And it is only when I left him that I could step back and realize that you know, my God, I went through a really horrible and abusive relationship. And when I started talking like telling him that things aren't working out, when I said things like that to him, he would get really abusive more in terms of like physically abusive.” (E001)

For newcomer women who have recently migrated to Canada, the feelings of isolation may be more intense than for Canadian-born women, as they do not have their family and friends from home to turn to. They may also have a language barrier that prevents them from adequately explaining to authorities or other outside members what their home life is like. Findings such as these are corroborated by previous research that states,

(n)ew immigrant women are likely to experience stress in relation to economic circumstances, the negative attitudes of some Canadians towards them, and personal isolation (O'Mahony et al., 2010, p. 920).

Many challenges related to isolation include building a relationship with someone they trust enough to confide in, learning the language well-enough to describe the abuse and, and deciding to question cultural norms that it is the women's duty to follow their husband and support them through loyalty and obedience. As one social service worker says,

“Women... are kept at home and they have no friends and no social life or the man is the one who goes to work so all they do is sit at home. They have no idea what happens out there, they have no idea what their rights are, they have no idea...they don't know. So I think those ones. Women who pretty much just follow their husbands here or they come as refugees. They basically don't know. They are not being integrated into the community, they just stay at home.” (SS003)

4.2.3. Major Barrier #3: Distrust of Authorities

Although many women regardless of immigrant status distrust authorities, why they are prone to distrust varies between women. For example, officers anecdotally observed fewer calls to the police by certain religious groups, specifically Muslims, and noted that while abuse is likely just as prevalent in Muslim as it is in non-Muslim communities, they are not often called to intervene. Officers also observed that newcomer women made fewer calls regarding child protection issues. While research would suggest that some groups of women born in Canada report distrust in police officers, specifically Aboriginal women (Barrett, 2011; Goldsmith, 2005), similarly newcomer women have a well-developed sense of mistrust. The challenge for police officers in Winnipeg is to encourage abused women to report and work with them to intervene and terminate the abuse, but that goal remains difficult. As one officer reports,

“You come here and all of a sudden police are at your door because you cannot whack them (children) with a stick, so...different barriers. And even the concept of police as helpers, in many countries coming here police officers...for many women coming here their experience with police in their country of origin is very different than what policing is here. So even understanding that police are here to help, may be a totally foreign, uncomfortable position to view police in. So the barriers are large, are enormous.”
(P002)

Police officers were aware that newcomer women are less likely to trust them. They also know that in some communities, there are cultural issues to consider when advising female victims. In situations where female officers are not present, it may be difficult to provide information about resources or legal rights. Without anyone to advise them of their rights or to answer critical questions related to exit paths, newcomer women may be less able to leave abusive relationships.

Social workers and abuse survivors interviewed further echoed this sentiment, however indicated that while the feeling of distrust may be felt by both newcomer and Canadian-born

women, the reasoning behind why there is distrust derive from different experiences. For instance, one social worker (SS003) suggests that newcomer women may ask ‘Will my husband be arrested? Will I be deported? Will the police take my children?’

4.2.4. Major Barrier #4: Fear of Losing Children

Many fear that if the woman leaves or if she reports the abuse her children will be removed from the home. This threat of losing children is felt by immigrant and non-immigrant abuse victims. However, for those who have been separated from their children before (i.e. through the migration process, dispersion in refugee camps), this is often a reality rather than an unfounded fear. For many newcomers, lack of culturally-specific shelters may pose a fundamental problem to leaving. Shelter options may not provide adequate support in addressing cultural and religious differences such as dietary needs, religious following, and language differences. Furthermore, many women will come from places where government and police are viewed with deep suspicion rather than as sources of help. One mother of two and survivor of abuse reported that one major barrier to her leaving the relationship was the perception that any report of abuse means that the victim must leave the relationship or Child and Family Services (CFS) will apprehend the children. She went on to say,

“That [reports to CFS] has a huge part to play (in the decision whether or not to leave). Anyone who knows about it would think a hundred times more, as if it is not hard enough already, it places a significant burden on you. As a woman, because it is the women who has to take responsibility for the abuse, not the man. You know, it’s like you have to figure out what you are going to do, you have to leave the man. Why? He is the one who abused me! Like, it is not my fault, why do I have to leave my kids?” (E001)

When asked if having children affected her decision to leave her abusive spouse, one participant replied,

“Absolutely. Absolutely. In the beginning I stayed only because of them, for all of these years...actually it was this one day where my ex was just beating me up and (daughter's name) walked in... I think she was 3 or 4 years old, she was really young, but she was old enough to realize what was going on. She wasn't a baby. And she walked in and was like, "Daddy what are you doing to mommy? Why is mommy crying?" And she started crying so bad. And I thought, I am not going to keep my kids in this situation, I don't want them growing up thinking that this is how a women has to be treated, and that it is ok for them to be treated this way. I don't want my kids to be abused by anyone ever! So I have to do something and leave for their sake” (E001)

The idea of leaving an abusive partner elicits anxiety over breaking this image of a two-parent household and furthermore, it promotes feelings of shame, guilt, and fear that their children will blame the abused mother for leaving their father, especially in instances where the abuse is kept a secret. The social workers and the newcomer women interviewed state that divorce is often taboo among certain cultures and religions. Furthermore, the presence of children in the marriage makes it more difficult for women to leave because they are expected to remain, regardless of the circumstances. The argument that newcomer women may be more inclined to stay married to an abusive spouse is particularly evident in arranged marriages. Women in arranged marriages are less likely to divorce than those who marry for love. The percent of marriages in the world that are arranged is 55%, with an average divorce rate globally of 4% (UNICEF, 2014). In Canada where arranged marriage is not the norm, the divorce rate is 45% (Huffington Post, 2014). This does not mean that those in arranged marriages are happier in their relationship, nor are they necessarily free from intimate partner violence. There are other factors such as cultural and religious traditions that discourage divorce among those in arranged marriages.

Migration to another country causes inevitable challenges for the people relocating. Regardless of whom they are leaving behind, newly arrived families need to find housing, jobs, and root themselves within a new, unfamiliar setting. Many newcomers leave behind other

family members, they may have spent years in a refugee camp, they may have endured violence in their home country, and may experience post-traumatic stress disorder or other issues related to trauma. Some may have migrated from non-violent countries but have experienced inequality or marginalization, or they may have existing family members in the country they are migrating to. Regardless of their personal situation, all will undergo some process of integration and experience some uncertainties regarding their new life. Several conditions that may contribute to the unique challenges experienced by newcomers may also exacerbate intimate partner violence. There are many overlapping impediments women have to contend with including issues of trust, financial dependence, isolation (and the prolonged and direct effects isolation has on ones' ability to exit), self-esteem and perceived self-worth, fear over losing children, and control of the abuser that are similar to those experienced by women born in Canada. While there are certainly struggles that are felt severely by both Canadian and newcomer women, there are also barriers that may be felt more severely or only by newcomer women. The next section discusses some of these unique barriers.

4.3. Unique Barriers as Experienced by Newcomer Women

The major barriers outlined indicate from participant interviews, what barriers they believe newcomer women *and* Canadian-born women face when trying to leave an abusive partner. This next section addresses the unique barriers participants feel predominantly newcomer women are confronted with, or in other words, that Canadian-born women generally do not encounter. This does not preclude *all* Canadian-born women from having experiences similar to the ones described below, but rather is reflective of what these study participants described as being experienced predominately by newcomer women.

4.3.1. Unique Barrier #1: Cultural Barriers

Cultural relativism plays an important role in our understanding of intimate partner violence. Culture affects how we articulate our understanding of norms, values and what is perceived as ‘right or wrong’. Arguably, there is a continuum of acceptance as related to intimate partner abuse. The majority of Canadian-born citizens would argue that such abuse is forbidden and unacceptable, however some may find it difficult to intervene in abusive situations, particularly when the family member(s) are cultural, religious and/or racial minorities. It should be noted that cultural beliefs can affect both Canadian born and non-Canadian born women, posing the potential to influence their decision to leave an abusive partner. This study is limited in analysing the effects of culture on Canadian-born women, and the extent to which their cultural beliefs impact upon their decision to leave. While it is probable that a Canadian-born women from a certain culture may also have unique barriers to contend with when deciding to report abuse that are similar to non-Canadian women, this study is unable to look at the differences and similarities as Canadian-born women were not interviewed.

The police and social service workers interviewed discussed cultural relativism at length, their feedback relating to cultural norms, religious expectations, and the influence of the community, stigmatization, and gender roles. Both police officers and social services workers described the extent to which they perceive that culture influences acceptance of abuse against women. As one police officer says,

“...there are cultural mores that other cultures inoculate women to domestic abuse. It is not only considered acceptable, but expected. Women are to be subjective to their husband’s whims. So that overshadows everything. If you think this is right as it should be, and expect nothing different then why would you possibly look at help, why would you need help? This is just as it should be why would I call police or talk to my neighbor? And, you know, I think it is (has) more of effect for newcomers, because if you have been here for a long time, I think that the elements of what is society start to seep into the

culture you live in. So if you live here for 10 years, you start to realize, that is not the norm here. You know what may have been the norm for my entire life up until coming here that is not the case.” (P002)

This comment suggests that this officer believes that some cultures promote an ideology that accepts abuse against women. This perspective further suggests that there are members of minority groups who are reluctant to report instances abuse. While this was not explicitly stated by police officers, a question that warrants further investigation, is, do police officers feel abuse that occurs between newcomer families is a cultural norm for which they should not interfere, or, do they feel it is a cultural norm for which they cannot appropriately address? As one officer points out,

“And I would say that the training piece of this is really important, that police officers can become very jaded in their perspective, if they keep going back to the same house over and over. And it gets very frustrating, and it is really the understanding of the cycle or the continuum of abuse.” (P005)

Perhaps in addition to training that addresses the ‘continuum of abuse’ officers should also be trained in culturally appropriate means of intervention, and different signals to look for that would indicate that abuse is occurring which may be different for some religions and cultural minorities than for Canadian-born citizens.

The belief that cultural acceptability influences one’s reluctance to leave and report violence is held not only by police officers, but also by social service workers and the newcomer women themselves. For instance, a woman may see abuse not only as acceptable but also as an acceptable form of affection. As one social service worker recalls,

“I had one woman, I forget from which country exactly, I think the Congo, she told me that if your husband is not abusing you physically like hitting you, he is probably

cheating on you because then he doesn't care about you. That is shocking. And even more, when we talk about sexual abuse, they often, like, they still believe that sex is their right in the marriage. So it doesn't matter if the women wants it or doesn't want it. They believe it is their right. They don't see it as sexual abuse or rape. They see it as a part of marriage. Your body belongs to your husband and he can do whatever he wants with you." (SS001)

For people who grow up with Westernized ways of thinking, the thought of affection being demonstrated through acts of abuse is abhorrent, but for other women, abuse can be tolerated, as it is understood to be a display of affection. As one newcomer women states,

"I think that there needs to be more awareness of intimate partner violence. A lot of the women who come, they just believe that that is just how things are. Like I used to think you know. You don't even know what abuse is. Maybe something that educates them of what a healthy relationship looks like, and what an un-healthy relationship looks like. And what they can do to change it" (E001)

In other words, even though the act of violence may be the same, the understanding of abuse as perceived by the abused is, to a degree, intertwined in her cultural background. This attitude further isolates this group of women and prevents others from reaching out to assist them.

When interviewing the women who were victimized, it was interesting to hear them describe the process by which they determined that the abuse they were enduring was wrong and how the degrees of perception affected their decision to leave the abuser. As one victim of abuse recalls of her early understanding

"...it is always the women's fault; that is what we are told by the time we are born. No matter what happens, if your man leaves you, if he doesn't treat you good, it is always your fault. You did something wrong to deserve it." (E001)

She went on to say that even when being abused, her obligation was to her husband and her responsibility was to protect his image from being tarnished, and that this obligation was a reflection of her cultural upbringing. She further stated that this understanding prevents women within some immigrant communities from speaking at about the abuse. As such, she felt the abuse must be kept hidden to preserve her husband's image. A separation or divorce would not be tolerated. Regardless of their circumstances, a woman wants to be dutiful to her husband and that is what prevents some women from reporting abuse.

The other participant responded that she was confused when her husband started physically abusing her, as she had verbally warned him that, although she recognized that this was accepted practice in their home country, she would not tolerate it here in Canada:

“So I told him that if you think that back home, the way they treat their women... I am not that kind of person...so you need to stop that. Even though he never listen. I told him right after he start um, he start pushing around, he start like kind of hitting. I said you know what, I am surprised why you did that, and I never expect that from you, but I never want to see that from you again. And he said, what are you going to do if I do one day?”
(E002)

In the first instance, the woman tolerated the abuse for many years after she had been in Canada because she believed that it was ‘her fault’. The second woman questioned the abusive tactics but she eventually left this relationship. There are a few important factors that may have contributed to these two very different perspectives of the acceptability of abuse. For instance, the first participant is eight years younger than her husband; she was married at age 20 in her home country through an arranged marriage. Her husband lived in Canada prior to the marriage, which was the reason she came here. For her, the fact that her husband was more established in Canada, combined with the cultural expectation that abuse was the woman's fault, contributed to

the delay in the dissolution of this relationship. The second participant also came to Canada through an arranged marriage at the age of 22; however, she divorced her first husband after three years. While her first husband tried to isolate her, she did not consider his actions to be abusive. After her divorce, this participant married her second husband in 2012, and sponsored him to come to Canada. It was this second husband from whom she reports having experienced various forms of abuse. A couple of major differences between these two participants are the age at which they experienced abuse (20 years of age for the first participant versus 29 for the second participant) and the length of time they have been in Canada (less than a year for the first participant and seven years in Canada for the second participant). The second woman was more aware of the social and legal resources available to her and was more conscious of the negative view Canadians have towards violence in relationships. There may be a gradual acceptance that violence is wrong which allows newcomer women to perceive intimate partner violence in a different way once they have been exposed to Canadian norms. A deconstruction of cultural relativism may occur as women begin to interact with different social networks, and as they begin to learn about their rights in Canada. This can have a tremendous influence on how they view intimate partner violence, and to what extent they will tolerate it.

Participants in this study often referred to religion and culture interchangeably. Just as culture shapes the values and norms that collectively contribute to identity formation, religion plays a central role in defining a person's vision on how they interpret the world around them. Religion and culture, although fundamentally different, both contribute to what we consider people's acquired beliefs, morals, values, and norms. As Foucault (196) wrote,

(i)t is not that religion is delusional by nature, nor that the individual, beyond present-day religion, rediscovers his most suspect psychological origins. But religious delusion is

a function of the secularization of culture: religion may be the object of delusional belief insofar as the culture of a group no longer permits the assimilation of religious or mystical beliefs in the present context of experience (p. 81).

4.3.2. Unique Barrier #2: Religious Beliefs

All three-stakeholder groups spoke of the importance of religion and its influence on the decision to leave an abusive partnership. Religion can play a central role in how one thinks of oneself in relation to others and their surrounding environment. One newcomer participant said that at first her religious background played a critical role in staying with her husband as she felt that once she left him, she would be abandoned by her friends and family who believed that this was forbidden, as stipulated in their religion. When asked what influenced her decision to finally leave the relationship, she replied,

“Ok, that came to my heart. Because my big worry was my name. Because you know, and in this religion people think, “Oh she is Protestant, and she believes in God, which, which, which bible part says you know, you have to, you have to divorce and you have to separate?” You know nothing really supports you on that. But God said, worry about your life... So you have to know that, you have to decide. And then you have to decide what the best. To live or to die? That is it”. (E002)

What she is addressing here is the intersection of religion and culture. This participant was concerned about her reputation and future credibility because her cultural background and religion both prohibited a woman from divorcing her partner. When later asked about if she had friends at her place of worship, she said,

“I have, but most of them are useless. They are not a good person. They point on you and they say don't stand on your like, needs, on your weak side.” (E002)

To some degree, even though she had friends, she was alone in her abuse because of her social network actively discouraged the disclosure of intimate partner violence. This example demonstrates how the influence of the community affects women's view of themselves in relation to others specifically when we consider religion and culture and further, how religion and culture influence ones' desire and perceived ability to exit abusive relationships.

Sometimes culture and religion are used as scapegoats to condone intimate partner violence. At other times, culture and religion are used as reasons for not intervening in violent relationships. Police, social service workers, and abuse victims themselves often use these to explain the acceptance of violence in their communities. Several police officers said that the community could be a positive or negative influence. One way to address this is for newcomers to learn of service providers who are positive, caring, and helpful resources. Yet this positive view can be difficult to attain because some community members believe that calling the police to intervene in domestic abuse situations brings negative attention to their culture or religion. This combined with an underdeveloped culturally sensitive method that defines and measures abuse, may result in a tendency to overlook the occurrence of abuse in minority communities (Barrera et al., 2011; Koss, 2000). This inevitably leads to a failure to respond to abuse in racialized communities (Bell, 2000; Burman et.al., 2004; Fong, 2010). Several police officers interviewed also believe that the smaller the minority community, the less likely they are to call police to intervene in abusive instances. Another stated characteristics that impacts 'acceptance' of the abuse is length of time in Canada,

"...whether you are new to Canada or first/ second generation or Canadian born, the influence of our community be it positive or negative, is huge. So if you are a women or a man who is being abused and you turn to, those who look like you, who acts like you, who you identify with and that is usually your community, your family, and they tell you 'oh just leave it, oh just, you know, you are going to make a big scene'. Just to use for

example, Muslims, because they have a lot of domestic violence in there, that community. 'You are going to make Muslims look bad, you are going to make our community look bad and that won't be tolerated. They are going to make you move back home'." (P004)

Length of time in Canada will play a role in the acculturation process, impacting cultural beliefs. A major reason that police officers believe, that some smaller groups are less likely to report abuse is due to the lack of impartial language translators. If language translation is needed and the community is small, the chances of identity disclosure are high and victims may not be likely to report.

The police perception of the newcomer community (that the community is small and insular) may contribute another cultural barrier to newcomer women reporting domestic violence. This police officer also mentioned observing similar tendencies in terms of underreporting, community perception's and varying ideas of what is 'normal' behavior among Winnipeg's Aboriginal women who are victims of abuse. This is an interesting observation, as Aboriginal groups, like newcomer populations, are also marginalized and isolated in their suffering, the difference being that Aboriginal women and girls in the Winnipeg area likely have more culturally-specific resources to choose from as compared to newcomer women. Another police participant pointed to the advantages of shelters specifically to assist Aboriginal women, and suggested something similar could be done to enhance the services offered for newcomer families:

"Do newcomer women want to go into shelter? Maybe not, maybe that is an issue that has to be looked at. Is it an environment that says we welcome all people, women from all cultures? I am not sure, I haven't been on that end of it. But I also know that the shelters in Winnipeg, we have one that is specific to Aboriginal women, looking at that context."(P005)

Adelman and colleagues (2003) propose that with the intersection of community policing and the criminalization of domestic abuse, police are having difficulty knowing how and when to intervene in multicultural communities. They make the argument that gendered racism and racialized sexism shapes the victim and police response to domestic abuse which results in the culturalization and underreporting of violence against women in minority communities (Adelman et al., 2003). They recommend that police seek out non-traditional community leaders and organizations that challenge stereotypes about minority communities.

Social service workers corroborated police officers' suggestions that there are many occasions when their clients say that they are not supported by their community and remain in abusive situations. The social workers also added that many of the friends or networks of people that the victim may consult with are also victims of abuse and may advise these women to remain in the relationships as they had. As one participant says,

“And lots of the time the women talk about their community not being supportive. They talk about priests trying to tell them not to leave. Their friends often also say, “oh I experience that too, but what can you do? There is nothing you can do. You have to...it’s your cost you have to carry with you.” Often they get very negative response from the community.” (SS001)

We should be mindful that this is not the only adversity women may encounter when leaving abusive situations. An additional burden placed upon them by the community is to keep such matters secret. One newcomer participant reported that her ex-partner told community members that she was lying about the abuse, and subsequently, her friends became sympathetic to the abusive partner. She says,

“He is treating me like a dog, like a bitch, and now how am I supposed to trust him crying to everyone? Like that is just showing them that he is a good person, and that way

they black me out and saying you are a bad person, and I know everybody doesn't like me because he is nice to everyone, crying whenever they see him. On the street, on the phone, wherever.” (E002)

It is not uncommon for abuse victims, independent of whether they are from Canada or born elsewhere, to experience struggles over obtaining support from friends and family who are torn between believing one spouse over the other. What adds to the complexity for newcomer women is the influence the community has over their decision to leave an abusive partner. The threat of being shunned from a closely-knit community of friends and family may be too much to bear for someone who is alone in a new country. Additionally, the concern over reputation and the preservation of one's family honour plays a critical role in terms of the social stigmatization of women who leave abuse partners regardless of the culture or religion of origin. There is also the possibility that social service workers, similar to police, are in a situation where they are not necessarily equipped with the knowledge to adequately provide cross-cultural services. Therefore, they may fault the culture for creating the situation of abuse and be more inclined to conclude the situation as hopeless because of the community context. As this is suspected to occur on some level, more training on cross-cultural intervention methods is required.

4.3.3. Unique Barrier #3: Social Stigmatization

Social stigma arises when a member of a community acts in a way contrary to what is generally perceived by the majority as socially acceptable. For example, as one social service worker suggested, even to open up and talk about abuse may be considered taboo as it is commonly considered a private matter not to be discussed in public. This participant went on to explain,

“often it is hard to even encourage women to speak up, to talk about their experiences and once they do, admit that they are being abused, they have a hard time to leave...being dependent on spouse, not knowing about the resources, being concerned about children, the family unit and often they are also concerned about what the community will say. Will the community abandon them after? Because they are already lacking support they had back home. And I guess their spouse and family they have here is all they have.” (E001)

For newcomer women stigmatization was a significant barrier to exiting the relationship. For one abuse victim, her major concern was that this was her second marriage and therefore she perceived it as detrimental to remain married to her abusive husband so that community members would not judge her for having another failed marriage. She said,

(b)ecause I have been worried for my name I said. People might comment again. My second marriage is not working”. (E002)

This participant further suggested that her ex-husband may have thought he could continue with abusive behaviours simply because he knew that it was a taboo to divorce, particularly for a second time. In other words, it is quite possible he saw this as an opportunity to abuse her again, knowing that the chance of her leaving would be small. In some ways he may have been correct in this assumption as this participant did not immediately report the abuse, although she did leave her husband eventually. The other newcomer participant spoke to the issue of confusion over whom to confide in about the abuse. She suggested that fear of stigma certainly prevents open communication between community members, and that it also works to further complicate knowledge of who to reach out to. She says,

“I think once you start talking about abuse in the immigrant community, you are not going to get anywhere if that is how you start. Because that puts the man at risk, the woman is too afraid, and maybe she doesn't want to discuss it. You know, I wouldn't have discussed it years ago, because it is very taboo, you keep things in the home, you don't talk about things outside you know.” (E001)

4.3.4. Unique Barrier #4: The Influence of Gender Roles

Gender roles influence how newcomer women interpret abusive situations (Bunch, 1997). As previous studies have found, gender roles are culturally and religiously-based and can change significantly as a result of the migration process (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). The lines between ‘female’ and ‘male’ responsibilities and expectations as practiced in their homeland may change as a result of integration within their new society (Statistics Canada, 2013). Police, social service workers and victims of abuse all mentioned the issue of gender roles in connection with intimate partner abuse against newcomer women.

Change in gender roles as a result of migration to a new culture and the resultant challenges in integrating not only create additional stress in the integration process, but also may lead to male partners feeling insecure as they feel that they are losing power in the relationship as a result of different gender roles in Canadian society (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002). There are many influences in changing gender roles such as which partner obtains a job first, who is able to build a social network, how they feel they are perceived by the general community, and the degree to which partners change their understanding of gender roles which they held in their home country and adopt new beliefs in Canada. Some men may feel threatened if their partner obtains a job before him, or if she has a higher income than him. He may want to assert control over his wife if he fears that she will come to expect a more ‘equal’ division of labour in her new environment. This does not mean that all men reject new gender roles. There are, however, some newcomer men who see equality between the sexes as a major threat to themselves, the family unit and their way of life. One quote by a social service worker summarizes this issue,

“...moving to a new country is a great change, it is additional stress. They experience role changing, cultural shock, they have a hard time to adapt... So all those roles they had back home plus all the additional ones they have to deal with. So I guess all this puts stress on the family. And what I notice is that men often, they want to maintain their power relationships, and um, once they move into Canada which is more...what is that word...more, like in other countries, men still have more power over women and that is acceptable, but here we often talk about women and men having equal rights. I am not saying that they do have equal rights, but we talk about it more openly. And men can feel that their dominant position has been threatened. So in order to regain their position they start abusing their wives, so show them that they still have the power, that they are still the man.” (SS001)

4.3.5. Unique Barrier #5: Limited English Language Skills and Access to Translators

The inability to converse confidently and effectively in English is a significant barrier for some women experiencing intimate partner violence. For instance, 75% of government-assisted refugees in Canada do not have any official language skills (Statistics Canada, 2009).

Participants in this study suggest that limited language skills can lead to further isolation and depression for newcomer women who are unable to communicate. All participants interviewed mentioned language as a barrier for newcomer women in violent partnerships. Police officers interviewed reported that from their perspective, at times when they encountered situations where English was not their first language, the abuse victims could not communicate events or the sequence of events. This becomes an issue because good communication is needed so that charges may be laid. As one police officer notes when considering her interaction with newcomer who have limited English language skills,

“Am I really understanding what you are saying, and are you really understanding what I am saying? And the added burden to that of, I need to fully understand, because I need that information for court purposes which the level of proof is much higher. So um, it is really going into working with newcomer families with the idea that, you know, I do need a certain level, a certain standard to make an arrest so I have to have reasonable and probable grounds under the Criminal Code of Canada. So I have to believe what they are

saying is true, and I have to understand it. And that is a barrier if the level of understanding is not up there.” (P005)

Credibility of victim statements is critically important if the case goes to trial, as documentation contributes to the evidence used against the accused (R. v. W. (D), 1991). One officer said that sometimes there would be children or a close relative available to translate for the victim when providing a police statement. This participant recognized that this was not an ideal method to extract information because of the violation of privacy, but that often it was the only means they had available if they wanted to obtain important information such as time of occurrence, names of the parties involved and disclosure of what had transpired.

“Of course...there is a language barrier... And often times, if you can find a relative close by...sometimes we found that if there is a child or a teenager who has been in the school here, they know English and sometimes it is enough for interpreting through a child. Which might not be the best case scenario, but it is at least getting the information across at the time of names and what happened, those kind of things.” (P001)

The effect of having a family member, especially a child or adolescent, translate for the victim involved in the abuse is distressing both for the victim and for the family member involved in the translation. For children who are asked to translate, this may be beyond their ability given both the highly emotionally-charged environment and their own potential English language barriers. Another officer suggested that language barriers often prevent these women from obtaining information about support programs. This participant makes a critical observation by saying,

“(o)ur domestic violence pamphlet is the immigrant women’s counseling service, so we have this now right here. Um, but I mean still you have...you can leave a pamphlet like this with somebody at a residence, but it doesn’t mean that person is going to have it five minutes after you leave. Or that they even understand the English language to be able to read through it. It is a great pamphlet, it talks about the cycle of violence, it talks about resources they can get. So it is quite informative for somebody who has education and

who can read. You know, if open to reading about this, right. Because it is all good reading for somebody who is open to reading it. It gives really good information, but if you can't read, or if your spouse takes it away or rips it up or it gets shredded, you don't have it.” (P001)

Another police officer observed that one challenge she has is that many abuse victims refuse to use translators from their communities for obvious reasons. This is a frequent concern for both the victim and the social service worker who wants to obtain relevant information in a time-sensitive manner. As a result, this officer is reluctant to use translators but then may have to contend with communications issues, or will use translators in other provinces who are also known as ‘phone-in’ translators. According to police, the ‘phone-in’ translator is very common in dealing with police situations, and is also commonly used in hospitals. It is not a good solution but may provide some anonymity for the victim. Clearly communication is a persistent issue that poses a major problem in various stages of intervention (i.e. information gathering and reporting stage for both abuse victim and social service worker) and for everyone involved.

Social workers agreed that language poses a very significant barrier for newcomer women. In addition to having problems reporting abuse and understanding information, they may also suffer from lack of confidence when in expressing themselves in times of extreme stress. One of the newcomer participants said that she was lucky to know enough English to report accurately what was happening to her. She says,

“(i)magine me, you know I know how to speak English, I am good at you know, finding stuff, imagine the women who don't know English, who don't know anything, who don't know how to use a computer. What are they supposed to do? Is it their fault that they haven't learned enough? You know? It is almost like that. It feels like that. It is my fault that I wasn't smart enough to call (name of women's shelter). Not smart enough to make friends and go tell them about the abuse. But even if I told them, and they called CFS, then my kids would have been gone. You never know who you can trust.” (E001)

English language difficulty may mean that newcomer women are unable to fully disclose the nature of the abuse they suffer. Without complete information, service providers and police officers are not able to adequately assist victims. The victims, without knowledge of the laws, rights, the CFS system, immigration status, where to access resources, where to go if in a crisis situation, who to call are left with little knowledge (and therefore little power) to move themselves out of violent partnerships.

4.3.6. Unique Barrier #6: Limited Knowledge related to Canadian and Provincial Systems

While there are many Canadian-born women who struggle to fully understand the court and legal system, for newcomer women this may be further confounded due to limited English language skills and other extenuating factors imposed by their migration status. All of the participants agreed that lack of knowledge regarding the Canadian criminal justice system also prevents many women, not just newcomer women, from exiting abusive relationships. One example provided by a police officer (P002) was a situation where a newcomer woman had called to make a complaint against her abusive spouse, and then when police went to arrest the abuser, the women stopped them arguing that if he is taken away, she would have no means of financial support. Concern over financial stability is further compounded when the woman is sponsored and beholden to sponsorship agreements. The woman in this situation had no idea that her husband could be arrested for abuse. If the victim had access to assistance programs, housing programs and other types of supports, she may have been less hesitant to press charges. One question we may ask is how can we promote thorough understanding of the Canadian criminal justice system and processes among newcomer communities so that women are aware of the role the police?

Another officer believes that the current immigration system “*set(s) them up for failure the minute they decide they are coming to Canada*” (P004). This participant expressed frustration directed towards the Canadian immigration system stating that based upon her observations of newcomers in Canada,

“(w)e show them pictures of Grand Beach, we tell them you are lawyer, back in Canada you can get a job- do you know how much lawyers make? We tell our newcomers this when they are at home, and then they come here and you can't be a lawyer here, you know why? Because your university degree isn't equivalent to ours, so you can't be a lawyer, but you can be a sandwich artist (referring to work at a fast food restaurant) if you want! And I think that is an awful abuse of people. I think that before people should be immigrating over, and I understand refugee status and all of that kind of stuff, but I think that before somebody makes an informed decision about moving to Canada, you should have these things in place prior to. You know, before you move to Canada let's set up a system here so we can make sure that you have the equivalency you need to go to Canada and be a doctor. Before you come. So you come Winnipeg and you can apply to be a doctor, or go to the hospital or go to wherever. We set them up from the start. Law-wise too. You know...” (P004)

This statement reveals aggravation in the way newcomers are “sold” their life in Canada.

Economic disadvantage has been determined to be a risk factor for intimate partner violence (Hetling & Zhang, 2010). Families that experience large declines in financial status may be more likely to experience abuse, as their accumulation of social capital is diminished, which results in compromised well-being (Farber & Miller-Cribbs, 2014).

Lack of knowledge may prevent women from accessing the most basic information such as taxi phone numbers, location of buses and bus routes, and as one officer states,

“(j)ust basic nuts and bolt things that would be barriers to ending abuse or even receiving your information about what is abuse, and what is the acceptable-what is acceptable and what is totally unacceptable and what is criminal.” (P003)

Without the foundational knowledge of everyday Canadian life, newly emerging conflicts, already overwhelming, seem unfathomable. When one does not know how to call the police, the idea of leaving an abusive partner may be incomprehensible. A social service worker concurs and suggests that there needs to be more proactive information sessions in newcomer communities so that if and when they want to leave the abuser, they are aware of what options they have; where local shelters may be; and who they can call. This participant says,

“I find what happens with most immigrant women who are being abused is the lack of knowledge. That is what is getting them the most, right. Because I know of a case where a woman was being abused and she was so afraid to call the police. And then she started talking to her physician and she was getting the confidence to call, and then the spouse found out that she was about to go, so he called first. So whoever calls first is the one who is charged. So the husband called the police saying she beats me. So when she tried to file her own, he had already filed and they were investigating her. So I think it is the lack of knowledge.” (SS002)

This statement is concerning for two reasons: 1) it does not accurately represent the current procedure within the Criminal Justice System, and; 2) if this did occur, it is a misapplication of the law. While women need to be aware of how her partner may use the system to manipulate her, workers must also transfer accurate knowledge of the system. For instance in this case, the worker should have informed the client of the standard of proof in Manitoba, and how this is a measure that safeguards false allegations.

Newcomer women may be ashamed to even ask for help; therefore even asking for help becomes another barrier. If women are given several options regarding whom they can call for support, the chances that they reach out to someone may increase. Length of time in Canada may work to improve the likelihood of contacting assistance, as feelings of shame and guilt that stem from cultural background begins to dissipate.

4.3.7. Unique Barrier #7: False Information Perpetrated by Abusive Spouse

According to previous studies, abusers may also threaten their spouse with misinformation such as threats of deportation in an effort to dissuade them from leaving (Rana, 2012; Reina et al., 2013). Although the claims they are making may be false, newcomer women who do not have access to resource information or who do not have a strong support system for which to consult with experience little evidence that would contradict the falsity of claims asserted. Police officers and newcomer women interviewed both reported that this is an issue. As one woman reports,

“Like I came on a permanent visa, you know, but I still didn't know what that meant. And a lot of women don't. Like when they come here as refugees, or when they come here on a temporary visa, or even on a permanent visa like me, they don't know. Their husbands threaten them and say I am just going to send you back home. And that, sending you back home, is related to so many things that are...so much more persecution that you are going to face back home for having come back because you were not good enough to take care of a man... And a lot of women, like their family depends on them here. You have to send money back home. If you go back home, how are you going to support your family?”
(E001)

A police officer also has encountered situations where newcomer women were threatened with deportation and also told that if they leave and are deported, they will never see their children again. Additionally in one case, the husband held all of her documents required for travel (i.e. passports, identifying documents, etc.) and he prevented her from leaving the house. For many women, the only ‘knowledge’ they have involves the threat of deportation that is given by the partner.

4.3.8. Unique Barrier #8: Limited Social Network

Most newcomers are separated from close friends, immediate and extended family members, which means this group is less likely to have as many supports as those born in

Canada. This restricts access to temporary housing opportunities from family members and friends. The challenges might be different for women whose husbands arrived in Canada prior to them, especially if they have other family members present. One of the survivors commented that one of the main challenges in leaving her abusive spouse was the presence of her husband's family members. She reports that while her own mother was also in Canada (which adds further complication to the abuse situation), her husband's entire immediate family lived only blocks away from their house. She feared that his family would claim she was mentally unfit to raise her children and this made her very reluctant to leave. The fact that her husband's entire immediate family and some extended family members were in Manitoba initially dissuaded her from leaving the abuser out of fear that his credibility would be enhanced due to his large social network. While she did not explicitly state that her ex-husband's family was outright 'abusive', the point that she feared them and what reaction they would have if she were to accuse her spouse of the abuse, speaks to her feeling that they were not trusted nor considered her own family members. When asked if she felt that newcomer women's situation as a victim of spousal abuse differs from Canadian women, she answered,

"Definitely. I think that they have way more, like, networks, they have way more resources. If I had a family member who I can go and stay with or if my mom was living on her own and I could go stay with her, that would have helped me immensely. I had no one at all here. And when you have people, people are most important in one's life you know. You need people to share happiness, sadness, everything...and when you come here it is like you are leaving everything behind and you are coming to this new country and the laws are so different. It is really...I mean it is hard for women who are abused but it is even more difficult for women who are immigrant and abused." (E001)

Sometimes the abuse is prolonged because the woman is reliant on her partner's family. As one police officer pointed out, he has observed several abused women who have come to Canada and endure violence because her own family is overseas while her husband's family is here. He says

many newcomer women may feel as if they should remain with their husband because they “need them for support here” while their own families remain in the home country (P002).

4.3.9. Unique Barrier #9: Past Exposure to Violence as Acquired through the Migration Process

Many newcomers arrive in Canada having been previously exposed to prolonged forms of torture and violence either within their own relationship, or in the case of those fleeing war, as refugees. This theme, introduced by police officers, suggests that those who have previously experienced violence are more likely to continue to live in abusive situations. For newcomer women, past exposure to violence may enable them to cope with the reality of intimate partner violence, and possibly ‘accept’ the abuse more readily. Although little consensus can be made in terms of prediction of how survivors may respond, most experience one or more of the following symptoms: repression, numbness of responsiveness, amnesia, suicidal ideation, depression, chronic states of mourning, survivor guilt, sleep disturbance and nightmares, problems with anger and in dealing with interpersonal conflicts, paranoia, isolation, and a lack of trust (Kellerman, 2001; Sevcik et al., 2010). Although the observations in this study are speculative, one important area for future research may be a study that looks at newcomers who sustained violence in war, and to what extent violence in the home continues upon migration.

4.3.10. Unique Barrier #10: Concern for Family Members Overseas

As previously mentioned, often newcomer women travel to Canada on their own, leaving their extended families behind with a promise of financial support sent home in the form of remittances. For newcomer women experiencing abuse, this promise to provide monetary support to family ‘back home’ is also a contributing factor to their reluctance to leave abusive

situations. There is also the issue that if she leaves, she won't have the means to support herself in addition to her family back home. While there is very little existing literature that explores the issue of newcomer women staying with an abusive spouse due to financial obligations to her family in her home country, one Canadian study found that family ties back home does contribute to women's decision to stay in the relationship (Shirwadkar, 2004). As one of the newcomer women from this study reports,

“(w)omen who are from war torn countries, like Afghanistan... Africa... That whole continent, we have so many immigrants and refugees that come from there. They have nothing, they have no hope, they have no chance of surviving even. They are dying of hunger and thirst. So they have this one man who is going to support them and help their families...are they going to leave that and go back? No. No. I would rather die here. You know being abused than do that to my family.” (E001)

Reportedly, for some newcomer women, it is not only the obligation to support family members that keeps them tied to their abuser, it is also the threat that if she leaves her family back home will be harmed. Three participants (two social workers and a police officer) reported that through their work they had encountered women who stayed with their partners because if they left, their families' houses would be burned down, or individual members would be targeted and violent acts inflicted upon them. One social service worker interviewed says,

“(w)e have had cases where men threatened women that if they are going to leave, they are going to harm their parents back home, so the women are afraid. And that is something that has happened in the past. There is nothing we can do from Canada... It is out of our jurisdiction... Yes we had a case where the man burned the house of a family back home... He was here. He had connections back home. So for him it was just a matter of making a phone call home to tell his buddies or his gang to tell them I need you to do this or that. I heard from other women that this situation is so bad, it is so easy to kill somebody. And so the men are able to use that as a threat against the women here. Yes, and women know that that is possible.” (SS001)

In a Canadian court case, a 25 year-old Indo-Canadian woman, Jaswinder Sidhu, was murdered when she refused an arranged marriage and instead married another man. This case is unique in that the murder occurred while Jaswinder was overseas in India, and also because it was her mother and uncle who arranged from within Canada, to have four Indian men murder her (CBC, accessed May 26, 2014). The case demonstrates that murder of Canadian-citizens overseas is a reality, which may make it more difficult for women in abusive partnerships to leave their abuser. In Jaswinder's case, although this murder occurred in 2000, it was not until 2012 when her mother and uncle were arrested and more recently, in May 2014 the pair was extradited to India to face the murder charges. While this case does not depict the killing of the women's family overseas, it does serve as an example of how the safety of women and their families is potentially compromised if women leave the abusive spouse.

4.3.11. Unique Barrier #11: Difference in Experience between Immigrant and Refugee Newcomer Women

There are some conflicting opinions on the relative vulnerability of immigrant versus refugee women. One police officer interviewed suggested that refugees would have a more difficult time deciding to leave because of their resistance to taking up residence in a shelter. He says,

"I think for newcomers, if you have already come from a position that maybe mirrors that, like a refugee camp, basically saying it was absolutely hell on earth for you there. Police have shown up, you are getting hit, we are saying do you want to return and effectively become a refugee, because that is who you are. You are going to be a social refugee for a while, the system will have to... it is really similar. And I can't imagine someone who has been in a refugee camp for years really being given that choice again. Well we can help your husband stop, we can help you leave the domestic abuse, but you will have to be in a refugee camp. You are kidding me right." (P003)

Conversely, one of the newcomer women interviewed said that because refugees are given more thorough information or an orientation to Canadian society through newcomer settlement programs such as Manitoba START, they are at an advantage in knowing about and accessing information as compared to immigrants. Both immigrant and refugee women face similar issues but may have some significant differences as well. One social service worker provided some examples. First, the level of trauma experienced, exposure to violence, the overall struggle and/or process of migration, may be more pronounced for refugees. They are significantly more likely to have experienced or witnessed violence, have difficulties escaping their country and face long queues and delays in migrating (Loescher, 2012). Loescher (2012) argues that over six million protracted displaced refugees (those who have been moved from the initial emergency phase but for whom solutions do not exist in the near future) stay an average of 20 years in ‘limbo’, representing an increase from an average of nine years in the early 1990s. Being forced from their home rather than choosing to migrate also has significant bearing on the coping strategies of refugees as migration is not considered a choice. For these reasons, the experiences of refugees can be different from immigrants.

4.3.12. *Unique Barrier #12: Reluctance to Access Resources Marketed as ‘Free’*

One unique barrier that was identified by social workers is that some newcomer women are reluctant to approach resources that are free. For instance, they are cautious to access police or community programs, as they are suspicious of services that are marketed as being free, as there is the preconceived notion that ‘free’ does not exist and an exchange of something is always expected. Clearly the issue of trust including intervention and protection services is deeply felt by some newcomer women and these beliefs may be brought with them to Canada. As such, police experience a challenge in reaching a population they are aware of being abused

and victimized, and women continue to suffer. In an effort to improve newcomer women's position and decrease a lack of trust, one experiential woman suggests that there needs to be more outreach work by police and other authorities in newcomer communities. This, she feels, will help police in Canada connect with newcomer women in a more meaningful way. As she suggests,

"I think that more money needs to be spent on making it ok to access legal services. There is a whole idea about it in the immigrant community. Like you shouldn't have any contact with the police, or the legal system. You stay far away from them because that it totally taboo. Like you are not allowed to go there no matter what happens. So I think that we come here with that kind of mind set, and we don't trust cops, and we don't trust the legal system. Because we hear all these things on the news about all these bad cops and them raping women and throwing them somewhere along the highway. It is really difficult. So I think they kind of have to make themselves look more approachable and friendly, and ok." (E001)

This quote illustrates several levels of consideration as this survivor considers police involvement. First, in her experience she felt that calling the police was "totally taboo". Secondly, she mentions the distrust she has in the legal system and further relates this sentiment to the public images viewed through the media that denounce the integrity of police officers. For example, media outlets have in recent news reported a case where RCMP officers are accused of raping Aboriginal girls and women in British Columbia (CBC News, 2013; National Post, 2013). These allegations have not been investigated or substantiated. This is not to insinuate the allegations are not true, but rather that uncorroborated accusations work to instill a mistrust that prevents women such as this participant from contacting those who are in positions of authority. The third concern is the participants desire to see more money spent on educating minority communities of their ability to access resources such as the police. Furthermore, if police were to appear more approachable and less authoritative prior to an incident there would be enhanced

likelihood of newcomer women calling them to intervene, as this trust and relationship would have already been built.

4.3.13. Unique Barrier #13: Underutilization of Resources

While it is recognized that there are challenges for all women, independent of whether they are Canadian-born or not, to access social services, nearly all the participants interviewed stated that newcomer women are less likely than Canadian women to access resources. Social service workers and police officers identified several types of minority groups (both religious and racial) of newcomer women they believe would be at most unlikely to access services. Two officers interviewed said that they could not recall any cases where they had to intervene in domestic disputes among Muslim women. One officer provided specific reasons why he thought this was,

“I think there is a group that is more likely, but they are so unlikely to (call) that they don’t even track on our radar, and it is from the fundamentalist Muslims. Because they think that African cultures have integrated just enough that we have actually penetrated the culture. I think that, and it could be fundamentalist anything but there are certainly cultural ethos within the Muslim culture that keep us completely barred from it. So it is not that we see the problems and realize we can’t help, we can’t even get a lens in. And it has to do with a cultural view or an acceptance of violence, an acceptance of violence in domestic situations, and as women as chattel. You are my property, and I always use violence so why wouldn’t I use violence against my chattel?” (P002)

While this is an overgeneralization as there is no evidence that African or Muslim families experience more intimate partner violence than compared to others, the issue remains that when service providers and police have these perceptions/assumptions, it can encourage nondisclosure among victims. For example, the African community might become stereotyped as a violent community, which fuels racism. Officers reported observing that among minority communities, African women were most likely to call police, and those who spoke little English were

extremely reluctant to contact authorities. One social service worker also mentioned that she thought immigrant (non-refugee) women were more likely to access resources than refugee women. Observations such as these resonate with multiple stakeholders across different fields, but are not explicitly researched. The lack of research dedicated to investigate incidence of abuse, reporting (or lack thereof), and resource options in newcomer communities is again observed in such comments where there are evident feelings of ‘how things are’, but without real substantial evidence to back up such claims. For many service providers, cultural, and religious differences pose a challenge. An underlying assumption may be that abuse is a cultural or religious problem and that outsiders cannot intervene, or that outsiders struggle to know how to intervene. Lack of cultural understanding as related to intimate partner violence against newcomer women may prevent program development for this group. As a result, newcomer women are faced with another structural barrier of being unable to comfortably access resources. Furthermore, lack of appropriate cultural training for police, contributes to hesitancy to correctly know how to intervene, particularly in circumstances where English and/or French are not spoken. As one police officer states,

“(t)here is a bit of a language barrier...But with language barriers I have also come to recognize that I don't make a lot of assumptions about language now because of the newcomer women I have been in contact with have a lot of them who have come from small communities in Winnipeg now...prefer not to deal with their own community. So I try and approach and reach out to newcomers in the best way that I can, and a lot of that is preemptive work. So I have been out to several mosques, I have been out to um...second stage housing, kind of after the fact, but talking to the teen girls of moms. So I have tried to reach out into the newcomer community. It is not easy but it is very necessary.” (P005)

This officer, having worked in the Domestic Violence Unit (DVU), had experience interacting with abuse victims for 27 years, and has recognized the importance of both outreach work in

newcomer communities, and also that language is a limitation in identifying their needs. For new recruits or those with limited experience in communicating with people from different backgrounds, it may be difficult to understand cultural intricacies that alter the meaning of communicative exchanges. Senior police officers responding to domestic abuse calls among newcomer families may also find it challenging for two reasons: 1) Lack of training, and 2) Feelings of frustration towards women who call to report abuse, but who are unwilling to leave their abuser. One reason for this, as expressed by a police participant is that, “*the training piece of this is really important.*” (P005). Police officers are also restricted in terms of what past history they can access. For example, one police officer reported that while the standard of record keeping is quite high in Canada, this is not necessarily true in other countries. Therefore, there are limitations to what police officers can gain knowledge of when it comes to past instances of abuse within a family. Elements of limited training when considering cultural understanding, language barriers, and limited knowledge of the case function to restrict police officers ability to deliver services successfully to newcomer women.

4.3.14. Unique Barrier #14: Access to Social Assistance and Housing

Social service workers felt that the current system, while providing limited resources, makes it difficult for people who access social assistance programs to transition to independence. Social service workers did not mention witnessing abuses of the system, but did introduce other observations. One social service worker states that while she believes social assistance helps women leave abusive relationships, it did not meet basic needs. These inadequacies force women to look for jobs before they maybe are ready to engage with the community. She goes on to state that,

“(s)o often that is just additional problems and stigma and women, once they are on social assistance it is so hard to move on and get out of that...there is a name... Because being on social assistance they are poor. They lack basic needs. They may get enough money for rent, but then they have to go to different places to get food. So they have to go to food banks, they have to rely on other organizations to get clothing, diapers, formula. And that is a lot of work! Imagine having children and having to go from one organization to another, and on top of that, having to look for jobs. And because those women are coming from abusive relationships, they have often spent a number of years relying on their husband and have been out of the job market for so many years and they lack training or experience. So they have to start from the beginning which is often very, very hard. And, the other, like the safe homes and shelters, they are very helpful, but what I have noticed from working (name of org) is that often when I call them there are not enough spots. So often you have to wait until somebody else moves one and they have one spot for you, or they don't. So what options do you have? Unless you are able to rent your own space, you have to wait to get into a shelter, or you become homeless... And the housing and shelters are not adequate. Because there are not enough of them.” (SS001)

She identifies additional issues for women who are leaving abusers. First, they may not have enough money to support themselves and their children, so like others, have to reduce ‘unnecessary’ expenditures (i.e. children’s recreational activities; certain meals of the day; proper clothing; and/or food)². Secondly, they have to find places that will supply assistance to them. This task may be more difficult for newcomer women given their lack of information about services and the limited culturally-relevant services available. Once services are located, newcomer women are more likely to have difficulty accessing them, particularly if they do not have a driver’s license or their own vehicle. As a result, many don’t seek help. Difficulty with transport to services is the second most important barrier facing service use among newcomers to Canada (Wilkinson et al., 2014). A third barrier to accessing social assistance the stigma felt by people on welfare or who have accessed housing or shelters, which is a common barrier experienced by Canadian women (Hansen, 2014).

² Recreational activities have been proven to be an important way newcomer children become integrated into their community (Rotich, 2013)

Finally, women looking for housing may encounter long waiting lists, particularly if they are applying to Manitoba Housing and especially if they need large accommodation (to fit several children). For this reason, newcomers who have experienced difficulty-locating housing in the past may be dissuaded from leaving an abusive spouse. For example, a 2012 *Winnipeg Free Press* article outlined the frustration expressed by some refugees who reported that lack of housing facilities prevented newcomers from obtaining social insurance numbers which meant that they could not seek employment (*The Winnipeg Free Press*, 2012). In Manitoba, the Family Violence programs, including shelters and second-stage housing, are located within Family Services and Consumer Affairs which funds delivery of services for women and children escaping abuse (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2011). Canadian Women's Foundation (2011) report, *Scan on Funding and Policy Initiatives to Respond to Violence Against Women*, found that:

(t)here is a growing gap between public funding received and core funding needs.

Funding increases are infrequent and when received failed to meet increases in cost of living (inflation). This has meant an increased reliance on non-public sector funding.

Private sector funding sources are increasingly less generous and obtaining private sector funding is becoming more cumbersome and time consuming (p. 11).

There are also limitations to the actual legal assistance programs themselves. As pointed out by one-newcomer women interviewed, not all women who leave their abusers are even eligible for some types of assistance. As she says,

"I tried to go to legal aid, but the house that we had at the time was on both our names, and so they wouldn't, they didn't accept me for legal aid. And I had no money. It wasn't like I was going to get the house, you know? Cus he had all his...he had a lot of resources my ex-husband. He knew a lot of people." (E001)

This participant went on to say that she has observed situations where income assistance did help women and expressed the wish she had known about other forms of assistance that could have helped her as she contemplated leaving her abusive spouse.

Newcomer participants articulated two criticisms of existing social assistance programs. One criticism of social assistance was that the programs are not adequately advertised and that awareness of programs such as employment and income assistance and housing need to be made more readily available. A second criticism is that newcomer woman may be restricted from accessing adequate funds to support herself and children, if they face immigration loans incurred from sponsorship. As such, she will be forced to live off of social assistance while also paying all the bills and taking care of the children in a single-parent household. Additionally, two of the social service workers interviewed reported that when mothers realize their children cannot afford to be enrolled in extra-curricular activities, many sacrifice their own wellbeing (i.e. food and clothing required to meet basic needs) in order to allocate funds for their children's activities, much like Canadian-born women would.

4.4. Demonstrated Perseverance by Newcomer women, Social Service workers and Police Officers

All participants interviewed demonstrated perseverance when dealing with the difficulty of intimate partner violence. All agreed that this is a problem that must be addressed. Police officers identify a system riddled with sudden changes in policy direction and systematic challenges that make their job difficult. For instance, female officers 27 years ago had to fight for female victims of abuse to be given certain rights, and also had to challenge other officers (who were primarily men) to consider abuse as a fundamental violation of human rights. Similarly,

officers in the early 1980s had to advocate for the establishment of domestic abuse unit within the police force. Today this advocacy continues in the Winnipeg Police Force through research, intervention and culturally relevant training of officers.

Similar to police officers interviewed, social service workers also persevere under less than ideal circumstances. Many social service workers have the challenging job of creating long-term care plans extend reliance on resources that are in flux due unstable core funding which cause staff to focus on fundraising efforts, thus detracting from addressing the needs of clients (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2011). The frustration of this and the emotional toll such work can take on social service workers prove how extremely challenging their job is. Despite this, workers interviewed demonstrated a commitment to their work, to their clients and also personal investment in learning about new research that will better enable them to successfully do their job.

Findings from this study indicate that while newcomer women experience many of the same barriers that Canadian born women do while trying to exit abusive partnerships, they also are confronted with additional barriers that can be attributed to their position in society. While their vulnerability to intimate partner violence may be increased and their agency compromised due to structural impediments, there is possibility for systemic change that would aid newcomer women who experience intimate partner violence. The next chapter discusses the recommendations that derive from this study in response to the findings.

Chapter Five: Policy Implications

The previous chapter provided a summary of the findings derived, reflecting the major themes and subthemes that were developed from informed participants' feedback. This chapter outlines how some of the barriers discussed in chapter 4 are further complicated by current policies and procedures. Descriptions presented suggest that while all women who are abused may experience barriers to leaving, for newcomer women there are additional complications. Now that we have an understanding of what these barriers are, we can address the question, 'do Canadian laws and social policies exacerbate newcomer women's ability to leave abusive relationships' and if so, 'what recommendations can be provided moving forward to reduce vulnerability'?

5.1. Provincial Policies

Informed research can shape provincial and federal policymaking around intimate partner violence, specifically about police standards, our practice with victims; and the programs that we offer. For example, mandatory arrest policies, once viewed as a major advance in protecting victim rights in circumstances of intimate partner violence, are now recognized as having some negative consequences, especially since the victims of abuse may themselves be arrested in the process (Fraehlich & Ursel, 2014; Holland-Davis & Davis, 2014; Javdani et.al., 2011; Li et.al., 2014). Police officers were asked the question, 'Do you feel that the current protocol for police responding to a domestic abuse call is effective in all cases?' Most stated that the new policies for dealing with domestic abuse cases were more effective than previous ones, specifically indicating that understanding of 'zero tolerance' policies that were once met with confusion, are now better understood and cautiously applied. One officer interviewed responded by saying,

“I don’t know how effective is our protocol. I guess the only thing that I feel has been interesting is with the Winnipeg Police Service, there is mass confusion about the zero tolerance policy. So I can speak to that. That essentially I think it was probably a learning issue in our service, because it was called a zero tolerance policy, but it wasn’t a zero tolerance policy. What we have always been supposed to do is to determine the dominant aggressor in a situation because our problems here, in Winnipeg we have a lot of this, it turns into a fight between two people, but it doesn’t mean that one isn’t the dominant aggressor. It isn’t always easy to figure that out in the moment when you are attending the call. So I think for some people it has been an issue and it turns into a double arrest and you are arresting both parties. And that happened for a long time which can then deter people from reporting. So, I don’t think that happens anymore as much” (P005)

One officer described the history of this unit through the women’s advocacy programs in the 1980s and 1990s, leading to a piloted family violence intervention team and then transitioning into the Domestic Violence Intervention Unit (DVIU). This unit is located in the Manitoba Justice Victim Services, is unique to Winnipeg, and has a social justice lens promoting protection of victims by assessing risk and identifying resource options. The goal of this unit is to provide a safety net to abuse victims by reviewing all domestic incidents in which they were involved but where no charges were laid. By tracking these types of calls, they can look for patterns of behavior and, identify useful resources. Once potential resources are identified, a police officer will attend the house (within 48 hours) and offer the victim such resources upon determining no criminal charges are going to be laid.³ Police officers also write a report using domestic violence

³ In cases when the accused is arrested and where there is a reasonable ground to believe an offence of abuse has been committed, the accused is taken into custody and processed at a police station. If this is the accused’s first offence, he/she will likely be released on a Promise to Appear (PTA) with an attached Undertaking. The PTA will have his/her first appearance, Court date and time. The Undertaking will have conditions that the accused agrees to and signs including no contact or communication directly or indirectly with the victim (NCC Order); not to go within 200 meters of the victim’s residence, workplace, school or wherever they may be; If alcohol is involved they will also have a condition to abstain from alcohol or any other intoxicants. Most of the time the accused will be fingerprinted before releasing to confirm identity. If the accused has a history of similar offences on the same victim, or has a history of Breaching Court Orders, the accused is taken to the Arrest Processing Unit (APU) where they can represent themselves on a video link Bail hearing with a Magistrate, or the accused can wait “in custody” until their lawyer can represent them. This can mean staying in the Remand Center until the lawyer is available. However, if the incident is of a serious matter, police can have the accused held in custody after certain criteria is

non-criminal check sheet, which is then transferred to the DVIU. Once this form is submitted, a victim services worker is assigned to the case. As a result, victims are provided with support, even if they do not directly request it; cases are also managed by a single person rather than per case meaning that if a woman leaves one abusive spouse but ends up in another abusive relationship later on, the same case worker will be there to provide support. The development of this program speaks directly to the nature and complicating variables that make intimate partner abuse unique and difficult to understand. This program also demonstrates the persistence of police officers, social service workers and other professionals in regards to developing an effective process.

While initiatives such as these are designed to respond to the needs of victims of abuse, it is a streamlined approach, meaning it responds to the needs of the ‘average’ abuse victim. As previously examined throughout this thesis, newcomer women occupy a unique position and may require more specialized services and intervention. What is currently offered in many resource organizations are pamphlets of information about organizations offered through police services (i.e. Victim Services) and other programs, cross-cultural counseling in some organizations, the opportunity to meet with other newcomers, and various programs directed towards newcomer families. While such information is useful, the onus is most often on the newcomer women to access the resources *after* she has been abused. Protective resources that inform women of their rights early on in the settlement process may help prevent abuse before it starts, as both women and men become aware of the legal ramifications and consequences.

met (i.e. seriousness of the offence, likelihood to reoffend, mental state of mind, etc.) (personal communication with Winnipeg Police Officer, 2014).

One issue for grass roots organizations, particularly for non-profit agencies, is the lack of sustainable funding that is often required to develop informed programs and maintain outreach staff and counselors. For instance, program development often stems from the education and knowledge of the volunteers in the organization. While this functions to a certain degree, the length of time the programs are offered and the specificity that goes into the development may vary due funding, that is often granted on a yearly basis. Two results of this type of program implementation is that evaluation is limited because people are often unsure whether funding will be secured to continue development, and also programs may be guided by the volunteers rather than the direct needs of the clients. Furthermore, hiring staff trained in cross-cultural counseling is challenging when NGOs offer temporary contracts with a lower hourly wage, as opposed to permanent positions that offer a higher salary.

While there are limitations, strategic community outreach programs continue to strive for specific, needs-based programs that adequately address the challenges of newcomer families. Just as the DVIU has been a specialized way to respond to the unique needs of abuse victims, similar programs can be developed to response to the needs of newcomer women experiencing domestic violence. Part of the programing should be devoted to providing services and information in a variety of different languages so that all women can access the assistance they need. Currently, NGOs compete for funding in order to hire staff and establish programs, leaving some staff with adequate funding and others without. Executive Directors at not-for-profit organizations often have to continually apply for funding, which is often based on one-year contracts. This leaves programs fragmented and inconsistently offered, which is problematic, as is limitations to hiring fulltime such as outreach staff, who can inform minority communities

members, and cross-cultural counselors. As one social service worker states in regards to financial sustainability for NGOs,

“We always need more funding. Yes, because with more funding you can do the education piece. With offenders and victims. But with budget cuts, it doesn’t help us reach as many people as we could... there is no more sustainable funding anywhere. So it is all project based. It’s one year, one year, one year, one year. So that takes away the time of the person to write proposal, create the activity, create this project that will only be for a year and that time could have been to see the person who is being abused and used to support that person.” (SS002)

In response to the question, ‘(d) do you feel that the current protocol for police when responding to a domestic abuse call is effective in all cases?’, one officer reported thinking that initially dual arrests were occurring as a result of misinformation and lack of training. She states that,

“I think earlier in my career, and I can’t give you exact dates, there were a lot of dual arrests happening and I think that was kind of just misinformation. People just didn’t understand at the time, right. Like when I got on, when I was trained, I know I was never told that directly. Like I never ever remember learning who the dominant aggressor is. If they both had physical injuries that they inflicted upon each other, then they were both arrested. I think that was the misinterpretation of it, tolerance does not mean that you arrest everybody no matter what. I think that people had that impression and again whether that is lack of training.” (P005)

It seems that the consensus among officers is that more informed training and the implementation of the Domestic Violence Intervention Unit have led to lower levels of dual arrests issued. For newcomer women, the prospect of having their abuser, who is also often their immigration and financial sponsor, arrested is terrifying. One police officer insightfully states,

“I think a lot of it is the front end work that needs to be done when people are coming to Canada, coming to Manitoba, coming to Winnipeg, that there should be an onus there should be an opportunity for front end service providers to tell people, to teach people, to

show people, to demonstrate what, what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in Canadian culture. And understanding that with coming to Canada there are freedoms, there are also responsibilities, and there are resources to ensure that you can cope, and the transition can happen. Now do we need more resources? Probably. But I think there is an obligation on behalf of the big institutions like police, like probation, like corrections, like shelters, like the government, like victim services to be at the front end of that teaching. It is part of the responsibility I think if we are going to, if we are going to encourage people to come to our country, our province, our city, that we make people, we make women aware of what is available to them.” (P004)

Similarly, social workers, especially those working closely with newcomers, report not having any way to keep up to date with current immigration policy and law. The criminal justice system and the immigration system are constantly changing, and it becomes difficult for agency workers to keep informed. As a result, programs may become disjointed and largely unhelpful for those working closely with abused newcomer women. Consequently, service providers are not properly informed of current legislation and practice and there is a great need for training of social service workers, police and other professional who work with newcomer women. Furthermore, poor communication between service providers exacerbates the problem as organizations have difficulty with information sharing and collaboration. If there were more opportunities for front-line workers to attend workshops on immigration law and policy, there may be better information sharing between groups.

5.2. Immigration Policies

Police officers and social service workers report challenges in keeping informed of current immigration laws, which is an important observation particularly since major changes have been enacted since 2012. Another challenge for those who work with newcomer women who suffer abuse, is understanding the steps necessary to prove the abuse occurred, particularly when the abuse must be proven in order for sponsorship agreements to be deemed void so that

newcomer women can financially separate themselves from their abuser. As one social service worker states in response to being asked if sponsorship agreements can be terminated,

“It does say that in the case of domestic abuse, they can leave, but it has to be proved. What does that mean? Having a doctor’s note? Proving injuries? Have a note from your counselor? But women that we work with often do not go and talk to counselors, they do not report, they don’t see counselors because they are ashamed. They hide in their houses and they are afraid if they leave they will lose their permanent status and be deported back home.” (S001)

While it is clear to the social service worker that sponsorship agreements can be terminated if abuse is proven, the steps involved in proving the abuse remains unclear.

As defined in the *Criminal Code of Canada*, violence against a partner must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. For instance, a judge trying a domestic abuse case has a process to follow when assessing the guilt or innocence of the accused:

Where credibility is important, the trial judge must instruct the jury that the rule of reasonable doubt applies to that issue. The trial judge should instruct the jury that: (1) if they believe the evidence of the accused, they must acquit; (2) if they do not believe the testimony of the accused but are left in reasonable doubt by it, they must acquit; (3) even if not left in doubt by the evidence of the accused, they still must ask themselves whether they are convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of the guilt of the accused on the basis of the balance of the evidence which they do accept (R.v.W, 1991).

Evidence as presented by the Crown in an effort to prove the abuse occurred is contingent on a case-to-case basis. The reality of the criminal proceeding is that if there is not enough evidence that the abuse occurred, or if the Crown cannot prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the abuse took place, the case would fall in the accused’s favour. Although it is recognized that

this is set up this way to deter false allegations of abuse, for those who are victims of abuse and who must also financially sponsor their abuser, the process of proving abuse is fraught with difficulty⁴.

In addition to having the burden of ‘proving abuse’, there are cases where the victim is the sponsor and the perpetrator is the financially dependent. Another social service worker indicates that for women who sponsor their abusive partners, they are responsible to pay for him to remain in Canada. Again there is no way ‘out’ of this contractual obligation, other than the otherwise undefined proof of abuse. Furthermore there is also a lengthy waiting time between reporting the abuse and obtaining assistance from an immigration officer. One newcomer woman had sponsored her husband and when he started abusing her, she contacted an immigration officer for help. She had contacted an immigration officer and at the time of the interview had been waiting three months for a response. This was causing an immense degree of stress for her, as she couldn’t mentally or financially separate herself from her abuser. As she recounts,

“(r)ight, so they said that whatever happened to you, you are stuck for three months. Like you are stuck for three years, that way you are responsible for that, you are the one who brought him to Canada. But he said that I am sure soon they might contact you because you are abused, then they might cancel that sponsoring...This is immigration...I mean. Ok this sponsor part I said right this is the hard part for me. It didn't happen still, but it will...maybe, maybe it happened and I will be in trouble. Because I have to pay him how much and I have to worry about myself, for my daily living too. So it is hard experiencing.” (E002)

It is clear that the conditions of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, along with the contractual obligations of financial support, cause many newcomer women significant hardship as they must deal with the criminal justice system at the same time as dealing with the

⁴ Information obtained by a Crown Attorney working for Manitoba Department of Justice.

immigration system that places them in vulnerable situations. For example, under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* 72.1(1):

A permanent resident...is subject to the condition that they must cohabit in a conjugal relationship with their sponsor for a continuous period of two years after the day on which they became a permanent resident (*Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, 2014).

There are two exceptions to this conditional measure: 1) the Sponsor's death and, 2) Abuse or Neglect. In instances where the spouse is experiencing abuse and/or neglect, the regulations state:

(6) The condition set out in subsection (1) also ceases to apply in respect of a permanent resident referred to in that subsection if an officer determines, based on evidence provided by the permanent resident or on any other relevant evidence, that

(a) the permanent resident

(i) is not able to meet that condition throughout the two-year period referred to in that subsection because the permanent resident or a child of the permanent resident or the sponsor, or a person who is related to the permanent resident or the sponsor and who is habitually residing in their household, is subjected by the sponsor to any abuse or neglect referred to in subsection (7) during that period, and

(ii) continued to cohabit in a conjugal relationship with the sponsor during that period until the cohabitation ceased as a result of the abuse or neglect; or

(b) the permanent resident

(i) is not able to meet that condition throughout the two-year period referred to in subsection (1) because the sponsor has failed to protect the permanent resident or a child of the permanent resident or the sponsor, or a person who is related to the permanent resident or the sponsor and who is habitually residing in their household, from any abuse or neglect referred to in subsection (7) during that period by another person who is related to the sponsor, whether that person is residing in the household or not, and

(ii) continued to cohabit in a conjugal relationship with the sponsor during that period until the cohabitation ceased as a result of the abuse or neglect. (*Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, 2014).

The definition of abuse adopted by Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations is as follows:

(a) abuse consists of any of the following:

(i) physical abuse, including assault and forcible confinement,

(ii) sexual abuse, including sexual contact without consent,

(iii) psychological abuse, including threats and intimidation, and

(iv) financial abuse, including fraud and extortion; and

(b) neglect consists of the failure to provide the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, medical care or shelter, and any other omission that results in a risk of serious harm (Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, 2014).

An abused and sponsored spouse is instructed to call the government hotline, which is only offered in English and French, and has 30 days to provide an immigration officer with 3rd party evidence proving that they lived together, that the offending spouse became abusive, and they she or he left the abuser after the abuse began (Vice Canada, 2014). If they cannot prove the abuse occurred, they risk getting deported for filing a false allegation. The predominant issues involved in this situation are first, the time and effort spend collecting evidence of abuse is not only stressful, but also prolongs the period of time for which an abused spouse must remain financially bound to the abuser. Secondly, wait times to access an immigration officer, as reported by one participant of this study, are lengthy so if the abuse must be proved within 30 days and the wait time to access an immigration officer is reportedly longer than that (three months according to one respondent), it is confusing how the 30-day timeline can be met without the aid of an immigration officer.

All service workers interviewed felt that abused newcomer women are less likely to leave abusive relationships because they fear deportation, particularly in cases where the women has children. Social service workers must be very familiar with immigration law so that they can

inform the women seeking consultation of their rights. The consensus among social service workers is that immigration laws are confusing to newcomer women and the workers themselves lack the necessary legal training to give proper advice. While there are some lawyers willing to work pro bono for such cases, the availability for precise legal advice greatly outweighs the demand. This too contributes to the information gap experienced by many abused newcomer women.

It is doubtful, however, if better access to legal counsel would assist the ‘average’ abused newcomer woman. When asked if she was aware of any policies in Canada that may have helped her leave her violent relationship, one newcomer woman responded,

“No. I don't know of any policy that could have helped me as an immigrant woman to leave my partner. In fact all of the, I feel like all of the odds were stacked against me...it permeates through so many different um, levels of government, and so many different social service agencies. For example, take Child and Family Services, take even the, the justice system. I think even in the justice system they have this policy that relates to this one that I just talked to you about where you know the women has to always prove the abuse. You are not allowed to leave the house when you have scars. What are you going to do? Take pictures? How are you going to prove? Like the way they always went. And then the family court is not always communicating with the, with the criminal court. So family court is like a whole different ball game. And when there are kids involved it is just a mess. So there is like everything, is just well, goes against abused women. It should be the other way around. But it is not...Come on! Who are you helping here?” (E001)

This participant went on to say that it is easy for abusive partners to threaten deportation, and that a resounding fear among some women is if they are sent home, they will experience violent retribution from the family members of their abusive spouse. Therefore, the combination of lack of accurate information surrounding legal rights with immigration status, ideologies in their home country regarding the persecution of women, and the idea of deportation collectively produce an environment that does not foster likelihood of exiting violent partnerships.

Participants were asked what they thought would improve the immigration system for newcomer women experiencing abuse. Police officer, social workers and newcomer women all advocated for the enhancement of rights and legal education for everyone. Others felt that the immigration system is failing to protect newcomer women from financial, emotional, and physical abuse due to their vulnerable situation. The government has not been listening and instead has enacted legislation that makes it more difficult for abused women to leave their partners.

In October 2012 the federal government announced a conditional permanent residence period for sponsored spouses and partners (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2012). This change means that sponsored spouses/ partners have a period of ‘conditional’ permanent residence for two years following receipt of their permanent residence status in Canada. For the duration of the two years, they must remain in a relationship and must live together. If there is a breach in this condition, their permanent residence could be revoked. The intention of this policy is to prevent marriages of convenience where Canadians or permanent residents marry would-be immigrants to allow them to enter Canada faster as sponsored spouse. The effect, however, has negative consequences for abused newcomer women. This is an example of a conditional measure that looks good on paper but has the potential to put more newcomer women in abusive situations in real danger and another example of a structural barrier that newcomer women face.

5.3. Regulations surrounding Social Assistance

Social assistance is important to consider in these situations. I do not suggest that newcomers should be defined as ‘poor’ or underprivileged, but that their position has placed them at greater risk of being underemployed and low income, therefore, requiring additional

resources to ensure basic needs are being met, especially when they first arrive in Canada. Social assistance includes both financial assistance (in the form of EIA) and housing assistance.

In November 2014, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled to uphold a prior decision that the Conservative government must reverse its “unconstitutional, cruel and unusual cuts to refugee health care” (The Council of Canadians, 2014, p. 1). This ruling meant that the federal government must restore access to health benefits for refugees. While this *appears* to be a positive move forward, there is fear that reaction from the Conservative government to this amendment in law will be implementation of Bill C-585. This bill, if passed, would allow

(p)rovinces to individually impose residency requirements for eligibility for social assistance benefits and restrict access to those benefits by refugees. It would result in social assistance to many refugee claimants including, “those whose bid for asylum was rejected but appeals are pending, those who are on a Humanitarian and Compassionate (H&C) release, those who are undergoing a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment, and even those who have yet to have their claim heard.” (The Council of Canadians, 2014, p. 1)

In other words, instead of the federal government being responsible for providing welfare to claimants who are refugees, and/or those who do not have permanent residence status, provinces would now be held accountable. This would negatively impact refugee claimants by predictably making it harder for them to obtain social assistance. Currently, refugee claimants and refugees recognized by the Immigration and Refugee Board receive no special income assistance; Privately sponsored refugees are not entitled to government assistance (including provincial assistance) during the period of their sponsorship; and Government assisted refugees have access

to financial assistance from the federal government through the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2013).

As previously discussed, Manitoba social assistance programs such as Manitoba Housing and EIA are difficult to access by all immigrant classes. While permanent residents, those with landed status, and some refugees are eligible to apply for social assistance, many from the sponsorship class are not. Depending on their immigrant category many newcomer women who do not have permanent status will not be eligible for income supplements. Additionally, few receive housing assistance on arrival. All participants interviewed were asked the question ‘(d)o you think that current social assistance programs such as welfare and social housing aid women who wish to leave abusive partnerships?’ The consensus was that even if it were available, newcomer women would need more assistance, particularly if they were responsible for supporting their abuser. For example, in 2013 the total monthly tax-free income supplied through income assistance to one adult with no children was \$585, with an additional \$23 provided by the federal government; therefore ones’ total monthly income would be \$607 (Employment and Income Assistance for the General Assistance Category, 2013).

The police officers agreed that financial assistance is insufficient and adequate shelter difficult to obtain. One officer reports that while money obviously is limited, she has seen many mothers successfully leave. However, the struggle is not only about spending money wisely, but also becomes about finding a way to no longer require social assistance. In regards to housing, this participant has observed that shelters are a very useful place to access help quickly and effectively, as they not only provide temporary housing, but also connect clients with other resources. When further asked to clarify how she thought newcomer women would fare in Manitoba shelters she stated,

“(d)o newcomer women want to go into shelter? Maybe not, maybe that is an issue that has to be looked at. Is it an environment that says we welcome all people, women from all cultures? I am not sure, I haven’t been on that end of it. But I also know that the shelters in Winnipeg, we have one that is specific to Aboriginal women, looking at that context. We also have Osborn house that also looks at, or welcomes women from a wide variety of different cultures.” (P005)

Perhaps a question for further consideration is in regards to whether newcomer women are likely to access shelters in Winnipeg, and if not, why?

An interesting response from the police officers was that while social assistance may not be adequate, there is likely a reason for it. From their perspective, one reason why social assistance is limited so that the potential for falsifying claims is diminished. These two officers noted that they have witnessed some people who abuse the system so they understand that deterrence mechanisms are needed. While they recognize that those who need more assistance are not adequately assisted, they also understand why there is a reluctance to ‘fix’ it. For abused newcomer women, it means that accessing much needed financial assistance is very difficult. Perhaps a better way to deal with this problem is to provide separate services for newcomer women. That way, those who are at risk to accrue sponsorship debt (a debt that may be accrued by a newcomer women who leaves her abusive spouse from who she sponsored, and if the spouse subsequently seeks social assistance which the women then has to pay back), may be seriously deterred from leaving an abusive spouse for fear of never being able to gain financial independence (Ending Violence Association, 2013). As a response to this issue, Citizenship and Immigration Canada could be encouraged to forgive sponsorship debt in cases where abuse has occurred or at least increasing the repayment period for those victimized. The people working in these units could be better kept informed of changes to immigration rules and attain a level of cultural competence that also might help newcomer women deal with abuse situations.

5.4. Structuration Theory

Giadden's structuration theory argues that all people have the capacity to act; however, they are sometimes constrained in their actions due to the influence of structural barriers. The findings in this study point to the validity of such an argument. As determined by the participants interviewed (including the newcomer participants themselves), there are various barriers imposed on newcomer women trying to exit abusive partnerships. These structural barriers greatly influenced abused newcomer women's agency to leave abusive relationships. For example, as described by one of the newcomer women (E001), a major impediment to her leaving the abuser was concern that her children would be apprehended by CFS. Sadly, this concern became a reality, as her husband responded to her leaving the relationship by accusing her of physically assaulting her children. While the abuse investigation conducted by CFS determined that this allegation was false, it was a protracted battle to regain custody of her children, which further victimized her and her children and has still not been resolved. The reality in this situation is that her husband, who as we recall had been in Canada previous to her arrival, had money, power, and a large social network who could be utilized to speak to 'credibility of his character'. At the time of the interview, three years after leaving her spouse, she hadn't seen her children for six months, and they remained in the sole custody of her husband.

Another example of how newcomer women's agency can be impeded by structural barriers is in the case of the other newcomer women (E002). In her experience, having left her abusive partner for just over a year, she still remained financially supportive of him as due to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection* sponsorship agreement. While in theory this agreement is to be terminated if there is proof of abuse, the hardship she is having is securing an immigration

officer to process this claim. At the time of the interview, this participant had been waiting three months to be contacted by an immigration officer and remained financially responsible for her abusive spouse.

Financial constraints imposed upon women as a result of their dependent socioeconomic status demonstrate a significant barrier to leaving an abusive spouse. While this is a reality for any spouse trying to leave an abusive situation, newcomer women may be less likely to know how to access legal aid. Furthermore, they may be less likely to be eligible for aid such as income benefits (i.e. Employment Insurance) because of their lower participation in the labour market (Wilkinson, 2014), and may also have limited ability to obtain a loan. For instance, if they had not been working or (which may be because of not being able to find a job or not being permitted by her spouse to look for work) or had been underemployed they cannot be approved for a loan. Furthermore, financial issues are often compounded by immigration status, which may require them to remain financially supported by their spouse despite the presence of abuse. Immigration status presents a host of structural constraints on newcomer women hoping to transition out of abusive partnerships. The structural constraint resulting from the sponsorship agreement ties the victim to the abuser for a lengthy period of time. Because females are more likely to be structurally confined to immigration categories that make them dependent on their spouses, the abuse is likely to continue. Language barriers, isolation, a limited social network, and a lack of trust may exacerbate awareness of resources, which then also influence their decision-making. As a result, newcomer women are at a disadvantage at obtaining relevant information. This combined with recent and significant budget cuts stemming from neo-liberal policy decisions, (i.e. the cutting of Status of Women Canada programs), have resulted in cuts to social services across Canada, as well as diminished federal funding for women's advocacy and

research organizations, further eroding our response to abused newcomer women (Knight and Rodgers, 2012).

Structural racism, understood as a system of social structures and power relations that produce successive and on-going race-based inequalities, works to further isolate newcomer women from social networks and accessing resources (Neborak, 2013). The findings in this study demonstrate how the interaction of systems (i.e. the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*) prevents many abused women from seeking help due to structural and migration-related barriers. Newcomer women who require specific resources, unique intervention strategies, and more cross-cultural understanding and who are isolated are more likely to experience structural barriers. Lack of translation services, culturally or religiously appropriate shelters, limited cross-cultural counseling, and limited cultural training for police are all structural problems identified by stakeholders. Structural racism can be implicit or explicit, and contribute to policy formation that subsequently leads to systemic outcomes. Structural factors that are embedded in the immigration system and the criminal justice system are sources of power, and the policies surrounding such system are tools by which inequality are created. Two types of resources in structuration theory are authoritative resources that are derived from the coordination of human activity, and allocative resources that are initiated from aspects of the material world (Giddens, 1984). There are sequential steps that produce structural racism that directly and indirectly affect newcomer women in abusive partnerships. Economically-motivated policies combined with a neo-liberal shift away from social service provision, work to further marginalize newcomer women. If the Canadian immigration system continues to encourage males to be classified as principal applicants and females as dependents, then the dependency problems continue. As a result, the structure, a combination of the criminal justice system and

the immigration system, is developed to benefit those who are economically 'successful' (which as argued above, are more likely to be men), while further isolating those who are not (i.e. newcomer women).

Giddens argues that the influence of the structure affects, and is influenced, by human agency. In other words, human agency and social structures are interconnected, as repetition of individual acts works to perpetuate social structures. For newcomer women, structural barriers presented when trying to exist an abusive partnership burden individual agency and make it difficult to leave. For instance, the Canadian immigration system has focused on economic migration over all other classes for the past 25 years. Previously, the system focused on family reunification with the idea being that whole families contribute to stronger integration. This movement away from a family-focused immigration system consequently has led to fewer applicants from the family class being accepted into Canada but more women being sponsored. For instance, in 2012, immigrant class composition was as follows: 62.4% permanent economic class immigrants, 25.2% family class and 9% refugees. Of this 62.4%, only one-third of principle applicants were women (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2012). We can see from these statistics that newcomer women are more likely to arrive in Canada as family class than the economic class (which immediately puts them at a financial disadvantage compared to if they arrived under the economic class), and furthermore, if they arrive under the economic class are more likely to be sponsored applicants. When we look at permanent residence by gender and category in 2012, there were more female immigrants in the family class (25.7% females versus 19.5% males), but more male immigrants from the economic class (59.9% females versus 65.7% males). Statistics such as these reflect an underlying assumption that male immigrants are more likely to have the qualifications to participate successfully in the Canadian work force, whereas

female applicants may not. This means that female immigrants maybe limited to working in low-paying jobs or staying at home. This means that women are typically disadvantaged in the work force which impacts their ability to gain financial independence, resulting in prolonged ties with the abuser.

The unequal structure, as argued by Giddens, is reinforced and reproduced by individual peoples' actions; these actions produce a set of expectations that comprise 'social force'. In many societies, this social force is gendered and weighs heavily against females. This idea is reproduced when women are viewed as 'less than' males. This, combined with the structural rule of financial sponsorship of dependents puts women at a significant disadvantage economically than men in most migrant families. It means that leaving abusive situations has financial implications are different from women born in Canada.

5.5. Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality theory proposes that systematic inequality is compounded when one is a member of more than one minority groups. Intersectionality theory allows us to view how violence affects newcomer women, and more so, how various identity characteristics relate to violence within partnerships. Newcomer women are particularly susceptible to victimization due to several factors. First, like all women, their gender immediately makes them more likely to be a victim of abuse than they would if they were male (Russo et al., 2006; Samuels et al., 2008). In 2009, female spousal victims were over three times more likely than male to be assaulted, beaten, choked or threatened with a gun or knife (34% versus 10%), and were also much more likely to experience chronic forms of spousal violence (53% for female versus 35% for male victims) (Statistics Canada, 2013). Secondly, because most newcomer families endure struggles

after early arrival in Canada, they are more likely to be financially insecure or in other words, be of a lower socioeconomic class (Wilkinson, 2014). For instance, according to 2013 statistics, more than 36% of immigrants who have been in Canada for less than five years live in poverty (Canadian Labour Market Report, 2013). Third, their fear of being ostracized by their communities if they leave abusive relationships may enhance the likelihood of newcomer women remaining with their abusive spouse. For instance, traditional gender roles may influence newcomer women to accept a more submissive role in the relationship causing them to feel less empowered which leads to low self-esteem and a perceived inability to live without her spouse. As mentioned by one of the newcomer women, her lack of self-esteem deterred her from making friends and feeling as if she could obtain an education that would aid in getting her a full-time job. This made her more reliant upon her husband and as such, she stayed with her husband even as his violence towards her escalated.

As noted by several participants, newcomer women may actually be a target for certain men who think that they can ‘get away’ with acting violently towards these women, as they are perceived as more likely than Canadian-born women to ‘put up with it’. The case can be made that the characteristics that collectively lead to identity formation among newcomer women including her sex, race, and class seem to make her a more likely target for male partners who demand obedience, submissiveness, and protection from authorities. As such, newcomer women who are victims of abuse are also victims of inequality as demonstrated by the lack of specified efforts made to help them escape such abuse and also to promote feelings of empowerment. Future research should examine the prevalence of intimate partner abuse against newcomer women as perpetrated by Canadian men to identify areas where women may be directly targeted.

Since newcomer women are confronted with additional challenges to accessing resources, community, social service workers and police officers could make greater effort in providing this group with additional information. Structuration theory helps us understand that it is not only cultural barriers that place newcomer women at a disadvantage, but also structural oppression that restricts information sharing which in turn limits knowledge of the legal system and individual rights. Structural constraints such as language barriers, structural racism located in power system such as the criminal justice system and the immigration system, and lack of ethno-cultural services all influence help seeking behavior (Tastsoglou, 2000). No longer can we assume that women in need of resources can or have the ability to access them on their own, special effort needs to be made to ensure the information provided is in a language that is understood and delivered in culturally appropriate ways. We cannot hide behind the excuse of ‘we do not know how’ or ‘it is too difficult’ to intervene in minority households because of lack of cultural understanding. Being culturally respectful does not mean looking the other way when immigrant and refugee women are being beaten. If certain groups of women are not accessing resources and there are notable gaps in terms of cultural groups who access resources, research needs to focus on why this is the case, and most importantly, how do we overcome this?

Newcomer women who experience intimate partner abuse encounter a myriad of obstacles to transitioning out of the relationship and then afterwards, being able to function independently in society. Interviews conducted with newcomer women in this study not only highlight the many barriers they encounter, but also the commitment they must make to the process involved in transitioning out of abuse. It takes extreme courage to leave an abusive spouse and endure a process where little security is provided and hardship is ever-present. A sustained belief in self-worth, despite a spouse’s attempt to diminish and eliminate self-esteem

through acts of abuse and humiliation, is what fosters the perseverance necessary for women to leave destructive relationships. Furthermore, the perseverance it takes to recreate and establish an identity outside the abuser presents significant challenges. All abuse victims, specifically newcomer women in this case, have tremendous courage and are relentless in their pursuit for a life they envision living; one that is free from abuse and strives towards empowerment.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Clear from this research is that our knowledge of intimate partner violence as experienced by newcomer women is limited. Our failures to closely examine their situation and to challenge assumptions about relationships among newcomers are one of the major obstacles to resolving issues related to intimate partner violence. Although the multiple barriers that are faced by newcomer women are similar to those experienced by Canadian-born women, the challenges can be greater. As a result of their vulnerability as newcomers combined with a lack of resources puts newcomer women in an exacerbated position of inequity. Research focusing on vulnerable populations is particularly critical. We need to know more about the issue of intimate partner violence in general, but specifically learn more about the experience of intimate partner violence within minority populations.

Although this is a small-scale, exploratory study that only examines the perceptions of a small number of participants at one point in time, we can glean some important information. This chapter summarizes the findings and recommendations derived from the data collected, and concludes by discussing opportunities for future research.

6.1. Summary of Findings

There are a number of findings and corresponding recommendations that derive from this study. One finding is that the definition of *abuse* as understood by all stakeholders is similar, but reaches beyond the ‘standard’ definition typically found in written documents such as the Winnipeg Police Service’s definition, federal legislation, and the *Manitoba Domestic Violence and Stalking Act*. Also observed, is that definition of domestic abuse varies across federal and provincial levels, and also within working organizations. This speaks to the complexity and

changing perspectives that derive from how we think about issues related to intimate partner abuse.

A second finding is that newcomer women encounter a multitude of barriers, which may make it more challenging to leave abusive relationships compared to Canadian-born women. As a result, they may require specific resources that address the unique challenges they face. For example, services such as translation services, culturally appropriate shelters, and financial assistance such as emergency loans for those in sponsored classes are non-existent, or are limited at best. More research into how program developments can directly respond to the needs of newcomer women is required, as is the development of preventative measures that help stop the abuse before it starts.

A third finding reveals that front-line workers experience a challenge in keeping up to date on policies that impact the clients they serve. For instance, federal immigration laws are constantly changing, but the constant changes make it difficult for service providers to keep up. For instance, the new regulation that stipulates a spouse and their sponsor must live together for two years from the day they are granted permanent resident status in Canada has the potential to increase the period of time women are caught in abusive relationships. Social service workers should be aware of such laws as they influence the opportunities for exiting and as they influence access to assistance. For example, social service workers have difficulty referring clients to resources when their immigration status negatively limits what resources they are able to utilize (i.e. legal aid). Knowledge about how to properly and respectfully intervene while defending basic human rights is required. Perhaps the development of a central database that is dedicated to providing updated information on changing laws and policies would help inform social service workers.

Fourth, participant feedback suggests that newcomer women may be less inclined to call for police intervention, and furthermore, once called many front-line workers may feel less prepared to adequately respond as they experience overlapping challenges in gathering information from the family. This has the negative effect of leaving minority communities without equal opportunities to proper intervention and/or treatment plans. Resonating with multiple police officers and social service workers, is the belief that newcomer women may arrive in Canada with pre-defined negative views of police, and compounding cultural pressures that restrict police involvement. It is important to recognize that violence against women is a social issue that requires specified intervention. Investment of resources dedicated towards publically educating newcomer families of the role of police is important if trust is to be built for newcomer women. Additionally, police and social service providers require resources and education to best equip them with the tools needed when working with newcomer women.

Fifth, sponsorship regulations within the immigration system restrict newcomer women from being able to extricate themselves from the abuser, and from social service workers being able to respond to their needs. Just as the aforementioned conditional measure that stipulates a two-year marriage between a sponsored spouse and her/his partner, other facets of immigration including the movement towards accepting more economic immigrants and less family applicants, has far-reaching effects into the lives of newcomer women, making them simultaneously more vulnerable to abuse, and less likely to leave the abuser as compared to Canadian-born women. There is the general issue of laws in general (i.e. in the *Criminal Code of Canada* there is concern over proving abuse occurred; within *Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act*, conditional measures for sponsored spouse; restrictions concerning social assistance policies and newcomer populations etc.) being designed to prevent abuse of the system, but working against victims who

justifiably require help. When related specifically to newcomer women, ability to access timely social assistance and housing support is diminished due to their sponsored status. To think of it another way, the time between leaving and finding adequate shelter and income assistance is longer for a newcomer woman than for a Canadian-born woman because they have to prove the abuse before they become eligible for assistance. The amount of assistance is further hampered due to their immigration status. This has a negative effect on their ability to leave abusive partners. Furthermore, while regulations protect the system from being taken advantage by fraudulent claims, this mechanism makes it nearly impossible for abused newcomer women to access much needed resources quickly. This is one example where a law, which looks good on paper, has very unequal consequences for newcomer women.

Finding seven relates to shelter, second-stage housing, and Manitoba housing options for newcomer women fleeing abusive partners. There are several concerns that may be presented when women consider accessing housing options. First, while women's shelters such as Osborne House and YWCA Westman Women's Shelter offer a safe place for women to stay, newcomer women may be hesitant to abandon their home so soon after arrival. Furthermore, for those arriving in Canada who have migrated from home countries enduring war, the chance that they may arrive at a shelter and be co-existing with those they were fighting opposite to, is a strong deterrent to seeking out shelter options. There may be further concern that they will be separated from their children and that they will not be able to access Manitoba Housing, leaving them uncertain of where they will stay after they leave the temporary residence of a shelter.

Lastly, stakeholders who work in the social services arena should to be trained to be aware of the needs specific to newcomer women. For instance it is important for community stakeholders such as police, NGO workers, and other social service workers to recognize the inequalities

bound within the system so they can be effective in combating structural barriers. Service providers must also be encouraged to overcome the propensity to identify family-based violence as a cultural or a religious problem that must be resolved by insiders and not to assume intimate partner violence is a religious or cultural imperative. Finally, newcomer women, while encountering immense, multi-faceted barriers, must be recognized as having the ability to transition out of abusive partnerships despite the magnitude of challenges they may face.

6.2. Summary of Recommendations

In response to the findings outlined above, the following recommendations have been developed. **One recommendation of this study is for the Provincial government to fund a thorough research agenda in the area of intimate partner abuse against newcomer women; data gathered through this process can be used to guide policy development. The results from this research can be used to identify effective training tools that would enhance police officers' awareness of culturally appropriate intervention strategies. Other benefits could include development of appropriate outreach materials provided to newcomers regarding police roles, women's rights, Canadian laws and immigration law.** Using information collected through this process could also aid in determining unique ways to market such information. **A second recommendation is for organizations working with newcomer populations to develop adequate training for front-line workers in relation to knowledge surrounding immigration laws. A third recommendation is for collective effort to be taken in order to ensure transfer of knowledge is occurring between service providers, front-line workers in the immigration, social service and criminal justice areas.** Furthermore, extensive collaboration and communication between collaterals needs to take place to allow for information sharing and opportunities for innovation (i.e. brainstorm about ideas on how to

better improve programs based off of observations by front-line workers who interact with newcomer families).

A fourth recommendation is for social service organizations to consistently provide training to front-line workers for the purpose of increasing awareness of the challenges that exist for newcomer families in general, but as the more vulnerable cohort, newcomer women and children specifically. Issues such as language difficulty, cultural and religious differences, and lack of credential recognition as it relates to low-income, issues of poverty, gender role confusion and systemic barriers like structural racism need to be acknowledged by front-line workers so they feel better equipped to intervene in situations with newcomer families. By knowing more about the challenges encountered, front-line workers may feel more confident in intervening, which would decrease the likelihood of abuse.

There are challenges bound within certain laws and policies that severely impact newcomer women's ability to exit abusive relationships. For example, the conditional measures surrounding sponsorship contracts as stipulated in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* makes it difficult for a spouse to gain financial independence; and policies previously discussed that restrict sponsored spouses from accessing social assistance may further prevent newcomer women from leaving. While it is recognized that such laws and policies are designed to prevent abuse of the system, they are working against victims who justifiably require help. **A fifth recommendation of this study is for the Federal government to recognize the impact of the sponsorship conditions bound within the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* on newcomer women in abusive partnerships, and develop a response to this that is both timely and effective in promoting the abused spouse from leaving the abuser.**

A sixth recommendation of this study is for the Manitoba government to develop transparent and equally applicable social assistance policies so that all newcomers, regardless of immigration class, have availability to some form of social assistance. In response to social assistance policies, future research that asks the question of how likely newcomer women are to access shelters may inform the development of future housing/ shelter opportunities. Finally, development of financial assistance options for newcomer women living in abusive partnerships needs to occur in order to provide equal opportunities to exiting abusive partnerships.

6.3. Limitations of the study

This study is a brief snapshot of the lives of newcomer women who are survivors of abuse, and the challenges presented for social service workers and police officers who interact with newcomer women who have experienced abuse. Not having the time or available resources to conduct a longitudinal study or collect more data from individuals is a limitation of this project as is my inability to interview participants outside of Winnipeg. National, longitudinal research that explores and follows the paths followed by newcomer women who experience abuse would provide a great contribution to both the conditions that they endure and our ability to respond to their problems. It would be interesting to increase the number of service provider, police and experiential women to see if the patterns I have detected can be seen in a larger population.

Another limitation of this study is that there is no quantitative data on the degree of abuse that newcomer women experience. Quantitative data is beneficial for dissemination of results among larger communities and is helpful for making decisions related to funding programs for abused women. Future research that considers tracking the prevalence and effect of intimate

partner violence in newcomer communities with the intention of improving resource options, and further developing policies and procedures may benefit vulnerable newcomer women. The GSS on Victimization is a start, but the data does not include information about immigrants such as time of arrival, immigrant entrance class or other unique characteristics to this population. To fully study these issues, the sample size would have to be greatly increased.

Abuse is an intensively private and invasive topic for anyone to discuss. Given the fear in opening up to a stranger about an immensely painful, private and life altering event is traumatic at best, I suspect the reluctance among some newcomer women, particularly those in more precarious immigration categories such as dependents and refugees, makes it less likely for them to participate in a study like this. A future study needs to take time to make solid connections in the community so that the interviewer becomes a trusted member of society. That way, the important stories of these women can be shared more widely.

6.4. Concluding Remarks

Violence against women is, at its root, a fundamental denial of human rights that precludes women feeling safe in their own home. The realities of this type of gender-based violence are experienced within Canada, and more needs to be done in addressing the needs of abuse survivors. The effects of abuse are far-reaching, influencing the overall health of women (both physical and mental), their ability to be participatory citizens who thrive in society, and impact children who have witnessed domestic violence. While the issue of partner abuse has been widely researched, more needs to be done in terms of looking at scope of the problem, how it is relevant in today's society, and how it affects minority populations. Conventional approaches to addressing issues of partner abuse used for mainstream populations are not adequate and specific research that guides policy and program need to be implemented so that

identified resources can be established. Provincial and federal governments need to invest in addressing laws and policies that tackle inequities experienced by newcomer women experiencing intimate partner violence. Collectively local community groups, front-line workers, informed collaterals, researchers and policy makers representative from provincial and federal levels of government, and survivors of abuse need to collaborate and develop innovative ways of thinking about this ever-changing, complex and multi-dimensional problem. While intimate partner abuse is certainly a challenge to address, it is possible to strategize ways to resist it while striving for the elimination of violence against women altogether.

References

- Abu-Laban, Yasmeen. "Keeping 'em Out: Gender, Race, and Class Biases in Canadian Immigration Policy." *Painting the Maple: Essays on Race, Gender, and the Construction of Canada*. Ed. Veronica Strong-Boag, Sherrill Grace, Avigail Eisenberg and Joan Anderson. Toronto: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data, 1998.
- Adelman, Madelaine, Adna Erez and Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian. "Policing Violence Against Minority Women in Multicultural Societies: "Community" and the Politics of Exclusion." *Police & Society* 7 (2003): 103-131.
- Alaggia, Ramona, Cheryl Regehr, and Giselle Rishchynski. "Intimate partner violence and immigration laws in Canada: How far have we come?." *International journal of law and psychiatry* 32.6 (2009): 335-341.
- Alberta's Social Policy Framework. February 2012.
- Anderson, Kristin L. "Gender, Status, and Domestic Violence: An Integration of Feminist and Family Violence Approaches." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 59 (1997): 655-669.
- Baker, Michael and Dwayne Benjamin. "The Role of the Family in Immigrant's Labour-Market Activity: An Evaluation of Alternative Explanations." *The American Economic Review*, 87 (4) (1997): 705-727.

Barrera Jr, Manuel, Felipe González Castro, and Lori K. Holleran Steiker. "A critical analysis of approaches to the development of preventive interventions for subcultural groups." *American journal of community psychology* 48 (3) (2011): 439-454.

Barrett, Betty Jo and Melissa St. Pierre. "Variation in Women's Help Seeking in Response to Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from a Canadian population-based Study." *Violence Against Women* 17 (1) (2011): 47-70.

Bell, Carl, and Jacqueline Maltis. "The Importance of Cultural Competence in Ministering to African American Victims of Domestic Violence." *Violence Against Women* 6 (5) (2000): 515-532.

Blanchfield, Mike. "Mounties raped, abused B.C. aboriginal girls, rights watchdog alleges in report." Canadian Press 13 February 2013. Retrieved November 2, 2014 from http://news.nationalpost.com/2013/02/13/mounties-rapedabused-b-caboriginal-girls-rights-watchdogalleges-inreport/?__federated=1.

Bosworth, Mary, D Campbell, B Demby, SM Ferranti and S.M. Santos. "Doing prison research: Views from inside." *Qualitative inquiry* 11 (2) (2005): 249-264.

Brennan, Shannon. "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2011." *Juristat article Statistics Canada*, July 24, 2012.

Bryman, Alan and James Teevan. *Social Research Methods: Canadian Edition*. Canada: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Bunch, Charlotte. "The Intolerable Status quo: Violence against Women and Girls." *The Progress of Nations* (1997): 40-49.

Burman, Erica, Sophie L. Smailes, and Khatidja Chantler. "'Culture' as a Barrier to Service Provision and Delivery: Domestic Violence Services for Minoritized Women." *Critical Social Policy* 24 (3) (2004): 332-357.

Canadian Council for Social Development. (2004). "Cultural competence is not just about tolerance, it is service excellence." *National Network on Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Electronic Bulletin* 4. Retrieved June 12, 2012 from <http://www.ccsd.ca/subsites/cd/docs/bulletin/1/lse>.

Canadian Council for Refugees. (2013). "Refugees and income assistance – rebutting the chain email." Retrieved March 23, 2015.

Canadian Department of Justice. (2003). *Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group Reviewing: Spousal Abuse Policies And Legislation*. Retrieved January 13, 2012 from http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/fv-vf/rep-rap/spo_e-con_a.pdf.

Canadian Women's Foundation. "The Facts About Violence Against Women." Retrieved August 11, 2014 from

http://www.canadianwomen.org/factsaboutviolence?gclid=Cj0KEQjw06GfBR9tDI4t6n5_MBEiQAF6kuP3NN4iEiOQMTMeysS3NPeRsw7J9rC4YEIqgkA4btIaAkI_8P8HAQ.

Canadian Women's Foundation. "Scan on Funding and Policy Initiatives to Respond to Violence Against Women." Retrieved October 25, 2014 from

http://www.canadianwomen.org/sites/canadianwomen.org/files/PDF%20VP%20Resources%20%20NWSTH_CWF_Policy%20and%20funding_2011.pdf.

CBC News. "Manitoba rate of violence against women double national rate." 25 February 2013 retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-rate-of-violenceagainst-women-double-nationalrate-1.1316577>.

CBC News. "RCMP accused of rape in report on B.C. aboriginal women." 13 February 2013, retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/britishcolumbia/rcmp-accused-of-rapein-report-on-b-c-aboriginalwomen-1.1305824>.

Choi, Susanne YP, Yuet-Wah Cheung, and Adam KL Cheung. "Social isolation and spousal violence: Comparing female marriage migrants with local women." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74.3 (2012): 444-461.

Cobb-Clark, Deborah A., and Michelle Tan. "Non-cognitive skills, occupational attainment, and relative wages." *Labour Economics* 18 (1) (2011): 1-13.

Coburn, David. "Income inequality, social cohesion and the health status of Populations: the role of neoliberalism." *Social Science & Medicine* 51 (2000):135-146.

Coll, Cynthia Garcia, and Katherine Magnuson. "The psychological experience of immigration: A developmental perspective." *The New Immigrant and the American Family: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the New Immigration* (2014): 69.

Cottrell, Barbara, Evangelia Tastsoglou and Carmen Celina Moncayo. "Violence In Immigrant Families in Halifax." *Racialized Migrant Women in Canada: Essays in Health, Violence, and Equity*. Ed. Vijay Agnew. Toronto: University Of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2009: 70-97.

CRIAW. *Women and Restructuring in Canada*, 2010. Accessed June 13, 2014 from <<http://www.criawicref.ca/publications/factsheets>>.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6) (1991): 1241-1299.

Creswell, J. *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. London: Sage, 1994.

Dube, Shanta R., et al. "Exposure to abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction among adults who witnessed intimate partner violence as children: implications for health and social services." *Violence and victims* 17.1 (2002): 3-17.

Ellsberg, Mary, et al. "Researching domestic violence against women: methodological and ethical considerations." *Studies in family planning* 32 (1) (2001): 1-16.

Farber, Naomi and Julie Miller-Cribbs. "Violence in the Lives of Rural, Southern, and Poor White Women." *Violence Against Women* June, 2014.

Filc, Dani. "The health business under neo-liberalism: the Israeli case." *Critical Social Policy* 25 (2) (2005): 180-197.

Fischbach, Ruth, and Barbara Herbert. "Domestic Violence and Mental Health: Correlates and Conundrums within and Across Cultures." *Society, Science And Medicine* 45 (8) (1997): 1161-1176.

Fong, Josephine. "Psychodrama as a Preventative Measure: Teenage Girls Confronting Violence." *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama And Sociometry* 102 (2006): 99-108.

Foster, Jason, and Alison Taylor. "In the Shadows" Exploring the Notion of Community" for Temporary Foreign Workers in a Boomtown." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 38 (2) (2013): 167-190.

Foucault, Michael. *Mental Illness and Psychology*. United States: University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976.

Fraehlich, Cheryl, and Jane Ursel. "Arresting Women: Pro-arrest Policies, Debates, and Developments." *Journal of Family Violence* (2014): 1-12.

Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society*. United States: University of California Press, 1984.

Gill, Carmen. "Canadian Observatory on the Justice System's Response to Intimate Partner Violence." *Atlantis* 30(3) (2006): 54-62.

Goldsmith, Andrew. "Police Reform and the Problem of Trust." *Theoretical Criminology* 9 (4) (2005): 443-470.

Government of Canada. *Evaluation of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) and Resettlement Assistance Program*. Nov. 4, 2011.

Government of Canada. "Facts and Figures 2012- Immigration Overview: Permanent and Temporary Residents." August 7, 2013 retrieved from

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2012/permanent/1.asp>.

Government of Canada. "IMDB 2008 Core Report: National Portrait of Immigrant Outcomes: 2011-2008 Employment Earnings." May 15, 2012 retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/research/imdb2008/overview.ap>.

Greaves, L., O. Hankivsky & J. Kingston-Riechers. *Selected Estimates of the Cost of Violence against Women*. London, Ontario: Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children, 1995.

Hancock, Ange-Marie. "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm." *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (2007): 63-79.

Hansen, Jorgen, et al. "State dependence in social assistance receipt in Canada." *Safety Nets and Benefit Dependence (Research in Labor Economics, Volume 39)* Emerald Group Publishing Limited 39 (2014): 81-105.

Harvey, David. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Harris, Richard, Juanita Firestone, and William Vega. "The Interaction of Country of Origin, Acculturation, and Gender Role Ideology on Wife Abuse." *Social Science Quarterly* 86 (2) (2005): 463-483.

Hester, Marianne, Liz Kelly and Jill Radford. *Women, Violence and Male Power*. Britain: Library of Congress and Cataloguing, 1996.

Hetling, Andrea and Haiyan Zhang, "Domestic Violence, Poverty, and Social Services: Does Location Matter?" *Social Science Quarterly: Special Issue: Inequality and Poverty: American and International Perspectives*, 91(5) (2010): 1144-1163.

Hicks, Peter. "Social Policy in Canada – Looking Back, Looking Ahead." *School of Policy Studies* (46) 2008.

Hirschel, D. & Buzawa, E. "Understanding the context of dual arrest with directions for future research." *Violence Against Women*, 8 (2002): 1449-1473.

Hirschel, David, Eve Buzawa, April Pattavina, Don Faggiani. "Domestic Violence and Mandatory Arrest Laws: To What Extent Do They Influence Police Arrest Decisions." *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 98 (2007-2008): 255-298.

Hlavka, Heather R., Candace Kruttschnitt, and Kristin C. Carbone-López. "Revictimizing the victims? Interviewing women about interpersonal violence." *Journal of interpersonal violence* 22 (7) (2007): 894-920.

Holland-Davis, Lisa and Jason Davis. "Victim Arrest in Intimate Partner Violence Incidents: A Multilevel Test of Black's Theory of Law." *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology* 6 (1) (8): 2014.

Holloway, I. *Basic concepts for qualitative research*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.

Hyman, Ilene, Tonia Forte, Janice Du Mont, Sarah Romans, and Marsha Cohen. "Help-Seeking Rates for Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Among Canadian Immigrant Women." *Health Care for Women International* 27 (8): 2006.

Hyman, Ilene, Robin Manson, Sepali Guruge, Helene Berman, Pushpa Kanagaratnam, Lisa Manuel. "Perception of Factors Contributing to Intimate Partner Violence among Sri-Lankan Tamil Immigrant Women in Canada." *Health Care For Women International* 32 (9), 2011.

Hyman, Ilene, and Robin Mason. "Perceptions of and Response to Woman Abuse Among Tamil Women in Toronto." *Canadian Woman Studies* 25.1 (2006).

Jackson, Nicky Ali, ed. *Encyclopedia of domestic violence*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007.

Javdani, Shabnam, Naomi Sadeh, and Verona Edelyn. "Gendered Social forces: A review of the impact of institutionalized factors on women and girls' criminal justice trajectories". *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 17 (2) (2011): 161-211.

Jenson, Jane. "Who Cares? Gender and Welfare Regimes." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 4 (2) (1997): 182-187.

Jones, Alysha D. "Intimate partner violence in military couples: A review of the literature." *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2011.

Kasturirangan, Aaratic, Sandhya Krishnan, and Stephanie Riger. "The Impact of Culture and Minority Status on Women's Experience of Domestic Abuse." *Trauma, Violence and Abuse* 5 (4) (2004): 318-332.

Kellerman, N. P. P. "The long-term psychological effects and treatment of Holocaust trauma." *Journal of Loss and Traumas* 6 (2001): 197-218.

Kitzmann, Katherine M., et al. "Child witnesses to domestic violence: a meta-analytic review." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 71.2 (2003): 339.

Knight, Melanie, and Kathleen Rodgers. "The Government Is Operationalizing Neo-liberalism": Women's Organizations, Status of Women Canada, and the Struggle for Progressive Social Change in Canada." *NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 20 (4) (2012): 266-282.

Kohler Riessman, C. "Analysis of personal narratives." (2000).

Koss, Mary. "Blame, Shame and Community: Justice Responses to Violence Against Women." *American Psychologist* 55 (11) (2000): 1332.

Krahn, Harvey, Tracey Derwing, Marlene Mulder, and Lori Wilkinson. "Educated and Underemployed: Refugee Integration into the Canadian Labour Market." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 1 (2000): 59-84.

Lamba, Navjot L. "The Employment Experiences of Canadian Refugees: Measuring the Impact of Human and Social Capital on Quality of Employment." *CRSA/RCSA* 40 (1) (2003): 45-64.

Larner, Wendy. "Neo-liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality." *Studies in Political Economy* 63 (2000): 525.

Lemke, Thomas. "'The birth of bio-politics': Michel Foucault's lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality." *Economy and society* 30(2) (2001): 190-207.

Liang, Belle, Linda M. Williams, and Jane A. Siegel. "Relational outcomes of childhood sexual trauma in female survivors a longitudinal study." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 21(1) (2006): 42-57.

Li, Simiao, Ani Levick, Adelaide Eichman, and Judy Chang. "Women's Perspectives on the Context of Violence and Role of Police in Their Intimate Partner Violence Arrest Experiences." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, June, 2014.

Loescher, Gil and James Milner. "Protracted Refugee Situation." *Migration Review* 33, (2012).

Manitoba Department of Justice. <<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/legis.html>>. Accessed April 2, 2012.

Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters Announcement. "Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters Announcement." Accessed October 15, 2012. <<http://www.maws.mb.ca/>>.

Mann, A., and M. Grimes. "Common and Contested Ground: Marxism and Race, Gender & Class Analysis." *Race, Gender and Class* 8 (2001): 3-22.

Martin, Melissa. "Housing Refugees' Top Challenge: Lack of address only makes Settlement here more difficult". *The Winnipeg Free Press*, January 18, 2012.

McCall, Leslie. "The Complexity of Intersectionality." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30 (3) (2005): 1771-1800.

McDonald, Susan. "Not in the numbers: Domestic violence and immigrant women." *Canadian Woman Studies* 19.3 (1999).

Merry, Sally. "Rights talk and the experience of law: implementing women's human rights to protection from violence." *Human Rights Quarterly* 25:2 (2003): 343-381.

Menjívar, Celilia, and Olivia Salcido. "Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence: Common Experiences in Different Countries." *Gender & Society* 16 (6) (2002): 898-920.

Mitchell, William E. "Why Wape men don't beat their wives: Constraints domestic tranquility in a New Guinea society." *To have and to hit: Cultural perspectives on wife beating* (1999): 100-109.

Miedema, Baukje and Sandra Wachholz. *A Complex Web: Access to Justice for Abused Immigrant Women in New Brunswick*. Status of Women, March 1998

Mosher, Janet. "The Complicity of the State in the Intimate Abuse of Immigrant Women." *Racialized Migrant Women in Canada: Essays in Health, Violence, and Equity*. Ed. Vijay Agnew. Toronto: University Of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2009. 43-69.

Moussa, H. *Challenging myths and claiming power together. A handbook to set up and assess support groups for and with immigrant and refugee women*. Prepared for and published by Education Wife Assault, 1994.

Nafstad, Hilde Eileen, et al. "Ideology and power: the influence of current neo - liberalism in society." *Journal of community & applied social psychology* 17.4 (2007): 313-327.

Neborak, Jacklyn. *Family Reunification?: A Critical Analysis of Citizenship and Immigration Canada's 2013 Reforms to the Family Class*. No. 2013/8. RCIS Working Paper, 2013.

Olsen, M. Gregg. "Toward Global Welfare State Convergence?: Family Policy and Health Care in Sweden, Canada and the United States." *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare* 34 (2) (2007): 143- 164.

O'Mahony, J., and T. Donnelly. "Immigrant and refugee women's post-partum depression help-seeking experiences and access to care: a review and analysis of the literature." *Journal of psychiatric and mental health nursing* 17(10) (2010): 917-928.

Orb, Angelica, Laurel Eisenhauer, and Dianne Wynaden. "Ethics in qualitative research." *Journal of nursing scholarship* 33.1 (2001): 93-96.

Pagliari, Jennifer and Jill Mahoney. "Funding cuts threaten immigrant agencies." *The Globe and Mail* 23 December 2010 retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/funding-cuts-threatenimmigrant-agencies/article564940/>.

Pan, Amy et.al. "Understanding the Role of Culture in Domestic Violence: The Ahimsa Project for Safe Families." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 8 (1) (2006): 35-43.

Paterson, Stephanie. "(Re) Constructing women's resistance to woman abuse: Resources, strategy choice and implications of and for public policy in Canada." *Critical Social Policy* 29 (1) (2009): 121-145.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Picot, Garnett and Arthur Sweetman. "Canadian Immigration Policy and Immigrant Economic Outcomes: Why the Differences in Outcomes between Sweden and Canada?" *Statistics Canada*, March 2011, Policy Paper No. 25.

Pozzebon, Marlei and Alain Pinsonneault. "Challenges in Conducting Empirical Work Using Structuration Theory: Learning from IT Research." *Organization Studies* 26 (2005): 1353-1376.

Radford, J., and E. Stanko. "Violence against women and children." *Hester M. Kelly, L and Radford, J. (eds.) Women, Violence and Male Power*. Open University Press. Buckingham (1996).

Rana, Sheetal. "Addressing Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities: Critical Issues for Culturally Competent Services" *National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women*, Feb 2012.

Reese, Susan, and Bob Pease. "Domestic Violence in Refugee Families in Australia: Rethinking Settlement Policy and Practice." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 5 (2) (2007): 1-20.

Reina, Angelica, Brenda Lohman, Marta Maria Maldonado. ““He Said They’d Deport Me”:
Factors Influencing Domestic Violence Help-seeking Practices”. *Journal of Interpersonal
Violence* 29 (4) (2014): 593-615.

Riley, Krista. “Violence in the Lives of Muslim Girls and Women”. *A Safe Space for Dialogue,
Reflection, and Research Symposium, London, 22-24 September, 2011*.

Rotich, Jerono P. "Physical Activity and Recreation Lifestyle in Transition." *Engaging the
Diaspora: Migration and African Families* (2013): 93.

Russo, Nancy Felipe and Angela Pirlott. “Gender-based violence: Concepts, Methods, And
Findings.” *Academy of Sciences* 1087 (2006): 178-205.

R. v. W.(D.), [1991] 1 SCR 742, 1991 CanLII 93 (SCC), retrieved November 10, 2014 from
<<http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/1991/1991canlii93/1991canlii93.html>>.

Ryan, G. & Bernard, H. (2000) Data management and analysis methods (chapter in) Denzin, N.
& Lincoln, Y. (eds) (2000) *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd edn). 769-802. London: Sage.

Samuels, Gina Miranda and Fariyal Ross-Sheriff. “Identity, oppression, and power: Feminisms
and intersectionality theory.” *Journal of Women & Social Work* 23 (1) (2008): 5-9.

Santin, Aldo. "Manitoba second-worst for violence against women." *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 2, 2014: A5.

Sevcik, Irene, Michael Rothery, Nancy Nason-Clark. "Finding their Voices: Women From Ethno-Cultural Communities Speak Out About Family Violence." *Resolve Alberta*, 2010.

Sharma, Anita. "Healing the Wounds of Domestic Abuse: Improving the Effectiveness of Feminist Therapeutic Intervention with Immigrant and Racially Visible Women who have been Abused." *Violence Against Women* 7 (12) (2002):1405-1428.

Sherkin, Samantha. "Community-based Research on Immigrant Women: Contributions and Challenges." *Presentation: Seventh National Metropolis Conference*, March 25-28, 2004.

Shirwadkar, Swati. "Canadian domestic violence policy and Indian immigrant women." *Violence Against Women* 10.8 (2004): 860-879.

Sinha, Maire. "Measuring violence against women: Statistical Trends. February 25, 2013". *Statistics Canada*, 2013.

Sokoloff, Natalie, and Ida Dupont. "Domestic Violence at the Intersections of Race, Class and Gender: Challenges and Contributions to Understanding Violence Against Marginalized Women in Diverse Communities." *Violence Against Women* 11 (1) (2005): 38-64.

Statistics Canada. *Transitional Homes in Canada: National, Provincial and Territorial Fact Sheets 2009/2010*. Catalogue no. 85-404-X, 2010.

Statistics Canada. *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*. Catalogue no.85-224-X, 2011.

Statistics Canada. *Violence Against Women, 2011*. Catalogue no. 11-001-W, 2013.

Sullivan, Marianne, et al. "“For Us It Is Like Living in the Dark” Ethiopian Women’s Experiences With Domestic Violence." *Journal of interpersonal violence* 20.8 (2005): 922-940.

Tastsoglou, Baukje and Evangelia Miedema. “But Where Are You From, Originally?” Immigrant Women and Integration in the Maritimes." *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 24 (2) (2000): 82-91.

The Council of Canadians. “With omnibus Bill C-42, Conservative government going after the most vulnerable yet again.” 18 November 2014 retrieved from <<http://www.canadians.org/media/omnibus-bill-c-43-conservative-government-going-after-most-vulnerable-yet-again>>.

Tomlinson, Kathy. “Russian bride leaves elderly man with \$25K welfare bill.” *CBC News* 22 October 2012.

Townson, Monica. "Women's Poverty and the Recession." *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*. September, 2009.

Tranter, David. "Breaking the Connection Between Traditional Masculinity and Violence: Toward a Context and Gender-Sensitive Approach to Counselling Males." *Violence in the Family*. Ed. Keith Brownlee and John Graham. Toronto: Canadian Scholar Press, 2005. 105-119.

Tremonti, Anna Maria. "Muslim Leaders speak out against honour." *CBC Radio*, December 13, 2011, accessed May 26, 2014.

Tripp, Rob. "'Give me away...if he is a good man' An excerpt from Without Honour The True Story of the Shafia Family and the Kingston Canal Murders." 27 October 2012 retrieved from <http://news.nationalpost.com/2012/10/27/give-me-away-if-he-is-a-good-man-an-excerpt-from-without-honour-the-true-story-of-the-shafia-family-and-the-kingston-canal-murders/>.

UNICEF. "Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls." *Innocenti Digest* 6, 2005.

United Nations General Assembly. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*. Proceedings of the 85th Plenary Meeting, Geneva, Dec. 20, 1993.

United Nations High Commission. *Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: A Guideline for Prevention and Response*. May, 2003.

Ursel, Jane. "Family Violence Courts: Issues and Trends in North America." Conference: On the Path to Justice. 5 February 2014 retrieved from <<http://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/NEVR/NEVR%20%20Vancouver%20%20Feb%20%202014%20%20Family%20Violence%20Courts.pdf>>.

Ursel, Jane. "Final Report on an Evaluation of the Manitoba Front End Project." *RESOLVE*, June, 2013.

Ursel, Jane. "Mandatory Charging Policy: The Manitoba Model." *Unsettling Truths: Battered Women, Policy, Politics and Contemporary Research in Canada*. Vancouver, 1998.

Van der Kolk, Bessel A. "Developmental trauma disorder." *Psychiatric Annals* 35 (5) (2005): 401-408.

Vice News. "Immigrants to Canada in Abusive Relationships must choose deportation of more abuse." 4 June 2014, retrieved from <<https://news.vice.com/article/immigrants-to-canada-in-abusive-relationships-must-choose-deportation-or-more-abuse>>.

Violet: law & abused women. "Understanding the legal implications of partner abuse." Retrieved October 12, 2014 from <[http://www.violetnet.ca/content/understanding-legal-implications-partner](http://www.violetnet.ca/content/understanding-legal-implications-partner-abuse) abuse>.

Wilkinson, Lori. "Understanding the Influence of Gender, Language and Entrance Status on the Settlement Experiences of Immigrants: an Intersectional Analysis" *invited keynote presentation at GBA From Research to Policy Measurement Conference, Status of Women Canada, Ottawa, 2014.*

Wilkinson, Lori, Jill Bucklaschuk, Yi Shen, Iqbal Chowdhury and Tamara Edkins "What do we know about the settlement outcomes of recent immigrants to Canada?" Ottawa: *Citizenship and Immigration Canada*, 2014.

Wilson, Kate S., et al. "Health needs and barriers to healthcare of women who have experienced intimate partner violence." *Journal of women's health* 16.10 (2007): 1485-1498.

Writer, Staff. "Settlement agencies lose federal funding." *Canadian Immigrant* 27 May 2011 retrieved from <<http://canadianimmigrant.ca/news-and-views/settlement-agencies-lose-federal-funds>>.

Winnipeg Police Service website, retrieved 25 October 2014 from <<http://www.winnipeg.ca/police/DomesticViolence/>>.

Yue, Hongchen. "Immigrant and Canadian born Family Migration and the Employment outcomes of Women and Men." *Submission for Canadian Employment Research Forum Conference*, 2007.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (3) (2006): 193-209.

Appendix

Appendix A1: Questionnaire for Newcomer Women

Long Answer

1. Can you tell me about your life in Canada?
2. Tell me about your relationship with your partner/husband/ spouse (i.e. how did you meet, what was it like starting out in your relationship?)
3. How would you define a 'healthy relationship' or 'partnership'?
 - A) Did your experience with abuse start before you arrived in Canada? If yes, did you find the abuse got worse after you arrived in Canada?
 - B) If you feel comfortable, can you tell me about the violence you experienced?
 - C) Has your partner ever threatened to have you deported or not financially support you?
4. What kinds of programs or services did you use? (prompts: police, shelters, immigrant-serving agencies, police, lawyers/ legal aid, doctors, faith-based groups, ethnic or cultural centers)
 - A) How did you learn about these services?
 - B) Were these programs/services helpful?
5. What kinds of programs, services or other things would help newcomer women to deal with their experiences of intimate partner violence? (prompts: reporting abuse, accessing shelters, legal advice etc.)
6. Were there factors that prevented you from leaving an abusive partnership? If so, what were they?
7. Are you aware of any policies in Canada that might help assist women who are experiencing intimate partner violence? (prompt: reporting policies)
8. Did you find it easy, somewhat easy, somewhat difficult or difficult to access information regarding your legal rights? What do you think would help newcomer women in similar situations access information?
9. Do you think that your situation as a victim of spousal abuse differs from Canadian born women who are victims of spousal abuse? If so, could you tell me about it?

10. Do you feel that there are current Canadian policies (prompt: legal policies, immigration policies, social assistance policies, child protection etc.) that make it difficult to address or transition out of violent partnerships?

A) If yes, what policies?

11. (See question 6: If participant has children, continue) Do you feel that having children affected your decision to leave your abusive spouse? If so, can you tell me about it?

12. What advice would you give other women like you who are in abusive partnerships?

Appendix A2: Questionnaire for Social Service Workers/NGO's

1. Can you describe your area of work for me?
2. How long have you been in this position? How long have you worked with women experiencing domestic abuse?
3. How would you define intimate partner violence?
4. Have you encountered cases where you have had to intervene or counsel women in, or exiting, domestic violence situations? (If yes, proceed to 4A)
 - A) Have you had to deal with cases that involve spousal abuse against newcomer/immigrant or refugee women? (If yes, proceed to 4B)
 - B) Do you think that these cases are different than cases from other women experiencing spousal abuse? If yes, in what ways?
5. From your experiences dealing with victims of spousal abuse, what do you think are the major challenges for newcomer women involved in abusive partnerships?
6. Do you think that newcomer women in abusive partnerships experience different challenges than 'mainstream' Canadian women? If so, what types of challenges?
7. From your experience, what do you think are the major reasons why women stay in abusive relationships? Do you think the reasons women stay are different for newcomer women? If so, what reasons do you think newcomer women stay in abusive partnerships?
8. Do you think that having children affects a women's decision to leave an abusive relationship? If yes, what are the factors that contribute to their decision? Do these differ for newcomer women?
9. Do you think that current social assistance programs such as welfare and social housing aid women who wish to leave abusive partnerships? Why or why not?
10.
 - A) Are you familiar with immigration laws and policies? Please tell me what you know.
 - B) Do you think that current immigration and refugee laws have an influence on whether newcomer women who are experiencing spousal abuse leave the relationship? If yes, in what ways?
11. Are there ways you think that current Canadian policies can be improved to better help newcomer women who are victims of spousal abuse?

12. Are there abused newcomer women you think are less likely to access services? If so, what characteristics might they have?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix A3: Questionnaire for Police Officers

1. How long have you worked with the Winnipeg Police?
2. How long have you worked in your current department/ unit?
3. How would you define intimate partner violence?
4. Have you encountered cases where you have had to intervene in domestic violence situations? (If yes, proceed to 4A) How long have you worked with abused women? In what capacity have you worked with them?
 - A) Have you had to deal with cases that involve spousal abuse against newcomer women? (If yes, proceed to 4B)
 - B) Do you think that these cases are different than cases from other women experiencing spousal abuse? If yes, in what ways?
5.
 - A) From your experiences dealing with victims of spousal abuse, what do you think are the major challenges for newcomer women in abusive partnerships? (prompts: barriers)
 - B) Do you think that these challenges differ from ‘mainstream’ Canadian- born women who are involved in violence relationships? If so, how?
6. Do you feel that the current protocol in place for police when responding to a domestic abuse call is effective in all cases? If not, what kinds of cases challenge the current intervention policy? In the future, do you think that there are amendments that should be made to improve the current policy?
7. From your experience, what do you think are the major reasons why women stay in abusive relationships? Do you think the reasons women stay are different for newcomer women? If so, what reasons do you think newcomer women stay in abusive partnerships?
8. Do you think that current social assistance programs such as welfare and social housing aid women who wish to leave abusive partnerships? Why or why not?
9. Do you think that current immigration and refugee laws have an influence on whether newcomer women who are experiencing spousal abuse leave the relationship? If yes, in what ways?
10. Are there ways you think that current Canadian policies, laws and practices can be improved to better help newcomer women who are victims of spousal abuse?

11. Are there groups of abused newcomer women you think are less likely to access services? If so, what characteristics might they have?

12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix A4: Demographic Fact Sheet for Newcomer Women

Demographic Fact Sheet

1. Case ID: ____ (to be filled out by researcher) _____
2. Pseudonym: ____ (to be filled out by researcher) _____
3. Age of Participant: _____
4. Current employment?
 - Full time1
 - Part-time.....2
 - Casual.....3
 - Not employed.....4
5. What is your education level?
 - Grade nine or less.....1
 - Some high school2
 - Completed high school3
 - Some post-secondary (technical)4
 - Completed post-secondary (technical)5
 - Some post-secondary (university)6
 - Completed post-secondary (university)7
6. What is your current level of income approximately? _____
7. What is your racial background?
 - Caucasian (white)1
 - Aboriginal origin (Native descent)2
 - Black3
 - Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese).....4
 - South East Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi)..5
 - Middle Eastern (Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi, Afghani)6
 - Pacific origin (Filipino).....7
 - Central/South American (El Salvador)8
 - Other9
8. Marital/relationship status with abusive partner?
 - Married.....1
 - Legally separated2
 - Divorced.....3
 - Common law4
 - Boyfriend5
 - Ex-boyfriend6

Other7 18 Explain _____

11. What is the length of your involvement with your ex/partner? _____

12. Age and sex of children (starting with oldest):

_____ (Male/Female)

_____ (Male/Female)

_____ (Male/Female)

_____ (Male/Female)

_____ (Male/Female)

_____ (Male/Female)

Appendix B1: Consent Form for Newcomer Women



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Consent Form

The Role of Canadian Laws and Policies in Perpetuating Intimate Partner Abuse Against Newcomer Women

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This project is a required component in achieving my Master's degree from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba.

In this research, I want to learn about intimate partner abuse as experienced by newcomer women in Canada. In this study, I wish to gain knowledge on how newcomer women's experiences with abuse may differ from Canadian-born women's experiences. One further goal is to assess the role current Canadian laws and policies play in intimate partner violence against newcomer women.

You are invited to participate in this face-to-face interview that will last approximately 60-90 minutes. However, the participation is **STRICTLY** voluntary, and you are able to end the interview at any time. Only if you agree to be part of this study, will you be invited to participate in one meeting and answer the questions presented to you. You are not required to answer all questions, just the ones you are willing to share information.

B. PROCEDURES

You have been selected to participate in this research because you have experienced some form of intimate partner abuse and have lived in Canada for 10 years or less. During the interview, I will ask questions regarding your experiences and opinions regarding abuse against newcomer women, and what can be done to prevent abuse, as well as aid transition out of violent partnerships for women in these relationships.

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will attend a face-to-face interview to discuss your personal and work experiences. The interview will be arranged to take place at your office or a mutually agreeable location. The meeting will be audio-taped if you permit me.

C. RISKS

Due to the nature of this study, the questions asked during the interview may evoke emotional responses. Participants should know they can pause or terminate the interview at any time or may choose to skip certain questions. You may choose not to answer any questions or may leave the study at any time. Please indicate to the researcher any sensitive question related to your personal information that you do not want to be disclosed.

Confidentiality will be secured in a variety of ways:

- Your name and contact information will only exist on the signed consent materials and stored in a locked cabinet at the University.
- Your name will not be recorded in the interview transcriptions
- Any identifying information will be removed from transcriptions and surveys and will not be linked to the data or output
- All data will be analyzed and presented as a group. Your personal information will not be identifiable
- Data will be kept in the researcher's office in a secure file cabinet (separate from the consent forms)
- Only the researcher and her thesis committee will have full access to the data
- Audio recordings are destroyed once the transcripts have been created
- Participation or refusal to participate will not have any affect on services received or on employment with their current organization
- Data is destroyed upon completion of this project and within five years after initial interviews for this project take place (destruction will take place on or before May, 1 2018)

For those participants who are past or present victims of abuse, counseling services will be provided if requested, and a list of resource contact numbers supplied.

D. DIRECT BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you for participation in this research study.

E. COSTS

There will be no cost to you for participating in this research.

F. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

G. DISSEMINATION

Results from this research will be disseminated in aggregate (group) form. It may be presented to local community organizations and other community stake-holders in Winnipeg. It may also be published as academic papers in refereed journals, or presented at professional conferences. As stated above, your information will not be identifiable—your confidentiality is my highest priority.

H. QUESTIONS

Please contact Janine Bramadat about any questions you may have about the project. You can contact me at (number provided).

You are also able to contact my advisor, Dr. Lori Wilkinson, at (number provided) who is happy to answer any concerns you may have.

If you have any further questions about the study and your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, you may call the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board care of Ms. Maggie Bowman at (number provided) or email her at margaret.bowman@ad.umanitoba.ca.

I. CONSENT

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board(s) and a representative(s) of the University of Manitoba Research Quality Management / Assurance office may also require access to your research records for safety and quality assurance purposes.

This research has been approved by the Psychology and Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at (number provided). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

I consent to having this interview audio-recorded:

No () Yes ()

I am interested in obtaining a summary of the findings from this research project:

No ()

Yes (): If yes, how would you like to receive the results?

By Email () Please provide email address: _____

By Surface mail () Please provide mailing address:

You can expect to receive a copy of the results at the end of this project but no later than December 2014

Appendix B2: Consent Form for Social Service Workers and Police Officers



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Consent Form

The Role of Canadian Laws and Policies in Perpetuating Intimate Partner Abuse Against Newcomer Women

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This project is a required component in achieving my Master's degree from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba.

In this research, I want to learn about intimate partner abuse as experienced by newcomer women in Canada. The goal of this study is to gain knowledge on how newcomer women's experiences with abuse may differ from Canadian-born women's experiences. One further goal is to assess the role current Canadian laws and policies play in intimate partner violence against newcomer women.

You are invited to participate in this face-to-face interview. However, the participation is STRICTLY voluntary. Only if you agree to be part of this study, will you be invited to participate in one meeting lasting approximately 45-60 minutes and answer the questions presented to you. You are not required to answer all questions, just the ones you are willing to share information.

B. PROCEDURES

You have been selected to participate in this research because you either work (or have recently worked) with newcomer (women who have lived in Canada 10 years or less) women who are victims of intimate partner abuse. During the interview, I will ask questions regarding your opinions on the issue of abuse against newcomer women, the role Canadian laws and policies play, and what can be done to prevent abuse, as well as aid transition out of violent partnerships for women in these relationships.

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will attend a face-to-face interview, to discuss work experiences. The interview will be arranged to take place at your office or a mutually agreeable location. The meeting will be audio-taped if you permit me.

C. RISKS

There is no anticipated physical or psychological risk related to participating in this study. You may choose not to answer any questions or may leave the study at any time. Please

indicate to the researcher any sensitive question related to your personal information that you do not want to be disclosed. Confidentiality will be secured in a variety of ways:

- Your name and contact information will only exist on the signed consent materials and stored in a locked cabinet at the University.
- Your name will not be recorded in the interview transcriptions
- Any identifying information will be removed from transcriptions and surveys and will not be linked to the data or output
- All data will be analyzed and presented as a group. Your personal information will not be identifiable
- Data will be kept in the researcher's office in a secure file cabinet (separate from the consent forms)
- Only the researchers and her thesis committee will have full access to the data
- Audio recordings are destroyed once the transcripts have been created
- Participation or refusal to participate will not have any affect on services received or on employment with their current organization
- Data is destroyed upon completion of this project and within five years after initial interviews for this project take place (destruction will take place on or before May, 1 2018)

For those participants who are past or present victims of abuse, counseling services will be provided if requested, and a list of resource contact numbers supplied.

D. DIRECT BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits to you for participation in this research study.

E. COSTS

There will be no cost to you for participating in this research.

F. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

G. DISSEMINATION

Results from this research will be disseminated in aggregate (group) form. It may be presented to local community organizations and other community stake-holders in Winnipeg. It may also be published as academic papers in refereed journals, or presented at professional conferences. As stated above, your information will not be identifiable—your confidentiality is my highest priority.

H. QUESTIONS

Please contact Janine Bramadat about any questions you may have about the project. You can contact me at (number provided).

You are also able to contact my advisor, Dr. Lori Wilkinson, at (number provided) who is happy to answer any concerns you may have.

If you have any further questions about the study and your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, you may call the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board care of Ms. Maggie Bowman at (number provided) or email her at margaret.bowman@ad.umanitoba.ca.

I. CONSENT

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board(s) and a representative(s) of the University of Manitoba Research Quality Management / Assurance office may also require access to your research records for safety and quality assurance purposes.

This research has been approved by the Psychology and Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at (number provided). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

I consent to having this interview audio-recorded:

No () Yes ()

I am interested in obtaining a summary of the findings from this research project:

No ()

Yes (): If yes, how would you like to receive the results?

By Email () Please provide email address: _____

By Surface mail () Please provide mailing address:

You can expect to receive a copy of the results at the end of this project but no later than December 2014

Appendix C1: Introductory Script for Newcomer Women



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Hi, my name is Janine Bramadat. I am a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. We are meeting today to discuss your interest in participating in my study on intimate partner abuse against newcomer women in Canada. I am interested in learning more about your feelings and opinions on the subject of partner abuse in Canada. As a recent immigrant to Canada who has resided in Manitoba for 10 years or less, you are able to provide a unique perspective when confronting the issue of partner abuse. This information is important, as it helps build knowledge and academic literature regarding an understudied area.

The information I gather throughout this interview will help me gain a sense of the progress that has been made in understanding intimate partner violence against newcomer women, while also learning of the challenges that exist and future progress that needs to be made in order to better aid those in abusive partnerships.

As someone who is an immigrant to Canada and also who has been through some form of partner abuse, your experiences will help further the research on intimate partner violence, specifically in this case, among newcomer women. We will discuss your opinion on current laws and practices and how they may relate to intimate partner violence. We will also discuss ideas you may have on future research, and how partner abuse against newcomer women may differ from partner abuse against Canadian-born women.

The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. I will be using an audio-recorder to ensure that I capture what you say accurately. At the beginning of the interview I will be referring to your participant number rather than your name in order to ensure you remain anonymous.

Please be aware all the information you provide will be kept anonymous and confidential. You are not required to answer all the questions asked, and you are able to leave at any point. Your participation is completely voluntary, and if you wish to skip any of the questions asked, we can do so.

If you have any questions following the interview you are welcome to contact me at (number provided)

Thank you,
Janine Bramadat

Appendix C2: Introductory Script for Service Providers



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Hi, my name is Janine Bramadat. I am a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. We are meeting today to discuss your interest in participating in my study on intimate partner violence against newcomer women in Canada. I am interested in learning more about your experiences working with newcomer women who have been impacted by abuse in their partnerships. This information is important, as it helps build knowledge and academic literature regarding an understudied area.

The information I gather throughout this interview will help me gain a sense of the progress that has been made in understanding intimate partner violence against newcomer women, while also learning of the challenges that exist and future progress that needs to be made in order to better aid those in abusive partnerships.

The following questions will be regarding your experiences, opinions and ideas regarding intimate partner violence against newcomer women. We will discuss your opinion on current laws and practices and how they may relate to intimate partner violence. We will also discuss ideas you may have on future research, and how partner abuse against newcomer women may differ from partner abuse against Canadian-born women.

The interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes. I will be using an audio-recorder to ensure that I capture what you say accurately. At the beginning of the interview I will be referring to your participant number rather than your name in order to ensure you remain anonymous.

Please be aware all the information you provide will be kept anonymous and confidential. You are not required to answer all the questions asked, and you are able to leave at any point. Your participation is completely voluntary, and if you wish to skip any of the questions asked, we can do so.

If you have any questions following the interview you are welcome to contact me at (number provided)

Thank you,
Janine Bramadat

Appendix D1: Telephone Script for Newcomer Women



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Hello, my name is Janine Bramadat and I am from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. Thank you for expressing interest in this project. This research project focuses on the issue of intimate partner violence against newcomer women in Canada. Specifically, I am interested in learning more about your experience with intimate partner abuse in order to assess current Canadian laws and policies.

The information I gather throughout these interviews will help me gain a sense of the challenges you may have faced when deciding to leave an abusive partnership; the challenges you may have faced after leaving an abusive partnership and the ways current Federal and Provincial interact with such decisions.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to attend a face-to-face interview with me. It will take about 60-90 minutes and will be audio-taped (with your permission). You will be asked some questions about your life in Canada, your previous experience with abuse, some of the social services you may have utilized, and what, if any, challenges you may have encountered when deciding to leave an abusive partnership. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form that will be provided at the meeting. You are not required to answer all the questions, and can terminate the interview at any time. All the information you provide will be kept confidential.

Before we begin the interview, I will go over the consent form with you and you may ask any questions about the study. Do you have any questions for me? May I arrange a time for you to meet with me? Where would you like to meet?

Thank you,
Janine Bramadat

Appendix D2: Telephone Script for Social Service Workers



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Hi, my name is Janine Bramadat. I am a Master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. We are meeting today to discuss your interest in participating in my study on intimate partner violence against newcomer women in Canada. I am interested in learning more about your experiences working with newcomer women who have been impacted by abuse in their partnerships. This information is important, as it helps build knowledge and academic literature regarding an understudied area.

The information I gather throughout this interview will help me gain a sense of the progress that has been made in understanding intimate partner violence against newcomer women, while also learning of the challenges that exist and future progress that needs to be made in order to better aid those in violent partnerships.

The following questions will be regarding your experiences, opinions and ideas regarding intimate partner violence against newcomer women. We will discuss your opinion on current laws and practices and how they may relate to intimate partner violence. We will also discuss ideas you may have on future research, and how partner violence against newcomer women may differ from partner violence against Canadian-born women.

The interview will take approximately 45-90 minutes. I will be using an audio-recorder to ensure that I capture what you say accurately. At the beginning of the interview I will be referring to your participant number rather than your name in order to ensure you remain anonymous.

Please be aware all the information you provide will be kept anonymous and confidential. You are not required to answer all the questions asked, and you are able to leave at any point. Your participation is completely voluntary, and if you wish to skip any of the questions asked, we can do so.

If you have any questions following the interview you are welcome to contact me.

Thank you,
Janine Bramadat

Appendix E1: Initial Letter of Introduction for Newcomer Women



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

October 2013,
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to inform you of a project that I am conducting as part of the requirement to complete my Master's Degree. This study, called, '*The Role of Canadian Laws and Policies in Perpetuating Intimate Partner Violence Against Newcomer Women*', seeks to investigate questions regarding the experiences of intimate partner violence against newcomer (immigrant and refugee women who have lived in Canada for 10 years or less) women. While there is a significant body of evidence chronicling the abuse of women, there are few studies dedicated specifically to abuse against newcomer women. This study aims to examine the issue from a collaborative perspective that entails the views and opinions of service workers such as NGO workers, social workers, and police officers, as well as newcomer women who are victims of partner violence. I hope that this work will provide a more accurate and holistic picture of the issue in Canada. I wish to conduct semi-structured interviews with participants who are currently over 18 years of age. The research has already been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba, and interviews are anticipated to commence in February 2013. Eligible participants include immigrant and refugee women who have previously been victims of one or more forms of intimate partner abuse. Participation would entail one 60-90 minute interview. Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed. The goal of this interview is to provide more detailed information about issues surrounding abuse specifically as it applies to newcomer women in Canada.

In an effort to recruit participants, I am asking permission to post recruitment notices that provide information to this study along with my contact information. If you are willing to grant me permission to continue with this recruitment process, please email me at (email provided) or call me directly at (number provided).

I thank you in advance for reviewing this research project.

Sincerely,

Janine Bramadat
Master's Student,
Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba

Appendix E2: Letter of Introduction for Service Workers



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

March 2013,
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to inform you of a project that I am conducting as part of the requirement to complete my Master's Degree. This study, called, '*The Role of Canadian Laws and Policies in Perpetuating Intimate Partner Violence Against Newcomer Women*', seeks to investigate questions regarding the experiences of intimate partner violence against newcomer (immigrant and refugee women who have lived in Canada for 10 years or less) women. While there is a significant body of evidence chronicling the abuse of women, there are few studies dedicated specifically to abuse against newcomer women. This study aims to examine the issue from a collaborative perspective that entails the views and opinions of service workers such as NGO workers, social workers, and police officers, as well as newcomer women who are victims of partner violence. I hope that this work will provide a more accurate and holistic picture of the issue in Canada. I wish to conduct semi-structured interviews with participants who are currently over 18 years of age. The research has already been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba, and interviews are anticipated to commence in March, 2013. Eligible participants include those who are currently, or have recently (within the past 5 years), worked in the social service sector in Canada (i.e. social workers, NGO representatives, and those working in the legal field), where they would have experiences with newcomer women who are victims of intimate partner violence. Participation would entail one 45-60 minute interview. Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed. The goal of this interview is to provide more detailed information about issues surrounding abuse specifically as it applies to newcomer women in Canada.

In an effort to recruit participants, I am asking for permission to post and circulate this recruitment announcement to employees in your organization. If you are willing to allow me to go forward with recruitment, please let me know by emailing me at (email provided) or calling me at (number provided)

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Janine Bramadat
Master's Student,
Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba

Appendix F: Places to Send Introduction Letter

Alpha House: Protective Living for Women Leaving Abuse
P.O Box 37015 RPO St. Vital Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2M 5R3

Aurora Family Therapy Centre
University of Winnipeg
Phone: 204-786-9251

Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre
1150 A Waverly St
Winnipeg, MB
R3T 0P4

#104-3100 Pembina Hwy
Winnipeg, MB
R3T 4G4

#104-210 Ellen St.
Winnipeg, MB
R3A 1R7

Immigrant Centre
100 Adelaide Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3A 0W2
Phone: 204-943-9158

Klinic Community Health Centre
870 Portage Ave
Winnipeg, MB
R3G 0P1
Phone: 204-784-4090

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.
521 Bannatyne Ave.
Winnipeg, MB
R3A OE4
Phone: 204-977-1000

Main Street Project
75 Martha Street
Phone: 204-9420-3052

Mount Carmel Clinic
886 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 5L4
Phone: 204-582-2311

Multicultural Wellness Program: Mount Carmel Clinic
Ph:204-589-9483
Fax:204-582-6006

NorWest Co-op Community Health
785 Keewatin Street
Winnipeg, MB
R2X 3B9
Phone: 204-940-2020

North End Women's Centre
394 Selkirk Ave
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 2M2
Phone: 204-589-7347

Pluri-elles (Manitoba) Inc.
570, rue des Meurons
Saint-Boniface, MB
R2H 2P8
Phone: 204-233-1735

Prairie Sky Immigration Inc.
Unit 158 - 99 Scurfield Blvd
Wpg, Mb, R3Y 1Y1
Phone: 1-(204) 221-0672

Pregnancy & Family Support Services Inc.
555 Spence Street
Phone: 204-772-9091

Psychological Serice Centre
University of Manitoba
Phone: 204-474-9222

Recovery of Hope
300-309 Hargrave Street
Phone: 204-477-4673

SEED Winnipeg
Phone: (204) 927-9948
Fax: (204) 927-9930

Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC)
Suite 200, 226 Osborne Street North, Winnipeg, R3C 1V4 (corner of Osborne and York)
Tel: 982-7812 (direct line)
Tel: 982-7800 (general)
Fax: 982-7819
Website: www.serc.mb.ca

The Family Centre of Winnipeg,
4th Floor, Portage Place
Phone: 204-947-1401

The Laurel Centre
104 Roslyn Road
Winnipeg, MB
R3L 0G6
Phone: 204-783-5460

The Immigrant Centre
100 Adelaide Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 0W2 Canada
Phone: (204) 943-9158
Fax: (204) 949-0734
Email: info@icmanitoba.com

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
95 Ellen Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3A 1S8
Phone: 204-943-8765

The Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba
108-424 Logan Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 0R4
Phone (204) 414-9452, Fax (204) 415-0807
Email iwamanitoba@gmail.com

Wahbung Abinoonjiiag Inc.
225 Dufferin Ave
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 5N7
Phone: 204-925-4610

West Central Women's Resource Centre
Telephone: 774-7990
101B - 583 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1J7
Email: nisw.westcentral@mts.net

Winnipeg Transition Centre
1836 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2V 3H2, Phone:
Phone:(204) 338-3899
Fax: (204) 338-4299
Email: info@winnipegtransitioncentre.com

Women's Health Clinic
3rd Floor,419 Graham Ave.
Phone: 204-947-1517

Women in Second Stage Housing (W.I.S.H.)
St. Norbert P.O. 202
Winnipeg, MB
R3V 1L6
Phone: 204-275-2600



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

**LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS
WHO MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**

- **Have been born outside of Canada**
- **Have lived in Canada for 10 years or less**
- **Have *previously* been in an abusive relationship with a married or common-law spouse**
- **Are 18 years of age or older**

**Your participation would entail a one
60-90 minute interview.**

For more information on this study, or to volunteer,
please contact:
Janine Bramadat
Department of Sociology
At
(number provided)
(email provided)

Appendix H: Debriefing Script

Participating in research interviews and speaking about their experiences of domestic violence can be distressing for many women. If you are feeling upset and distressed, I encourage you to contact a crisis counsellor. Sometimes sharing your thoughts and feelings with professionals knowledgeable in the field of family violence can be helpful. Would you like me to provide you with a list of names and numbers of agencies that you could contact for assistance?

Appendix I: Community Resources

Shelters, crisis line support and services

24-Hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline: 0808 2000 247

24-Hour Toll-free province-wide crisis line: 1-877-977-0007

Osborne House: 204-942-3052

Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.: 204-987-2780/ 1-800-362-3344 (Toll-free)

Winnipeg Police Victim Services Unit: 204-986-6350

Victim Services at Correctional Service Canada: 1-866-806-2275

Nova House Inc.: 204-482-7882/204-482-1200 (Crisis line)

The Portage Family Abuse Prevention Centre: 204-239-5243/ 204-239-5233 (Crisis line)

Entre-Temps (L') des Franco-Manitobaines: 204-925-2550

Legal Contact

Women's Advocacy Program: 204-945-6851

Legal Aid Manitoba: <http://www.legalaid.mb.ca/>

Community Legal Education Association: 204-943-2382

Citizenship and Immigration Canada: 1-888-242-2100

Medical and Counselling Contact

Alpha House: Protective Living for Women Leaving Abuse
P.O Box 37015 RPO St. Vital Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2M 5R3

Aurora Family Therapy Centre
University of Winnipeg
Phone: 204-786-9251

Crisis Stabilization Unit
755 Portage Ave
Phone: 204-940-3633

Cornerstone Counselling Centre
302-1200 Portage Ave
Phone: 204-663-0050

Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre
1150 A Waverly St
Winnipeg, MB
R3T 0P4

#104-3100 Pembina Hwy
Winnipeg, MB
R3T 4G4

#104-210 Ellen St.
Winnipeg, MB
R3A 1R7

Immigrant Centre
100 Adelaide Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3A 0W2
Phone: 204-943-9158

Klinik Community Health Centre
870 Portage Ave
Winnipeg, MB
R3G 0P1
Phone: 204-784-4090

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc.
521 Bannatyne Ave.
Winnipeg, MB
R3A OE4
Phone: 204-977-1000

Main Street Project
75 Martha Street
Phone: 204-9420-3052

Mount Carmel Clinic
886 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 5L4
Phone: 204-582-2311

Multicultural Wellness Program: Mount Carmel Clinic
Ph:204-589-9483
Fax:204-582-6006

NorWest Co-op Community Health
785 Keewatin Street
Winnipeg, MB
R2X 3B9
Phone: 204-940-2020

North End Women's Centre
394 Selkirk Ave
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 2M2
Phone: 204-589-7347

Pluri-elles (Manitoba) Inc.
570, rue des Meurons
Saint-Boniface, MB
R2H 2P8
Phone: 204-233-1735

Pregnancy & Family Support Services Inc.
555 Spence Street
Phone: 204-772-9091

Psychological Serice Centre
University of Manitoba
Phone: 204-474-9222

Recovery of Hope
300-309 Hargrave Street
Phone: 204-477-4673

SEED Winnipeg
Phone: (204) 927-9948
Fax: (204) 927-9930

Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC)
Suite 200, 226 Osborne Street North, Winnipeg, R3C 1V4 (corner of Osborne and York)
Tel: 982-7812 (direct line)
Tel: 982-7800 (general)
Fax: 982-7819
Website: www.serc.mb.ca

The Family Centre of Winnipeg,

4th Floor, Portage Place
Phone: 204-947-1401

The Laurel Centre
104 Roslyn Road
Winnipeg, MB
R3L 0G6
Phone: 204-783-5460

The Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba
301-960 Portage Ave
Winnipeg, MB
R3C 0R4
Phone: 204-414-9452

Wahbung Abinoonjiiag Inc.
225 Dufferin Ave
Winnipeg, MB
R2W 5N7
Phone: 204-925-4610

West Central Women's Resource Centre
Telephone: 774-7990
101B - 583 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1J7
Email: nisw.westcentral@mts.net

Women's Health Clinic
3rd Floor, 419 Graham Ave.
Phone: 204-947-1517

Women in Second Stage Housing (W.I.S.H.)
St. Norbert P.O. 202
Winnipeg, MB
R3V 1L6
Phone: 204-275-2600

Immigrant Service Agencies

The Immigrant Centre
100 Adelaide Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 0W2 Canada
Phone: (204) 943-9158
Fax: (204) 949-0734
Email: info@icmanitoba.com

Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Welcome Place
521 Bannatyne Ave.
Winnipeg, Manitoba,
R3A 0E4, Canada
Phone: (204) 977-1000
Fact: (204) 956-7548

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
95 Ellen Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3A 1S8
Phone: 204-943-8765

Winnipeg Transition Centre
1836 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2V 3H2
Phone:(204) 338-3899
Fax: (204) 338-4299
Email: info@winnipegtransitioncentre.com

Prairie Sky Immigration Inc.
Unit 158 - 99 Scurfield Blvd
Wpg, Mb, R3Y 1Y1
Phone: 1-(204) 221-0672

Neighborhood Immigrant Settlement programs

Elmwood Community Resource Centre
Telephone: 982-1720
200 Levis Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2L 2C2
Email: nisw.elmwood@elmwoodcrc.com

Tuxedo Resource Centre
Telephone: 488-2133
1 - 225 Doncaster Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3N 1X7
Email: nisw.tuxedo@hotmail.com

Elmwood Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program
200 Levis Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2L 2C2

Telephone: 204-982-1720
Email: nisw.elmwood@elmwoodcrc.com

NEEDS Centre

251- A Notre Dame Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1N8
Telephone: 204-940-1260
Web: <http://www.needsinc.ca>

West Central Neighbourhood Immigrant Settlement Program

101B - 583 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1J7
Telephone: 204-774-7990
Email: nisw.westcentral@mts.net

Westman Immigrant Services

1001 Pacific Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R7A 0J2
Web: <http://www.wesls.com>

MOSAIC Newcomer Family Resource Network (Fort Garry)

1771 Pembina Highway
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2G6
Telephone: 204-774-7311
Web: <http://www.mosaicnet.ca>

MOSAIC Newcomer Family Resource Network (Fort Richmond)

828 Silverstone Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2W6
Telephone: 204-774-7311
Web: <http://www.mosaicnet.ca>

MOSAIC Newcomer Family Resource Network (River Heights)

456 Stafford Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3M 2B3
Telephone: 204-774-7311
Web: <http://www.mosaicnet.ca>

University of Winnipeg Global Welcome Centre

511 Ellice Avenue, Room 1E12

Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2S4
Telephone: 204.258.2946
Web: <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/gwc-index>

YMCA/YWCA Adult EAL Program for Newcomers with Children
301 Vaughan Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2N7
Telephone: 204-999-4830
Web: <http://www.ymcaywca-eal.ca/>

Ethno-Cultural Agencies

Winnipeg Chinese Cultural and Community Centre
2nd Floor, 180 King Street
Winnipeg Manitoba
R3B 3G8
Telephone: (204) 943-2627(204) 943-1197
Fax: (204) 944-8308
E-mail: wcccc@mymts.net

Jewish Federation of Winnipeg
C300-123 Doncaster Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3N 2B2
Telephone : (204) 477-7400
Email: http://www.jewishwinnipeg.org/contact_us.aspx

African Communities of Manitoba Inc. (ACOMI)
101-421 Kennedy Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2N2, Canada.
PH: (204) 221-6696
Email: info@acomi.ca

Canadian Czech-Slovak Benevolent Association
154 McKenzie Str.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2W 5A2
Phone:(204) 589-7483

Canadian Polish Congress
768 Mountain Avenue Winnipeg, MB R2W 1L7, Canada
Tel. / Fax - (204) 589-7878
Website: <http://www.kpkmanitoba.ca>

Email: kongres@shaw.ca

The Manitoba Association of Friendship Centers
301-1200 Pembina Hwy
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T2A7
Phone: (204) 942-6299
Fax: (204) 942-6308
Web: <http://www.mac.mb.ca>

National Association of Japanese Canadians
3rd Floor, 207 Donald Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1M5
Phone: (204)943-2910
Fax: (204)947-3145
Email: National@najc.ca

African Association of Manitoba
203 - 720 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 0X1
Phone: 204-774-4821
Website: <http://www.africancommunities.ca>

Afro-Caribbean Association of Manitoba
259 Watt Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2K 2R4
Phone: 1 204-667-6919
E-mail: afro_car@msn.com
Website: <http://www.afro-caribbean.org>

Caribbean-Canadian Association of Winnipeg
595 Clifton Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 2X5
Phone: 1 204-786-2606
E-mail: calypso_classroom@hotmail.com

Sudanese Association of Manitoba (SAM)
129 Dagmar Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3A 0Z3
Phone: 1 204-779-6737

Sri Lankan Association of Manitoba

145 Dickens Drive
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Phone: 1 204-338-9238

Trinidad and Tobago Society of Winnipeg
PO Box 1824
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 3R1
Website: <http://www.tntwpg.com>

Ethiopian Society of Winnipeg Inc.
593 Notre Dame Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1S6
Phone: 1 204-783-5022
Website: <http://www.ethio-winnipeg.tripod.com>

Cuban Cultural Association of Manitoba
368 Langside Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2T4
E-mail: cubanosmanitoba@yahoo.com
Website: <http://www.cubanosmanitoba.5u.com>

Federation of Korean Associations in Canada
97 Queen's Park Cres
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3P 1Z8
Phone: 1 204-488-6206

Free Vietnamese Association of Manitoba
100 - 458 Balmoral Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2P8
Phone: 1 204-774-3214
E-mail: banguyen@escape.ca

Eritrean Community of Winnipeg Inc.
535 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 1Z1
Phone: 1 204-786-5637

Hindu Society of Manitoba
854 Ellice Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3G 0C4
Phone: 1 204-774-9197

Islamic Information Institute of Manitoba
715 Ellice Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 0B3
Phone: 1 204-779-4446
E-mail: contact@iiim.info
Website: <http://www.iiim.info>

Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA)
PO Box 21010, RPO Charleswood
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3R 3R2
Phone: 1 204-944-1560
E-mail: info@issaservices.com
Website: <http://www.issaservices.com>

Jamaican Association of Manitoba Inc.
1098 Winnipeg Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3E 0S2
Phone: 1 204-786-5496

Lao Association of Manitoba Inc.
7 - 983 Arlington Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3E 2E6
Phone: 1 204-774-1115

Lebanese Association of Canada Inc.
834 St. Matthews Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 0H8
Phone: 1 204-783-4823

Portuguese Association of Winnipeg
659 Young Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2T1
Phone: 1 204-783-5607
E-mail: port@mts.net
Website: <http://www.portuguese Canadians.com>

Muslim Ahmadiyya Association

525 Kylemore Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3L 1B5
Phone: 1 204-475-2642

Manitoba Islamic Association
2445 Waverley Street
Winnipeg, MB, R3Y 1S3
Telephone: 204-256-1347

Muslim Association of Canada - Winnipeg Chapter
594 Ellice Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 0A3
Phone: 1 204-779-4446
Website: <http://www.macnet.ca>

Ugandan-Canadian Association of Manitoba Inc.
PO Box 124
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 2G1
Phone: 1 204-253-4096
E-mail: hmbabaali@yahoo.com

United West Indies Association
87 Olford Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Phone: 1 204-694-8532

Yellow River Chinese Association
8 Dalhousie Drive
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2Y7
Phone: 1 204-269-0123
E-mail: yellowchinese@hotmail.com

Resource's for Men

Building Bridges Program
204-726-8706 (Brandon)

Men's Resource Centre
200-321 McDermot Ave
Phone: 204-415-6797

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata

204-925-0300

Men are Part of the Solution (MAPS)

204-778-6040