

IMMIGRATION AND ITS EFFECT ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AND VIOLENCE
AGAINST WIVES IN POLISH FAMILIES IN WINNIPEG

by

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Social Work

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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Jacek Beimcik

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem

The intention of this thesis is to offer insights into those features of marital violence in Polish immigrant families in Winnipeg that might be considered important for the planning, delivery and evaluation of social services. This plan is congruent with the need for ethnic awareness and sensitivity in social work practice which, as stated by Green, “implies an awareness of prescribed and proscribed behavior within a specific culture, and it suggests that the ethnically competent worker has the ability to carry out professional activities consistent with that awareness” (1982, p.52).

Probation officers, as well as immigrant batterers and their victims frequently say that limited English skills and cultural differences create a serious challenge to effective treatment within the existing paradigms of intervention. These opinions, however, have little impact on decision-making when it comes to the implementation of effective preventive approaches to dealing with the problem of family violence in immigrant families. Among 125 programs which were offered to male batterers across Canada in 1993 (Canada’s Treatment ...,1994), only a few provided individual counseling and interpretation services in the immigrant clients’ first languages. Furthermore, only two programs - Services to Immigrants on Probation (SIP) in Winnipeg and MOSAIC in Vancouver - provided group intervention with immigrant male clients. There is a shortage of trained interpreters and workers specializing in counseling or therapy with the

abused immigrant women and their abusive partners. In Winnipeg, one such illustration is the lack of such services for Polish immigrant clients with limited English skills.

In light of my experience counseling batterers of Polish descent and Polish-Canadian families, and in the opinions of “front line” professional workers (probation officers, counselors, settlement workers), there is a need for a knowledge base to social work intervention with victims of abuse and abusers of Polish background. Programs and approaches that would take into account the specific needs of Polish-Canadian clients have been requested during meetings and workshops on family violence organized for the Polish community, for example, by the Multicultural Partner Abuse Prevention Project (MPAPP). My own observation from Poles in Winnipeg suggests that violence in Polish-Canadian families is a problem which needs to be addressed in a way which is appropriately and specifically designed for this population.

1.2 Rationale for this Study

Three factors influenced the study of family violence in immigrant families: socio-demographic changes in Canada, victims’ legal rights to protection, and professional social work values.

1. Socio-demographic Reasons

(a) Immigrant residents comprise a significant proportion of the total Canadian population.¹ Consequently, their social problems are inseparable from the problems of the larger society.

(b) There are growing numbers of men, including immigrants, charged with violence against their partners as a result of society's increased awareness of the battering phenomenon and accompanying new laws and regulations. In Winnipeg, the number of immigrants on probation charged with domestic violence reflects the proportion of immigrants in the population (1:10).²

2. Victims' Legal Rights to Protection

Immigrant women, like all residents of Canada, have rights to protection from violence (e.g., Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedom). Their rights are significantly constrained by the lack of resources available to help them cope with crisis and change their partners' behavior. This situation is compounded by language barriers,

¹According to Statistics Canada (1992), In 1991, the total number of immigrants living in Canada was 4,342,890 which represented 16% of Canada's population. There were 138,597 immigrants in Manitoba, including 11,825 individuals of Polish decent. Toronto had the largest immigrant population of any metropolitan area: 38% (1.5 million). Provided by the Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, the total number of immigrants who came to Manitoba between 1984 and 1995 was 50,549.

²This estimate is a result of the effort of the Services to Immigrants on Probation project that attempted to count all the cases of immigrants on probation in 1994. There were about 140 immigrant men charged with wife assault among about 1,500 active cases supervised by the Youth and Correctional Services Winnipeg.

as well as many immigrant women's lack of awareness of their rights, isolation, and limited access to information about services and resources available to them (McLeod & Shin, 1990).

3. Professional Social Work Values

As stated by Green, "ethnic minority group clients are entitled to competent, professional social work services, as are all other persons"(1982, p. 4). This entitlement is in accord with the social work values of acceptance, self-determination and individuality, acknowledged without discriminating "on any grounds of race, ethnic background, language, religion, marital status, sex...or national ancestry"(Canadian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, 1994, p.5). The ethical responsibility of the social worker refers also to advocacy "...for the equal access of all persons to resources, services and opportunities"(1994, p.13)

1.3 Marital Violence in the Polish Family

There is little discussion in the literature about violence in Polish families. My extensive search through libraries in Poland (via the internet) and private contacts has not been a success. I have not found any publications in North America which would treat the problem beyond general indications that the problem exists. However, with the recent democratization of Poland, more and more information on this subject is reaching the

public through the press. One of the most prominent Polish journals “Wprost” (1994), provides statistics which reflect the fact that wife assault is a frequent phenomenon in Poland. For example, in the Warsaw district (pop. 2.5 million in 1991 - Demografia, 1992, p.5), the Court received nearly 14 thousand complaints in 1994. The reality is that only five percent of those complaints resulted in a court sentence.

1.4 Purpose and Major Questions

The goal of this study was to explore the relationship between my male informants’ (who were Canadians of Polish origin) satisfaction with their marriages and their participation in marital violence while living in Canada. To realize this goal, I addressed the following questions:

1. Has my informants’ satisfaction with their marriages been affected by their immigration experience?
2. Is there a connection between my informants’ satisfaction with their marriages and their participation in marital violence?

The idea of studying marital violence in the context of marital satisfaction was influenced by Hyden’s proposal that “... people define and interpret, explain and justify (wife battering) in light of beliefs about what marriage is supposed to be.” (1994, p. 96) Lack of satisfaction with their marriages is typically pointed out by male offenders as the

leading cause of their aggressive behavior and violence against their partners. Ptacek reflects on this issue:

Among the reasons for the violence given by men who batter, there is a pattern of finding a fault with the woman for not being good at cooking, for not being sexually responsive, for not being deferential enough to her husband, for not knowing where she is supposed to be silent, and for not being faithful. (1988, p. 147)

The abused woman can identify with the batterer's reasoning, and rationalize that she is responsible for 'provoking' her husband because she has not satisfied his marital expectations (Walker, 1979, p. 56). Extended family members, friends and neighbors can refer to expectations about marriage by telling the battered women "that they are exaggerating or must try to be better wives so they won't lose their homes and husbands" (McLeod, 1980, p. 36). Furthermore, it is not unusual for clinicians to accept the batterer's excuses (Ptacek, 1988, p. 153), which is just the same as accepting the husband's perspective on marital dissatisfaction, accompanied by blaming the victim for the abuse. For example, Deschner claims:

After a period of abuse, the wife rises up and scolds her husband or else withdraws from him. After tolerating her negatives for a period, he rises up again in another act of violence....Such marriages, though not enjoyable, can be stable

over a long period of time because each partner periodically enjoys the rewards of being on top. (In: Ptacek, 1988, p. 153)

The idea of linking marital violence with the experience of immigration to Canada evolved from my own observation that changes in the marital situation in the process of immigration could lead to hostility in a husband who was reluctant to accept any re-definition of his expectations of marriage. While working with the program “Services to Immigrants on Probation” in 1993 and 1994, I had an opportunity to read the comments of over 30 batterers from seven different ethnocultural backgrounds. In the majority of cases, aggression towards partners was believed to be caused by stress and conflicts that emerged as a result of changes in the family situation after immigration to Canada. The same view has frequently been shared by members of different ethnocultural communities in Winnipeg, in discussions organized by the Multicultural Partner Abuse Prevention Project (MPAPP). Often, during discussions with Polish immigrants, the argument of changes in family roles in Canada is used by both men and women to justify the man’s aggressive behavior, including violence towards his partner.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

My study applied the methods of grounded theory originated by Glaser and Strauss, who advocated that “one generates conceptual categories ...from evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept”(1971, p.

23). Following this view, the preliminary conceptual framework of this work referred only to the basic terms, which provided clarity to the discussion about the subject of my study. Some of the terms indicated below were used in the formulation of the research purpose and questions.

Marital Violence. For the purpose of this thesis, marital violence was seen as the physical battering and emotional abuse committed against a woman by her husband. It was understood that the abuse could also be perpetrated by a wife against her husband. Physical battering referred to all aggressive acts against the victim's body, such as pushing, hitting, punching, choking (Mackenzie, 1985, p. 66). Emotional abuse could include direct threats of physical violence, suicide, or it could "take the form of a more indirect type of aggression, such as frequent criticism of personal appearance or abilities as wife and mother" (Mackenzie, 1985, p. 67). The terms which were interchangeably used with 'marital violence' were *partner abuse*, *spousal abuse*, *violence against wives*, and *wife physical abuse*.

Polish Immigrants. Znaniecka Lopata (1994, p. 8) offered a definition of "the most ethnic person" which was adapted to describe the population of Polish immigrants which was the subject of my study. Based on this definition, I referred to Polish immigrants as individuals who proclaimed Polish identity, associated with other Poles, observed Polish cultural events and norms, reflected their ethnic culture in personal relations, had a working knowledge of the Polish language, shared knowledge of both

folk and national Polish culture, and were cognizant of the Polish community in Winnipeg. For the purpose of this work, the terms with similar meaning to “Polish immigrants” are *Poles*, and *immigrants of Polish descent or background*.

Polish Immigrant Couple. For the purpose of this study, a Polish immigrant couple was a liaison between a man and woman of Polish descent who had an emotional and sexual relationship, who shared a common residence, and whose language of mutual communication was Polish. This definition was created only to describe the population under study who were the intimate partners involved in marital violence. Obviously, there is no single Polish couple “type.” Variations exist, for example, in social class, “waves” of immigration and education.

Culture. The definition of culture was utilized to clarify the context within which family violence occurred. Goodenough associated culture with patterns of “believing, communicating, acting and evaluating” (Sands, 1990, p. 117). Cultural patterns also referred to the shared system of meaning which provided “standards for deciding what is, ... what can be, ...how one feels about it, ...what to do about it, and ... how to go about doing it” (Goodenough, in: Keesing, 1976, p. 139).

1.6 Organization of Thesis

The methodological framework of this study will be described in the next chapter of the report. It includes rationale for choosing qualitative research methods and research design. The grounded theory method and process of conceptualization are introduced and the role of initial questions is explained. Several ethical issues are discussed due to the fact that invitations to participate in the study were extended to individuals with whom I had worked as facilitator of educational groups for Polish batterers on probation.

Following will be the presentation of the participants' views about their immigration experiences and their impact on marital satisfaction, marital conflict and violence. An emphasis is placed on differences in the perceptions of opportunities in Canada between men in the study and their wives. The men also describe how the process of immigration affected them and resulted in their deep sense of injustice.

In the next chapter, I will discuss specific factors in the immigration process of Polish men in Winnipeg that might contribute to their dissatisfaction with their marriages and increase the likelihood of violence against their wives. The context of marital violence in Polish families in Winnipeg is explained by three propositions.

In the concluding chapter, several issues will be considered including recommendations for social work practice and for further studies.

2.0 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Background

A combination of Corbin and Strauss' (1990 and 1994) *grounded theory* and Sand's (1990) *ethnography* as a method of qualitative data collection and analysis was appropriate for this study. The implication of this approach is that traditional research methods that are based on a set of serial steps³ had no applicability to the design of this study. The Corbin, Strauss and Sands' approaches are particularly useful when research focuses on an area which has not found the significant attention of researchers, and therefore, where there is a lack of material for comparisons. Another advantage of Strauss and Corbin's approach is that the research gains its credibility through cumulative sampling of incidents and not persons, per se (1990, pp. 177-178). This made it possible to implement this study, despite the fact that the number of participants was expected to be low.

The use of *grounded theory* implies that "data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously" and that "both the processes and products of research emerge from the data rather than from some preconceived, logically deduced theoretical framework ..."

³"1. Theory construction 2. Derivation of theoretical hypotheses 3. Operationalization of concepts 4. Collection of empirical data 5. Empirical testing of hypotheses." (Babbie, 1983, p.59)

(Burnette, 1994, p.9). As a result of applying these assumptions to my study, I did not intend to create initial concepts of “what marriage is supposed to be”, “satisfaction with marriage” or even “marriage”. As stated by Glasser and Strauss, “generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research” (1971, p.6). Therefore, these terms were used only to initiate the research process in which the concepts and themes attached to satisfaction with marriage were generated.

The idea of studying marital violence by focusing on participants’ personal experiences stemmed from the qualitative research assumption that “the empirical description of social phenomena requires not simply the documentation of physical behavior but the attribution to participants of intentions, motives and perspectives” (Hammersley. 1981, p.210). Over the course of my contacts with the Polish families experiencing violence, I have come to realize that to properly understand any particular action or event, it must be put in the context of other actions and events. One way of achieving this is to listen to people’s stories which, as noted by Riessman “are a kind of cultural envelope into which we pour our experience and signify its importance to others”(1994, p.114). Sharing experiences with the participants in this study enabled a joint participant-researcher effort to interpret the problem and bring meaning to live events and actions.

Grounded theory seeks not only to determine the conditions which shape human life, but also how the participants in research “respond to changing conditions and to the consequences of their actions” (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.5). Congruent with the above principle was the study’s inquiry into the effect of immigration (changing conditions) on marital satisfaction. The impact of actions (e.g., decision to emigrate) on respondents and their partners’ lives was also an important part of the investigation.

This study employed methods of *cultural theory* - the fundamental theory guiding the process of ethnographic research (Sands, 1990, p.117). This theory offered two concepts - *emic* and *etic* (Sands, 1990, pp.117-118) - which helped to form the specific design of my study. According to the “emic” perspective, as an “insider” sharing his cultural background with the population under study, I am better able to comprehend group-defined terms, categories and meanings. My “emic” position in the Polish community creates practically unlimited opportunities to use the ethnography method of *participant-observation* to capture the way participants make sense of the world. Through this method, I learned community members’ impressions of such issues as expectations about marriage, the causes of marital violence, and responsibility for the problem.

At the same time, I am classified by the “etic” perspective as an “outsider” who, by way of formal education and work experience, has the ability to apply abstract

categories to a given culture. My “dual” position in the study of Polish immigrants was particularly privileged in light of Le Doux and Stephen’s caution that

... although competency in a foreign language provides access to another culture, it does not guarantee familiarity with that culture. Alternately, the mere familiarity with another language and culture is inadequate if the worker lacks awareness of the social work knowledge and value base. (1992, p. 41)

While some qualitative researchers could argue about the extent to which a theory might be generated from data and technical aspects of that endeavor, they would agree that the complete rejection of existing theoretical assumptions would be impossible. Lather stated that the researcher cannot avoid “taking into account the deep structures - both psychological and social, conscious and unconscious - that shape human experience and perceptions without committing a sin of theoretical imposition” (1986, p. 262). The available knowledge, however, is used “mainly as informative maps of the terrain to be explored rather than as a recipe to be followed to the letter or to be tested in some way” (Goldstein, 1991, p. 111).

One theoretical perspective utilized in this study was Herberg’s (1993) practical method of assessing the immigrants’ situations at first contact. Her concern with values which “frame the actions of those who are interacting” (1993, p.29) corresponded with

my concern with the role that values played in framing behaviors of Polish women and men in the marital context.

According to Herberg, “the individuals have unique histories that have led to the current framework of values governing their behavior; this unique framework evolves from family, community, and national sources of values” (1993, p. 30). To capture these sources of values, generalizations are necessary. For this reason, Herberg contrast *high context* cultures in which kin networks are “coterminous with the whole society,” with low context cultures, where “very little of one’s identity, obligations and rights derive from family”(1983. pp. 33-34). Herberg suggests that the most distinctive trend in North America is emphasis on the individual who is expected to live a self-fulfilling life. This trend sharply contrasts with a Polish tradition that the needs of an individual are secondary to the needs of the family (which is the unit of decision making). In this confrontation Canada is seen as representing a low context culture while Poland is seen as representing a high context culture.

In the process of adaptation an individual is expected to develop his or her place or context in a new situation. According to Herberg, this process can be captured on a continuum. Herberg writes:

The continua used suggest that a value can be greater or lesser and that some other value may gradually take its place....The simple diagram below suggests the

change that is possible along one dimension. The left end of the line stands for a high presence of a value or cultural mechanism, which dwindles away to a low level of this value at the right.

High-----Low

An individual or family could be placed on this continuum at one point in time and as the process of acculturation proceeds, could be considered to move towards the other end of the line. (1993, p. 31)

I used Herberg's model, for example, to question whether the wife's greater tendency to accept egalitarian values in Canadian society led to changes in the partners' satisfaction with the marriage and subsequent marital conflict. In the following example, the left side of the continuum represents hierarchical values (ascribed to high context cultures) in Polish society, while the right side represents egalitarian values (ascribed to low context cultures) in Canadian society:

Hierarchical values-----Egalitarian values

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Husband's goals are superior • Husband's decisions are superior • Individual status depends on family status • Wife's needs (intellectual, social, vocational) are secondary to her husband's needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners' personal goals equally important • Decisions are made jointly by partners • Individual status can exist independently from family status • Wife's needs are as important as her husband's |
|--|--|

This diagram helped to establish that in the pre-immigration period both marital partners were attached to hierarchical values which prevail in the Polish culture. In the case of the

men in the study, this value orientation did not change in Canada. In the meantime, their wives became gradually attracted to egalitarian values of Canadian society. The wives' departure from traditional value expectations became a contributing factor to the men's lack of marital satisfaction and frequent conflicts in their marriages.

In another example, contrasting hierarchy (which reflects levels of power) with equality (which reflects equal power) was a way of looking at contradictions between values which either disapproved of or permitted violence against wives in the Polish culture.

2.2 Research Design

Population

Participants in this study were men of Polish decent with a history of violence against their partners while living in Canada. The *grounded theory* "logic of ongoing inclusion of groups" (Glaser and Strauss, 1971, p. 50) strongly implies that the number of research cases cannot be pre-planned (Glaser and Strauss, 1971, p. 30). Corbin and Strauss note:

In grounded theory, representativeness of concepts, not of persons, is crucial. The aim is ultimately to build a theoretical explanation by specifying phenomena in terms of conditions that give rise to them, how they are expressed through

action/interaction, the consequences that result from them and variations of these qualifiers. (1990, p.9)

Based on the above principle, whether a new respondent is invited to participate in the study is continually based on the need for data pertinent to evolving concepts and themes. Ideally, this process stops when theoretical saturation takes place (similar concepts are repeated over and over again, providing confidence that a theme is generated).

Although I did not plan any specific number of respondents in the study, some selection criteria had to be established in order to produce compatible data, and to secure the safety of all participants and any other persons. Throughout three years of counseling experience, I worked with about 20 men of Polish origin who were sentenced for assault and battery with one to three years of probation. From these cases I chose six men who had satisfied the following conditions: all of them participated in groups for Polish batterers on probation and successfully ended their probation period; their marriages with present partners began in Poland; we had a positive relationship during counseling; there was a high probability of their cooperation throughout the entire study; and, there was no threat to the safety of the respondents, their partners, myself and any other person. The assurance of these conditions came from my own professional evaluation of clients' performance (submitted to probation officers as Participation Report) and other documentation, such as Admission to Probation Case Load and Progress Review.

In the preliminary telephone conversations with the six men, they indicated that they would be willing to participate in the study. All of them were aware that their involvement would be entirely voluntary (important issues regarding the invitation to participate in the study are raised in the Ethical Considerations chapter). After the approval of the research proposal by the Research Ethics Committee, the six men were approached again (in person) to discuss their participation in the study. Eventually, five of these men took part in the research.

The demographic characteristics of the male participants, which are indicated below were not factors in the selection of respondents. All the participants gave me permission for all the information to be presented in the study. They were:

- born between 1948 and 1954
- Roman Catholics
- married between 1975 and 1984
- fathers of one to three children, 11 to 17 years old*
- new immigrants to Canada between 1987 and 1989
- employed full time*
- not sponsored by the Government of Canada
- all sentenced with battery against their wives only once in 1993 or 1994

In addition,

- four men has completed high school (vocational) education; one - grade 10

- one man was married previously
- one man's sister lives in Winnipeg; the wife of another man has remote relatives in another province

* At the time of the interview

Research Process

The Preparation Stage. My preparation for this thesis involved reviewing my notes from my work with the Polish clients as well as the notes which I took on different occasions (e.g., during discussions on family violence issues with members of the Polish Canadian Combatant Organization and two workshops organized by the Multicultural Partner Abuse Prevention Project). I did an extensive literature review, looking for information on such issues as the role of tradition in the expectations and behavior of Polish family members, and family changes in the process of acculturation. These notes and readings helped me to develop the first set of questions which were intended to be used as a guideline rather than a directive in my work (see: Section 2.4).

The Preliminary Observation Stage (Sands, 1990, p. 122). I began my research in April 1996. During this stage, I collected and analyzed the opinions of Polish immigrants about their expectations of marriage, the impact of immigration on changes in family life, and the causes of marital violence. The purpose of this exercise was to refine research questions, to develop provisional concepts, and to obtain data which could be used in

further comparisons. I listened to many discussions and individual comments about issues relevant to the study, such as the differences between values of Polish and Canadian families and the roles of wives and husbands. This “*emic*” approach to gathering data was anticipated at the onset of this study.

The main event was a discussion meeting with four Polish immigrant women in Winnipeg on the topic of marital violence in Polish families. I taped this discussion, took notes and had conversations with the participants. I paid attention to their opinions, but also to jokes, sayings and proverbs, which provided insights into popular perceptions of husbands and wives in the Polish culture. The terms and conditions of participation in the meeting were described in the Consent Form (Appendix B).

The meeting was advertised through a handout distributed by Polish schools and organizations in Winnipeg. The topic was clearly described, as well as the reason for and date of the meeting. My name and telephone number were posted for further information and confirmation of participation.

During my initial telephone conversations with the six women who replied, I read (in Polish) the entire text of the Consent Form. As a result, the women became aware of the steps which were undertaken to protect their identification (the issue of confidentiality is discussed in greater detail in the Ethical Considerations chapter). Initially, all of them agreed to the terms of the meeting, and to signing the Consent Form

at the meeting. All of the women knew that they would be asked to sign the consent form prior to the beginning of the discussion. Before the meeting, two women decided to withdraw. One of them requested a separate discussion with me, which we held one week after the original meeting. The other woman's situation was exceptional in terms of her problems and emotional state. I did not meet with her, but I maintained a telephone contact with her for some time. (The case of this woman is discussed in the Issues Related to the Research Process section of this chapter.)

Prior to the discussion, each female participant signed the Consent Form and was given a list of names and phone numbers of counselors who were available free of charge in case of physical and emotional risk as a result of their participation in the meeting. Confidentiality was an important issue for the women. The women agreed that none of them would reveal the names of other participants to any person who was not associated with the meeting. I also assured them that questions would be addressed to all the participants and not directed to any of them individually. This calmed the women's fears that they would have no choice but to give personal answers against their wishes.

The Focused Exploration Stage (Lincoln and Guba: in Sands, 1990, p.122). After examining the above data the relevant findings were incorporated into a set of *semi-structured interviews* which were carried out in May and June, 1996. During this phase, I recorded and analyzed the personal views and experiences of Polish men who had perpetrated violence against their partners. The terms of recording the interviews, my

obligations and the respondents' rights were described in detail in the Consent Form (Appendix C). The consent form was discussed and signed before the interview started. Like the female respondents, each man received a list of names and phone numbers of counselors who were available free of charge in case of physical and emotional risk to them as a result of the interview.

In this phase of the research, there were six interviews conducted, one with each male respondent. During these interviews, the respondents' personal views and experiences regarding marital violence, satisfaction with marriage and immigration were explored in depth. However, the information obtained in one of the interviews was excluded from data analysis because the interviewees refused to sign the Consent Form (See: section, "Issues Related to the Research Process"). As a result of that incident, only five men were acknowledged as participants in the study.

The Final Stage. I sought independent judgment about my analysis in August and September 1996. For this purpose, I carried out individual interviews with two counselors of Polish background who, through their practice, were familiar with the issue of marital violence in Polish Canadian families. A few days prior to the interviews I gave them those parts of my study in which the findings were presented and discussed. Their professional opinions and recommendations influenced some changes and additions to the presentation and discussion of the findings. The counselors' opinions were

particularly important for validating those points of view which had face validity (Babbie, 1983, p. 117), but which lacked reference to the literature.

The Consent Form which described the conditions of their involvement in the study were discussed and signed on a separate day, before the interview (Appendix D). Some limitations to full confidentiality of names of the counselors were anticipated (See: section, “Ethical Considerations”).

Once again, I met separately with each male participant, to give him the up-to-date results of the study and to give myself an opportunity to hear his opinions about it. Essentially, all of them agreed with my analysis. My fear that they might have felt offended, especially by my elaboration about their sense of injustice, appeared to have been groundless. In their comments, the men gave mostly supportive feedback and additional information which supported my findings.

The meetings with Polish women and all the interviews with Polish men were conducted in the Polish language. The consent form was available in both English and Polish. Professor Krystyna Fabrykowski (German and Slavic Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Manitoba) proof-read the Polish version of the consent forms. The data relevant to my research was translated into English. Gathered information was kept confidential all the time. The tapes were erased and notes were destroyed after

information was typed. Information was kept under an exclusive password on the computer, while the names of the respondents were coded.

Issues Related to the Research Process

There were a few events throughout the research process that I had to respond to immediately, and decide the appropriate course of action. The first event was an important reminder that in the social work field the requirements of the research are secondary to the needs of the people with whom the researcher interacts.

A woman who earlier had agreed to take part in the meeting with other women called me a day before the meeting to withdraw from it. Apparently, she feared the consequences (shame, gossip, condemnation) of sharing with other women the history of physical and other abuses she had experienced in her marriage after the family's settlement in Canada several years ago. Based on her description of her situation, I had no doubt that this woman was in an emotional crisis which was reinforced by her isolation, and lack of support from extended family and friends. I realized that more than being a participant in the study, this woman needed professional help. Eventually, she accepted my offer to arrange a meeting with a counselor whom she continued to see until recently (Appendix E 1).

The second event was an indicator that cultural factors should not be ignored when it comes to the potential participants' perceptions of formal procedures, role of researcher, and method of data collection. A man who was invited to the interview refused to sign the consent form (despite his earlier agreement) and to have our conversation taped. As I have already mentioned in the earlier section, after that incident this man was not considered a participant in the study (APPENDIX E2).

This man's attitude was not accidental. In Poland, there is no custom or requirement to sign a consent form for a research interview, other interviews (e.g., medical and psychological), or any other form of gathering data (e.g., questionnaire and psychological testing).⁴ A mere verbal agreement with a candidate is synonymous with the right to collect information from him or her and to use the information according to the intention of the researcher or practitioner. Another important issue is that placing one's signature on an official document might be associated by many Poles with collaboration with an oppressor, or at least with a threat to personal freedom. For the old and young generation of Polish immigrants who, to a large extent, fled Poland to liberate themselves from the conditions which limited their freedom, or even because of the fear of prosecution, any suspicion that their freedom is at stake can cause their rejection of even the most decent initiatives.

⁴This situation still exists in Poland, as confirmed by professor Halina Grzymala-Moszczyńska. Professor Grzymala-Moszczyńska, a prominent Polish clinical psychologist who was recently a guest lecturer at the University of Manitoba. She agreed to let me use this information in my thesis.

Collaboration with Instructor and Advisory Committee Members

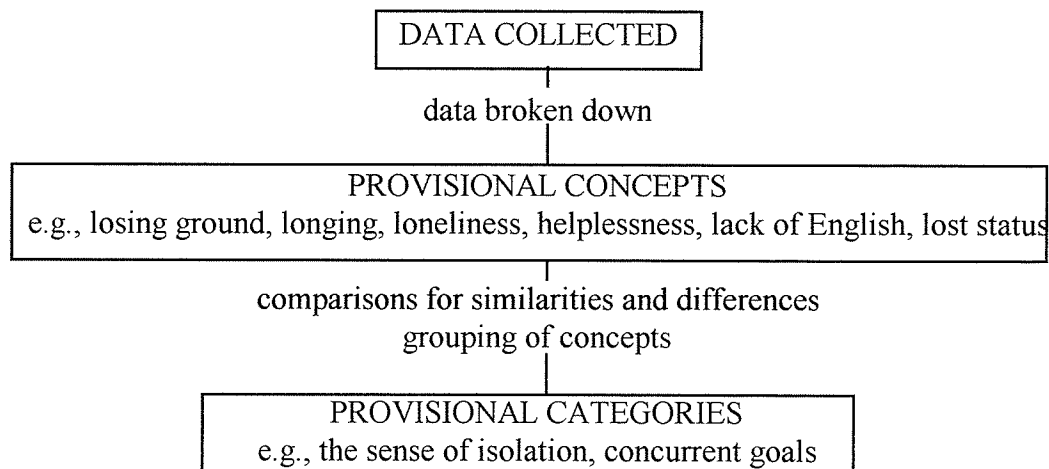
An important part of the study was consultations with my thesis advisor and members of the advisory committee. Discussions with them provided me with excellent intellectual support and led to increasing in my skills in using qualitative methodology. Opening up my research to their inquiry helped guard against research bias. They were available at any time, even without appointments, after the draft of any chapter was completed. Their comments were very much appreciated and their feedback always was taken into account.

2.3 Method and Process of Conceptualization

The *grounded theory* method of conceptualization is the process by which a set of seemingly related pieces of information, observed incidents, events and activities are given a conceptual label. Concepts that pertain to the same phenomena are integrated into categories. The concept's relevance to an evolving category is concluded if the concept is repeated in observations, interviews or documents. In my study, the use of constant comparisons and challenging concepts with fresh data in my study was expected, as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 9) to lead to greater precision ("the grouping of like and only like phenomena") and consistency ("always grouping like with like").

In this study, *open coding* was initially used to examine, compare, conceptualize and categorize data. Open coding, following Corbin and Strauss (1994, p.62-63), was based on two analytical procedures, the *making of comparisons* and the *asking of questions*.

The process of coding data began after it was collected at the meeting with female respondents. While the tapes were transcribed, provisional conceptual labels were assigned to the participants' comments. After reading the entire transcription, I changed some of the labels and added new ones when it was appropriate to name emerging concepts. While analyzing the data, whenever concepts appeared to be pertinent to the same phenomenon, they were grouped into disparate (but still provisional) categories which were also given conceptual names. This process can be illustrated graphically:



The categories which were generated after the first meeting highlighted the phenomena which seemed relevant to the problems of marital satisfaction, marital

conflict and violence against wives in Polish immigrant families. For example, the concurrent goals of partners in Canada appeared to be a significant factor that negatively influenced marital satisfaction.

After analyzing the first observations and establishing the first set of provisional categories, new questions were developed for the next interview. The data obtained from each interview was analyzed in the same manner as the data from the meeting with female respondents. The emerging concepts were compared to the concepts and categories which were discovered prior to the actual interviews. These comparisons had three outcomes:

1. The category “The Conflict of Opportunities”, which was generated after the first meeting, was continuously “enriched” with new concepts, confirming the significance of the phenomenon.
2. Some categories collapsed in the absence of concepts relevant to the phenomena; for example, “The Roots of Violence,” which was meant to represent the relationship between wife abuse and male’s socialization in the Polish family.
3. Some new concepts altered the significance of previously defined concepts which had little significance. The “old” concepts were “rediscovered” and helped generate new categories. For example, this quite unexpectedly led to the generation of the category, “The Sense of Injustice,” after the third interview with a male respondent.

The constant verification of the relationship between concepts and categories led to the establishment of two previously mentioned categories: The Conflict of Opportunities (which referred to difference in the perceptions of opportunities in Canada between the male respondents and their wives), and The Sense of Injustice (which referred to the men's strong feelings of injustice and misfortune). Confidence in the theoretical significance of these categories was gained when concepts pertinent to these categories were repeated over and over again in all the interviews (i.e., when the categories' theoretical saturation was reached).

Axial coding was used in the study, as stated by Corbin and Strauss, to put "data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories" (1994, p. 97). The purpose of axial coding was to give new insights to the research problem by analytically breaking down data which were relevant to the category developed through open coding.

Axial coding can link subcategories to a category by denoting causal conditions which gave rise to the phenomenon represented by the category, the context in which it occurred, the action/interaction strategies it was dealt with, intervening conditions that either constrained or facilitated the strategies (Corbin and Strauss, 1994, pp. 99-106), and the consequences of the phenomena (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.13).⁵ Axial coding was

⁵In my opinion, there is some inconsistency in Corbin and Strauss' view with regard to this discussion, quoted in their two publications. For example, on one occasion these authors write of axial coding as of a procedure which connects a phenomena representing a given category with its *consequences* (1990). On another occasion (1994) those

a way through which concepts were identified, related to each other and systematized.

For example, one of the subcategories of the category “The Sense of Injustice” was “Injustice in Poland”. This subcategory achieved its integrity by identifying and grouping those concepts of the main category which were pertinent to the phenomena of injustice in Poland. The example below illustrates the final result of this process:⁶

	CAUSAL CONDITIONS	PHENOMENON
	Martial Law, Chernobyl, communist system	Injustice in Poland
CONTEXT	bureaucracy control, corrupt doctor, wife in a psychiatric ward, privileges of militia, waiting lists, rationed vodka, poor work ethics, work disorganization, ...	
STRATEGIES	hiding, bribery, lots of plans, hope, home-made vodka, unruliness, appeal to Honor and Fatherland, support of extended family, ...	
INTERVENING CONDITIONS	child’s birth, gvm’t’s support for mothers, Poles emigration, trips to the West, parents in law, ...	
CONSEQUENCES	feeling second class, helplessness, anger, desire to change, blame, family conflict, emigration “seed”, jealousy, a sense of “no future,”	

The following subcategories were developed to signify a given category:

Category:

The Conflict of Opportunities

Subcategories:

(a) The Knowledge of English (b) Career and Occupation (c) Social Interactions

Category:

The Sense of Injustice

Subcategories:

(a) Injustice in Poland (b) Injustice and Changes in Poland (c) Injustice in Canada

The categories were not related to each other through the application of *grounded theory*’s procedures because this project aimed at themes analysis, not the theory

consequences are linked to *strategies* used in reply to that phenomena. These two different approaches, I think, produce fundamentally different results of the coding process.

⁶Some labels were slightly altered from their original versions in order to make their meaning easier to understand by the reader

development. The categories, however, were integrated in the final discussion, forming a contextual framework for the formulation of theoretical propositions with regard to the purpose of this study.

I used a computer with the windows application to group data into concepts and categories. The process of pasting and grouping the data was a fairly convenient task from a technical viewpoint. The use of two windows was useful. They allowed for pasting comments from the original transcript onto a separate one, on which the grouping of concepts took place.

2.4 Questions

Initial questions (Appendix A) were developed in order to produce the data base for the study. These questions were tentative, and subject to refinement whenever new findings suggested it. It was assumed that new questions would be added when evidence had indicated that it was necessary to build on prospective concepts and categories. The questions were primarily designed to be used during interviews in the Focus Exploration phase of the study. As well, they framed my investigative activities in the Preliminary Observation stage.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Male Participants

A sensitive situation was created due to the fact that an invitation to the study had been extended to individuals with whom I had worked as facilitator of educational groups for Polish batterers on probation. Individuals in corrections programs are involuntary clients whose performance and behavior during their contacts with probation staff can influence decisions about, for example, the extent of supervision, termination or continuation of counseling, referrals for the assessment of chemical dependency, possible breach of probation and additional criminal charges. Although only those men who finished their probation period were considered as potential respondents, I had to assume that for some of them the participation in the study would be a matter of concession in order to make a positive impression on authorities (e.g., probation officers and Crown Attorney) or to avoid negative future consequences (e.g., launching a new investigation). To guard against such connotations and to maximize voluntary participation in the study, the following issues were considered:

1. It is commonly admitted by practitioners and researchers (e.g., Caesar and Hamberger, 1989) that short term intervention programs (between 16 to 30 hours) only begin the process of changes in the offenders' attitudes. In this light, there were at least three positive implications for the respondents from their participation in qualitative

interviews: (i) The interviews created an opportunity to review some important elements of counseling (e.g., techniques of dealing with anger) at probation. The discussion of the effectiveness of these elements and their impact on the men's marriages were appreciated by the men. Some of them claimed that such reminders, when more frequent, might have helped them to solve problems in their families more effectively (ii) the interviews created an opportunity to explore the use of social resources that could help the men and their families to address their problems. In one case, I personally made arrangements for a man to join an appropriate self-help group in order to overcome his particular problem (iii) during the second interviews, the men had a chance to become familiar with their situations as seen through the study's findings. Some constructive ideas evolved from our discussions. For example, one man said that by learning the roots of his sense of injustice he would be able to deal more effectively with his feelings of hostility towards, as he phrased it, "the whole world and even more."

2. My independent contacts with Polish clients on probation were never restricted by my contract while working as a counselor. Also, at the time of my research, I was no longer under a contract or any obligation to the Community and Youth Correctional Services in Winnipeg (CYCS). I was able to carry out my research activities with previous probation clients without fear of conflict of interest resulting from the terms of the contract. I was not obligated to report the names of my respondents, the content of the interviews, or any other factors related to the respondents' situation. To make sure that I would not violate existing regulations, I spoke to the appropriate authorities of CYCS

about my plans to carry out research with previous probation clients with whom I had a working relationship. In response, there was no reservation to this plan as long as the confidentiality of names of individuals involved in those cases was preserved (Appendix F).

3. I carefully reviewed important aspects of my relationship with several clients such as mutual trust, cooperation, quality of our verbal and non-verbal communication, and my capability of responding to their problems and needs. My positive opinions about my relationships with the six prospective respondents (expressed in participation reports accepted by probation officers) allowed me to assume that they would quite openly discuss with me their concerns regarding their participation in the study. Based on my professional assessments submitted to and discussed with probation officers, the six men could make a conscious and unrestrained decision about joining in the study. My obligations and their rights were specified in the Informed Consent (Appendix C).

4. Special attention was directed to preventing the identification of the respondents. When any doubt arose, information was either not included in any report or presented in its original form.

5. While the respondents' right to confidentiality was the fundamental principle of the study, the participants were informed that the right to safety outweighed the right to absolute confidentiality. By respecting the fact that this was a duty of a researcher to

warn and to protect any intended victim from danger, I abided by the law and professional regulations. By law, for example, I was required to report cases of child abuse or the occurrence of any criminal act. By professional standard, I was under the obligation to follow the CASW Code of Ethics according to which disclosure of information was justified to prevent clients from doing harm to themselves or to others (1994, p.10). The formal procedure regarding the right to confidentiality and the duty to warn were specified in the Consent Form.

6. If physical and/or emotional risk or harm to the respondent had been apparent, he would have immediately been offered services appropriate to his needs. Several counselors were asked to help provide services. In effect, they agreed in writing to offer counseling free of charge if such needs emerged (Appendix G). The respondents received the list of names and phone numbers of these counselors.

Female Participant

The women who expressed their interest in the meeting were informed that the preservation of confidentiality of names and information would not be entirely possible due to the presence at the meeting of other community members. During the meeting, personal information was available to other women. It had to be taken into account that although undesirable, some information would be shared with other individuals after the meeting. To minimize this situation, each woman was requested on the telephone first,

and then in the Consent Form (Appendix B) to agree to keep confidential all the identifying information shared during the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, participants were also reminded about the terms of confidentiality.

Counselor Participants

The counselors were given an opportunity to draw up their own conditions if this was necessary to protect their professional and personal interest. However, none of them did so. The Consent Form (Appendix D) was signed prior to the interviews.

3.0 PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 The Conflict of Opportunities

During the interviews with male participants, all the men, without exception, confirmed that there were differences in the perception of opportunities in Canada between them and their wives. These differences which are referred to in this chapter as the Conflict of Opportunities included two possible options: first, what was seen as an opportunity by one spouse was not seen as such by the other; second, both partners saw similar opportunities but had different views about how to make the best use of them. The data shows that if the men viewed their situation as affected by their wives' own

visions of opportunities in Canada, they resorted to abuse and violence toward them. The men admitted to this connection and explained it by referring to three issues: (i) The conflict of opportunities and the knowledge of English (ii) the conflict of opportunities in career and occupation (iii) the conflict of opportunities in social interactions.

The reflection on marital problems in the context of opportunities in Canada arose from the comments of female respondents. All the women spoke about Canada as a country of opportunities for Polish immigrants that did not exist in Poland. However, these opportunities were seen differently by each partner, in terms of the impact on their personal, marital and family situations. One woman's opinion provided a general illustration of other women's views:

Polish women find out that they can exist independently in many ways in Canada. There is no family around; therefore there is no pressure or ridicule when the wife does something on her own. It is important for a woman to have the basic comfort of having everything at hand and not worrying that she has to stay in a lineup for hours. She finds it all in Canada and this is the point from which she starts thinking about the future of her family. She sees the opportunities, but she knows that she had to first learn English, maybe take some other courses, and build a network of her own acquaintances. That's the change in her life. In the meantime, her husband would like to achieve everything very fast without changing anything in his life. He is even likely to oppose moving furniture around, because it is

something he has gotten used to and something that makes him feel secure. For him, change is a threat to stability. For her, change is a means of achieving stability./e⁷

The Knowledge of English and the Conflict of Opportunities

Summary

All male participants admitted that their wives learned English faster than them. They also insisted that their marital situations were not immune to the consequences of this phenomenon. For their wives, acquiring English skills was seen primarily as a means to accessing opportunities in Canada (such as vocational and educational). Taking advantage of these opportunities, however, required some changes in the traditional arrangement of family lifestyle and roles. Men objected to these changes. They were reluctant to accept new possibilities for their families' functioning.

The men's commitment to their "provider" role did not change in Canada. It appeared, however, that to fulfill this role effectively, communication in English was essential. Under these circumstances, the wives whose English was more advanced than their husbands began to take on some tasks of the provider role. The disturbance in the

⁷Every lower case letter represents one female respondent and every capitalized letter represents one male respondent.

traditional assignment of roles in the men's marriages increased the risk of marital conflict.

Focused Exploration

In Poland, the man learned the lesson that he must provide for the well-being of his family. Now (in Canada), by this rule, he works very hard and at the same time he sends his wife to school. He is working, she is studying. She learns English fast, is relaxed, she doesn't think that she has to fight, she has time to handle other things such as going to the bank, etc. She thinks that she is independent After she finishes school, she earns more money. For her, Canada is beautiful. Meanwhile, he is still working for \$7 per hour, and she doesn't respect him any more. /3/

The above excerpt from an interview with a male respondent is an excellent example of the way all the men linked their wives' acquisition of English with changes in the couple's marital situation. The man who made this comment, like the other men, thought of himself as the primary provider for his family and also "the man in charge" of his wife's role (e.g., "he sends his wife to school"). In the end however, he felt he was the one who suffered, because despite his sacrifices ("he is still working for \$7"), his role was undervalued ("she doesn't respect [me] any more") while she harvested

the gains (“for her, Canada is beautiful”). For him, as a man, this situation had become unbearable. One of the men described his feelings:

I am somehow smaller than she is. She studies, she goes to school, she learns English, Something, you know, something torments you. When there is a bad day at work you think that you deserve something better and you start to hate the situation that you work only to make her feel good about herself. /4/

In the above two statements, the authors pointed out that attending school (which in most cases was ESL classes) and learning English was a means through which their wives gained independence and felt “good about themselves.” This was in contrast with their own feelings of being “trapped” in their traditional provider role which no longer offered the sense of personal worth and control over family matters. One female respondent concisely described this process:

I went to school and started to catch some English. About half a year later - it was the moment I remember - we were at a store and he couldn't understand what someone was asking him. I still spoke very poor English but in some way I was able to figure out what that man wanted from us. After that incident our (marital) life was never the same. /c/

Since the wives spoke English better than their spouses, some of the traditional roles of the husbands which required communication outside the family and Polish ethnic circle were performed by their wives. For the men with a strong sense of identity about the traditional male role, this situation created a sense of inferiority, powerlessness, and humiliation. One man recalled, "The worst things happened when some people made comments, sort of, 'How was it that I spoke English worse than my wife?'" In response to these feelings, this man demanded (and so did the other men) that his wife perform her new role as if she was him. To be sure that this role was fulfilled, the men provided detailed descriptions of what their wives were supposed to say or to do, with whom they were supposed to meet and how to behave:

I'm a perfectionist and I wanted to get everything perfect. I became paranoid, for example, that because she'd complained to our landlord, our rent went up. I asked her to go back to the landlord and explain everything that I told her. When the landlord didn't change his mind, I was angry with her because, I thought, she had not listened to me and wasn't firm enough in my request. Whether it was a caretaker or a plumber, I asked her to check everything twice before she let them go. When something still wasn't fixed well, I thought it was because she didn't listen to my instructions. /2/

The wives were not expected to be in charge of the new role but to be the agent who represented the role of their husband. If there was a doubt that the instruction had

not been fulfilled in an expected manner, it triggered in men the feeling of losing control, usually accompanied by anger. This could easily generate marital conflict. To compensate for these feelings, the men attempted to tighten control over their wives. One of the male participants explained:

I could earn \$20 000, she nothing, but she knew what to say in the bank, how to speak with MTS or Hydro, how to check a bill while I still had no idea how to do so. I only kept an eye on the money. That's how it started (the conflict). And it happened almost every day because I wanted to know if the bill was paid or what information was in the letter. To be sure that everything was done correctly, I did what I had never done before, such as going together to the grocery. If something was not as it was supposed to be, I got upset and demanded an explanation. Next time I tried to be sure that everything was fine. I was like that (prior to charges and probation). /1/

For the wives learning English was a means of gaining self-respect and worth. They also hoped that by learning English and/or attending occupational training they would increase the spectrum of vocational opportunities available to them in Canada. However, neither the wives nor their husbands predicted that this dream would be a source of an acute tension in their marital relationship.

Conflict of Opportunities in Career and Occupation

Summary

All the wives had a high school education and specific work experience from Poland. However, finding a suitable job based on these credentials was impossible without some knowledge of English and Canadian-based experience. The situation of male respondents was different. Their occupational preparation and experiences in technical fields were sufficient to meet the expectations of Canadian employers. In their case, the knowledge of English was not as important a consideration.

At first, the wives' plans to change their careers were supported by the men. However, it quickly appeared that limited financial resources deprived the men of their hope of achieving the family's material stability in a relatively short time. They wanted their wives to abandon their educational and/or vocational goals and to return to their previous occupations. The disagreement between the husbands and their wives over whose agenda should take precedence was a significant factor contributing to their marital conflict, as well as the men's violence against their wives.

Focused Exploration

In all circumstances women adapt faster than men to new conditions, to changes. They have more opportunities than in Poland. When a Polish woman comes here she figures out that she can go to school, she doesn't have to work and instead can pursue her own career and dreams. In the meantime, we men arrive with an attitude that first we have to earn and save some money, buy a house, new car and then eventually we can think about pleasures. We (Polish husbands and wives) often have different goals in Canada. /3/

The above statement illustrates what all the male participants believed was true: Canada offered their wives opportunities for personal development which they did not enjoy in Poland. Personal development, however, was not what the men had in mind when they came to this country. Their agenda was first to provide for the family ("save some money, buy a house," etc.). Eventually, they thought, after the family had achieved a sense of material stability, their wives would have been able to afford not to work, and realize their career and dreams (which are called "pleasures"). However, the wives decided differently ("they had different goals") which made the plans of the men unattainable in a relatively short time. The men were disappointed:

My dream was to buy an affordable house, let's say for \$70,000. My wife, however, had a dream to live in a house which costs about \$100,000 because, as she put it, she 'won't live in a shack'. If she was still working we would have already saved enough to live on our own, but she said that she was not going to work as a cleaning lady all her life; so she quit (her job) and the dream about the house was gone. I paid for her training for six months and then it appeared that it was going to take some (indefinite) time to be successful in this business./1/

In the above statement, all the men suggested that their wives' aspirations (such as buying an expensive house and being more than a cleaning person) had shattered their own plans. The changes in the wives' attitudes, however, were neither immediate nor accidental.

After arriving in Canada, both marital partners quickly found employment. While the men obtained jobs which were more or less related to their occupational experiences in Poland, their wives were less lucky; one of them worked as a nursing aide and the rest as cleaning persons. The situation of all the wives did not change in the first two to four years of life in Canada. In the meantime, their husbands were able to get promotions, or change their jobs for more suitable ones (in fact, during the interview, each of the men expressed his satisfaction with his present job). Limitations in vocational opportunities for women were acknowledged by both women and men participants. One woman said:

Don't forget that the Poles who come here are fairly well educated and have good professions. For men however, it's easier to find a job they like because they have more than one profession. Many are trained in technical or industrial fields and have no difficulty adapting their skills to the needs of the employer. For them, working at Boeing, Flyer or with machinery is just a matter of orientation. There are many jobs for them. Polish women have fewer technical skills. They are nurses, teachers or secretaries - all the occupations which require Canadian school or training. So, what's left for them? Nursing homes - even this is difficult now (to get a job there) - and cleaning offices. /c/

According to the men, no major marital conflicts took place in the first years of settlement in Canada. The partners still agreed on their common goal (which was the economic wealth of the family) and put aside their occupational differences. During that time, the partners supported each other and seemed to be mutually satisfied with their marital situation. As time went on, however, the wives became aware of vocational and educational opportunities for immigrant women in Winnipeg. Finally, they became active in changing their own unfavorable situations.

For the male respondents, limitations in vocational opportunities for women did not provide a sufficient argument for seeking other solutions. They expected partnership in sharing marital responsibilities, which implied personal sacrifices and participation in

realistic goals. When the wives decided to pursue their plans, the men thought that the burden of family responsibilities was “on their shoulders” exclusively. They saw that for their wives it was convenient that the men took everything on. As one man said:

She had no stress because she didn't have to make decisions and be responsible for them. I put 'one harness, second harness, next harness' on myself, but finally I was fed up with all of that. I tried to discuss these problems with her. She said that I had no right to accuse her of wrongdoing because she cared about the family and thought about its future as much as I did. When I got upset, she left the house, making me feel ignored. /1/

That was too much for someone who called himself the realist:

I blew up. I was 45 and the only assets we had were my wife's dreams. I'm not the hurrah-optimistic type, sort of, 'Oh! It's going to be fine, go for it.' I always think ahead how to overcome difficulties to stand on my own feet. That's my way of seeing the world. I am a realist, we are not young any more, we have a teenage kid whom we have little to offer. Even if there was a chance that she would realize her dreams, how could one say that this was realistic? /5/

The men in the study emphasized the fact that they were fully mature persons (“not young any more”) who were realistic in their goals and actions. Because their wives did not support them in their “realistic” goals - logically to these men - their wives’ own goals and actions were thought to be against them. They blamed themselves for this situation:

That was my mistake that I didn’t take my wife to Germany. If she had faced the hardship of the life there as I had to, and experienced all of the stresses - that hardens one against many real life situations - then she would understand that sacrifices have to be made to achieve something in life. And then (after coming to Canada) she wouldn’t be just day-dreaming. /1/

Finally, the male respondents evaluated their present situation:

Why did I leave Poland, since there is no difference for us? I couldn’t earn a living there and I can’t earn it here. I have no friends I can trust, those from work don’t count. The only person I half expected to be trusted by, my wife, has her own friends with whom I have very little in common./2/

The latter comment highlights an important characteristic of the men in the study: their disillusionment with the social environment in Canada. This is in contrast to their wives who managed to build up a network of Canadian friends and acquaintances. For these women, social interactions were expected to open new doors to social and vocational opportunities. For their husbands, these interactions were seen as unnecessary changes to their family patterns. Such differences between partners often heightened conflict in their marriages.

Conflict of Opportunities in Social Interaction

Summary

Through contacts with peers, instructors and other associates (e.g. volunteers) in schools and vocational training, the wives of male respondents had a chance to participate in a variety of social events and to interact on an informal basis with English speaking individuals. For the wives, this interaction created an opportunity to improve their social and vocational opportunities. As a result of acquiring better English skills and becoming increasingly accustomed to the social codes in Canada, these women seemed to have less and less problems with communication and interaction outside the Polish community.

Contrary to their wives, the men had no incentives to learn English in order to improve their employment situations. Their working conditions with regard to social interactions differed from the conditions of schools and training. The men's communication with English speaking persons was practically reduced to informal conversations at work. These contacts did not satisfy the men. Finally, the men resented any social connections which required communication in English. Soon, the differences between wives and husbands regarding their preferences for social interaction became an inseparable part of their marital conflicts.

:

Focused Exploration

I felt very bad when my wife and I went out together to visit acquaintances, go dancing or to a restaurant. I sat against the wall while they talked with my wife in English. I felt stupid and - this is human nature - when you are not equal you feel worse. You don't speak, they think that you are stupid and you feel useless. /3/

The central issue in the above example is the feelings of male respondents whose limited English restrained their ability to interact with English speaking people. Feeling "bad", "stupid", "worse", "useless", "not equal", "alone and upset" - all these words were commonly used by the men to describe their first experiences in social events during which English was the language of communication. These negative feelings were

usually so intense that the men for a long time abstained from any further social contacts which required the use of English. In contrast to the men who were reluctant to take part in “English speaking” events, their wives did not have such barriers. Their disagreements over this issue could easily evolve into a conflict. The same respondent described this process:

Next time I wanted to avoid a similar situation and...that’s the beginning of the conflict. When she says, “Hey, we were invited (to the same place), are we going there?” Well, I think, “Am I going to sit alone again listening and not understanding a word?” For a normal person this is very upsetting; so I’m saying “no” and the damn quarrel starts. /3/

According to the men, their wives argued that their informal contacts with non-Polish Canadians could help them improve their English, make new acquaintances, increase their chances of finding suitable jobs and/or improve their current job situation. This attitude was confirmed by all the female respondents:

There was no unemployment in Poland and all of us thought that “whether we stand or lie, we are all entitled to 3000 *zlotych*”.⁸ Besides, we knew a lot of people who were able to give you tips where to find jobs, or even help you to get one. In Canada, nobody is going to give you anything if you “stand or lie.” I

⁸A *Zloty* (pl. *Zlotych*) is a unit of money used in Poland

myself and many of the Polish women whom I know got their jobs because they made friends and acquaintances beforehand. That's, for example, why I earned good references and recommendations. /a/

The male participants did not believe that these contacts could make any positive changes to their wives and families' situation. "Instead of being in the clouds," one man said, "my wife should have continued her previous job. Then we wouldn't have wasted so much money."⁹/1/ The men's own experiences of looking for a job did not include social interactions. They could hardly comprehend why this was necessary for their wives:

We had (local) Canadians a few times in our place. My wife prepared everything according to tradition which says "nothing is ever too good for another person." I couldn't stand this attitude. I couldn't understand why she was doing this. Did she really hope that these people could help her in any way? No one who has brains should believe that their life is going to be better in Canada because you get to know people who were born here. For me this was just very childish. /4/

⁹This statement referred to the wife who completed training and began to gain some respect in the area. This required intensive networking in order to become 'visibly' present and successful in this area.

Currently, all male respondents realize their social needs almost entirely within the Polish community. They frequently visit Polish clubs, go to Polish parties, and meet Polish friends who provide the comfort of communication in the familiar language. The issue of language, however, cannot be seen alone as a barrier to social interaction with English speaking Canadians. One man said:

Here people can't make a good time of it. Where Polish people have a social, you know that you are going to have a good time. You can chat over a beer and you don't have to sit on a stool with a drink in your hand or dawdle around the living room and someone's kitchen. There are differences in temperament. We are not embarrassed by having a good time and everybody feels relaxed. Here you have to watch what is and what is not proper to do or to say. You have to take a piece of cheese and crackers and pretend that you're happy; that's a little comic. We grew up in something different. /5/

The above statement represents two complementary features of the men's views. Firstly, it contains superficial assumptions (shaped through language barriers and limited experiences reinforced by popular opinions) about "Canadian-style" social entertainment. Secondly, it reflects the men's personal preferences: one should have a good time, be relaxed, enjoy good food and not pretend to be happy. According to the men, these qualities can only be met by interacting with other Poles. Their social contacts with other Polish immigrants in Winnipeg, however, have a different meaning than in

Poland. In Poland, the main purpose of meeting others was “just to enjoy being together”; here the purpose is to break the cultural and social isolation:

We are lonely here because we have no families or friends. We try to create at least a substitute of family or find new friends. We enjoy the company of new people when we are together but when they go home we feel lonely again. On the surface we can even think, “those people would be nice to befriend,” but then we get to know them better and see that this is not the same as our family and close friends. /2/

The men admitted, however, that their adherence to the Polish network was the source of new conflicts between them and their more independent wives. One man explained,

This is the Polish environment: after work some men drop by a bar or go with another guy and have some wine. Sometimes I invite them to our place. My wife can't stop wondering where I find those people. When they have left, we often end up arguing. The worst things happened where there was ... (a special occasion for the whole community). Each evening there was a lot of drinking - day after day. One day she didn't want to let me go there, the fight started and that's why she phoned the police. /1/

In summary, three phases of conflict opportunities can be linked to the marital conflict in the male respondents' marriages:

In the first phase (the first one to three years of living in Canada), no major conflicts were reported. The opportunities were perceived similarly by the spouses in terms of the conditions which made it possible for them to fulfill their basic instrumental needs. The focus on these needs was a result of both spouses' deep desire to achieve some material stability after the uncertainty of the transition period, as well as their longings in Poland for better living conditions.

In the second phase (between the second and fourth year in Canada), the discrepancies in goals and visions generated first conflicts after the wives began to seek individual opportunities as a means to improve their personal lives and family situations. The women took either vocational or educational courses. However, no plans or efforts were made by the husbands to seek other than existing opportunities.

In the third phase (between the third and fifth year in Canada), acute conflicts in the respondents' marriages were frequent, which included violent acts against the wives. Two wives were already working (although only part time) in their areas of interest, and their hourly wages were higher than their husbands. Two other wives were still in school, and one was involved in an on-site job training. The discrepancies between partner's

perceptions of their opportunities were so immense that the men rejected any possibility of marital reconciliation at that time.

3.2 The Sense of Injustice

The male respondents' sense of injustice emerged as a prominent category which tied in several aspects of immigration. The men shared strong feelings of unfairness and misfortune as they interpreted their experiences throughout different stages of immigration. Injustice in communist Poland was an important reason for their original decision to immigrate to Canada. With the unexpected political changes in Poland, the men again felt a deep sense of injustice having struggled so hard to live in an oppressive society which then appeared to be more hospitable. This research revealed that the men felt that they had limited rights in Canada, and the legal system was biased against them. Finally, the sense of injustice was used as an excuse for violent behavior towards their wives.

Injustice in Poland as a Reason for Immigration

Summary

When the men explained why they immigrated, one of the most frequent reasons they identified was the sense of injustice they experienced in Poland. From their

perspective, injustice infiltrated most aspects of everyday life in Poland. They felt it was also unjust that they had to live under those conditions. Their sense of injustice grew throughout the period between 1980 and their actual date of immigration. In the process of gaining new experiences, the men's protest against injustice intensified, to become a deep desire to break away from the situation once and for all.

Focused Exploration

1. The Perspectives of Male Respondents on Injustice in Poland

In this section I will attempt to reconstruct the development of the male participants' sense of injustice, which played a significant role in their decision to immigrate. The experiences which are shared here embrace the complex conditions in Poland which spawn the sense of injustice in male respondents.

In 1980 when the Solidarity movement emerged, the public became fully aware for the first time in Polish post-war history of the extent of corruption, police brutality, protectionism, fixed court sentences and many other examples of social pathology in Poland.¹⁰ There was hope, shared also by the men in the study, that a mass protest against the existing political regime would bring about freedom, justice and honesty. This hope

¹⁰The comments in this section were selected exclusively because of their relevance to this discussion, and should be interpreted as such. It would be harmful and unjust to assume, based on the men's testimonies that, for example, the entire medical system in Poland is corrupt. It would also be disrespectful to the many honest people associated with the areas indicated in this discussion.

however, did not last long, and disappeared when martial law was declared in December, 1981. This date for male respondents can be seen as the beginning of the development of a sense of injustice which led to their decision to immigrate. One man recalls:

During martial law, some of my colleagues went into hiding. We lived (the respondent and his wife) in constant fear that the militia would come and pick me up or that I would be fired from work. I never ever in my life had come across militia before. And then, I was interrogated without notice many times because they wanted to know whether I knew something about my colleagues, or if I myself was involved in publishing or distributing underground press. That was until 1985. /3/

The sense of injustice was one effect of this dramatic event:

When martial law was declared, I had to go into hiding. My wife ended up in a psychiatric ward from which, by the way, she escaped. The undercover officer took her to a separate room, without a witness, and interrogated her without mercy using fear, for example, that he would rape her because nobody would see them. She was in shock, and had a nervous breakdown. As a result, they called on the emergency unit, put her in a strait jacket, and locked her in an isolation ward. The next day she managed to escape with the help of a doctor. When I learned about that, for the first time, I thought we had to get out of that country. /2/

In one way or another, the men tried to adjust to the difficult conditions of the time. This sometimes required that they take part in activities which were officially considered illegal:

Once a month we went to buy meat directly from a farmer. That was illegal and you could go to jail if the militia had caught you on the way home. /4/

Remember? They rationed vodka (laugh), the main income of the government! So we all became criminals; we produced our own. Once I asked a policeman, "What would you do if you caught me?" He said, "I would drink with you." Even they knew the difference between good and evil. There was one difference between us however; they played gods on every street of the city, while we had to play slaves in our home (fatherland). /1/

The use of contrasting pronouns, "we and they", by the men symbolized their deep discontent with the power and privilege of the state representatives (members of the Party, government, militia and ZOMO - special units of militia with the reputation for particular ruthlessness):

We had waiting lists for houses and goods, and stamps to get meat, butter and candies. They had all of this without even bothering to pretend that they weren't more privileged. They had their own butcher stores, retail stores, etc. where the prices were far below ours. You were only allowed to see through a window what a good piece of meat looked like. I really felt like a second class citizen. /4/

Bureaucracy was frequently identified by the men as a major source of their feelings of injustice. Some examples were difficulties in obtaining a passport, failure to obtain a taxi driver license because of corruptive practices, or inability of a parent to give a newborn child a chosen name because the name was not on the official list of acceptable names. One man attempted to get permission to build a house:

I wanted to build a house, but I soon realized that to get permission or to purchase any construction material, I had to pay a large amount of money "under the table" to a well-connected party activist and smaller amounts to virtually all the clerks in the city housing department. This was all to keep us on a leash, in case we did something "politically incorrect." When they didn't have evidence against you to charge you for political reasons, they always had a hook on you for bribery or other illegal trade activities. /1/

Giving gifts and money to assure better service, which were officially free of charge, became customary:

Can you imagine? When our son was born I paid the nurse to take special care of my wife and baby, and I gave a bottle of brandy to the doctor so he would remind the nurse to take care of them. /3/

I had to have surgery. They told me to wait three months. Three months out of work? (The condition prevented the respondent from performing his usual work duties). How was I supposed to support my family? So I found a doctor who did it in two weeks for just \$100. Then I started thinking, “what’s going to happen next time when I don’t have this money?” /4/

After 1984, the government eased its restrictions on traveling abroad. All but one of the respondents visited western countries, either for business or tourist purposes. Although they considered the possibility of immigration, they were still not convinced that they should do so. Their positive experiences, however, became a source of comparison between life in those countries and Poland:

I was on a business trip abroad for a year and I saw workers who actually enjoyed their work, who were treated like people, who felt responsible for what they were doing. That was a colossal difference from what I saw when I went back home. People in my company were degenerate; they started drinking at 6 a.m. . What do you expect when there are 30,000 people, but there is not enough work for even a

half of them? We spent more time talking than working. While away on that trip, some friends asked for asylum. I still couldn't do it because I still believed that "honor and *fatherland*" came first. /1/

The sense of injustice also increased when the male respondents compared their life histories to those of Poles who had immigrated earlier. Some relatives and friends who were abroad during the implementation of martial law or were forced to leave Poland for political reasons received preferential treatment in many Western countries. After a while, they seemed to enjoy life there. They earned fair wages, went on interesting vacations, bought houses and thought positively about the future:

My brother and his family stayed in Sweden. For a few months we didn't hear from him (all telephone lines were disconnected during that time). I still remember the first pictures we got of his family. They had their own big apartment, all furnished. My brother! Who was barefoot before! But what hit me the most was that they were all smiling. I thought it was unjust that people who lived just a few hundred kilometers away could have such a decent life when we couldn't even open our mouth to say what we thought. /2/

The respondents knew that these privileges were possible to achieve only because of opportunities which did not exist in Poland. It was more and more difficult to defend their own reasons for living in Poland. Yet, they still did not immigrate:

My father used to say that there were two important things in this world: honor and fatherland. I thought my honor was to endure the hardship of life in my fatherland /1/

My greatest concern was my parents. My father had cancer and I knew that they would've really been in despair if we'd left them, despite the fact that my brother was there. /4/

The men were perfectly united on one matter - their conscious decision to immigrate crystallized after the catastrophe in Chernobyl in 1986. This event triggered such an intense sense of helplessness and injustice in the men that they had little doubt that immigration could make a change in their lives.

The last straw was Chernobyl. We knew nothing about what happened for many days. Even on May 1 (Labor Day - three days after the catastrophe) Urban (Press Secretary in the Polish government) said that we were safe because there was no radiation in Poland. In the meantime, all Party members, the police, and their families got vaccinated. When we learned that we were indeed affected, they had just enough vaccine for children but not for adults. That was already too much for many people, but for me that was the end of any hope that Poland would ever be a normal country. /5/

2. Injustice in Poland and the Marital Situation prior to Immigration

The men generally spoke about the three years of living under martial law (1981 - 1984) as a period during which marital conflicts were rare. The increased stress from the political situation was partially counterbalanced by mutual support to withstand the impact of this situation. The families were still young and had support from other family members. This, in these difficult times, helped them to maintain common goals and look to the future with hope:

Life was really difficult, but we, like most of the Poles, were still against the regime and had hope that one day they would be gone. We had a lot of plans. We dreamed about our own apartment, our parents were very supportive and despite the situation in Poland, we were still optimistic. /3/

During that period all the children in the respondents' families were born, thus helping to crystallize family roles. The women, as primary caregivers of children, did not work outside the home, or if they did, only held part-time jobs. This was possible because of the government's financial assistance for parents (and this traditionally was mothers) who decided to take care of their children at home full-time instead of using child care facilities. Simultaneously, insufficient family financial resources required that the men provide for the family more intensely than before.

The sharpening of the division of marital roles had the potential to create conflict. However, agreeing on who should do what was not the problem. Because the woman's primary task was to look after the couple's child (ren), she became less active in public life than before which decreased her interest in the overall social and political situation in Poland. Meanwhile, searching for a way to fulfill his family provider role, the husband became even more sensitive to injustice around him. Not only did he bring home his frustration about the situation, but his wife, who was supposed to understand him, expressed less and less interest in his social and political agenda. Reflecting on the conflict with their wives at that time, the men indicated that its genesis had been her lack of attention to his problems, and increasing discrepancies between their interests in the political and social situation of Poland:

When our kid was born in 1983, I thought that we should go. I was scared that the (political) situation would only get worse. There were still innocent people in internment camps and prisons, and frequently held demonstrations. There were all sorts of rumors that the Russians would finally intervene. When I was on the bus, I saw that people were becoming increasingly upset. My wife didn't seem to realize any of this, the danger of the situation. Her whole world was our son. So was mine, of course, but we had different views of what was good for him. /4/

The men recalled that the couples' tendency towards marital conflicts intensified after 1986, along with their plans for immigration. There was still much to lose: family, jobs, friends and livelihoods. The couples knew that to justify immigration they needed strong arguments, not only for themselves but for their families and other significant people in their lives. The men's sense of injustice, which had been present before, now became a conscious account of events, situations, and observations. One man said that it was the beginning of a process which never ended - the interplay between reasons for migration and blame for the decision:

When I came up with this idea (migration) we were both so happy and agreed to it so easily. When it became real that we would go, she got scared. We knew that there was no turning back, and we were still looking for causes of our fear. For me it was obvious that I wanted to live an honest life, without fear that our kids would have to go through the same things as us or our parents. She knew that I was right, she wanted to go, but mentally she opposed. So she gave me more and more reasons for staying, but it only ended up in more quarrels. Finally we decided that I would go first, and if everything was okay then she would join me later. /1/

For the men in the study, the basic goal of immigration was to escape an unbearable socio-political situation and seek justice in a "western" country. Their dream was to maintain at least the same level of wealth without resorting to dishonest ways of

acquiring it. They thought that they were prepared to lose their status, change their professions and work long hours in menial jobs - all to be able to live in a politically and economically stable environment. The men's vision of their future lives was shaped by the popular idealistic opinions in Poland about "life in the west" supported by the western media (prominently Radio Free Europe and The Voice of America) and their own positive experiences from trips to western countries. The hope that was created was finally to be challenged in Canada.

The Sense of Injustice in Canada and the Changes in Poland

Summary

In 1990, Poland was the scene of profound political changes. For the first time in 50 years, the parliament, government and president were chosen by democratic means. The members of the Communist party, holding key positions, were replaced by members of the underground opposition (who were highly regarded in the Polish society), and by the activists of the Solidarity movement.

By that time, all the male respondents were already in Canada. In almost one day the sense of injustice, which was at the root of their migration was challenged, with the promise of freedom and democratic changes in all aspect of social and economic life in Poland. The moment they waited for throughout their adult life was welcomed by the

men, but it also generated the sense of injustice which would be best reflected in a rhetorical question by one respondent, “Why did this happen to me?” After so many sacrifices and difficult years, instead of reaping rewards, the men considered themselves victims of their own dreams.

Focused Exploration

1. Making sense of injustice

During the interviews, the male respondents frequently linked their sense of injustice to the changes in Poland. They felt it was unjust that they were not in Poland during historic events but more than that they felt that they lost a chance to benefit from new opportunities created in their country. In light of the changes in Poland, Canada no longer attracted the men with its promises. In dealing with the unfavorable reality, the men had become strongly preoccupied with their losses. This preoccupation, however, was not a mere collection of individual complaints. On the contrary, there was significant consistency in how all the respondents made sense of the situation.

Central to the men’s perceptions of their new reality was the constant evaluation of their present situation against new opportunities in Poland. Typically, they created a hypothetical picture of life in Poland which offered a decent life not possible in Canada:

Nobody thought that there would be any changes in Poland. If I'd known that there would be a difference, then, you can believe me, I wouldn't have gone anywhere, because with my knowledge and experience I would easily have been able to make a living there. Who knew that everything would turn around over there? I'd like to be honest, my life has proved to be a fiasco here, a huge fiasco./5/

The men gave examples of family members, friends or colleagues in Poland who established prosperous businesses and in a short time were able to accumulate significant wealth. Commonly, when such stories of success were described, the men presented their own economic situations prior to immigration as much better than the individuals referred to in their examples. Although one might be skeptical about such colorful descriptions, the fact is that these comments reflected the men's deep sense of injustice:

I am a poor person here, one of many. My friends who are in Poland and who had a much lower standard of living than I had at that time are now such rich people. I will never be able to attain that level of wealth. How do you think a normal person like me feels about this? /1/

The men considered their situation irreversible and did not plan to return to Poland in the near future. What prevented them from doing so was not because of their own choice but - as they see it - because of the adverse effects of immigration to Canada.

Their wives had no intention of living anywhere else but in Canada because they had personal plans and had reconciled themselves to the convenience of life in this country. Also, that their children, who are in high school, would not be able to compete with Polish peers at school because they lacked proficiency in the Polish language and had insufficient education by Polish standards (Canadian education is regarded by men as inferior to Polish education). One man noted:

I'd like to go back, but I can't. My family, my youth, my whole life is there. I have no more reasons to stay here and there are people there who would help me set up my business or find a suitable job. I'm full of ideas which I can only make real in Poland, but this is just a dream. My son can hardly speak Polish and my wife wants to stay in Winnipeg. That's a little crazy, isn't it? So, because of "*komuna*"¹¹ we are now at the crossroads: she is already "Canadianized" and thinks only about what's good for her; my son's future is impossible in Poland; and my life is worth only a cent here. /3/

2. Personal guilt and marital conflict

There was a consistent tendency among the men to attribute the responsibility for their misfortune in Canada to the conditions of Canada, to the political system ('komuna') in Poland which forced them to immigrate, and more prominently, their wives, who 'betrayed' them (as discussed in "The Conflict of Opportunities" chapter).

¹¹"*Komuna*" is a colloquial expression used by Poles which carries pejorative connotation and refers to the political system in Poland between 1945 and 1989.

However, freeing themselves from the responsibility for their fate did not help the men to escape the stress of guilt for not living in Poland. Dealing with their guilt implied blaming those who were responsible for the situation. No one, however, was held more responsible than their wives:

Women and men are different. Men think about how things should be and what's good for the family; women think about how to have a comfortable life. We have neither a good nor comfortable life in Canada, but she keeps saying that for her it's okay, that we have everything we need, we don't have to stay in lineups or worry that something is not available. But she has the same opportunities now in Poland. And this was not the only reason of our immigration! /5/

According to the men, the partners had different needs which made them decide to immigrate. The wives, were mainly looking for the conveniences of life. The men based their decision on their sense of injustice and political reasons. The men believe that by living in Canada, the wives have already been able to meet their goals; sometimes beyond their expectations. For the men, fulfilling their goals became not only difficult but also - in light of the changes in Poland - less than a useful task. As the men in the study saw it, their main goal was devalued while hers was fulfilled. What was once perceived as a rather insignificant discrepancy between the partner's views, now had become major marital problems:

We used to fight over whether we should stay here or pack up and go back home. Now, if I only start talking about it and how it could make a difference in our life, just only talking, she doesn't respond and sometimes even leaves the house. That makes me of course stunned and angry. Her attitude is the main reason for our conflict. /3/

The inability to find a solution to this problem influenced the men's lack of satisfaction with their marriages. Even minor disagreements could evolve into accusations which had their roots in the men's sense of injustice that they had to live in Canada against their wishes. The author of the latter statement remembered that in the past, the conflict with his wife over the issue of returning to Poland ended up with him hitting her and the intervention of the RCMP. Other men also admitted that the difference between partners and their views about whether to "return or stay" could easily become a source of a major conflict in their marriages.

3. Contradictions, fears and marital conflict

In spite of an overall impression that returning to Poland would bring about positive changes to the men's lives, some of their opinions tended to contradict this belief. During several years of living in Canada, whether intentionally or not, the men were able to acknowledge some unique advantages of this country. The significant one, for example, was the freedom to make one's own choices independent of the pressure from extended families:

You came from work and even if you didn't want to eat you had to because the supper prepared by my mother-in-law was on the table. It was not well received if we were late; her mother got upset. These were little things, but life is built of little things. I couldn't do what I liked to do. If the situation became tense while living with her parents, we moved to my parents'. Now at least I can do whatever I want, instead of deterring to what others think. /2/

The men also admitted that they had more job satisfaction in Canada than in Poland because of clear rules, honesty of the workers, and discipline.

The men were aware that by moving to Poland they would have had to leave behind some of the benefits of living in Canada. Despite their feeling of injustice here, they enjoyed relatively stable economic and living situations (e.g., two of them own houses) and, as pointed out in the examples above, appreciated some other aspects of life in Canada. These gains were not without meaning when the men considered (although only hypothetically) moving back to Poland. Evidently, they were an integral part of the men's turmoil - predominantly *the fear of the unknown*, *the fear of dependency* and *the fear of shame*. These fears had a direct impact on marital conflict.

Fear of the unknown is a feeling that the men would be unable to function effectively in Poland because they are not familiar with new rules, customs, laws and

other aspects of life brought by the changes in their country. For the men this could be “just another immigration” which they were afraid to experience one more time:

I found out how much I'd changed when I went for a visit to Poland. I wanted to get a certificate of my Polish citizenship and it took me two weeks to figure out how to do it, and first of all, how to talk to the clerks. Whatever I wanted to do - open an account for my mom or even use a tram, was different than before. They didn't let me walk alone at night. For them it was quite normal, but for me it was just another immigration. /5/

Fear of dependency on others upon returning to Poland refers to limitations in housing arrangements and making independent choices:

Where would we live? With our parents, or in an apartment where you can hear your neighbors from upstairs, downstairs and all sides, and smell what they cook? Besides, now if we want to eat at 1:00 - it's okay; at 7:00 - it's okay. But there we would have to eat what the others did. Here, we can just put a sweat suit on and go to Safeway. In Poland, that could be considered bad manners. There, we would have to watch what others say and how we look. /4/

Fear of shame is the fear of embarrassment and ridicule that after so many years of sacrifices and best efforts, they would not be able to present themselves as proud,

prestigious and economically independent persons. Instead, the men would have to rely again on the support of family and friends:

For example, in Poland they always judge you by your clothes, the type of car you drive and the size of your house, and I would have nothing of that. Even if I sold everything we have here, that would be nothing to compete with. First, everybody would be happy, but soon they would laugh at me because after so many years in the west I would have to borrow some money from family or friends. /3/

Even though the men had no immediate plans to live in Poland, they were constantly preoccupied with the pros and cons of such a possibility. The “pros” side involved feelings of loss due to irreversible changes in their lives. The “cons” side consisted of fears about living in Poland. These fears threatened the men’s sense of security and competence. In addition, the men felt guilty because they perceived their fears as punishment for emigrating from Poland¹². The men’s perception of their wives’ indifference to their fears brought on feelings of frustration towards the wives. The men admitted that in the past they had verbally and physically attacked their wives; taking out their hostility and anger caused by their fears:

¹²A contributing factor to the feeling of guilt for emigrating from Poland might have been the effect of political pressure in the past in Poland to treat all people who left the country as traitors.

We were walking down the street at night, and I was drunk. We argued about whether we would've been better off in Poland or here. You know, you have this dream all the time that you are over there, but you get scared when you think that the dream could finally come true. So, I said that, and she answered that I should finally make up my mind. I don't know what happened, but I lost control. I grabbed her by her shirt and pushed her away. /5/

Injustice and the Legal System in Canada

Summary

Unlike other Polish immigrants, the men charged with assault against their partners have unique experiences of dealing with the Canadian legal system. The intervention of the RCMP, legal procedures, the court sentence and probation orders - have deeply influenced the men's perception of justice in Canada. All the men in the study claimed that they were treated unfairly and with disrespect to their inherent rights. An integral part of the men's sense of injustice was their conviction that in Poland their rights would have been preserved better than in Canada.

Focused Exploration

The major problem appeared to be a deep sense of injustice which had never left the male participants since they were charged by the police with assault against their

wives. To a lesser or greater degree, the men admitted that their behavior was wrong, but none of them could accept that the intervention of the RCMP was necessary, and the actions of the legal system were just. One man explained:

I can say from my own experience, the police in this country like to be busy and take care of any complaints. They write whatever the woman is saying, whether it is the truth or not. They don't ask the man, "Hey listen, what happened?" The report is made up and signed by the wife. They don't bother to ask whether or not the husband agrees. If there are no witnesses, whose rights are going to be taken into account? Her's of course, because there is a report and her signature is on it. Who is going to consider the truth when the wheel (of justice) is already in full swing? The most ridiculous thing is that the accused is not being asked in court to say what he thinks. /5/

The above statement touches on two important issues which constitute the men's perception of their legal situation: (i) That the law and power of the police in Canada are considered inappropriate (ii) that the rights of men in general are fewer than the rights of women. Each of these issues is discussed separately.

1. Injustice and the Justice System

The men's criticism of police intervention usually began with their feelings of complete defenselessness and humiliation in front of children, friends and neighbors.

However, what they considered entirely unacceptable was that they were “treated like a criminal”. According to the respondents, nothing could justify such treatment by the RCMP. None of them described his own behavior, upon which the police intervened, as a criminal offense:

“Being a criminal, for what? They come and handcuff you. Do you know how it feels? As if I have killed somebody. I asked them if I could contact my lawyer. They only allowed me to do this next day, and this was all because we had an argument where I had just pushed her a bit. She was angry, I was upset, she phoned the police. Okay, it was my fault, and I admitted to that, but to put me in jail for that and treat me like a criminal? Not allowing me to go back to my own place? Even the lawyer agreed that they were too harsh on me. /4/

An understanding of the men’s objection to “being treated like a criminal” requires a closer look at their perceptions of a criminal. This can be done only through reference to the Polish socio-cultural context in which such a perception originated. It was not unusual in Poland that some behaviors which were classified as criminal by the existing law were not considered as such by a large segment of the population.¹³ Even though official legal acts (e.g., the Family and Protection Code) defined violence against

¹³A good example is illegal political activities which by law were considered criminal offenses, but by popular belief were regarded as highly moral acts.

one's spouse as a criminal offense¹⁴, the actual impact of the law was severely limited because of the complicated procedures around its execution and the lack of appropriate helping resources (e.g., shelters for women).

The most important reason, however, why the official law concerning marital violence was not respected in the community, was the cultural value of family privacy. Marital disputes which involved physical abuse have customarily been seen as internal matters between husbands and wives. The strength of this value was so strong, that it could even take precedence over the Polish police's obligation to respect the law. All the respondents were aware of at least one such situation in Poland. One example is:

Every month on payday all the men in this house (husband and sons) went back home completely drunk. They beat this woman (wife and mother) so badly that she had to run away with two small kids (...). When the police arrived, the house was completely demolished. They wrote a report, shook their fingers at those guys and said, "if you don't leave her alone, next time you're going to be behind bars." Each month they were back, but not a single hair of those guys heads was touched. /1/

¹⁴The Polish Criminal Code (art. 184 par.10) defines family abuse as one family member's intentional act of inflicting physical or emotional pain on other family member(s) on one occasion or repeatedly, but intensively and extended over time.

All other men in the study were asked to comment about the above situation. They strongly condemned the behavior of the husband and sons, but they also defended the conduct of the police. They admitted that the police should react more strongly, for example, by threatening the men with sending information about their behavior to the employer or, as one man suggested, “to the Party”¹⁵. They opposed, however, considering those men to be criminals. Instead, they assigned the responsibility for violence to external causes:

Some men expected to be able to give more than they could to their families. Such a man burned out inside and had to have an emotional outburst. First he got drunk, and when he went back home his wife was upset. He beat her but he didn't think that this was wrong or that he didn't have a right to do so. We shouldn't blame these men because for most of their lives they were unpunished. /3/

The male respondents were against laying charges or even temporarily arresting of the offenders. Their main argument was that such measures would cause more harm than good for the victim and their family. One man said:

In Poland, she would be the one who suffered the most. Where would she go? To her parents, friends? How long would she be able to stay there? A week? And what after? This would be even worse in the village where women typically didn't

¹⁵Until the end of the 1980s, both methods were fairly efficient ways of punishment through shame, negative financial consequences and dismissal from post or work.

work outside the farm. Where would she find a job when there was only one company around? At first people would blame the husband but after? They would start gossiping: “Why is she not coming back home? He is already a good man. Doesn’t she care that the kids are without their father?” And don't forget that her children would meet kids at school who are sure to say, “what happened to your dad? /4/

During the meetings with female respondents, the women were asked whether they would call the police in Poland in a battering situation if they had similar protection from the law as in Canada. All of them said that they would not do so:

Well, they would keep me for one night. People don’t want to interfere in others’ problems. They’d say I know you and I know him, I don't want to have any of you against me. /c/

In contrast to what I would do here, in Poland I wouldn’t call the police. In Poland I have friends, family, I know the language perfectly, know where to go and how to communicate with people. I would just go out, take a taxi, spend a night with friends and the next day I would be back home. Why? Because his family, my family and neighbors would accuse me of egotism and family negligence. /d/

The men easily related the situation in Poland to their own feelings of injustice after the intervention by the RCMP. While they tended to refer to the approach of the police in Poland as “good for the family,” they described the actions of the police in Canada as “destroying the family”. They said that not only had they suffered excessive punishment, but the whole family was affected. In the absence of their husbands (due to a restraining order), the women had to alone fulfill the family responsibilities which were otherwise shared with him. They faced a period of financial hardship because of the husband’s lower wages as a result of absence at work and his expenses for his own support (e.g. renting a room). Living alone on a limited budget forced one wife who was on compensation to go back to work as a cleaning person. For the same reason, another woman had to drop her ESL course while another had to interrupt her job training. Another effect suggested by the men was the feeling of guilt the women would face which, as one man noted, “would make her think twice before she called the police again.” One female respondent who was battered in the past and called the RCMP confirmed:

I had no satisfaction that he was behind bars. Besides, I punished myself because he had to pay a fine in the court and for the lawyer, altogether \$1000, and this affected the whole family for a month. That money was a matter of survival. Our financial problems resulted only in more stress. We were very close to divorce, and you know what that means for immigrants. He would have been fine, as if

nothing had happened, but I with the kids would've ended up on welfare. So, who would be punished for his abuse? /a/

Frequently, the men talked about their emotional discontent and used generalizations about the law in an attempt to prove how they were treated unjustly by the legal system in Canada. Many of the generalizations originated from real situations. The opinion expressed by one of the male participants two years ago accurately describes what the other men think:

It is a problem of the system which denied my rights to defend myself or to see a lawyer at an early stage; the system that doesn't provide interpretation services and even denies access to the phone. It's a problem of prejudice against immigrants and preconceived notions by some people that "immigrant" means something worse. This is not right when it comes to judgment of who is right and who is to blame. /3/ (Services to Immigrants on Probation..., 1994, p.19)

The area which was almost completely unknown to the men was their legal rights such as the right to appeal the court decision or the right to an interpreter other than a family member throughout the entire legal process. Some of the men did not even know that they had a right to plead not guilty. Only one man had an impartial interpreter at his home when he was arrested for wife assault. In one case, interpretation was offered by an

officer who spoke Ukrainian. The men claimed that these rights were never clearly explained to them prior to their conviction.

The men's experiences of dealing with the legal system in Canada had a significant impact on their general perception of their rights in Canada. These experiences together with the cultural expectations about gender relationships underscored the men's sense of justice with regard to their rights as men.

2. Injustice and the Rights of Men in Canada

The men in the study believed that there was an imbalance between the rights of women and men in Canada. "Women can do everything, men nothing", "If she calls the police, they come right away; but if I try to call them, are they going to do the same?", "Men mean nothing in this country," "This is a country for women; forget about yourself." These were only a few examples of comments used by the men during the interviews, that showed their discontent with their social status as men in Canada. They believed that their underprivileged position compared to the position of women in Canadian society affected them in business and as co-workers, complainants and defendants when dealing with the legal system and finally as marital partners. They thought that this had nothing to do with justice and equality, but more with discrimination against men. One respondent noted:

A real man means nothing here; zero. Go to Polo Park and see how many stores are for women and how many are for men. Maybe three are for you, the rest are for them. If a female decides something, you don't have a chance to say no. If she testifies against you, even though you are completely innocent, there is a 98 percent chance that they are going to find you guilty. /5/

While listening to such stories, I had the overwhelming impression that these men saw themselves as victims of a plot created by the law against men; feminists who influence their wives, the media which portrays men as criminals and women as innocent victims, and even Polish people who are influenced by the propaganda against men.

Below are summaries of some of these opinions:

On the Canadian judicial system:

The women can be as violent as the men, but do you think that the police or the judge would believe me if I told them that I was hit by my wife? Is this what they call equal rights for everybody? /1/

He took care of the kids while she was constantly drunk. When he filed for divorce to save the kids, the court gave her custody. /2/

On the feminist movement:

What they've done to families in Canada is just a way of saying that women can exist without men and children don't need fathers. /1/

What they promote is a single pregnant woman being angry with a man because he gave her the belly. Wasn't she with him? Don't tell me that all these women were raped! /5/

First they are against men and then they make a noise about how difficult it is for a single mother to look after their own kids. /3/

On the media:

He is a bad guy, she is a good girl. Take any talk show, any news: he is a rapist, bandit, burglar, alcoholic, drug addict, and abuser; and that's what they teach the kids about men. After that, you are afraid to discipline your own kids because you might be considered a criminal. /3/

They make people believe that all men are potential criminals and all women are innocent. That's nonsense, but it makes you feel bad about yourself. /4/

Apparently, these opinions do not differ from the average views of non-Polish offenders. They actually confirm what some authors found to be a common perception of reality by men who batter their partners (e.g. Gondolf, 1985 and Ptacek, 1988). However, what does make a difference is that the men perceive this reality not only in terms of the local conditions which gave rise to it, but, more importantly, as a particularly negative effect of their immigration to Canada. In other words, apart from seeing discrimination against men as a uniquely Canadian phenomenon, the men were convinced that it would have never been their experience if they had not come to this country. The sense of injustice which stemmed from this situation was an integral part of men's feelings:

When they first time told me at work that I had to watch what I said to a female worker and that I should avoid looking at her, then I knew that this was crazy. You know what I feel? That there is less freedom here than there was in Poland, and if I stayed there, I would never have all these problems! The women here look at you as if you are their enemy, and they can sue you if you just say to her that she looks nice. That might be considered harassment for them, might it not? This is the only continent where you have to be ashamed of yourself because you are a man. /5/

The belief that men are deprived of their "maleness" in Canada seems fairly common among male Polish immigrants.¹⁶ However, when compared with other Polish

¹⁶This opinion was frequently expressed by the men who participated in several discussions on the topic of partner abuse, organized by Polish Canadian Congress, Polish

men, the male offenders who were charged with wife assault presented a heightened suspicion of possibility of being accused of misbehavior towards women in Canada. This attitude was expressed by one man:

I will never again speak to a woman I don't know without a witness. Even if I go to my office and see that there is a (female) secretary sitting alone, I will turn back and come later when somebody else is there. I always have the answering machine ready to record (a conversation), in case there is a woman who doesn't like men. I don't believe women here, because they can accuse you even though you are doing nothing wrong. /1/

Before arriving to Canada, the men paid little or no attention to the issue of equality between men and women. They said that there was no need to because all men and women had equal rights in all aspects of life in Poland. They also said that the problem of inequality between the *wife* and *husband* did not exist because there were no differences in partners' expectations of themselves or each other. As one man said,

We Poles knew what to expect from a man and a woman, because everybody expected the same. Sometimes when she felt that she had too much to do, I just helped her, and that was it. When I needed her help, for example, when I didn't

have time to go and pay for the hydro or gas bill, she did it for me. We didn't have this "problem with rights" until we came here. /2/

The men's assumption that all Poles in Poland enjoyed equal rights regardless of their gender and marital status needs to be understood within the context of the specific political and ideological environment in Poland. Prior to 1990, an unusual alliance existed between the two most influential forces affecting public opinion, the Party and the Catholic Church. Although coming from different ideological positions, representatives of both organizations claimed that inequality between men and women was not a Polish problem, but the problem of capitalist countries. Despite differences in their explanations of why gender inequality was not a Polish problem,¹⁷ this view was widely accepted by the Polish population. At that time, no visible opposition, such as the feminist movement, emerged.

All female respondents said that they had no interest in evaluating their rights while living in Poland. Currently, however, they all consider their situation in Polish society to have been noticeably underprivileged when compared to that of men:

¹⁷The Party claimed that socialism in Poland put an end to the exploitation of women. Officials of the Catholic Church in Poland said that the preoccupation with the problem of gender rights is a result of advanced secularization in the West. In Poland, they claimed, there was no problem of equality between sexes because the majority of Poles adhered to the religious teachings of the Catholic Church about equality within the marital relationship. This opinion was expressed in several discussions by Polish counselors and teachers, as well as other individuals who were interested in this topic.

In the 80s, men played a very decisive role in Polish society. There were male generals who ruled the country, male principals who ruled the schools, and husbands who ruled the families. It was also natural to believe that they didn't make mistakes. Mothers, schools, workplaces - all contributed to this situation because for the Poles it seemed to be normal. All important posts were occupied by men. Only those women who had very strong personalities were able to get better jobs, but of course they had to be members of the Party which was ruled by men. /e/

In Canada, men's sudden contact with issues of gender equality was a cultural shock to them. When they were initially exposed to this problem, there were not too many people who would have understood their concerns. Furthermore, they were not able to take much comfort from other Polish immigrants, some of whom had either reconciled this situation or benefited from it:

You see, you come here and see the changes in Polish people. They watch TV, listen to friends and their views become different than they were five years ago in Poland. They can call your behavior (as a man) inappropriate. They call a behavior abusive that they would never have called abusive before. The wives start bossing their husbands so he even has to ask for her permission to go to the barber. I didn't learn in Poland that we should fear our own wives. /3/

The wives became increasingly attracted to the idea of equal rights for women in Canada. The discrepancies which appeared in the partners views about “what marriage was supposed to be” had a deep impact on the men’s marital satisfaction. As one man sarcastically said, “her emancipation almost destroyed what we had built for 15 years”. The changes in their wives have left the men feeling isolated in their traditional expectations about marriage and coping with the sense of injustice:

Tell me, how should I feel when I have provided for this house all the time and she’s turned her back on me? This house has been erected on my shoulders, not hers, mine. How much has she helped me for all these years? She wanted to be liberated like the Canadian women, Okay, but didn’t she have obligations as a mother and wife? /1/

The respondents’ feelings of competence as men and husbands had always coexisted with their wives’ appreciation of their male roles. Lacking this appreciation, the men felt undervalued and isolated. Their protest intensified as their wives gained more and more independence (described in the “Conflict of Opportunities” section) and departed from traditional expectations of marriage. The wives, who were traditionally expected to be an ally in the men’s perception of reality, were considered traitors, associated with the oppressive conditions which, as the men believed, they supported. In this light, the wives’ situation became doubly unfortunate. On the one hand, they were supposed to stand by their men, yet they were perceived as representing a system which

was discriminatory towards men. As a result, the wives became particularly vulnerable to the men's rage:

It made me mad when she started to complain about our life and that I should change, not her! I knew that my wife brought these ideas from her course because after every class she was upset and aggressive. Finally I said to her, "you have two choices, either it is me or that bunch of feminists. /4/

Gradually, conflicts over the rights of husband and wife became an integral part of the marital situation. According to men's recollection of violent events, they were outraged that their wives had betrayed them by joining those who were against family and men in particular. For the men, their wives showed no respect for Polish values and little regard for the Catholic religion. When the situation seemed to become uncontrollable, the men saw it as their obligation to restore - as one man phrased it - the "natural balance" in their relationships.

3.3 Making Sense of the "Natural Balance" in the Marital Relationship

One man said, "In Canada, you feel (as a man) like nobody, like an unnecessary piece of furniture. Being nobody is against the nature of the real man." Deprived of his perceived male role and rights in the new environment, the men felt powerless:

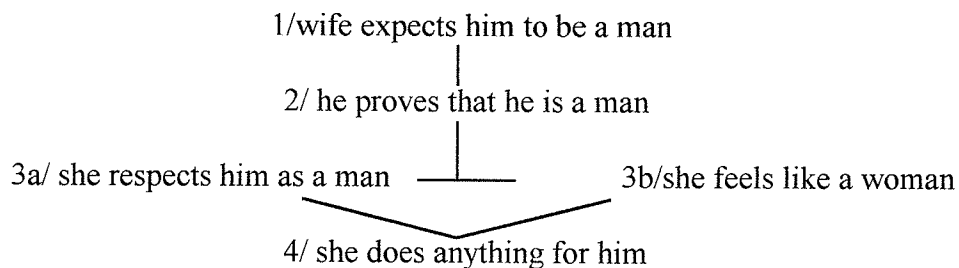
In Poland I was a man. I was somebody because I knew what people expected from me as a man, a husband and a father. Here it doesn't matter, women have power, you are just a little boy. In Canada the natural balance between men and women doesn't exist. /2/

The men in the study thought that the depreciation of the man's role in Canada unsettles a "natural balance" in the relationship between man and woman. Typically, the men believed that the "natural balance" in their marriages could be maintained when both partners agreed upon their marital roles and were committed to fulfilling them. Upon closer scrutiny, however, it turns out that what seemed to be "natural" to the men looked more like a designed plan:

To be the real man means to be firm, resolute, open and manly. You can't say, "I have a problem" because she is going to treat you with disrespect. You are supposed to solve problems so that she can feel safe and will appreciate your presence in her life. She expects you to be her guard. I like giving out something to her and I'm happy that she accepts my good deeds. Then she will do anything you like because you've shown her that you are a man and she is a woman. When you show that you are the man then you can have a good sleep. That's what makes a marriage normal. /5/

What makes the statement representative of all the men in the study is the process of thinking that maintaining a ‘natural balance’ in the marriage (“what makes a marriage normal”) is indeed a complex task, realized in several steps. The initial step is the man’s own depiction of his wife’s expectations from him 1/ (“you are supposed to solve problems”). In the next two steps, by proving his worth as a man 2/ (“you’ve shown that you are a man”) he earns his wife’s respect 3a/ (“she will appreciate your presence in her life”) and paves the way for her to feel like a woman 3b/ (“you’ve shown her that /.../ she is a woman”). In the final step, in return for all his efforts, he expects his wife to prove her worth as a women by pleasing him 4/ (“she will do anything you like”).

The task of maintaining “natural balance” in the marriage can be summarized by a simple diagram:



This ideal picture of naturally ‘balanced’ marital relationships reflects life in Poland and, in some instances, in the country of transition. One male respondent said (the numbers refer to the steps indicated above):

There was no problem between us because she worked in a day care and came home at 3 p.m. I had to work overtime many nights. Sometimes I had to go abroad for a month or so. She was with the kids, but I gave her everything she liked, as well as good money. I even built the kitchen by myself (1). I think that she was happy that I really did care for the family (2) and didn't put my nose in the kitchen or in women's business (3b). I was in Saudi Arabia for almost a year. She didn't want me to go, but I earned a lot of money, we bought a car and she saw that it was worth the trip (3a). This was probably the time when she would have done anything to keep me by her side (4). /1/

One conclusion that can be derived from the above discussion is that the "task" of maintaining natural balance in the marital relationship was a means by which the male respondents expected to realize their utmost value in the marriages: to be respected as a man ("she is not going to treat you with disrespect"). However, In Canada, in the men's opinion, gaining this respect was difficult because some of the roles which have traditionally been assigned to the men either had no meaning or could not be fulfilled. The men believed, that this situation affected a "natural balance" of their marriages. Living with this problem, that, as the men felt, received limited attention from the wives made the men frustrated and angry, which could easily evolve into marital conflict and violence. Wrightsman, L.S. and Deaux, K. write:

The individual who feels that the relationship is out of balance will become distressed and will attempt to restore the balance, either by actually altering the inputs and outcomes or by psychologically altering the perception of the gains and costs that both people are experiencing. (1981, p. 169)

4.0 A DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

This study has shown that there are specific factors and circumstances in the immigration process of Polish men in Winnipeg which might strongly contribute to dissatisfaction with their marriages. In turn, this dissatisfaction might increase the likelihood of conflict in their marriages and violence against wives. This conclusion is represented by two of the research findings:

1. The increased assertiveness of Polish wives in Canada might create a threat to the traditional dominant status of men in their marriages as well as in their desired status outside the family. When discrepancies between partners in their personal and family goals become insoluble, the husband (who is dissatisfied with this situation) might attempt to restore his traditional power by resorting to violence against his “rebellious” wife.
2. In Canada, Polish men might respond to the perceived injustice by retreating into themselves. This can lead them to increasingly expect their wives to affirm

their ideas, intention, rights and actions. The wives' perceived lack of loyalty may elicit anger and feelings of powerlessness in the men, precipitating marital conflict and violence against them.

In the third research finding, I digress from relating marital conflict and violence to marital dissatisfaction. I refer to the correlation between the personal experiences of male Polish immigrants in Winnipeg and their violent behavior towards their wives:

3. In Canada, without relatives and familiar social networks, Polish men might not find themselves in a position to observe those values and norms of Polish culture which proscribe physical violence against wives, because the men are not subjected to familiar consequences for the violation of those values and norms.

The discussion of these findings will be conducted in three sections: Marital Violence and Status Competition, Marital Violence and Personal Marginality, Marital Violence and Values Contradiction.

4.1 Marital Violence and Status Competition

Social-exchange theory offers helpful guidelines for understanding how conflict and violence in the male respondents' marriages might reflect the spouses' different goals and perceptions of opportunities in Canada. The basic tenet of this theory is that

“the individuals have goals which can be met only by affiliating with others”

(Wrightsmann and Deaux, 1981, p.158). In the process of interacting with others, people are constantly evaluating benefits and costs of their relationships. This evaluation is influenced by the evaluator’s personality characteristics and specific factors that are especially important to him or her (Smith, et al, 1986, p.597). In addition, Thibaut and Kelley (in Wrightsmann and Deaux, 1981, p.169) point out that *the comparison level* might consist of past experiences. If the affiliation’s benefits are greater than their costs, the person will be satisfied with his or her affiliation. If the costs outweigh benefits, he or she will be dissatisfied with the affiliation. Logically, individuals who are satisfied with their affiliation have a greater chance meeting their goals than those who are dissatisfied with their affiliation.

The findings of this study are consistent with the general outline of the *social exchange theory*. It has been shown (see: “Conflict of Opportunities and Social Interaction”) that male respondents were neither content with their contacts with English speaking people nor did they have friends within the Polish community. They also did not maintain close ties with their colleagues at work.¹⁸ In Canada, lacking a traditional support network (such as extended family, friends and familiar institutions), the men had to rely exclusively on their affiliation with their wives in order to achieve their goals. Due to immigration, however, their marital relationships were challenged in ways they had never been before. One challenge was to the traditional Polish wife’s role

¹⁸The men’s vocational satisfaction referred to the type of work they did and its organization, not to the quality of their relationship with others at work.

of undying commitment and support for her man's goals of economic stability for the family and the achievement of a socio-economic status that was acceptable by Polish standards. In Poland, traditional marital expectations were that the wives would fully participate in the men's plans, and sacrifice their own individual needs in order to do so ("*the comparison level*"). After settlement in Canada, their marital relationships became unfavorable to the men.¹⁹ As they viewed it, in spite of their own important contribution to their marital relationships ("*cost*"), the actual gains of these relationship were insignificant ("*benefits*"), due to a lack of support from their wives. Giles-Sims writes:

When two or more people are in close proximity and share common goals and resources, as people do in families, conflict results from the discrepancy between idealized expectations and the reality of scarce resources and different personal goals. (1983, p.21)

Indeed, partners shared common goals of reaching an acceptable socio-economic status. However, discrepancies arose in their expectations of how to achieve the envisioned goals. When planning to immigrate, the men anticipated that they would lose

¹⁹"*Matka Polka*" - the Polish Mother - is an expression used by Poles to symbolize an unconditional devotion of wife and mother to her family. This devotion is believed to have contributed to the survival of national and cultural identity through 125 years of partition of Poland, German occupation and post-Second World War communism rules. An ideal picture of *Matka Polka* includes the notion that education, morality and national identity in Poland depends on the preferences, character, mentality and intelligence of Polish mothers and wives (Historia Wychowania, 1968). This idealistic perception of women achieves its peak in the cult of the Holy Virgin (Black Madonna), historically and commonly referred to by Poles as the Queen of Poland.

their socio-economic status for some time after arriving in the host country. Their concern with status at that time was of less importance to them than the benefits of living in politically and economically stable conditions. However, the unexpected changes in Poland devalued the men's primary reasons for immigration. At the same time, the rapid improvement of their relatives' and friends' economic situation in Poland made them realize that the cost of immigration exceeded the benefits. Their own socio-economic decline became a painful reality. It is well documented in the literature that a drop in one's socio-economic status following migration has a negative effect on the well-being of a male migrant, as well as his family:

(R)elative economic status - the difference between the status perceived in the host country and that recollected from the homeland - is more critical to migrant mental health than is absolute economic status. ... A drop in men's socio-economic status may precipitate psychological symptoms and possibly suicide in the men themselves as well as creating stress for their wives and pathology in their children. (Canadian Tasks Force...,1986, p.10)

The individual success of the men in the study was intended to compensate their loss, by achieving socio-economic status compatible with other Polish families, both those living in Canada and in Poland. Apart from this, there may be another explanation for the men's persistence in reaching this status. According to Lopata-Znanięcka (1994,

p.25-26) the comparison between one's own status (individual and family) and that of other Poles is one of the most prominent traits that defines the Polish national character.

In her deliberation about status competition among Polish immigrants in the United States, Lopata-Znanięcka suggests that the status of the Polish family is formed within *okolica*, "the area within which a person's reputation is contained, the social area in which the person lives and interacts, the social life space which contains his identity" (1976, p.19)²⁰. In other words, *Okolica* locates a person in a particular social network which provides criteria for status such as education, occupation, and income, and also individual and family behavior, and general lifestyle. *Okolica*, therefore, demarcates the hierarchies of social status, enabling an individual and family to compete with other individuals and families.

The men in the study thought of several means of acquiring status. The most prestigious was durable goods, primarily the possession of one's own house. Next was economic prosperity compatible with other Poles. Then, the ability to live up to certain important values of the Polish community, for example, to have children educated at the university level. To acquire objects and "new points" for status competition, the men needed the loyalty and active support of their wives. The loyalty of family members was also critical:

²⁰Polish people commonly refer to *okolica* as a neighborhood, a cluster of villages or a housing estate; a limited space within which people know and frequently interact with each other. In Winnipeg, Poles speak of *okolica* as a residential area.

Each person is born into a family with a certain position vis-à-vis other families within a social area. This status is cumulative and competitive; points are won by the acquisition of new prestige items and lost by the dissipation of such items.

Each competitive family member depends upon his or her family to provide him or her with a suitable background, to help acquire objects needed for status competition, and to continue working for the acquisition of new points. (Lopata-Znanięcka, 1976, pp. 18-19)

It is worth mentioning that in the Polish tradition, family solidarity is expected to prevail over individual desire. Back in 1962, Baron made a comment which still adequately describes the lives of many contemporary Polish immigrant families: "Loyalties are attached to the fortunes of the group as a whole, whose prestige is the dominant concern of all. The familial bonds are those of duty and respect rather than affection" (1962, p. 306).

One obvious reason why the loyalty and support of the wives is necessary is that only by combining two incomes would the family have a chance of establishing its (and the men's individual) desired status in Canada. The second reason is that the perception of the men's status outside the family strictly depends on the perception of his status within the family. The wives' increased independence and assertiveness threatened the

traditional family arrangement. The perceived decline of a man's status in their family could easily shatter the man's status outside his family. McCall and Shields write:

A husband whose status outside the family system is inconsistent with his status inside the family is thought to be more likely to resort to the use of violence to restore the family system to equilibrium. The husband's status outside the family is evaluated relative to that of his wife, and is expected to be higher. It is taken for granted that the husband holds the dominant, more powerful position within the family. (1986, p.103)

In striving for a higher status outside the family, the men expected that their wives would not only commit to the same goal, but subordinate themselves to the men's plan of how to attain this goal. Jenkin explained this situation by noting that "(t)raditionally, 'superiors' have had the right to chastise or discipline 'subordinates' using physical violence, if they do not fulfill their 'obligations'" (1990, p.36). This author expands his view:

"Subordinates" have been expected to maintain the status quo by demonstrating loyalty and support to "superiors." In fact, a traditional criterion for individual success in the family has been the maintenance of loyalty, deference and respect from "subordinates." This promotes reliance of "superiors" upon "subordinates"

to maintain support and thus take responsibility for the maintenance of the 'superiors' self esteem. (1990, p.35)

Bersani and Chen (1988) suggest that changes in traditional normative expectations of family members may result in violence against the members who have traditionally held inferior roles. In fact, the moment that the police intervened upon the men's violence against their wives can be regarded as the culmination of changes in the wives' perceptions of their rights within the family, and their individual rights to access opportunities in Canada. Bersani and Chen note that "the changing expectations of women and their demands of equality may actually increase violence against them" (1988, p.61).

As described in the "Conflict of Opportunities" section, the wives' awareness of their rights in their marriages underwent significant changes in the course of their education and interaction with English speaking individuals. This had a direct effect on the changes in status arrangement in the family. Bersani and Chen noted:

In family situations, males may be traditionally regarded as having a higher ascribed status, such as father or husband, but their achieved status in areas such as education and income, or occupation, may fail to measure up with the ascribed status. O'Brien (1971) suggested that this inconsistency may result in family violence when the husband feels threatened in his traditional status by a more

educated or skillful wife and resort to physical violence to maintain dominance.
(1988, p.62)

This assumption is consistent with Geles-Sims' (1983, p.19) finding that if women' education or job status is higher than their husbands, there is an increased risk of violence. The men in the study felt disadvantaged when comparing themselves with their wives in areas of English skills, integration into Canadian society, and vocational or educational prospects. When the gap became significant, it was apparent that the wives were already better equipped than their husbands to fulfill some of their husbands' traditional roles. The men felt deprived of rewards in their relationships and felt that their dominant status in their families was threatened. Conflict and violence was the consequence of this situation. Finkelhor (1983) found that the men often beat their wives when the wives attempted to assert themselves or try to establish some degree of independence. He also added that, by being violent, the abusers "compensate for their perceived lack of or loss of power" (1983, p.19). Roskies and Vignes and Hall confirmed that marital conflict in the new country occurs "where wives begin to seek greater autonomy than their husbands would have them" (in: Canadian Tasks Force... 1986, p.12).

McCall and Shields point out in *social exchange theory* that in the exchange relationship (such as between spouses), "violence is seen as a failure of 'normal' family exchange relations; violence is used as a resource to restore a threatened dominant

status” (1986, p. 103). Similarly Nye explains that, “the rewards of using violence are usually immediate, and frequently the costs can likewise be clearly and immediately identified” (1982, p.249). McCall and Shields continue, “(W)hen the perpetrator does not receive the rewards he expects, or he feels that his status is threatened, he resorts to the use of violence” (1986, p.102).

4.2 Marital Violence and Cultural Marginality

As far back as 1928, Robert Park, a sociologist, coined the term “marginal person,” ascribed to a person who is “never quite willing to break with his past and traditions and not quite accepting of the new society. A person on the margin of two cultures” (in Bennett, 1995). As this “cultural marginality” might be seen as a common characteristic of many immigrants, it can be represented - as suggested by Bennett (1995) - by two distinct patterns: *constructive marginality* and *encapsulated marginality*. This author writes:

Encapsulated marginals are buffeted by conflicting loyalties and have little ability to construct an identity. They are awash in all the pressures and feel trapped.

Constructive marginals, on the other hand, maintain their ability to create personal boundaries and control choices. They construct their own identities.

(1995)

Encapsulated marginals feel alienated and isolated from everything around them. They never feel at home in a new socio-cultural environment, but also no longer identify entirely with their original culture. By contrast, *constructive marginals* take personal responsibility to choose and construct sets of values. These marginals feel authentic most of the time and feel that they have a peer group.

There is a startling parallel between the attributes of *encapsulated marginals* and the men in this study. The men constantly compare life between Poland and Canada, not really feeling “at home” in either country. They respond to the distress of perceived injustice in Canada by retreating into themselves, rather than by affirming themselves. Their alienation in Canada is intense, and can be linked to emotional association with Poland which, in the minds of the men, presently offers an abundance of opportunities in the aftermath of democratic changes. On the other hand, their sense of alienation regarding Poland is caused by fears of the unknown; dependency and shame. The men perceive immigration as a major failure in their lives for which they blame a number of factors constituting their deep sense of injustice: the communist system in Poland, immigration during a time of change in Poland, their perception that men have limited rights in Canada, and their attitudes about the legal system in Canada. The men are angry with themselves and frustrated, and disappointed with their lives.

Some attributes of the *encapsulated marginals* of Polish background in Canada are deeply entrenched in the historical-social realities of Poland. These realities have

been reflected in the men's outlook on life, and as the main theme of their conflict with the social-cultural environments in Poland and Canada. These realities are the building blocks of the men's sense of injustice and have deeply influenced conflict in the respondents' marriages. The large impact of these realities on the men and their families in Canada, necessitates their adequate explanation. Boski writes:

A short flashback to the past will tell us of the traditions of the earlier unparalleled "golden freedom" (often anarchic and corrupt) enjoyed by the noble class until the end of the eighteenth century. Then came the partitions that swept the sovereign state from maps for 123 years (1795-1918). *Those historical circumstances helped to instill hate and mistrust toward external oppressive powers, but also toward any type of government and system of laws. Rebellion was considered the highest national virtue* (italics added), and 20 years of the Second Republic (1918-1939) were not enough to change that orientation, particularly as the country was torn apart with many social and ethnic conflicts. The years of World War II (1939-1945) witnessed a period of resistance and struggle for survival. (1993, p.85-86)

Boski continues by describing 45 years (1945-1990) which marked the rule of the Communist party:

Its programs and strategies of building a society of real socialism in Poland have never enjoyed popular support, which led to another troubled period of cyclic crises and deepening breakdowns in mutual relations between society (nation) and the state symbolized by the Communist party. Hence, *facing adverse and threatening conditions, Poles have trained themselves in disobedience, unruliness, and disorganized behavior, but paradoxically, all that was intended to serve individual as well as national survival* (italics added). (1993, p.85)

Based on the above knowledge, it becomes apparent that the men's sense of injustice in Canada was not specifically circumscribed by their immigration experience, but was an ongoing perception of their realities. The men were discontented, as much in Poland as in Canada with the economic and political situation, and what they saw as the violation of their rights and freedoms. However, coping with these conditions in Canada, through mistrust and disobedience, had no historical, social, or cultural relevance.

In Poland, the men often used tactics identified by Boski ("disobedience", "unruliness" and "disorganized behavior") to cope, for example, with economic hardship and bureaucracy. These tactics also gave evidence of the men's solidarity with those who shared similar views and beliefs. When used for political purposes, they testified to men's concern for "honor and fatherland." The paradox of this situation was that despite being considered by the men as a "necessary evil" (and eventually being one of the

reasons for their immigration), these coping tactics secured their self-affirmation and guaranteed the support of their family and community members.

In Canada, these individuals were helpless in dealing with their sense of injustice. Having no cultural, social and political relevance for Canada, where honesty and following the rules determine individual and family well-being, the men retreated into themselves denied self-affirmation in their new social environment. Siann writes:

...all human beings require a sense of personal significance and identity. This sense of significance, or self-affirmation, comes from meeting the standards that the individual has assumed to be important and valid. ...If self-affirmation is denied the individual will feel a sense of devaluation that will be deeply distressing. (1985, p.241)

In coping with their lack of self-affirmation, the men appeared to depend on their wives' support for their ideas, intentions, rights and actions. The wives, however, actively sought their own self-affirmation in Canada, gaining advancing over their husbands in English skills, social interaction and vocational/educational prospects. This only deepened the men's self-devaluation, for which they blamed their wives. Siann continues:

(W)hen self- esteem is attacked, and when affirmation is denied, an individual may experience a number of emotions that may lead him or her to try and exact self-affirmation from others by wresting personal advantage from them. (1985, p.241)

The men's perceptions of their wives' "indifference" to their problems only confirmed their suspicions of disloyalty. Following Ferraro (1988, p.133), even the slightest indication of their wives' disloyalty was seen as an attack on their sense of self, to which the men responded with violence. Ferraro explains:

(The batterer's) perception of threat is tied to the feelings, meanings, and actions they regard as critical for continuity and survival of self. Anything that an intimate other does or says that violates the batterer's expectations of allegiance and support of his sense of self is interpreted as a threat. (1988, p.128)

Siann also confirms that the denial of one's self-affirmation may fuel this person's aggressive behavior (Siann, 1985, p.244). Recalling their wives' affiliation with English speaking individuals, the statement below by Ferraro illustrates the dynamics of conflict and violence with regard to the link between their wives' loyalty and the men's self-affirmation:

He will become sullen and irritable about her involvement with others. She, in turn, becomes exasperated by his possessiveness and begins to withdraw. He interprets this as further rejection and becomes more concerned about her loyalty and becomes more possessive. Eventually, her loyalty to him actually is undermined, his sense of threat is expanded, and he may become violent. (1988, p.132)

Unlike in Poland where the men's sense of injustice had been an integral part of their communication and interaction with others, the men did not feel that they had a reference group in Canada. They did not have English speaking friends, and those of Polish descent were "not the same as family and close friends." Many years ago, Fromm wrote:

Man - of all ages and cultures - is confronted with the solution of one and the same question: the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and find at-onement. (1974, p.8)

For the men in the study, overcoming their separateness and isolation in Canada was probably one of the most difficult existential tasks of their lives. Against their pre-immigration wishes and dreams, isolation, in different forms, became the reality of their

everyday lives. Also against their wishes, the process of overcoming their isolation was marked by conflict in their marriages and violence against their wives.

In the literature, isolation is commonly seen as a contributing factor to violence against women. However, isolation can assume different forms. In the first instance, isolation is seen as an effect of the violence, a condition which contributes to its persistence. Many authors (e.g. Ptacek, 1988; Montelone, 1982) note that denial and guilt as well as practical worries (e.g., economic and fear of prosecution) prompt family members to keep the family violence secret. In this case, isolation is a kind of “cover up” which prevents the family and its individual members from shame and other consequences of public interest. Isolation might also be the result of a tendency to avoid any association by others with families where violence occurs, to manifest lack of support for such families, or even to punish them (Pagelow and Johnson, 1988). Paradoxically, because of lack of support systems, these types of punitive isolation may increase the risk of violence in isolated families (Edleson and Tolman, 1992, p.49). Finally, isolation is one of the tactics used by male abusers to control their wives and maintain dominance in their marriages (e.g. Walker, 1988, p.16).

The above forms of isolation, to varying extents, refer to all of the male respondents' marriages. A less commonly described form of isolation is “self-imposed” isolation which is typical for encapsulated marginals (Bennett, 1995/96). In the men's case, this form of isolation can also be seen as their defense against the perceived

injustice in their new environment. Sinclair admits that “for violent man, isolation from others tends to be self-imposed, he distrusts his environment and most people in it” (1985, p.39). Devoid of a familiar socio-cultural context and overcome by isolation, the men create, as Gondolf suggests (1985, p.41), an emotional “funnel system,” storing up their unexpressed feelings, to be finally erupted in anger²¹. To be clear, the men’s anger was not, at least not primarily, a skill deficit or a stress management problem²². It was an accumulation of feelings of powerlessness the men felt through their self-imposed isolation; powerlessness which is considered an important factor in precipitating abusive behavior. Jenkins (1990, p.54) reports that intense powerlessness is felt by many abusers, especially prior to the abuse. There is a parallel between the situation of the men in the study and Finkelhor’s explanation:

Abuse can be a way of venting anger against another family member who is seen in some way responsible for the loss of power. Or it can be a way of trying to regain control by using coercion or exploitation as the resource for having one’s will carried out. In either case, the abuse is a response to perceived power deficit. (1983, p.19)

²¹The men’s increased anger was also observed during the interviews when they were asked to make comments about their adaptation and feelings of isolation in Winnipeg. Similarly, during the educational sessions while on probation, the men’s anger was particularly “visible” when these topics were discussed.

²²The evaluation of these qualities was part of a complex evaluation of the men’s situation undertaken during their probation period. The results of such evaluative tools as The Index of Controlling Behavior, and pre - and post evaluation of their participation in group therapy indicated that the men in the study were able to control their anger quite effectively if they wanted to.

4.3 Marital Violence and the Contradiction of Values

Wife beating was considered by the men to be a private family matter. The response of the police in Poland, who hardly interfered to prevent the violence, was called “good for the family”. The men opposed defining batterers as criminals. When Poland’s cultural context was considered, they clearly confirmed a widely accepted view by theorists and practitioners that “cultural norms regarding the subservient role of women and the privacy of the family have made the marriage license a hitting license” (Margolin, 1988, p.203). On the other hand, the men generally condemned physical abuse of wives in any form. They also asserted that they did not use physical force against their wives while living in Poland²³. There was inconsistency in the men’s opinions about violence against wives. These opinions, however, precisely voiced contradictions between values which, depending on circumstances and the interpretation of the situation, can proscribe and condone violent behavior. As noted by Longstreet,

A given ethnic group may have...a belief that all members should follow the established laws; this same group may also have another...belief that a man should defend his marital honor even to the extent of beating his adulterous wife

²³It is possible that some of these men were in a state of denial or were too ashamed to openly talk about these events. It is more likely, however, that this information was correct. Both the degree of trust between the men and myself and my familiarity with their life histories suggest this is so. This was also confirmed in several evaluations conducted for Youth and Correctional Services in Winnipeg.

or murdering his wife's lover, both of which violate laws supported by the group.
(1978, p.93)

Lowenberg (1983, p.40) explains that members of an ethnic community who share a common set of generalized values, often select behavior that violates those values by subscribing to a variety of operational values. For example, assuming that 90% of Poles regard themselves as Roman Catholics, the Roman Catholic religion influences the Poles' shared general values orientation. One example of a general value widely recognized in Poland is mutual respect and tolerance, influenced by the commandment, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself"²⁴. This value advocates life in harmony with others. On the other hand, an operational value in many Polish families is that wives and children should fully obey "the man of the house." Mondykowski illustrates how this value contradicts the value of mutual respect:

The father and husband is acknowledged as the head of the household. His authority is to be respected and his wishes obeyed. As one Polish patient told me, "When a Polish husband says, 'Jump!' you ask 'How high?' on the way up."

(Herberg, 1993, p.42)

²⁴The Polish version of the commandment differs from the English version which is "Love thy neighbor as you love thy." The phrase 'your neighbor' does not adequately reflect the original Polish phrase '*twojego bliźniego*' which, with the best effort can be translated as 'your fellow' with reference to any single individual human being, including a family member.

The assumption that violence is a chosen behavior (Edleson and Tolman, 1992, p.17) embedded in cultural values and norms (Ross, 1993) leads to a conclusion that the men were not violent against their wives in Poland because the impact of values which proscribed violence against wives was greater than the values which condoned such a behavior. In contrast, the impact of values which proscribe violence was not significant enough to prevent the men from perpetrating it in Canada (it is important to emphasize that the men's values orientation with regard to gender and marital interactions was not critically different in Canada than in Poland). An initial explanation of this situation is offered by Nye (1982, p.250) who hypothesizes that "wife-beating is less frequent in families that have relatives and/or friends living nearby," because the detection of violence is likely to be followed by sanctions. The data presented by Straus and Geles (1990) also suggests that there is a close correlation between reduced instances of family violence and social network "embeddedness." According to these authors, kin and neighborhood networks create social support systems which serve as family violence control mechanisms (1990, p.337).

In Poland, the role of the community in sanctioning and controlling its members' behavior cannot be ignored. A central concept through which this role is explained by Znaniecka-Lopata (1994, p.12-13) is "*reputation*," which is an important factor in ranking individual position in status competition within his or her location; defined earlier as *okolica*. If an individual's reputation is satisfactory, "families, employees, friends, and neighbors may combine efforts to help an individual to raise his or her social

position vis-à-vis others within the group” (Znanięcka-Lopata, 1994, p.14). In essence, without a reputation which is satisfactory by the *okolica*'s standards, an individual has limited chances of obtaining the social and economic support of his or her community.

Finestone writes that “the Polish mode of interpreting experience is deeply imbued with the conception of sin; moral categories are widely applied in the judgment of human conduct” (in Znanięcka, 1994, p.75). Moral categories - or general values - which proscribe physical abuse of wives (such as mutual respect) might not continuously be implemented, but they surely serve the Poles as points of reference in their judgment of the batterer's behavior. The illustration of these values is an expression “*Damski bokser*”, “the boxer of the females,” which is used to show the disapproval of violence against women. An offender is likely to suffer consequences of his behavior which may include, for example, criticism at work, or exclusion from a network of friends.

Znanięcka-Lopata (1994, p.13) points out that the dissemination of knowledge in “*okolica*” about a person is typically assisted by gossip. Violence against a wife is a topic which is not overtly discussed in the community. It is spread by gossip which can profoundly affect an offender's reputation, making it difficult for him to achieve a desired status, and to function effectively in the community.

Two other important sources of controlling and sanctioning the batterer's behavior are family values and the family's reputation. A family ideal shared by a majority of Poles stresses the feelings of belonging to a family group, which includes all

relatives by blood and marriage (Radecki and Heydenkorn, 1976, p.125). Belonging to a family in Poland warrants the broad support from family members for each other in many areas of life (e.g. economic, emotional, housing, childcare and transportation). On the other hand, belonging to a family requires that its members they observe family rules, values, and expectations. Although one rule in the Polish family is that men are to keep family order, it is less likely that the majority of families would quietly tolerate wife beating. Such a behavior could trigger family sanctions including the complete withdrawal of the family's support for the batterer. Since wife beating would still be considered a couple's private matter, the lack of family support could equally affect the husband, wife and children. The lack of such support particularly in times of economic hardship (and this, for example, was the case during martial law in Poland in the 1980s) would create many instrumental and social problems for the batterer and members of his immediate family.

In Poland, the reputation of a family unit is the product of reputation, status ascription and achievement of its individual members in "*okolica*" (Znanięcka-Lopata, 1994, p.12-13). Even slight changes in one of these qualities by one person may affect the reputation of other family members. The expressions: "Like father like son", "like mother like daughter," "like sister like brother," which are commonly used in Poland, show that the reputation of one family member strictly depends on the reputation of his or her relatives. The family of a batterer, therefore, can be the subject of the same community sanctions as experienced by the batterer himself. In this situation, the major

family expectation becomes that all its members feel committed to preserving the family reputation. If this reputation is jeopardized by the conduct of a family member by physical abuse of his wife, the family would have the obligation to react with a variety of sanctions against the offender. Znaniecka-Lopata suggests that “those who dishonor or shame the family are either written off, legally disowned, or simply ignored as much as possible” (1994, p.76).

Paradoxically, the orientation which emphasizes the role of family and community in preventing wife abuse contradicts another idea which links wife abuse with “societal messages” that it is permissible for men to be violent towards women (Straus, 1990, p.137). There is, indeed, significant evidence that this behavior is passed on to male batterers through socialization in the family of origin (e.g., Johnston, 1988, p.192). Frequently in the literature, violence against wives (and women in general) is ascribed to the socially accepted supremacy of men in the family and other social domains of life. There is some evidence that men’s violent behavior might be linked to specific societal norms of a given ethnic group, which give the men special privileges in controlling family members (e.g., the aspect of “machismo” in Hispanic families, in: Straus and Smith, 1990). The beating of Polish wives can also be seen as closely connected to the norms and values of Polish society, which determine that a good marriage as one in which the husband is the head of the family and conducts himself accordingly (Radecki and Heydenkorn, 1976, p.127).

In response to these two contrasting views about the role of family and social networks in the prevention versus promotion of wife abuse, O'Leary writes:

There is an important difference in the acquisition (learning) of a behavior and the performance of a behavior; we may learn how to do things through modeling that we might never do because the modeled behavior had such disastrous consequences for the individual or because we perceive that engaging in such behavior would have disastrous consequences for us. (O'Leary, 1988, p.34)

In addition, Gill suggests that despite established social conditions and processes which legitimate violence in society ("social-structural violence"), violence within families "involves acts which usually conflict with prevailing social norms or laws" (1986, p.127). These two opinions explain why the men who grew up believing that they had inherent rights to use a variety of controlling tactics in their marriages did not actually resort to violence against their wives in Poland, but did in Canada. Given the sanctioning and controlling role of extended family and "*okolica*" in Poland, the following opinion can be formulated:

In Canada, in the absence of relatives and familiar social networks, Polish men might not find themselves in a position to observe those general values and norms of Polish culture which proscribe physical violence against wives, because the

men are not subject to familiar consequences for the contravening of those general values and norms.

The intention of this section has by no means been to suggest that violence against wives is a less common phenomenon in Poland than in Canada. The information provided in the introductory chapter shows that it might actually be otherwise. I have only attempted to answer a question which has assisted me throughout my work on this thesis: “Why had the Polish men beat their wives in Canada but had not resorted to the violence in Poland?” Similarly, in my work, immigrant men of varying cultural backgrounds, have insisted that they began to physically abuse their female intimate partners in Canada. The ideas included in this discussion may also help to understand similar problems of other ethnic groups.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Results of the Study

Owing to the opportunity created by *grounded theory*, this study showed conflict and violence against some wives in Polish immigrant families in Winnipeg, within the context of gradually emerging, interrelated factors that made the phenomena unique under immigration circumstances. This approach led to the generation of two major categories, “The Conflict of Opportunities” and “The Sense of Injustice.” Each category

shows that there might be a connection between Polish batterers' immigration experience and their dissatisfaction with their marriages. It also shows that these men's dissatisfaction with their marriages can be a factor influencing marital conflict and their violence against their wives. The final summaries of these categories are:

- *Conflict of Opportunities* refers to the men's dissatisfaction with their marriages after their wives became more assertive when they decided to take advantage of educational, vocational, and social opportunities existing in Canada. This situation creates a threat to the traditional dominant status of men in their marriages, as well as their desired status outside the family. Some men resort to violence in order to restore their traditional power in their marriages.
- *Sense of Injustice* refers to the men's dissatisfaction with their marriages because of feelings of injustice accompanied by lack of support from their wives and isolation in Canada. The men's perceptions of lack of support and loyalty can precipitate marital conflict and violence in the marriage.

These categories, in turn, formed a contextual framework for the formulation of three propositions concerning the social, cultural and personal aspects of marital violence in Polish immigrant families. These propositions are:

1. The increased assertiveness of Polish wives in Canada might create a threat to the traditional dominant status of men in their marriages as well as in their desired status outside the family. When discrepancies between partners in their personal and family goals become insoluble, the husband (who is dissatisfied with this situation) might attempt to restore his traditional power by resorting to violence against his “rebellious” wife.
2. In Canada, Polish men might respond to the perceived injustice by retreating into themselves. This can lead them to increasingly expect their wives to affirm their ideas, intention, rights and actions. The wives’ perceived lack of loyalty may elicit anger and feelings of powerlessness in the men, precipitating marital conflict and violence against them.
3. In Canada, without relatives and familiar social networks, Polish men might not find themselves in a position to observe those values and norms of Polish culture which proscribe physical violence against wives, because the men are not subjected to familiar consequences for the violation of those values and norms.

It was emphasized in the study’s design that the aim of this thesis was not to integrate its categories to form a grounded theory. Though I would not hesitate to undertake this task in the future, my intention with regard to this study was to identify issues important for social work practice, not develop a theory (e.g., about the causes of marital violence among Polish immigrants). In this project, I was interested in concept

development and theme analysis. This approach was anticipated by Corbin and Strauss as an alternative to developing a theory (1994, p. 115).

5.2 The Benefits of the Study

This study has one particularly fundamental and positive outcome: it enriches the knowledge about family violence in the Polish community in Canada, and as such, has application for social work practice with Polish families who experience this problem.

This opinion is supported by at least three premises:

1. This thesis is likely one of very few studies that exclusively focuses on the problem of marital conflict and violence among Polish immigrants in Canada and possibly the only one that reflects the unique experiences of Polish immigrants since the 1980s. In light of a shortage of publications on this topic, this study uniquely offers social work practitioners insights into a number of factors that might influence conflict and violence in the families of their Polish clients. As well, some information provided in this thesis (e.g., the impact of the historical and social realities of Poland on shaping attitudes of Poles) can be used in areas of social work practice other than family violence.
2. There is considerable depth to the analysis and presentation of the findings, which identifies the perspectives of the participants. These perspectives might offer cues to the way male batterers of Polish descent interpret the realities of their lives. These

cues might enable the worker to assess his or her client's situation more accurately by distinguishing, for example, which elements of the client's situation are unique to the client and which are similar to other Polish batterers.

3. It shows a broad spectrum of social, cultural, and personal conditions that either facilitate or constrain violence Polish men perpetrate against their wives. This knowledge might be helpful, for example, in the ecological assessment of a batterer's situation (Edleson and Tolman, 1992).

5.3 Personal Insights and Dilemmas

My particular experience in this project was that the task of compiling and analyzing data substantially exceeded my first expectations with regard to time, work load and interaction with people. Shortly after I had gathered the "first bits of data," I found myself increasingly preoccupied with the question of data credibility. This led to my continually growing sensitivity to observing those behaviors and attitudes of Poles in Winnipeg that might have been relevant to the study. I listened to many discussions and individual comments about issues, such as the differences between values of Polish and Canadian families, the roles of wives and husbands, and attitudes and practices in child rearing. With greater interest than ever before, I observed the way Polish family members interacted with each other, how they spoke to each other, how they communicated non-verbally, and what they expected from each other.

This “emic” approach to gathering data, anticipated at the beginning of this study, played a pivotal role in expanding my sensitivity to cultural factors impacting on people’s attitudes and behaviors. Green notes that ethnic competence in social work “implies an awareness of prescribed and proscribed behavior within a specific culture, and it suggests that the ethnically competent worker has the ability to carry out professional activities consistent with that awareness” (1982, p.52). I believe that I have made a significant progress in attaining this skill.

I have to acknowledge that I was not able to avoid dilemmas while working on this theses. Two main dilemmas were:

1. Data analysis, according to the canons of *grounded theory*, is a twofold process. On the one hand, categories are constructed by adding bits of data relevant to the preceding findings until the effect of saturation is achieved. On the other hand, the data that lacks relevance to the evolving categories is not included in the process of further conceptualization. As this procedure was justified by the chosen methodology and general aim of this project (which was to synthesize individual experiences to produce generalizations), it also led to the marginalization of some important aspects of the respondents’ lives. To my regret, facing these objective constraints as well as a huge volume of data, I had to leave underreported some interesting data pertaining to individual cases that appeared to have a low level of significance to the emerging

categories. I hope, however, that in the future I will be able to share this knowledge at, for example, during professional training and workshops.

2. My deep desire was to produce a study that would really highlight those issues that were specific to the Polish cultural and national background of the respondents and their immigration experiences. However, certain “features” of the phenomena of wife abuse, such as the offender’s striving for power and control in the family, exist regardless of national or cultural boundaries. Unfortunately, I was not always successful in determining whether I found either, de facto, the indicators of “the Polish case” or general trends. The major obstacle in solving this dilemma was the almost complete lack of published references available on the topic of marital conflict and violence in Polish families. I hope, however, that my attempt to delineate the “Polish content” from general theoretical explanations will help the reader to form his or her own opinion about whether a given aspect of the problem might be labeled “Polish” or would have broader, cross-cultural significance.

5.4 Recommendations for Social Work Practice

Based on this thesis, several recommendations can be made to practitioners who encounter the problem of marital violence in Polish families:

- Workers should be aware that adult Polish clients who immigrated to Canada in the 1980s will likely have at least high school education and one or more occupations. It

was noted in the study, that all the male respondents and their wives had partial or completed high school education (either vocational or comprehensive). This reminder is very important in light of popular notions about Polish immigrants that originated during the earlier waves of Polish immigration to Canada; that Polish immigrants are under-educated and unskilled beyond menial work. This perception might not reflect the reality of the immigrants who, like the men in the study, arrived to Canada within the last 16 years.

- Workers should pay attention to differences in the education and occupations between Polish wives and husbands. As indicated in the study (“The Conflict of Opportunities in Career and Education”), it is possible that a Polish wife whose skills are to be less adaptable than her husband’s, might decide to upgrade them (or seek new ones) by exploring existing opportunities in Canada. Such a decision might result in temporarily worsening the family’s financial situation, altering personal and family goals, and increasing the wife’s assertiveness. These are factors which, according to this study, contribute to marital conflict and violence against Polish immigrant wives.
- Workers should look at the differences between the level of English proficiency of Polish partners. This study showed (“The Knowledge of English and the Conflict of Opportunities”) that there might be a correlation between one partner’s better English skills and changes in marital roles. When the wife’s English becomes better than her husband’s, she might start making independent decisions and taking on her husband’s roles that require communication in English. In this situation, the husband might feel that his traditionally dominant, controlling role in the marriage is threatened. As

pointed out in the study, in an attempt to ensure (or regain) his control over his wife the man might resort to violence against her.

- Workers need to be aware of the social, cultural, political and historical circumstances of their clients' lives that contributed to their sense of injustice. The circumstances discussed in this study ("The Sense of Injustice") referred to the communist system in Poland, democratic changes in Poland, and legal system in Canada. This awareness has several advantages. It allows the worker to comprehend the systemic conditions that influenced the client's situation both in Poland and Canada; it improves communication with the client, who sees the worker as a competent individual who understands Polish people; it provides a basis for the discussion of important issues in intervention with batterers, like denial of responsibility for violence, self-isolation, lack of affirmation and negative self-talk.
- Workers should investigate the contradictions between those values of Polish culture that discourage men's violence against their wives and those that condone such behavior. This knowledge will play an important role in challenging the views of Polish offenders who are familiar with both types of values but justify their violent behavior with values that lead to the victimization of their wives.

This thesis has demonstrated that violence in Polish immigrant families is a complex problem. However, to deal effectively with it, new approaches to program planning and intervention are necessary. Currently, Polish families in Winnipeg who experience violence are not treated appropriately with regard to their language and

cultural needs. An offender of Polish decent has a chance to participate in counseling in his first language only after a court sentence to probation services. No such opportunity exists for female Polish victims. The following actions would improve this situation:

- A long-range policy is necessary which would coordinate all agencies in Winnipeg providing services for victims and abusers to deal with their immigrant clients according to their language and cultural needs.
- The abused Polish women should be given professional support immediately after her husband's arrest, and continuously until any kind of threat to her and her family is eliminated. These women are often left without any help. It must be understood that women might not ask for help themselves because they fear language barriers, her husbands' re-offenses for acting against him, they blame themselves, and feel shame.
- Programs for victims and abusers of Polish background should be designed to address the specific needs of this population. Such programs should take into account the specific experiences of Polish clients such as those presented in this study. Marital conflict and violence in Polish families can be properly understood and discussed only within their cultural context. Another important issue is the use of supporting "tools" such as videos, and written materials. These "tools" should be selected and prepared to serve their intended educational purpose.
- All legal organizations (e.g., ICRP, Court, Legal Aid) dealing with immigrant male abusers and their victims should use interpreters who have training in the area of family violence or in the court/legal interpreting. Other interpreters (e.g., a minor

family member) should not be regarded as legally competent because of the severe consequences their interpretation can bring for victims and their abusers.

- Educational materials in first languages should be widely available to victims and abusers so they can understand that they have the same rights and opportunities to seek help in their problem as any other person in Winnipeg.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

Several suggestions for further research can be made:

- This study showed only the perspectives of the batterers. To obtain a full picture of marital violence among Polish immigrants, it would be useful to carry out a similar study with female Polish immigrant victims of abuse.
- This study concentrated on similarities in the Polish batterers' situation. There were, however, individual differences knowledge of which should be the part of the worker's overall orientation in the dynamics of conflict and violence in Polish immigrant families. For example, experiences in a country of transition might deeply influence conflict and violence in some Polish families. Knowledge generated through case studies would give more specific information about the problem.
- There is a need for the design of an intervention strategy with batterers of Polish origin. As a starting point to developing such a design, it would be necessary to investigate the effectiveness of current services in dealing with Polish offenders, and to identify their shortcomings and advantages. It could be expected, for example, that

research would indicate which of the elements of the present programs are useful and which need new directions to provide effective services to Polish clients.

- An important issue to investigate is the problem of research with immigrants. Some immigrants refuse to take part in research because of conditions drawn by the researcher. For example, a procedure such as signing the Consent Form might be viewed by a prospective respondent as an attempt to limit his or her freedom. New directives to research with immigrants would significantly expand opportunities to study problems of this population.
- There is a need for qualitative studies that would highlight the experiences of marital violence of other ethnocultural communities in Winnipeg. Such studies would shed more light on what is the unique experience of a given ethnocultural group, what is the immigrant experience and what is abusive male phenomena.

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1. Background information

This section is designed in response to two important principles of qualitative research. In order to understand actions or events the researcher (i) “must be alert to contextual variability in people’s behavior” (Hammersley, 1981, p.209) and (ii) to see the phenomena as “continuously changing in response to evolving conditions” (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.5). The demographic data is a source of basic knowledge about the context and conditions within which expectations about marriage are created and executed. All respondents in the Focus Exploration phase will be asked to answer the following standardized questions:

“You are under no obligation to answer any of these questions, or all of them if, by any reason, you would rather not. You do not need to explain this decision.”

- Age of respondent
- Occupation in Poland
- Present occupation
- Employment status (e.g., employed, unemployed, on compensation, retired)
- Education
- Religious affiliation
- Length of time in Canada
- Previous abode
- Place of living in Poland
- Length of marriage
- Previous marriages
- Number of co-habitants
- Number of children
- Age of children
- Parental status (biological parent vs. step-parent)
- Other family members in Canada

2. Expectations about marriage

Expectations about marriage refer to specific aspects of life that might influence marital conflict. Four major questions will induce the narrative of respondents. Probing questions will be used when necessary to direct attention to those aspects of marital life which play a significant role in the development of conflict situations and marital violence.

Major questions:

- What do you expect from marriage?
- What do you expect from your partner?
- What does your partner expect from you?
- What do you think your partner has the right to expect from you?

Probing questions:

A.

- How would you like him/her to help you in everyday life?
- How would you like your partner to behave at home?
- How would you like your partner to behave outside your home?
- How would you like your partner to talk to you?
- How would you like your partner to talk about you?
- etc.

B.

- How would you like to behave toward your partner?
- How would you like to talk about your partner?
- How would you like to treat your partner at home?
- etc.

C.

- How would your partner like you to behave at home?
- How would your partner like you to talk about him?
- How would your partner like you to interact with your friends?

3. Satisfaction with marriage in Canada

The above exploration of expectations about marriage will highlight both similarities and differences between respondents' views about what a satisfying marriage means to them. In this section, the emphasis is placed on the effect immigration on changes in the respondents' satisfaction with their marriages. Four major questions were developed for this purpose. Probing questions will direct attention to those aspects of marital life which have particularly been affected by the experience of immigration.

Major questions:

- How was your marital life different in Poland?
- What have you missed the most in your marital life since the move?
- What are the negative impacts of immigration for your marital life?
- What are the positive impacts of immigration for your marital life?

Probing questions:

As a result of immigration to Canada:

A.

- Is there a change in how your partner helps you in everyday life? What do you like about these changes? What don't you like? What does your partner like in these changes? What doesn't he/she like?
- Is there a change in how your partner behaves at home? What do you like about these changes? What you don't like? What does your partner like in these changes? What doesn't he/she like?
- Is there a change in how your partner behaves outside the home? What do you like about these changes? What don't you like? What does your partner like about these changes? What doesn't he/she like?
- Did your partner change his/her occupation? What do you like about these changes? What don't you like? What does your partner like about these changes? What doesn't your partner like?
- etc.

B.

- Is there a change in how you help your partner in everyday life? What do you like about these changes? What don't you like? What does your partner like about these changes? What does he/she dislike?

- Is there a change in how you behave at home? What do you like in these changes? What don't you like? What does your partner like about these changes? What does he/she dislike?
- Is there a change how you behave outside the home? What do you like about these changes? What don't you like? What does your partner like about these changes? What does he/she dislike?
- Have you changed your occupation? What do you like about these changes? What don't you like? What does your partner like about these changes? What does he/she dislike?

4. Marital violence

The above investigation focuses on those aspects of satisfaction with marriage which might have changed as a result of immigration. In this section, connections will be made between immigration and marital violence. Questions prepared for women (participants in the meeting) will expose general opinions about correlation between violence and immigration. Questions for men will aim at the men's personal experiences and views on the relationship between violence and immigration.

Men:

- Why are some Polish men violent toward their wives in Canada?
- Why have you been violent toward your wife since coming Canada?
- Why were you violent in Poland? (if applicable)
- Do Polish men have more or less reason to be violent toward their wives in Canada than in Poland? What are these reasons? Why do they exist?
- Do you think that violence would happen if you and your wife were still in Poland? If so, why do you think so?
- How would your wife react to your violence towards her if you were both in Poland? Why would she react that way?
- How did she react to your violence towards her in Canada? Why did she react that way?

Women:

- Why do you think some Polish men are violent against their wives in Canada?
- Why do you think some men are violent toward their wives in Poland?
- Do Polish men have more or less reason to be violent toward their wives in Canada than in Poland? What are these reasons? Why do they exist?
- If you were physically abused by your husband in Poland, what would you do?

The purpose of this study is to investigate how violence against wives in Polish families in Winnipeg might be influenced by expectations about marriage and immigration. The practical goal is to offer material useful in the planning and delivery of services to Polish clients experiencing marital violence.

The study is being conducted by Jacek Beimcik, a social work student, with the primary assistance of professor Esther Blum. Professor Denis Bracken and professor Wendy Josephson are helping with their advice and expertise.

You will be requested to participate in two interviews. During the first interview, you will be asked to share your personal views and experiences referring to violence against wives, satisfaction with marriage, and immigration. During the second interview, you will become familiar with the up-to-date results of the study and will be asked to express your opinion about it. I am hoping to tape record and type up a written record of what was said. If you do not wish to be tape recorded, I will instead take notes during the interview. The tapes will be used exclusively for the study and will not become available to other persons. The tapes will be erased after a record of what was said is typed.

In my report, I will summarize common themes that come up in the interviews. To illustrate these themes, I will sometimes quote things you have said during the interviews. Your comments will be altered in a way that prevents from revealing your identity without changing the sense of information. Your comments will never be quoted or reported if there is a chance that your identity could be revealed. Your name will never be written in any report when quoting comments.

You are free not to answer any questions if you would rather not. No identifying information will be mentioned in any report throughout the entire study including the final report. Gathered information will be kept confidential. These obligations will be continued indefinitely after the completion of the study.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time. You will not be penalized in any way for not participating. You can share your concerns and comments with Jacek Beimcik by calling him at 478 1407 or writing to him at:

35-1321 Beaumont Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 5E5

There is a limitation to the full protection of your identity. Where information involves a threat of harm to self or others, the information and your name will be disclosed to an intended victim, his/her guardian (in case when the threat aims at minors) and the Police. If you make those threats, you will be informed about these preventive measures.

Research with you will be terminated if physical or emotional risk or harm to you become apparent. You will immediately be offered services free of charge appropriate to your needs.

You will be able to obtain a summary of the results of the study by contacting Jacek.

I agree to participate in the interview and have it used in the study report:

NAME

DATE

I agree to have my interview tape recorded:

NAME

DATE

The purpose of this study is to investigate how violence against wives in Polish families in Winnipeg might be influenced by expectations about marriage and immigration. The practical goal is to offer material useful in the planning and delivery of services to Polish clients experiencing marital violence.

The study is being conducted by Jacek Beimcik, a social work student, with the primary assistance of professor Esther Blum. Professor Denis Bracken and professor Wendy Josephson are helping with their advice and expertise.

You will be requested to participate in a discussion meeting with other Polish women. During this meeting you and the other women will be asked to share your personal views and experiences referring to violence against wives, satisfaction with marriage, and immigration. I am hoping to tape record and type up a written record of what was said. If you do not wish to be tape recorded, I will instead take notes during your presentation. The tapes will be used exclusively for the study and will not become available to other persons. The tapes will be erased after a record of what was said is typed.

In my report, I will summarize common themes that come up in the meeting. To illustrate these themes, I will sometimes quote things you have said during the meeting. Your comments will be altered in a way that prevents from revealing your identity without changing the sense of information. Your comments will never be quoted or reported if there is a chance that your identity could be revealed. Your name will never be written in any report when quoting comments.

There are some limitations to the full protection of your identity. You will share information with others in the meeting. You might have already been known to some of them. They could recognize your comments in the final report. There is a risk that your name and comments will reach other people outside the meeting. To minimize such a possibility, all the participants, including yourself, are obligated to keep all identifying information about others in the meeting confidential.

You are free not to answer any questions if you would rather not. No identifying information will be mentioned in any report throughout the entire study including the final report. Gathered information will be kept confidential. These obligations will be continued indefinitely after the completion of the study.

If a physical or emotional risk or harm to you become apparent, you will immediately be offered services free of charge appropriate to your needs. A list of counselors will be distributed at the beginning of the meeting. If necessary, the meeting will be terminated.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time. You will not be penalized in any way for not participating. You can share your concerns and comments with Jacek Beimcik by calling him at 478 1407 or writing to him at:

35-1321 Beaumont Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 5E5

You will be able to obtain a summary of the results of the study by contacting Jacek.

I agree to participate in the meeting and have it used in the study report:

NAME

DATE

I agree to have my presentation tape recorded:

NAME

DATE

The purpose of this study is to investigate how violence against wives in Polish families in Winnipeg might be influenced by expectations about marriage and immigration. The practical goal is to offer material useful in the planning and delivery of services to Polish clients experiencing marital violence.

The study is being conducted by Jacek Beimcik, a social work student, with the primary assistance of professor Esther Blum. Professor Denis Bracken and professor Wendy Josephson are helping with their advice and expertise.

You will be requested to participate in one interview. During this interview you will be asked to share your personal and professional views and experiences referring to violence against wives, satisfaction with marriage, and immigration. I am hoping to tape record and type up a written record of what was said. If you do not wish to be tape recorded, I will instead take notes during the interview. The tapes will be used exclusively for the study and will not become available to other persons. The tapes will be erased after a record of what was said is typed.

In my report I will summarize common themes that come up in all interviews and meetings. To illustrate these themes, I will sometimes quote things you have said during the interview. Your comments will be altered in a way that prevents from revealing your identity without changing the sense of information. Your comments will never be quoted or reported if there is a chance that your identity could be revealed. Your name will never be written in any report when quoting comments. All the above applies, unless you request otherwise.

You are free not to answer any questions if you would rather not. No identifying information will be mentioned in any report throughout the entire study including the final report. Gathered information will be kept confidential. These obligations will be continued indefinitely after the completion of the study.

There is a limitation to the full protection of your identity. Since there are only a few counselors of Polish background working in Winnipeg, it is possible that your opinions might be recognized by some community members or colleagues at work. To guard against any potential inconvenience, you can indicate your own conditions of confidentiality.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time. You will not be penalized in any way for not participating. You can share your concerns and comments with Jacek Beimcik by calling him at 478 1407 or writing to him at:

35-1321 Beaumont Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

R3T 5E5

You will be able to obtain a summary of the results of the study by contacting Jacek.

I agree to participate in the interview and have it used in the study report:

NAME

DATE

I agree to have my interview tape recorded:

NAME

DATE

Appendix E

Writings from my journal (some details are altered to protect the identity of the person described):

1. "Ms. P. phoned me to apologize for not being able to take part in the meeting. In a lengthy conversation she confessed to being a victim of abuse which ended up with a divorce four years ago. She was very concerned about it would be appropriate for her to attend the meeting because she did not want people to laugh at or criticize her. She said, 'I don't know if I did wrong or not by divorcing my husband, and I still feel guilty because my children don't have a dad at home.' She also added that I was the first person she had ever shared her feelings with after the divorce. At the same time she seemed to fear her openness. She used such phrases as 'this is not right for me to talk about myself' 'I'm not quite sure if my feelings are normal, maybe there is something wrong with me that I can't get over all of this,' and 'everyone sees me as a normal person but I know that my life is not normal.'

I expressed my readiness to listen to her, and encouraged her to speak freely if she wanted to. I also realized that this could be a daunting or even dangerous task to comment on her thoughts without being sure of their effect after the end of our conversation. Simultaneously I was open for cues which would allow me to learn more about her situation, such as the support she received from friends and her financial situation. Finally, when she seemed to be more relaxed, we made an agreement that she call me back in two days.

(Two days later) Ms. P. phoned me back. She was relaxed, apologetic and seemed to be a little embarrassed by her confession two days ago. This time I told her that in her situation she might have tried to seek professional help, which I phrased in a saying popular among Poles, "It will not make worse but might help." After that she investigated this possibility and I offered my assistance in making appropriate arrangements. Finally, I connected her with"

2. "After we exchanged our greetings and had some coffee, I explained the basic objectives of my study and the reason for our meeting. I reminded him that he was informed during our telephone conversation about the consent form and my desire to tape the interview.

When I started reading the consent form, he interrupted me and said that he was not going to sign anything because he wanted to speak to me as a friend. 'Now,' he said, 'when you show me this I start doubting whether you represent yourself or someone else.' I explained to him that the reason for the formal consent was to assure him about his rights to confidentiality. He insisted, however, that we talk 'like friends' without formal obligations. He also allowed me to take notes but did not agree to tape the meeting. At that time I told him that if he had any doubts, we could cancel the meeting. He rejected that idea and repeated once again that he wanted to talk to me but did not want to sign anything. Seeing no other option (fear was certainly an issue) but to conduct the interview on his conditions, I read the entire Consent Form in order to inform him about his rights and my obligations. He verbally agreed to this."



Justice

Community and
Youth Corrections
Central Winnipeg

355 Donald St.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2J1

(204) 945-3213

FAX: (204) 945-1227

Appendix E

This is to confirm that I have no objection to Jacek's plans to conduct his study with the Polish men who are no longer the clients of probation services. Although Jacek was involved in the education of clients with whom he intends to work throughout his research, he was not restricted in any way from further contacts with these individuals.

In carrying out his research plans, Jacek will not violate regulations of the conflict of interest because he worked on as-needed-basis. This also means that he is not obligated to report to our office the names of his respondents, the content of the interviews, or any other factors related to his respondents' situation.

I request that the confidentiality of names of individuals involved in those cases is preserved.

NAME

March. 20 / 96.
DATE

I _____ agree to offer counselling free of charge to the respondents in Jacek's study for whom participation in the study might evoke emotional distress or otherwise affect their psychological or physical well-being. I am entirely aware of the conditions of confidentiality which accompany Jacek's study.

Appendix 67

NAME

March 19/96
DATE

I _____ agree to offer counselling free of charge to the respondents in Jacek's study for whom participation in the study might evoke emotional distress or otherwise affect their psychological or physical well-being. I am entirely aware of the conditions of confidentiality which accompany Jacek's study.

NAME

March 19/96
DATE

_____ agree to offer counselling free of charge to the respondents in Jacek's study for whom participation in the study might evoke emotional distress or otherwise affect their psychological or physical well-being. I am entirely aware of the conditions of confidentiality which accompany Jacek's study.

NAME

March 19/96
DATE

I _____ agree to offer counselling free of charge to the respondents in Jacek's study for whom participation in the study might evoke emotional distress or otherwise affect their psychological or physical well-being. I am entirely aware of the conditions of confidentiality which accompany Jacek's study.

NAME

March 19/96
DATE