Narratives of Settlement:

Immigration, Change and Identity

Among New Immigrants to Winnipeg

by

Amelia LaTouche

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Abstract

My objective in this research was to document the settlement narratives of new immigrants who recently immigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Specific focus was placed on how individuals who share common settlement experiences had distinct interpretations, explanations and definitions of these similar events.

Fifteen participants contributed to this research by doing semi-structured interviews. I posited that the participants would have cohesive stories about their settlement experiences, each with a beginning, a middle, and an end. This hypothesis was based on the theory that people present their lives to themselves and others in the form of narratives, either verbally or internally, to create coherence, consciously or otherwise, out of sometimes contradictory or confusing events and feelings.

All narratives were informed in their own way by intersubjective experience and knowledge. Many of the participants had similar notions of migration, and many also had shared or partially shared norms and social understandings pertaining to gender, education, socio-economic status, and English as a second language. However, each narrative also reflected the distinctiveness of each participant. The participants' narratives were shaped by their particular experiences of culture and identity, transnational connections across borders, and relationships with both co-ethnic groups and others.

Several key issues emerged from this research. The participants described many experiences which demanded different kinds of adaptation and change, and each pointed to different strategies with which they responded. The participants had a shared knowledge of how immigration and settlement commonly occur, and by their accounts their own experiences were distinct and often deviated from this norm. The definitions

and meaning that each participant applied to his or her settlement process were highly personalized, reflecting the circumstances of his or her settlement and his or her individual identity.

By presenting and discussing new immigrants' narratives of settlement, this research represents the participants' untold stories of the moving home which, when told, are verbalizations of the process of movement, adaptation, change and growth into new cultural surroundings and a modified personal identity. This research allowed for a greater understanding of the individual experience of settlement, and for the realization that there are multiple, diverse kinds of immigration.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

Immigration and Settlement in Winnipeg

Immigration is a life-changing event in many people's lives. The destination for many new immigrants is Canada for many reasons including the fact that Canada has become a country known for its cultural diversity (Statistics Canada 2003). The process of settlement involves many powerful experiences that likely have an enduring impact on individuals and communities of immigrants. The way people interpret and describe these events is the subject of this research.

My research objective was to use ethnographic investigation, in the form of semi-structured interviews, to listen to, discuss and analyse the stories that new immigrants have to tell about their experiences in immigration and settlement. These *settlement narratives*, as I refer to them through out this research, do more than simply relay events that occur in settlement. In hearing and studying these settlement narratives I was able to learn about the way people talk about settlement, and how they define what immigration and settlement are in the context of their personal encounters with the settlement process. These narratives include the participants' own analyses of things that happened to them personally, as well as their own feelings and ideas surrounding the experience of being an immigrant in general.

The way in which new immigrants frame the events and internalise the experiences of settlement is this project's key to understanding how immigrants view themselves and the context of their new home in Canada. According to the 2001 Canada census, 18.4 percent of the population was born outside of Canada in 2000, which is cited as the highest proportion of immigrants in seventy years, making the experience of immigration and settlement a major event in many Canadians and Canadian residents' lives (Canada Census 2001). This large and diverse element of the population has a powerful and enduring cultural impact on Canadian society, while also impacting the communities and countries from which immigrants originate. On a grand scale, immigration means global economic change, population redistribution and cultural exchange. On a micro level, as the participants described, this form of immigration involves community, adaptation and identity change. In the context of personal experience, immigration and settlement mean excitement, adventure and opportunity, as well as loss, crisis, and obstacles. In reading and comparing the distinct experiences of each participant, the impact of education, socio-economic status, culture, age, gender and personality on the individualised process of settlement becomes evident, and a connection between the micro and the macro is apparent. This research aims to show how immigration is becoming inscribed on many people as individuals, in addition to transforming whole cultures and nations.

Settlement and the Individual

This research is an attempt to get at elements of immigration and settlement that have been sometimes overlooked in research and literature on the subject. The major interest in this research is to observe the experience of settlement in Canada in terms of

the personal changes that occur in an individual's life. While many immigrants may experience events in common during immigration and settlement, the way they perceive, evaluate and inscribe their experiences in the context of their own identities and lives is highly variable. Examining the individual's explanation of his or her settlement process is thus an opportunity to understand aspects of settlement that occur at the meeting point between the personal and the cultural.

The Research Questions

This research is designed to document the distinctive experiences of a common practice, by presenting parts of the participants' stories as they were told. The collection and analysis of the data were guided by the following questions:

> 1) How do new immigrants view and describe different aspects of settlement (such as experiences with policy, prejudice, language, socio-economic status, culture shock)?
>
> 2) In what ways do new immigrants relate their cultural pasts to their cultural present? (What roles do their original cultural resources, current co-ethnic groups and ethnic identities play in their daily lives in Canada?)
>
> 3) Do immigrants who describe their experiences express a relationship between their status as immigrants and their personal identities?

As with most qualitative research, I could only predict what issues might be important to the participants. In the context of this research, the participants' narratives directed me away from some ideas and urged me onto others. Few of the participants discussed experiences of prejudice, and instead described a new sense of freedom. Also, many of the people I interviewed framed their settlement experience in terms of loss, and accompanied their expressions of identity change and adaptation with a strong range of emotions, from loneliness and self-doubt to acceptance and sometimes relief. After

completing a few interviews in which these themes were present, I asked later participants about these very issues.

I could not have completed this research without letting go of some of my control as a researcher. I viewed the participants as experts in their fields, and in return I acquired a dramatic spread of experiences, which stand alone in their uniqueness but together form the rich data behind this project. The data have culminated into a set of diverse narratives that can be read together as complementary and contrastive.

Theoretical Framework for this Research

The subject of immigration is treated in the theories of many disciplines. The building of this research was informed by social science literature and theory on immigration. The majority of the work consulted for this project is anthropological, with multiple foci including transnational communities, adaptation and identity change. To contextualise my research in its setting, I have consulted the literature and theories that address contemporary Canadian multiculturalism. I have also explored the theory concerned with the impact of gender, ethnicity and social status on the experience of immigration and settlement. While ethnicity and socio-economic status have arguably always been important concerns in immigration theory, the way women are represented in this literature is changing, and only recently have the experiences of women immigrants been examined closely and with a new perspective. Finally, I have consulted theories of discourse and narrative analysis to inform and frame the exploration of the way the participants told their stories of settlement.

Migration and Transnationalism

During the last four decades, immigration has meant a growing influx of largely non-European, and sometimes non-English speaking, immigrants predominantly from Asia, Africa, and South and Central America (Foner, Rumbaut and Gold 2000: 1-2). This turn spawned a variety of research initiatives in the social sciences. Anthropology in particular has generated extensive literature and theory on the relationship between immigration and cultural change, and focuses on numerous issues such as remittance, transnational living, identity change and diaspora groups (Brettell 2000).

An important concept used in this research is *transnationalism*, which is said to have become a new and central focus in immigration studies, as well as in anthropology, by 1997 (Brettell 2003: 48). Transnationalism can in general refer to "the flow of people, ideas, goods, and capital across national territories in a way that undermines nationality and nationalism as discreet categories of identification, economic organization, and political constitution" (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 8). It can also be specifically used to refer to individuals engaged in a variety of ways of life and practices. The transnational person has been defined as an elite carrier of multiple passports, owner of homes across nations, and as an international investor and entrepreneur (Portes 1997: 812; Levitt 2000: 460). However, there are countless instances of transnationalism that do not reflect an economic perspective or follow this image. In anthropological immigration literature, and sometimes in other disciplines as well, transnationalism is represented in its many forms, and is considered in the context of cultural change, socio-economic status, gender and community. Brettell (2003) defines transnationalism as "a social process whereby migrants operate in special fields that transgress geographic, political, and cultural

borders" (Brettell 2003: 48), while Levitt (1998; 2000) suggests that people can be transnational actors without ever crossing a border (Levitt 1998; 2000: 461). Sassen (2004) points to the global actors who are atypical in comparison to the representations of elite, economically motivated entrepreneurs that are most often imagined in the context of globalization. These unconventional actors include minorities, women, and illegal immigrants, who are shown to use transnational networks to benefit themselves and to connect with others in the similar situations across the globe. Long and Oxfeld (2004) assert that return migration reflects the importance of transnational connections and identities, suggesting that it is about culture and community ties rather than simply economics (Long and Oxfeld 2004: 6). Sassen's (2004) and Long and Oxfeld's (2004) definitions of the transnational individual were helpful in guiding this research because they offer an inclusive approach to the study of transnational people. These scholars suggest, that transnational actors need not be wealthy investors or frequent travellers to be active agents in their lives or to have influence over their cultural communities and the rest of the world.

Evidently, many different kinds of people are crossing borders, physically or otherwise, and communicating rapidly and frequently with their counterparts in their homelands, discussing subjects political, cultural, social and professional. In researching the variety of perspectives on immigration, the theory and literature that has been the most informative and useful for this research has been that which focuses on these aspects of the transnational experience, and which provide a basis on which to connect the individual experience of settlement to the grand processes of transnationalism.

The study of transnational culture explains how "migrants as transnationals can operate in or between two (or more) worlds" (Brettell 2000: 118; see also Portes 1997: 812-814). It is now being widely recognised that immigrants often develop their new lives in their adopted countries while maintaining evolving connections back home and even making new ones (Brettell 2003: 54). Central to much anthropological discussion on immigration is the ongoing, evolving relationship between the diaspora and their homeland.

After immigrating, immigrants often continue many of the cultural practices of their homelands in their adopted countries, while simultaneously transmitting cultural change to their homelands of origin through communication, visits and return (Levitt 1998). This practice has been labelled by Peggy Levitt as social remittance, which she defines as "a local level, migration-driven form of cultural diffusion....the ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending-country communities" (Levitt 1998: 926). This is a continuous cycle of cultural exchange, one which challenges previously held notions that immigrants reject their previous cultures and connections to home in favour of complete assimilation (Levitt 1998: 927).

While migration is often examined in terms of groups of people flowing across borders for mainly economic reasons, this glosses over the role that individual agency plays in the immigration process. When migration is examined at the macro level, very often it is also analysed in terms of economics. Economic motivations do play a large role in migration, which may involve moves to avoid poverty, to attain Western credentials, or to pursue entrepreneurial success. However, the fact that 98 percent of the world's population do not migrate internationally means that there are other complex reasons for

migration (Fischer *et al.* 1997: 88). While migration can be basically voluntary or involuntary (Fischer *et al.* 1997: 50), within this category there are complex determiners and motives. While an outside observer may not view a migration as involuntary, the individual may feel she has no choice but to leave. Conversely, the dangers imposed on one's life may be cause for anyone to migrate, but the immigrant him or herself may feel like he or she still has a choice.

In addition to external forces, the influences of cultural background, co-ethnic group, and individual variation also account for numerous migration motives. Ward and others note that whatever constraints and opportunities are imposed and offered to potential immigrants, it is ultimately their decision to migrate (Ward *et al.* 2001: 193). Brettell agrees, suggesting that immigrants have agency and choice in their decisions to stay or to go, and are not constrained by economic and social pressure to the degree that is often portrayed (Brettell 2003: 27). Discovering by what factors and processes people were motivated to immigrate, and what degree of choice was involved, was one of the goals behind this research.

Immigration and Remittance

At the time of my research, many of the participants were engaged in university programs or were preparing for Canadian certification in their professional fields. Many of these individuals were interested in doing work connected with their communities in their homelands, or had already developed transnational professional or activist connections. This is one positive result of the pull for many people to seek education in North America. However, Bjerén (2000) suggests that internationally educated return migrants, though possibly altruistic, are most often taking advantage of the extra value

that their qualifications have because they were earned at a Western university (Bjerén 1997: 239). In *Give Us Your Best and Brightest* (2005), Kapur and McHale address the problem of the West luring highly trained professionals from poor countries. They suggest that what used to be called the "brain drain" is now being described as a positive way to offer poor countries a chance to acquire resources through sending their most highly educated and skilled to the West (Kapur and McHale 2005: 2). Although remittance-receiving households spend 58 percent more on education than other households (Adams 2006: 53), and remittances can constitute a substantial financial difference in a poor household, Kapur and McHale argue that this does little to compensate for the massive loss caused by the brain-drain (Kapur and McHale 2005: 78, 146).

While international students are remaining in North America after graduation, sometimes for good, others are returning home periodically or permanently to teach in their professional communities, or to otherwise develop knowledge exchange networks between their co-ethnic groups and their countries of origin (Kapur and McHale 2005: 113-114, 200). Concurrently, professional knowledge from other cultures is becoming entwined with Western knowledge, creating a challenge to the claimed Western hegemony of knowledge. Whether or not it is ultimately beneficial for sending countries, more and more international students are returning home with credentials acquired in the West, a reality that was strongly reinforced by discussions with some of my research participants, and one which shaped the way they viewed their possible futures in Canada or in their homelands.

Immigration and Culture

A major element of this research is the study of the effects of immigration on culture. More specifically, I am concerned with a few individuals' experiences of cultural change, and the way this change impacts their personal and cultural lives. As such, this work is an "ethnograph[y] of the particular" (Abu-Lughod 1991: 149-150). In order to properly explore the personal experience of cultural change, it is necessary to locate and define what is meant by *culture* and *cultural* identity.

In considering *identity*, the point at which the cultural ends and the personal begins must be delineated. Abu-Lughod (1991) suggests that "particulars…are always crucial to the constitution of experience" (Abu-Lughod 1991: 153), which implies that culture is always personal, or at least the boundaries between what is cultural and what is personal are always blurred.

Culture itself is an ambiguous concept. In the age of the multiculture, particularly in Canada, boundaries between cultural segments are vague, and multiple cultural practices, attitudes and institutions are often present in individual people's lives. To a degree, we are all becoming *cultural hybrids*.

The nexus between personal experience and the multi-cultural environment is the site for ethnography of the particular, as well as for this study of the effects of immigration on identity. It is impossible to separate what is distinctly *self* about one's identity from one's prolonged interaction with and internalization of one's social environment. Everyone's cultural experiences are filtered through the process of internalization and personalization, making it impossible to separate the personal from the cultural. The result is that each individual provides a distinct interpretation of their

culture. Rather than suggesting that one set of voices represents what it is to be a new immigrant in Canada, I am presenting here only a few voices out of many. My goal is to draw out the meaningful differences between these few, rather than to make generalizations among them.

The cultural environment is not a static site for adaptation. Rather, the process of moving from one cultural environment to another involves multidirectional interaction, as the personal informs the cultural as much as the cultural informs the personal. The new home, then, is a location of interaction and transformation for the immigrant *and* her surroundings, a continual and culturally-particular event. Throughout this work, when reference is made to *culture*, what is meant is the practices, attitudes and beliefs that have been and continue to be internalised and enacted, in the context of either the social environment that was left behind or that which has been adopted. For me, this definition leads to the idea that culture is more a verb than a noun, as it exists in people's lives as a dynamic interaction between themselves and their external environments.

Immigration and Adaptation

In preparation for this research it was necessary to form a working definition of exactly what is implied in the term *adaptation*. In this research, adaptation refers to the interaction of acclimatizing strategies that people develop and practice in the context of an environment that imposes a variety of obstacles and opportunities onto their lives. Adaptation is influenced by several factors, both within the self and from the external environment. Socio-economic status, age, gender and education all affect how people adapt (Ward *et al.* 2001: 235-237). Ward and others (2001) suggest that cultural adaptation is also contingent on immigrants interacting socially with members of the

receiving culture (Ward *et al.* 2001: 195). Still other scholars suggest that young adults and children have been shown to adapt rapidly, while older adults adapt poorly relative to their younger counterparts (see Orellana *et al* 2003; Ward 2001: 107; Kibria 1993, 1994; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Unfortunately, for older immigrants, the need to adapt is more immediate, as they needed to learn English before beginning their professions in Canada, and had brought families who were relying on them financially.

While personal characteristics inform how individuals adapt to, and cause change in, their new environment, ethnic background and the way attitudes and practices complement or contradict the attitudes and practices common to the receiving country also plays a large role in adaptation. Bjerén (1997) suggests that adaptation is culturally rooted, and that individuals who belong to cultural communities abroad will most often enact similarly culturally informed adaptive strategies, either in the form of cultural preservation or by changing more dramatically (Bjerén 1997: 232). The desire to continue old cultural traditions in one's new home, and a family and social group in which to continue them, may result in a much different adaptive process than would occur in the absence of such a desire. Papastergiadis (2000) states that "the resilience of the old in the form of the new [and]...the subtle transpiration of traditional values in contemporary norms" is underestimated in many studies of diasporan culture (Papastergiadis 2000: 123). Ultimately, Papastergiadis suggests that there are no absolutes in cultural adaptation; old practices and attitudes will naturally infiltrate new lives, but no amount of preservation attempts by individuals and diaspora groups will suppress cultural change (Papastergiadis 2000: 123).

An important element of immigration and settlement is the process of reconstructing community in one's new geographical location. The way people move across borders and enter, exit and reconstitute co-ethnic communities is an important issue in immigration research (Braziel and Mannur 2003: 1-18; Papastergiadis 2000: 113-115). During the settlement process, immigrants begin to seek out social connections, and will likely interact with fellow expatriates as well as non-co-ethnics they encounter in their daily lives. While people have distinct processes of fostering their social lives, they will neither totally isolate themselves in their ethnic enclaves, nor entirely adopt a host country's ways of living (Basch cited in Portes 1997: 812-813). Ong (2003) notes that the right to be different is becoming inscribed on the immigrant identity, which offers immigrants the freedom to adapt and change as little or as much as they personally or collectively desire. Although there are necessarily pressures both to adapt and to preserve attitudes and practices, the demands of the receiving nation are blurred and mystified if not dissolving in the context of the multicultural landscape.

Many theorists note that immigrants form multiple networks comprised of groups at home and abroad, all of which change and evolve over time (Brettell 54: 2003, Levitt 2000: 459) and that an individual's connections with each is constantly renegotiated in the context of this evolution (Papastergiadis 2000: 196-197). As well, people will vary in general in terms of their need for community affiliation (Levitt 2000: 461). While some will totally immerse themselves in the social realm, and view adaptation in terms of their ability to build and maintain connections, others do not put nearly as much importance on connections, neither with co-ethnics nor with non-culturally based groups.

Migration, Identity and Personal Change

In the context of immigration and settlement, an important element of the dialogue between imported cultural attitudes and practices and the receiving socio-cultural environment is the resulting effects on personal and cultural identity. The experience of adaptation to a new country has been described as a process that can often include identity change, which continues throughout life but is most overt during the first few years of settlement. That identity is constantly changing has been suggested by James and Shadd (2001), who quote Hall (quoted in James and Shadd 2001: 2) as stating that:

> "Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact…we should instead think of identity as a 'production,' which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside representation." (Hall quoted in James and Shadd 2001: 2).

Hall's assertion is supported by other work on immigration theory that describes the initial relations between new immigrants and their communities as a site for acculturation and identity change (see Berry 1992; Bannerji 2000; Peressini 1991). The term *hybrid* is often used to describe the altered identities that immigrants develop in the context of living transnationally (Papastergiadis 2000; Brettell 2003). This results from the transformations, "gaps and contradictions" that arise from living in a way that is culturally distinct from one's social surroundings while forming connections in one's old and new homes (Papastergiadis 2000: 169-170). Though immigrants may initially attempt to rebuild old lifestyles abroad, Bjerén suggests that identity change is not within the individual's control (Bjerén 1997: 232).

While the concept of hybridity is used to describe internalised cultural change, there are mixed feelings around how positive hybridity is, among the participants and in

the literature. Bjerén notes that hybridity has been viewed as the loss of the "essential distinctiveness" of cultural identity (Bjerén 1997: 232), while Chambers suggests that "the 'I' is constantly being formed and reformed in such movements in the world" and is not "destroyed" but "rewritten" (Chambers 1994: 24).

While adaptation is a cultural process by which people and groups begin to unravel some of their traditional behaviours and attitudes in the face of other cultural practices, there is also a very personal element to adaptation. One facet of this is the hybidizing of self discussed above, but it also involves personal stress and emotional crises that can accompany adaptation in varying degrees. During this research, some participants described experiencing stress and negative emotions in response to the pressure to adapt, especially in the first few months of settlement. In her study of adaptation of immigrants in Geneva, Haour-Knipe (2001) discusses the stress and coping strategies that people experience and develop during settlement in an unfamiliar place. She notes that the most stress occurs before people have compensated for the losses that immigration can entail, including the loss of the social group (Haour-Knipe 2001: 69).

Stress and emotional problems are also associated with socio-economic status, both pre- and post-migration. Adaptation is suggested to be most successful when individuals have language skills and financial resources, which seems an obvious claim (Ward *et al.* 2001: 235). However, Ward and others (2001) also suggest that high income earners with higher educations who experience a temporary loss of this socio-economic status tend to experience more stress and depression than poorer immigrants who do not experience a decrease in living standards (Ward *et al.* 2001: 235-236). Thus people

experience adaptation relatively to their previous lives as well as in terms of their cultures, genders, and educations.

Women and Immigration

Gender is a continuous part of both women's and men's experiences of immigration and life in general. The amount of attention paid to the role that gender plays in the experience of immigration is growing, but there are still many questions that have only been preliminarily answered. According to some recent feminist theorists, the study of the subject of women in the context of immigration has been, until recently, limited by a narrow perspective, one which either ignores women altogether (Brettell 2000: 109) or conceptualises women immigrants as passive accompaniments to their husbands, or as victims of low-waged labour (Ip and Lever-Tracy 1999: 59). In turn, men have until recently been conceptualised as the family-member who makes the decisions and plans surrounding immigration, and it is only they who are viewed as transnational actors taking advantage of the global labour market (Delaet 1999:1). These conceptualisations are based on gendered assumptions of what roles men and women play in general. Until women's immigration experiences were taken up as a field of study, the experiences of men were considered to be gender-free, and their maleness (or the absence of femaleness) was not considered a factor worthy of examination. As suggested by Abu-Lughod (1991), the woman was framed as the other in opposition to the default *male* self. While women were considered marginal to the immigration process, the dominant role and the responsibility for most elements of immigration were assigned to men. In more recent and consciously gender-balanced research on the lived experiences of women, it was discovered that women experience immigration and settlement differently from men.

Delaet suggests that gender differences affect immigration motivations (Delaet 1999: 2). While men mostly migrate for temporary labour opportunities, Delaet suggests that women migrate permanently for several different reasons, such as "economic incentives, family reunification, greater autonomy, opportunities for children, or hope to escape gender-based prosecution" (Delaet 1999: 13). In addition to immigration motivation differences, women migrants also demonstrate differences from men in the processes of settlement in the receiving society (Brettell 2000: 109). While the importance of co-ethnic and friend networks has been present in immigration theory literature, the role of women at the centre of these networks has not (Brettell 2000: 108). Brettell states that in the adopted country, immigrant women "both initiate and maintain" immigrant networks (Brettell 2000: 108). In terms of personal reactions to immigration and settlement, it has been suggested that women have higher levels of stress in the adaptive process than do men when trauma or crises are associated with their immigrations, but that they also react more strongly to positive experiences once they arrive in their new homes (Ward *et al* 2001: 236). It has also been suggested that women perceive less discrimination and prejudice than their male counterparts (Ward *et al.* 2001: 236).

Bjerén suggests that ideas of gender affect experiences and processes of immigration, but that immigration also alters cultural constructions of gender (Bjerén 1997: 229). Thus, only women who are able to overcome the limitations imposed on their gender in their own culture migrate in non-culturally prescribed ways, such as alone rather than with their husbands as "passive joiners" (Bjerén 1997:225). However, once solo and paired women migrate, both may move to a cultural environment with different constructions of gender. The longer the exposure, the more likely do cracks in the

structure of gender begin to seriously impact gender relations in the home and in co-ethnic communities (Ward *et al.* 2001: 107).

While immigration can cause cultural assumptions about gender to be challenged, this can also be seen as an equalising agent for men as well as for women. New perspectives on gender and immigration recognise women's contribution while relieving men of some of the responsibility for the process. Conceptions of traditional male roles in immigration are challenged, particularly when women live alone, become financially independent or earn Western educations. However, in the process of migration, men are no longer assigned the responsibility for *producing* a successful immigration, as women are increasingly viewed as competent migrants, capable of contributing equally to the project.

For some women, immigrating to North America from developing countries can mean liberation from patriarchal institutions, in which they were unable to engage in employment despite belonging to a middle class with access to education, or were relegated to unwaged labour, and now work outside the home with access to their own incomes (Brettell 1999: 110; Ip and Lever-Tracy 1999: 59). In my research, all the women I interviewed had been relatively independent in their countries of origin, although many indicated that they noticed a different attitude regarding gender in Canada. This attitude change can result from outside or within the home, and though there may not be a gender difference of which anyone is consciously aware, there will still likely be changes within the home that result from the continuous influence of the dominant culture of the outside world (Brettell 2001: 148-149). Changes in gender

attitudes do not necessarily assume a change towards greater equality; equality and inequality can also be transformed while maintaining their power (im)balance.

Despite the potential for liberation from some gender-based obstacles, or the transformation of cultural attitudes towards gender, women immigrants experience the same imbalances as Canadian women, taking into account the additional discrepancies between immigrants and citizens. On average, new immigrant women will earn between $8,000 and $15,000 less annually than immigrant men with comparable education, an imbalance that mirrors the gender earnings imbalance of Canadian citizens[1].

Women and men are now immigrating at nearly equal rates, and women, just like men, are travelling for education, adventure and employment opportunities (Delaet 1999: 5-6). My study reflects this new balance, as the number of lone migrants was equally divided among men and women. Many young immigrants are migrating by themselves for multiple reasons before they acquire responsibilities like marriage and children. Without these influential cultural institutions being already present in young immigrants'

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[1] Vazquez (2003) provides the following numbers for male and female immigrants, categorised by education level. High school or less: women: $21,100, men: $28,000; College: women: $25,900, men: $36,000; University: women: $35,500, men: $49,000. This disparity is not the result of the earning gap between men and women alone, although this does play a part. In 2000, Canadian-born women earned 11 percent more than they had in 1980, while immigrant women earned only 6 percent more, despite a marked increase in post-secondary education among immigrant women. These numbers indicate that the benefits that Canadian-born women have experienced in employment equity are not adequately affecting immigrant women (Picot and Sweetman 2005: 6).

lives, this generation of immigrants may demand yet another look at gender imbalances in the immigration process.

Immigration in the Canadian Context

Canada can be conceptualised as a settler society but is largely dominated by the Western European English-French colonial dyad that first founded Canada as foreign settlements. While putting much effort into the development of a national multicultural identity through employment equity in the public sector as well as other equality policies, Canada's relationship to, and expectations of, its immigrants are ambiguous. Canada has not, like other settler countries with stronger patriotism, demanded "Canada First" (see Kymlicka 2001). That Canadians are known for being relatively tolerant or welcoming of cultural differences may be due to an absence of a coherent Canadian cultural identity (Harles 712: 1997). This is perhaps because, as a nation divided into numerous communities in addition to the Franco-Anglo rivalry, Canada is unable to agree on a common identity or set of goals for Canada's cultural future. Canada's own inability to determine a substantive national identity surely affects the identities of its immigrants and citizens alike. To be sure, the official cultural demands of Canada as stated by government policy may be far different from the expectations of assimilation by a boss, a landlord, or a neighbour.

Porter and others after him have exposed and extensively explored the problems of social inequality among the ethnically diverse Canadian population (Porter 1965; Driedger 1973). To explain the nature of socio-cultural inequality, Porter introduced the concept of the *vertical mosaic*, which conceptualises Canada's multiculturalism as a stratifying agent, arguing that cultural affiliation, skin colour and language are powerful

determiners of poverty and wealth (see Porter 1965; Driedger 1973). Although the vertical mosaic was first theorised in 1965, scholars continue to cite it as an appropriate descriptor for Canadian cultural/social stratification (Helmes-Hayes and Curtis eds. 1998).

Although Canada is often characterised as an immigrant-seeking, multi-ethnic society that respects and welcomes immigrant men and women from all over the world, Canada is also very particular about who is a desirable member of Canadian society, which is manifested in its immigration policy. In particular, the point system, which is allegedly meant to predict an immigrant's adaptability and success as an employed Canadian, creates a class system for immigrants. The point system sorts potential immigrants in terms of socio-economic status, age, gender, education, country of origin and minority status. These are determiners of social entry status upon settlement even before taking into consideration the restrictions of Canadian immigration policy (Porter 1965; Driedger 1973, Helmes-Hayes and Curtis eds. 1998). What the point system does is prevent many people from a chance to achieve many of the skills and goals that are possibly unattainable in their homelands. Potential migrants who do not have enough points to immigrate to Canada are generally the most in need of the opportunities that immigration to Canada can offer, such as employment and access to basic needs. The point system serves to weed out these very people, as the policy delineates that they lack the *potential* to adapt and settle. Ultimately, while some elements of Canada's immigration policy take into consideration the welfare of potential immigrants, all immigration policies are designed primarily to protect the receiving country's economy and citizens (Kapur and McHale 2005: 38-341).

That Canada presents itself as a welcoming society, and potential immigrants perceive it as such, may ultimately be more detrimental to them once they discover that behind this tolerant exterior lies the same institutionalised prejudices and inequalities that are prevalent, but perhaps more obvious, in many other societies. The less affluent and aid-needing participants found that their pre-migration conceptions about Canada's positive attitude towards immigrants were found to be wrong or contradictory when they tried to find employment, seek aid or attempt to sponsor others. A poll done in 1998 indicated that 49 percent of Canadians believe that immigration increases unemployment, and that in general fears regarding unemployment and immigrants increases and decreases in accordance with unemployment levels (cited in Papastergiadis 2001: 199). This suggests that it is Canada's need for immigrants to work in undervalued employment areas, and not a general multicultural disposition, that is behind the warm welcome for immigrants. In contrast to aid-and-employment-seeking immigrants, the wealthier participants in this study seemed to maintain their pre-migration beliefs that Canada is a welcoming place, perhaps because they were self-reliant and contributed immediately to society from Canada's perspective.

There is a strong correlation between new immigrants' financial and financially-related resources and their experience of difficulties during their settlement processes. Ward and others suggest that socio-cultural adaptation is "a function of resources such as education, income and language fluency" (Ward *et al.* 2001: 206). When preoccupied with surviving financially, new immigrants may have a deficit of time and attention to concentrate on learning English or building social connections. Financial insecurity also breeds anxiety and pressure, which only add to the stress involved with learning social

norms of an unfamiliar social world. Statistically immigrants are in an inferior financial position to their Canadian counterparts. In 2000, 35.8 percent of recent immigrants (people who have immigrated in the past five years) were low income earners (Vazquez 2003: Table 4). While many immigrants may have skills and education recognised and needed by Canada's labour market, immigrants statistically earn less doing the same work as non-immigrants[2]. Ironically, many immigrants who are invited to Canada on the basis of their skills and credentials immigrate only to discover that they are not qualified to practice their vocations by Canadian standards (Kapur and McHale 2005). Many of the participants made claims that supported the suggestion by Kapur and McHale that education and experience acquired in one's country of origin are less valuable than the equivalent acquired in Canada (Kapur and McHale 2005). However, Canadian educations are extremely valuable in many countries of origin (Kapur and McHale 2005: 114), and many of the participants have considered the possibility of returning home with a strong competitive edge, even if this was not originally the plan.

For many immigrants, having to learn or improve English rapidly upon arrival is a significant obstacle to their success at living in Canada (Statistics Canada 2001 Census). Although a point-system is in place to ensure that immigrants entering Canada have

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[2] In 2000, an immigrant male with a university level education would be expected to earn $49,000 per annum, compared to the expected income of a non-immigrant male with a comparable education of $79,300 per annum. For an extensive comparison between earning predictions for immigrants and Canadian-born workers see Vazquez (2003: Education and Earnings graph).

marketable skills and linguistic ability in at least one official language, many immigrants arrive in Canada with an immediate need to learn or improve their English so that they can become accredited in their area of expertise or pursue further training. I found this to be true of many of the participants in this study, and the relationship between English proficiency and earning potential was obvious to the participants. It was also clear that, apart from other barriers, English was a gateway for international employment, and that learning English and having Western certification offered a much greater chance for income equity.

On Narrative and Ethnography

Narrative is an important element of the methodology and presentation of this research. In formulating my method and analytic style, I consulted theory surrounding the use of narratives as data as well as several other works that used the method. I discuss the parameters of the method and the definition of narrative used in this research in the next section. Here, I will provide an overview of the way narrative analysis has been defined, discussed and employed elsewhere.

The use of narrative as a data source in ethnography is now widespread and multidisciplinary. The life story is defined by Linde, who describes her method as ethnographic, as "the total of all the stories of a particular kind that are told in the course of the teller's lifetime" (Linde 1993: 27); as well as "a linguistic unit crucially involved in social interaction…it is also related to our internal, subjective sense of having a private life story that organises our understanding of our past life, our current situation, and our imagined future" (Linde 1993: 11).

Lieblich *et al.* (1998) argue that personal narratives "in both facets of content and form, *are* people's identities" (Lieblich 1998: 7, emphasis original). Ricoeur describes the life history as a paradigmatic telling of "the movement by which the hero—if we may still call him by that name—becomes who he is" (Ricoeur 1980: 182).

Narrative analysis has been successfully used in other studies of immigration and settlement in Canada (see Peressini 1991, James & Shadd eds., 2001). This method is described by Peressini, who collected narratives of Italian immigrants living in Montreal, as "a privileged method for producing accounts of practices that...describe the personal itineraries, aspirations and strategies of the actors....[and] as a means of compensating for the paucity of sources...about social groups that do not belong to the elite or whose point of view does not appear in official sources" (Peressini 1991: 231-232). Because all of the participants had experiences that most Canadians have never heard about let alone undergone themselves, the method of narrative collection and analysis is appropriate in light of Peressini's comments.

The use of narrative as a data source has been widely used by anthropologists such as Julie Cruikshank (1990) and Ruth Behar (2003). Victor Turner analysed story telling and shared narratives to understand various social mechanisms that the Ndembu of Zambia used to maintain social order (Turner 1980). He saw all narratives as teaching methods, providing a structure that mirrored life experiences, both including four stages of social drama: breach, crisis, redress and reintegration (Turner 1980: 145).

The postmodern turn has greatly validated narratives, stories and personal accounts as useful social science data. This was not always the case. In his critique of the narrative as a reliable data source, White suggests that while narratives are seen as "a

representation of real events", by virtue of their imposed formality of telling, they "display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary" (White 1980: 23). In other words, by constructing the narrative, the teller is giving cohesion and meaning to her life that might be constructed for the purposes of story-telling, making the narrative a poor source of objective data.

White's criticism of narrative as data fails to invalidate this method. Linde (1993) suggests that ethnographic study need not be concerned with "the postulation of the independent existence of the actual events of the speaker's life," and to be sure it is the representations through narrative of real life experience upon which this project is focused (Linde 1993: 68). The act of telling the story is more than a medium; the choices of representation are as valuable to the researcher as the content itself (Smith 1980: 212-222).

The Settlement Narrative

People explain, justify and make sense out of events by giving them a formal structure. One such structure is the life narrative, as a story that provides reasons for why people do things, assigns roles to life's actors and defines and explains causal relationships. Linde (1993: 3) states that we all need "coherent, acceptable, and constantly revised life-stor[ies]" in order to exist comfortably in the social world as a socially proper and stable person.

I chose to collect narratives because I felt it would cull relevant data useful for multiple areas of relevant discussion while still retaining the voices of the participants. My strategy was to look closely at part of the life story of each of the participants,

particularly the part that begins at the onset of the immigration process and ends after the first few years of settlement.

After deciding that I would study and analyse the participants' stories as I have, I found that other theorists have already found value in narrative in the context of immigration study. In addition to Peressini (1991) and Haour-Knipe (2001), whose works are discussed above, Rapport and Dawson (1998) make a number of connections between narrating one's life, or home, in the form of the "untold story" (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 28). In this instance the authors are using a definition of home that is informed by the fact that, in the context of global movement, some people no longer have permanent geographical homes to which they attach their identities (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 27). For travellers and immigrants, home is the routine practices, social interactions and regular use of a personal name (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 27). In describing the relationship between the narrative and the immigrant, Rapport and Dawson suggest that:

> "The content of narratives, then, treats a movement between events so as to give on to meaning and coherence in time. Also, the medium of narratives entails a movement from a start to a finish (if not a 'beginning' to an 'ending'), and is 'everywhere characterised by movement'.... Narrative mediates one's sense of movement through time, so that in the telling one becomes...an émigré from a past home" (Rapport and Dawson 1998: 28, emphasis original, quoting Chambers).

The authors refer above to time, in terms of a start and a finish, and the movement that occurs in between. Between this start and finish occurs a process of adaptation and profound change for new immigrants. The narration of this time period involves the telling of experiences that, while common to most immigrants, were punctuated by distinct emotions, reactions and interpretations from person to person. As stated above by Rapport and Dawson (1998) and earlier by Linde (1993), coherence and meaning-making

are key elements of storytelling. People present their lives to themselves and others in the form of narratives, either verbally or internally, to create coherence, consciously or otherwise, out of sometimes contradictory or confusing events and feelings.

By presenting and discussing new immigrants' narratives of settlement, this research offers a representation of the participants' untold stories of the moving home which, when told, is a verbalization of the process of movement, adaptation, change and growth into new cultural surroundings and a modified personal identity. Throughout this work, I refer to both stories and settlement narratives, which are terms that I use interchangeably. When referring to a part of a story, I use the terms excerpt and passage interchangeably.

Chapter 2

Research Methods

This research is aimed at presenting and analysing the way new immigrants narrate their experiences of settlement. I used ethnographic methods in the data-collection, in the analysis and in the interpretation. I achieved the investigative portion of my research by engaging new immigrants in qualitative, semi-structured interviews, on a variety of topics related to settling as a new immigrant in Winnipeg. I analysed the data by examining the subjects that the participants discussed, as well as the way they chose to tell their stories. I interpreted these findings in the context of the theoretical work that has already been done in the field of immigration and settlement.

Research Setting

I conducted my research in the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba, from the beginning of December, 2005 to the middle of February, 2006. While not considered a major Canadian destination city for immigrants, people who are foreign-born comprise 16.5 percent of Winnipeg's population. Foreign-born people, or immigrants are defined by Canada Census (2001) as persons who are or who have ever been landed immigrants in Canada (Statistics Canada 2001 Census). Winnipeg's immigrant population is somewhat smaller than that of major Canadian immigrant-destination cities. 44 percent of Toronto's population is comprised of immigrants, Vancouver has an immigrant population of 37.5 percent, and 20.9 percent of Calgary's population is foreign-born (Statistics Canada 2001

Census). Manitoba also has a Provincial Nominee program, which is designed to attract skilled immigrants for economic reasons, offering them a faster and more direct immigration process in exchange for a promise to remain in the province (Government of Manitoba 2006). Although Winnipeg does not have a large immigrant community compared to other cities, there are concentrations of immigrants in the city's centre, with fewer immigrants living in suburban areas. This concentration in the urban centre has created an ethnically diverse inner-city population.

In Winnipeg, the average annual income in 2000 was $39,210, with 67 percent of the population earning between $20,000 and $59,000, and 20% earning less than $19,999 annually (Statistics Canada 2001 Census). Winnipeg has a lower cost of living than do other major Canadian cities, which may make it an appealing destination for many immigrants.

There are three universities in Winnipeg, with the University of Manitoba being the largest. Many of the participants attended one of Winnipeg's universities or colleges, either in academic programs or in ESL classes.

The interviews with the participants took place mostly in Winnipeg's downtown area, at libraries, coffee shops and study areas in universities. Other interviews took place in the homes of some of the participants in various parts of the city.

Participant Population

The participants are a sample drawn from Winnipeg's new immigrant population. At the time of the research, all of the participants were residing in Canada legally, and had come as either international students, visitors or various classes of immigrants, including economic class, family or skilled worker class immigrants. At the time of each

interview, all of the participants were either immigrants or had recently become Canadian citizens. The data used in this research is comprised of thirteen interviews with fifteen participants, two of which involved couples interviewed together, all of whom I met through various networks and avenues. The participants in this study ranged in age from twenty-three to forty-five; seven were female and eight were male. Some had migrated with partners and children, others had met Canadian partners, and still others were single. All of the participants had immigrated to Canada between one and six years prior to this research. Some had come to Canada as international students initially, and the rest as different classes of immigrants. Table A below provides the participants' demographic characteristics.

Table A. ***Narratives of Settlement*** **Research Participants' Demographic Characteristics, Winnipeg, 2006.**

Participant's Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	# of Years in Canada	Marital Status	# of Children
Aaron	31	M	Costa Rica	2	Married	1
Mundia	23	F	Zambia	6	Single	0
Min-Soo	38	F	S. Korea	1.5	Married	2
Ha-Neul	42	M	S. Korea	1.5	Married	2
Sophie	26	F	Colombia	2.5	Married	0
Linda	29	F	Peru	3	Married	0
Uberto	29	M	Peru	3	Married	0
Vidor	28	M	Hungary	5	Single	0
Sharada	33	F	Guyana	1	Single	1
Jorge	45	M	Peru	2	Married	2
Isabel	30	F	Brazil	3	Married	0
Tushar	29	M	India	3	Married	0
Namita	29	F	India	3	Married	0
Robel	28	M	Eritrea	2	Single	0
Praveen	37	M	India	4	Married	1

In addition to the basic demographic descriptions of the participants, education, language proficiency and employment status were important factors that are considered throughout the research analysis. Many of the participants had postsecondary education, with some having achieved Master's and PhD degrees, either in Canada or in their countries of origin. The participants spoke varying levels of English, from beginner to excellent, with two participants considering it their first language. The participants

engaged in a variety of occupations; some were full-time university or ESL students, some were employed in unskilled labour, and some worked in the public sector or other professional areas. Table B below provides a detailed summary of these characteristics of the participants.

Table B. ***Narratives of Settlement*** **Research Participants' Education, Language and Employment Status Winnipeg, 2006.**

Name	English Proficiency (self-defined)	Other Languages	Occupation	Education
Aaron	Basic	Spanish	Grocery clerk	Bachelor's degree
Mundia	First Language	none	University Student, Part-time University worker	Bachelor's degree in progress
Min-Soo	Basic	Korean, Japanese	ESL student	Bachelor's degree
Ha-Neul	Basic	Korean, Japanese	ESL student	Master's degree
Sophie	Advanced	Spanish	Translation work, casual	Bachelor's degree
Linda	Advanced	Spanish	Scientist	Master's degree
Uberto	Advanced	Spanish, Italian	Civil Servant	Master's degree
Vidor	Advanced	Hungarian, German	Musician	Bachelor's degree
Sharada	First Language	Creolese	Garment worker	Some secondary education
Jorge	Basic	Spanish	Nurse's aid, ESL Student	Medical degree
Isabel	Advanced	Portuguese	Civil Servant	Bachelor's Degree
Tushar	Advanced	Gujarati, Hindi	University Student, medical specialist	Master's degree
Namita	Basic	Gujarati, Hindi	College student	College degree
Robel	Basic	Tigrigne, Tigri, Arabic	University student, parking lot attendant	3 years university
Praveen	Advanced	Gujarati, Hindi	University Student	Master's degree

The demographic characteristics of the research participants does not closely reflect the demographic breakdown that would be found in a random sample of new immigrants to Winnipeg, either in ethnic background, socio-economic status or education. The participant group included for example, a greater number of Peruvians

and fewer East Asians than the proportion of immigrants who originate from these areas, because of the networks of people to which I had access. The participants in this study had relatively high levels of education, which reflects the realities among some immigrant groups but not others. While the majority of Latin American immigrants have relatively low levels of education by Canadian standards (Ozden 2006: 232-233, 235), the majority of participants from this area have Master's degrees. However, the education levels of the East Indian participants more accurately reflect the average education levels among immigrants from this region, which is very high (Ozden 2006: 235). As a result of this overall high education level among the participants, there was greater financial and employment security. While many of the participants experienced some difficulty in finding suitable employment, few of them worked unskilled labour.

In thinking about this demographic profile, I note that I had under-represented immigrants who work at unskilled labour, who lack post-secondary education or English skills, and those who are otherwise marginalised for socio-economic reasons. Ozden (2006) suggests that most studies indicate that immigrating is generally easier for middle-class and educated people than it is for poor, undereducated people (Ozden 2006: 234-235).Consequently, this study does not focus on those most likely to encounter massive obstacles, stress and poverty in the context of immigration and settlement in Canada. Nevertheless, most of the people whom I interviewed reported experiencing economic problems, social obstacles and multiple forms of stress and emotional duress because of the nature of the immigration process itself. It should also be noted that access to education does not necessarily divide people into the same socio-economic categories elsewhere as it does in North America. A medical doctor in a Latin American country

may earn an income comparable to a taxi driver in the same country, though the income difference between the two professions is considerable here in Canada.

Though several of the participants had financial resources, credentials and skills, this did not guarantee them an obstacle-free settlement experience. Many of the educated participants I interviewed were under strong financial constraints and had uncertain futures despite their credentials. Similarly, individuals who had come with considerable economic resources were very anxious at the prospect of losing a lot of money through immigration with all the risks it entailed. Although there is certainly a need to pay attention to the effects of poverty and other social problems on immigration and settlement, I have nevertheless brought to the forefront important social and cultural issues in this research.

In assigning a level of English proficiency to each participant, I am relying largely on their own definitions of their languages skills. While they may have achieved certain scores on their TOEFL tests or have attained certain benchmark levels in their ESL classes, the self-assessments that they conveyed to me during the interviews are what appears in the above table. Thus, when a participant described his English as "not so good", or said "I am still learning", or "I need to practice", I defined his skills as *basic*. If she said she had spoken English for several years, and described being comfortable communicating in professional settings and in school in English, I defined her skills as *advanced*. While I could have added a middle category, there were not any participants who fell in between these two levels.

I used multiple methods for recruiting participants for my study. I placed posters in the international student centres of several post secondary institutions and at multiple

immigrant organizations. I also emailed recruitment information to people who worked in the immigrant services field for dissemination to prospective participants. No participants came forward as a result of these advertisements. I recruited two students whom I tutored, I met several others through acquaintances at the University of Manitoba, and I had a few connections from work that I had done in other research areas. People who participated put me in contact with other potential participants. The result was access to multiple networks, some connected to each other, which provided a variety of individuals with unique stories to tell.

Research Design

I designed my research around semi-structured interviews that I performed with each participant. The method of research was chosen by taking multiple factors into consideration. The interviews gave each participant the opportunity to narrate his immigration and settlement experiences, and it allowed me to include each participant's voice and interpretations of this experience. I included many excerpts from each interview in the final form of the research. The primary goal of this research was to connect the participants' narrated realities of immigration and settlement to the theory and research already devoted to the area of immigration. I wanted to achieve data that covered a broad range of subjects while paying attention to what the participants expressed as important to them. I was able to contextualise the data within the relevant theory and research covering several aspects of immigration. I simultaneously addressed the way individuals were framing and describing their experiences and why they were making the descriptive choices that they were.

In my analysis of the way people narrated the settlement process, I took into consideration how the participants described their ethnic identities and countries of origin, their stories' chronologies, the multiple actors who were involved and the subjects on which they chose to focus. The way that the participants viewed immigration was paramount, and I considered these perspectives in the context of the theory and research built around immigration issues.

In the context of this research, recording and analysing narratives is meant to be a means of understanding how people are changed by settlement, what they learn about themselves from the experience and if and how they embed these changes into their identities. What immigrating means to people is intersubjective, and the shared and individually ascribed meaning of movement and settling can be effectively and thoroughly uncovered through getting people to tell their personal stories of settlement.

The Interview Process

It was important that the social conditions of the interview did not compromise the comfort of the participant or constrain the research process. The conditions of narrative telling, as delineated by Smith (1980), may include, but not be exclusive to, the following: the cultural and social setting; the listeners', the potential readers' and the narrator's relationship to them; the narrator's motives for storytelling; the researcher's motives for eliciting the telling; and the interests and functions that the telling was designed to serve (Smith 1980: 209-232). All of these conditions of storytelling were considered in the process of setting up the interviews as well as during analysis.

The thirteen interviews I conducted and used in this research took place at various locations. Some participants invited me into their homes for the interviews, while other

interviews were conducted in libraries, classrooms, and cafes. I always made sure to offer multiple options for locations if none were proposed by the participants, and they ultimately made the decisions about where we would meet. I wanted the interview setting to make each participant comfortable and relaxed in such a way that she would not feel scrutinised, but rather feel like an expert whose information is valuable and important. With the exception of one interview, which involved both a husband and wife, all interviews were done individually.

It was my interest to cultivate an interview style that fostered narrative-telling and the description of feelings and experiences. My research method consisted of semi-structured interviews, using a set of twenty questions as a general guide. Bernard (1995) suggests that the semi-structured interview is the best method to use when only one meeting is going to take place between researcher and participant, offering the "free-wheeling quality" of informal interviewing, but with a structure to guide the interview neatly, though not rigorously, through a set of topics (Bernard 1995: 209). I ended up conducting only one interview with each participant, as planned.

My semi-structured interviews began with a series of simple demographic questions to elicit personal details such as age, marital status, education and employment. I often interspersed other queries within this basic questioning, asking about people's feelings on different subjects like the nature of migrating with a family, or how she got the job she had.

While I most often adhered to the twenty question guide (see Appendix 1) for the first part of each interview, the second series of questions were more dependent on the participants' previous answers and areas of interest. These questions were not so much

designed to cull basic factual information as to learn more about what sorts of experiences people were having, and what they thought about them. In answering these questions, the participants often gave relatively long answers and explanations. Asking people questions about why they decided to migrate, what the trip to Canada was like and how they went about their first few weeks of settling down in Winnipeg often resulted in explanations that turned into descriptive stories, in which the participants shared how they felt and described causal relationships and underlying motives of actors, including themselves, in their narratives.

As the research went on, areas of interest that were elucidated by the earlier participants became the basis for questions that I put to later ones. However, because I wanted the resulting data to be indicative of what was important to each participant, I was careful not to lead the participants too much with my questions, and the interviews were designed as very open ended rather than aiming for a particular answer. Because each interview became more tailored to the participant as the discussion unfolded, and the interviews changed to accommodate ideas from earlier interviewees, the research methods were participant-guided in multiple ways.

I used a tape recorder for all of the interviews, although all of the participants were given the option of being tape recorded or not. The interviews lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes. To varying degrees, the interviews resembled informal conversations, especially through the first series of "demographic" questions. All of the participants told their settlement narratives during their interviews, and though some were more "story-like" than others, all were characterised by lengthy and detailed descriptions

of events, personal changes, perceptions of their social groups and environments, and processes of emotional experiences.

Data

Once the interviewing process was underway, I began transcribing the completed interviews. Once I had transcribed the first interviews, I entered the transcriptions as documents into a data analysis program called NVivo 2.0 by QSR. This program allowed me to break down documents into categories and subcategories for easy clustering of themes across interviews, facilitating thematic analysis and demographic categorizing.

I created hierarchies of thematic categories by carefully examining what was said, repeated, or echoed by others, and how it was all connected and described by the participants. I then contextualised all of these themes within the body of literature and theory on immigration and settlement that I had found relevant for building this project. The way I organised the themes was guided largely by the way the narratives were told to me. For example, many of the participants talked about learning English. Within these discussions, many of the participants touched on both the obstacles they faced in learning English and the ways they found ESL classes or tutoring. Thus, *English* was a category, and two categories within it were *obstacles* and *ESL classes*. However, *ESL classes* was also a subcategory in *acquiring aid*, while *obstacles* was also a separate category including *social differences*, and *financial constraints*. Once I had connected these issues in a way that reflected the way that they were being linked to each other in narrative, I examined how these connections were or were not observed and analysed in literature on the settlement experience.

Analysis

Despite the fact that narratives are considered to be valuable data in multiple disciplines, its analysis "often seems like a mysterious art" (Daiute & Lightfoot 2004: vii). While many interpretations of any text are possible, I have based my interpretations here on multiple listening sessions and readings of the narratives in the context of what has been posited in previous research. My strategy to accomplish this was to be precise in my description of what specific parts of the text supported, and also challenged, my interpretations (Linde 1993: 97), while attempting to lay down some real examples of settlement experiences that support and challenge what is at the heart of immigration and settlement research at present.

To begin the analysis of the participants' narratives, I broke down each narrative into components that focused on subjects that I had decided to address. These subjects are addressed in Chapters 4 through 7. Each narrative was presented to me as a chronological story. Bernard suggests that in a semi-structured interview, the researcher should "get an informant on to a topic of interest and get out of the way" (Bernard 1995: 212). Following this process, the beginning of most interviews was naturally somewhat prompted by my demographic questions, and provided information that many of the participants elaborated on and referred to later in the interviews. The first part of each story generally involved a description of how and why the teller had come to be living in Canada. Most participants described where they lived, and with whom, and what they did with their time. The middle of each narrative tended to provide more descriptions of events and experiences, and several of the participants were offered explanations about why things happened the way they did and what it meant. The end of each narrative

usually involved a great deal of reflection, and discussion about their present situations and what the teller planned to do next. At this point many of the participants mentioned their countries of origin in the context of their futures, either as return destinations or sites for visiting.

There is no concrete structure for a personal narrative that is adhered to by all tellers in every way. Some participants told their stories very chronologically, while others jumped back and forth through time, making connections between ideas and experiences that happened at different points. Many people also described things that they had heard from others or used examples of things that could or might happen to them to make points clear to me. Everyone had a distinct storytelling style, and hopefully this uniqueness has been preserved in the excerpts of the stories that I have provided in Chapters 4 through 7. Through reading these narratives, I distilled the different ways people described and evaluated these similar issues and experiences. Although every single passage from each participant's contribution is not analysed in this work, my analytic process is supported by Linde's suggestion that analysing a portion of an individual's narrative is enough to show the substance and principles of construction of a story (Linde 1993: 51).

Drawing from Linde's (1993) ethno-linguistic analysis methods and Lieblich and others' narrative-interpretation methods, my analysis considers the subjects people discussed, the emotions and attitudes that people brought to the discussion, and the way that they represented these things stylistically (Lieblich *et al* 1998). How the participants represented themselves in their narratives, as active agents or as passive, what descriptive

language choices they made, and what emotional tones they brought to their narratives are all aspects of the narratives that I examined.

The participants made connections between themselves and the events and actors in their stories in different ways. Each teller had his or her unique taxonomy by which they categorised and created coherence out of what they had experienced and what they were telling me, a process described in Bernard (1995: 387-390). While these categories were not culturally shared by my participants, because they do not belong to the same culture and because there is no prototypical settlement experience, many people described common themes and topics that were meaningful to their narratives, such as differences between immigrants and Canadian citizens, the different kinds of immigrants, the differences of experience between the young and the elderly, and feelings about country of origin versus new home. Many of the participants also categorised many of the same issues with common attitudes and emotions. Learning English, interacting in Canadian society, and making friends were described as both important and difficult things to do by most of the participants at the beginning of their settlement. Many people attached feelings of anxiety to income, feelings of excitement to the initial move, and feelings of loss to their families and friends back home in their stories. In this way, many people talked about the same subjects and attached similar emotional meanings to them. However, some people attached very different meanings to some of the same subjects. Some people described making Canadian friends as very important for learning English, while others mentioned no connection between those two issues.

In presenting my analyses of the meanings of the narratives the participants recounted, I have tried to bring to the fore as many key features of the narrative tellings

as space permitted, in the form of quotations. In interpreting the meanings of what the participants told me, how they told it, and why, this work is intended to bring something new to the anthropological discussion of immigration and settlement.

Ethical Considerations

My research proposal was approved by the University of Manitoba Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board in November, 2005 (see Appendix 3). I used pseudonyms for all the participants in order to protect their confidentiality. While I may be the only person who has knowledge of many of the participants' identities, participants who introduced me to other participants are aware that each other has been interviewed, and I am obviously unable to protect their anonymity from each other.

Before conducting every interview, I obtained written consent from each participant (see Appendix 2), and each was informed that no remuneration would be offered in exchange for participation but that she could end participation at any time, thereby removing the interview from the research. Prior to the interview each participant was informed that he could refrain from answering any questions without consequence. Each participant was also offered access to their transcription or tape recording if desired, and was invited to the thesis defence. All participants were provided with my contact information and that of my advisor. In general, the ethical decisions with regard to the research design were made in consideration of the well-being of the participants, as well with respect to the goal of producing substantive and relevant data.

Chapter 3

Participants and Representation

Representation and Voice

I took a great deal of care in considering how the participants' words would appear in this work. While I knew I could not provide the narratives that each participant gave on every subject, I wanted to be true to the variability of experiences of each stage of settlement. I was also concerned with representing each individual's narrative of his or her settlement accurately, as it was told.

Chapters 4 through 7 feature narrative passages that touch on various subjects. I devote each section to a few different voices and analyse each of their narratives from multiple angles. I chose excerpts that best represent the differences between people. While it was ultimately my decision whose words would be heard on what subject, I paid close attention to instances where people seemed to feel strongly about an issue. I tried to include such instances in the presentation. Every participant is represented proportionately to their participation in the research. The lengths of the interviews varied, and some participants were more interested in delving into issues external to their own lives, while others stuck to their own experiences. As such, I have focussed on certain participants' narratives in places where their words are particularly illustrative of a given topic or problem.

In the process of choosing a representational style, I was concerned with producing a document that would be meaningful to anthropology without altering the meaning behind people's narratives. In other words, I attempted to strike a balance between over-analysing the narratives and being fearful of making any interpretations of my own. Thus, in some instances, I drew some of my own conclusions across experiences, while in others I tried to present what Emerson and others call "member-recognised meanings" as they were originally conveyed to me in the interview (Emerson *et al.* 1995: 109).

This involved offering precedence to the participants' words, and treating them as experts on the topics they discussed. To this end, I paid due attention to instances where participants presented theories and explanations of the nature of settlement in general, not only to their explanations of their own experiences. For example, while some people I interviewed were fluent in English, they still recognised that lacking English skills was a major obstacle for other immigrants. These individuals discussed issues such as English proficiency outside of their personal experience, and sometimes proposed explanations and theories about different aspects of such issues. Where I could rely on the participants to connect their specific experiences to the general nature of settlement, I was, as Emerson and others suggest, able to "put aside (my) own inclinations to explain when and why particular events occur in order to highlight members' accounts of them" (Emerson *et al.* 1995: 124-127).

Gender

Gender analysis should play a role in most ethnographic work. This research was no exception. Gender is one variable among many that I considered during the analytic

process of this research. Differences in narratives likely have roots in gender differences, but my sample was too small to make generalizations with regard to gender. Instead, I have paid special attention in cases where it appeared that gender was a key feature of a narrative passage.

It has been suggested that in narrative storytelling, women tend to story-tell relationally, while men tend to represent themselves individualistically or oppositionally (Linde 1993: 80). Although this may be supported in some of my data, I also found instances in which women's narratives were individualistic, and ones where men's self-representations were relational. In light of this variability, I have chosen to discuss gender on a case by case basis, where I felt it was relevant to analysis.

I found that the participants' narratives were affected by their culture's gender roles in differing, gender-specific ways. It was apparent from the narratives that gender and gender related issues affect both men and women in different ways. This came out very clearly in a few particular cases. Three of the female participants whom I interviewed answered several questions with reference to what their husbands thought or did. While they all told their respective stories of settlement, these tellings were at times dominated by someone who in other participants' narratives was a secondary character. In contrast, many of the men who were married referred to their wives very rarely, despite the fact that they had migrated with them. To a point, this seems to reflect what was discussed above about women and relational story-telling. However, among the participants from cultures which have a distinct gender imbalance than is present in Canadian society, the power-relations between men and women seemed to emerge within the narratives.

Presenting the Narratives

From the beginning to the end of this research, it was important for me to present the participants' stories in a way that reflects the way they were told, given the fact that they cannot be included here in their complete forms. Ultimately, the presentation aimed at framing the similarities, differences, moods, nuances and attitudes found in all of the participants' narratives as clearly as possible. The following is a short explanation of how I have chosen to present the participants' stories of settlement.

It was my goal in this work to show that the settlement process consists of a set of major events common to most immigrants' experiences, while also showing the different ways in which people assess, describe and are affected by these events. I have presented the narratives together, addressing each event in its original chronological sequence, so that the reader can follow the differences between the participants' conceptions and experiences of similar events.

Chapters 4 through 7 are devoted to presenting these major components of the settlement narrative in the order in which they were told. Not everyone's experiences could be presented at every stage in this work because of the amount of space I was able to devote to each narrative. Nevertheless, I have made an effort to present contrastive and diverse experiences on many subjects.

While each of the participants had unique experiences in immigrating and settling in Canada, there is a distinctive structure and order present in every settlement narrative. After hearing all the narratives, it was apparent that there was a linear sequence of events in every experience of settlement. In other words each story had roughly the same beginning, middle and end. All of the narratives recounted by the participants began with

what motivated them to migrate. These descriptions were varied; some people were motivated to leave, or forced to leave, by dangers in their homelands, while others were inspired to migrate for adventure, education or opportunity. Of this second group, some did not intend to remain away permanently. The participants then described their experiences upon immediate arrival in Winnipeg, telling me where they lived and how they found employment or enrolled in school. Subsequently, many reported where they got information about these issues, and who helped them with this process.

Once immediate needs were met, the middle of the narrative had begun, and many of the participants described setting about developing their emotional and personal lives. This involved a reevaluation of identity in the context of an entirely new environment. This was sometimes precipitated by an emotionally stressful experience, or a crisis point which many described as a struggle to choose between toughing it out in Canada and returning home. Some of the participants described this experience as a trial that they had withstood, and at this point many individuals reported a sense of arrival, or a feeling of coming through to the other side.

The need to reassess one's identity in this new environment led many of the participants to address what role culture played in their identities. The way they wanted this change to occur, and to what degree, appeared dependent in part on the choices they made regarding their co-ethnic groups. Several of the participants discussed the reorganization of their cultural groups, sometimes broadened to include groups that would have been considered separate back home.

Finally, at the end of their stories, several participants described what role their homelands were playing in their lives as Canadians, and how they would figure in the

future. This re-conceptualisation of their countries of origin as a place that was no longer their home marked a final stage in the settlement narratives to the present point for many of the participants. Although this constituted an ending to many people's stories, several participants suggested that this was a story to be continued, and that they had not decided on their futures. For them, this ending was also the beginning of the next stage: the participants' new lives, however and wherever they would ultimately be lived.

In addition to the chronological events that were common to the settlement narratives, I paid great attention to the ways in which the participants described themselves as active agents in their stories. Whether the participants conceptualised events as the result of their actions, or simply things that "happened" to them was a key feature in my presentation of these narratives. Thus, in addition to drawing connections between the stories' events, I paid special attention to the roles in which the participants cast themselves.

During the process of storytelling, the participants attached various emotions and attitudes to the different subjects which they addressed. Some participants described certain aspects of settlement with frustration, bewilderment or anger, while others examined what they had experienced with humour or irony. While some were very open about their experiences and admitted that they continued to struggle, or to find excitement in the process, others were less open and described experiences in a matter-of-fact manner, without overtly displaying much emotion. While this may have been in part because they were talking to a stranger, there were nevertheless personality differences as well as experiential differences, which affected how people told their stories emotively. When presenting the narrative excerpts in this work, I have pointed out the emotions and

attitudes that can be observed in reading the numerous quotations. Paying attention to these nuances provided an understanding of how people experience settlement differently, and how some events can affect some people profoundly and others apparently hardly at all. This variability also suggests that some people process their experiences by verbalising their feelings, while others do not want or need to share with others, or at least with their interviewer.

Participant Descriptions and Details

In order to provide the reader with some frame of reference for each individual settlement narrative, below I have included a brief demographic and circumstantial description of each person who participated. To view the demographic attributes and personal details of the research participants, consult the demographic tables presented in Chapter 2.

Aaron

A thirty-one year old man from Costa Rica, Aaron had been in Canada for two years at the time of the interview. He earned a business administration degree in Costa Rica before working there as a volunteer-coordinator on an organic farm. There he met his now wife, a Canadian woman with whom he had just bought a house at the time of the interview. At the time of the interview, Aaron and his wife were expecting their first child. He worked at an organic food store and took a university ESL class. Aaron possessed basic English skills prior to migrating.

Aaron described his settlement as unplanned, and he extended his visitor's visa three times before applying for landed immigrant status and only after marrying the woman with whom he came to Canada. Aaron had plans to run a business that would

make use of his dual connections in Canada and Costa Rica. He seemed firm in his desire to live in Winnipeg for the time being, but was interested in being able to travel back to Costa Rica often. Aaron was rather quiet and stated that he was somewhat unsure of his English during the interview.

Mundia

A twenty-three year old woman from Zambia, Mundia immigrated alone to Canada six years ago. She originally came to Canada as a student when she was seventeen, and was a landed immigrant when the interview took place. English is her first language. Mundia was to be finished her general arts degree within the year. Both her sister and brother lived in Canada. Mundia seemed unsure about her future plans or where she wants to live, but she said she considered herself to be very Westernised.

Mundia spoke to me with apparent confidence, and was happy to share her personal opinions about many things during the interview.

Min-Soo

Min-Soo, a thirty-eight year old woman, immigrated here with her husband and two children as economic-class immigrants one-and-a-half years ago. She was a teacher in South Korea, with a bachelor's degree in Chinese literature, and at the time of the interview had no professional plans other than assisting her husband with opening and running his business. Min-Soo was taking free ESL classes full-time at a community college.

At the time of the interview, Min-Soo was unsure about her choice to come here, but she said that she really loves Winnipeg and did not seem to want to go back to Korea.

Min-Soo answered questions slowly, sometimes with some hesitancy. I was previously acquainted with Min-Soo and her husband Ha-Neul through volunteer ESL tutoring that I did at an immigrant-serving organization in Winnipeg.

Ha-Neul

Ha-Neul, aged forty-two, immigrated with his wife, Min-Soo, one-and-a-half years ago. He has a master's degree in business and marketing, and has written several books on this subject in Korean and Japanese. He also taught these subjects at the university level in South Korea.

Ha-Neul said he brought his wife and two children to Canada because he viewed the Western market as something he could exploit to his advantage. Ha-Neul described being bored and feeling like he is wasting his time and money since coming to Canada, but nevertheless believed that he had financial opportunities here. At the time of the interview, Ha-Neul was learning English full-time and saw his language limitations as the major obstacle standing in the way of business ownership. He maintained business connections with South Korea and owned property there.

Ha-Neul was somewhat baffled by the lack of information that he perceived the government providing for immigrants. This was a major focus for him during the interview and had seemingly greatly affected his settlement experience.

Sophie

Sophie is from Colombia, aged twenty-six, and immigrated here two and a half years previous to the interview, to join her now husband. He came to Canada because he saw the political situation as a personal threat to his life. Sophie had prior experience living in North America as an exchange student in the U.S., and her English skills are

high. Sophie has a bachelor's degree in a social science, and intended to do a master's degree in another province.

At the time of the interview, Sophie had been back home once to get married, and she reported not wanting to live in Colombia again. She presented an interest in improving the social-political situation in Colombia through her education and research plans, but was interested in doing this work from Canada with her co-ethnic group.

Sophie described her settlement as relatively easy because she had her partner and because she considered herself to be independent.

Linda

Linda, a twenty-nine year old woman from Peru, travelled to Winnipeg three years ago to do a Master's degree in a science program, a field that she was working in at the time of the interview. She earlier planned to return to Peru, but later became a landed immigrant. Her boyfriend, with whom she now lives, followed a few months after she arrived in Canada. She learned English in high school in Peru, and considers herself lucky for this. Linda did a fair amount of travelling within Latin America.

Linda missed Peru a great deal, and had gone back five or six times, sometimes for work and sometimes to visit. She described herself as very emotional about Peru and her family and friends there. However, she liked Winnipeg, and said that she considers it to be home, or at least one of her two homes.

Uberto

Uberto, aged twenty-nine was born in Peru but described himself as half Italian, half Peruvian. Uberto followed his partner Linda to Winnipeg three years ago, and enrolled in a master's program. Neither had planned to stay, but they owned a house in

Winnipeg together at the time of the interview. Unlike Linda, Uberto did not speak very emotionally about Peru. He had lived all over North and Latin America for his work, and conceived of relocation as a fact of his life. Uberto had advanced English skills which he acquired in high school in Peru. He was working full-time in the public sector. He seemed settled with his partner in their home and in his employment.

Vidor

Vidor, aged twenty-eight, emigrated from Hungary five years ago. He had earned a degree in Hungary that is similar to a bachelor's degree, and studied for a while at a Manitoba university. He originally travelled here with a student visa with his now former girlfriend, intending only to stay for studying. At the time of the interview, Vidor had a full-time job in classical music, and a Canadian girlfriend he met through work. He learned English on his own, from a book that he bought in Hungary, and found the language barrier to be only a minor obstacle.

Vidor described no firm plans for the future, but seemed settled with his job and his new partner for the time being.

Sharada

Sharada, a thirty-three year old woman, emigrated here from Guyana. She came with her seven year-old daughter one year prior to the interview through the provincial family sponsorship program and moved into her parents' apartment. She bought a house only a few months later with her savings and her parents' help, and was paying the whole mortgage on the salary of a garment worker. She had some secondary education in Guyana, and was struggling to decide how to get more education while continuing to earn

enough money to support her family. English is her first language, but the dialect is slightly different than those found in Canada, and is what she called *Creolese.*

Sharada described her settlement experiences very emotionally and with both criticism and praise for how Canada receives immigrants. Her motivations for coming to Canada were to give herself and her daughter a better life, with opportunities that are unavailable in Guyana. Sharada communicated that she was firmly intending to live here forever.

Jorge

Jorge is a forty-five year old man from Peru who immigrated through the provincial nominee program, with his wife and three children, two years prior to the interview. When I interviewed him he was learning English in order to be able to take his medical doctor certification exam, so that his Peruvian credentials would be recognised in Canada. Jorge was working as a medical support staff member, more than full-time, at two hospitals. He was devoting all of his spare time to learning English.

Jorge moved here to give his family a better life, stating that he felt that he was often in danger in Peru. He nevertheless continued professional and social connections with Peru, and plans to open up a clinic for aboriginal people there in the future. He also had other public service interests in mind for his home country.

Isabel

Isabel is a thirty year old woman from Brazil who moved to Canada three years ago. She originally came on a six-month work visa through an international program, but she extended her stay by one year when offered further work. At the time of the interview

Isabel had plans to live here permanently, particularly because she had just become engaged to a Canadian man.

Isabel has a degree in accounting, acquired in Brazil, and was working in the public sector. Isabel had advanced English skills before arriving but felt that she was still learning how to communicate well in English.

Isabel described her country of origin with emotion and affection, and has mixed feelings about her family, which had experienced difficult times and loss. She cited this as one reason for leaving—to get a clean slate—but also said she wanted adventure before age and responsibilities overtook her chance to do so. Isabel had been to Brazil to visit five times since moving to Canada.

Tushar

Tushar is a twenty-nine year old man who emigrated from India with his wife, Namita, three years prior to the interview, first to Toronto and then to Winnipeg to pursue a post-graduate degree. He came here on the provincial nominee program. Tushar's English is advanced, as he learned English in school in India.

Tushar was very involved with his co-ethnic community in Winnipeg. He described India with a great deal of affection, and had thought of going back to live permanently. He connected this plan to being a leader in his profession back home, but also to his desire to be in the community in which he was raised.

Namita

Namita is a twenty-nine year old woman from India. She moved here with her husband Tushar, and at the time of the interview was in a program at a technical college, a slightly more advanced version of a program she completed in India. Although she

essentially followed her husband, Namita indicated a strong desire to live in Winnipeg permanently, despite her husband's ambivalence, for reasons that she did not explain other than saying that she disliked her job in India.

Namita was still becoming comfortable communicating in English, and most of the friends that she and her husband shared are Indian. She said that she would follow her husband if he decided to leave.

Robel

Robel is a twenty-eight year old man from Eritrea who immigrated three years ago. He travelled from Eritrea to India where he went to technical college, and then moved to Canada. Robel was sponsored by a family member. He could not go back to Eritrea at the time of the interview because he had left illegally and there is ongoing political conflict there. Robel expressed a desire to return for a visit if the government shifted, but seemed intent on making Canada his home.

Robel spoke basic English and was upgrading his degree at university. His plans were constrained financially and by his inability to return home at all. He seemed to miss home but was reluctant to go into details about it. In Winnipeg he was a member of a large and predominantly male co-ethnic group.

Praveen

Praveen is a thirty-seven year old man from India, who immigrated four years prior to the interview. He moved to Winnipeg with his wife and daughter to pursue a PhD, but seemed interested in making Canada his home, although perhaps not Winnipeg.

He is involved with his co-ethnic group in several ways, which includes playing in an Indian band, belonging to a religious group and enrolling his daughter in a Gujarati language school, which is Praveen's provincial language.

Praveen's professional field is connected to social issues pertaining to India, and he was maintaining professional connections at the time of the interview, with intentions to do further research in the area after graduating.

These participant summaries, and the above discussion of representation, were designed to provide transparency for the way that I chose to frame and embed the participants' narratives in the following chapters. Because representation can be a contentious issue when creating ethnography, as it is difficult to speak for others and interpret their words, I have attempted to offer explanations for the method used in this work.

Chapter 4

The Beginning of Settlement

The settlement narrative begins with a reason, a desire and a plan to move. There are countless reasons why people immigrate, and these motivations are very important to the way their settlement experiences unfold. Once arrived, immigrants must begin building the foundation for living in their new home. This involves filling basic needs such as housing and economic stability as well as making social connections and tapping into networks for aid and support. The participants' primary needs, the initial connections they had with others and what brought them to Winnipeg in the first place were voiced often in this beginning part of their narratives.

Migration Motivations

Every story of settlement began with a reason for immigration. At the beginning of every narrative, the participants described how they were motivated or influenced by some force, internal or external, to migrate to Winnipeg. These motivations determined the circumstances of the migration process: a forced immigration was described as unwanted, uncertain or hasty, while a chosen migration was more likely to be described as fulfilling a dream. Some participants even described their immigration as not planned, but rather the result of leisurely travel or an educational visit. Some of these tellings therefore began as escape stories, while others started out as stories of adventure.

Some of the participants cited motivations connected to personal gain, while others were migrating for other people, such as spouses or children. Still others were motivated by a feeling of obligation to their country, and tied their immigration to acquiring skills and knowledge that they could send or take back home. A few of the participants immigrated because they felt as though they were in danger in their homelands. Finally some of the participants migrated out of a desire for adventure and change. Every person whom I interviewed suggested one dominant reason for immigrating, but added other reasons that supported, and occasionally contradicted, that key reason.

Robel felt unsafe to the point that he fled from Eritrea, his country of origin. Robel's telling of his settlement narrative begins with his description of fleeing illegally to India:

> Robel: I was studying in India for three years, because some problem is going on in my country also. And I don't want to stay in my country, because there is a war going on between Ethiopia, and I want to save my life. I ran to India. And my cousin is here in Canada, and he sponsored for me. So I came to Canada, to Winnipeg.
>
> Amelia: Did you grow up during the conflict?
>
> Robel: Still, this conflict actually began in 1997. Before [Eritrea] was colonised [...] by Ethiopia, for thirty years. And in 1991 we were independent from Ethiopia, and after six years the war started again, conflict started with the border, the conflict just grew, and it's still going on. But actually now the UN community came between the border, but still it's not safe.

Robel described his whole life as powerfully affected by the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, which began before Robel was born and was ongoing at the time of the interview. Robel was among the many Eritreans and Ethiopians who have fled both of

these countries in the last ten years. Robel stated that he migrated to protect his own life, a motive that he first acted on by illegally fleeing to India. Very early on in the narrative Robel stopped referring to himself, and instead discussed his immigration in the context of Eritrea's problems rather referring to his own personal needs and wants. The fact that Robel tended to discuss Eritrea's political problems in general rather than his own experiences may also indicate that his immigration was stressful and possibly traumatic.

Robel evidently had reason to leave Eritrea. But he gave different reasons for why he chose to leave India and come to Canada. Robel cited his key reason for coming to Canada as financial.

> Amelia: Was it very dangerous?
>
> Robel: Yeah, it's dangerous, yeah sure, it's dangerous, you have to pay a lot of money to go out from your country, and it's hard also in India because you have to have a lot of money, and they will not allow you to live without education. You have to study, otherwise you are not allowed.
>
> Amelia: What did you think about Canada before [immigrating]?
>
> Robel: Oh, heaven! It's easy to get money. But [getting money is really] too difficult, it's so hard.

After narrating the dangerous task of illegally leaving Eritrea, Robel described being relatively comfortable in India with the exception of his financial situation. Were it not for his three years in India, Robel may have said that safety was also his reason for coming to Canada. During this interlude, Robel seemed to have transformed his motives from safety to financial opportunity, and in so doing, distanced himself from his fears, as he did in the above narrative excerpt. Thus, there were really two decisions that took place for Robel: the decision to leave home, and the decision to come to Canada.

Jorge, a forty-five year old doctor who left Peru legally with his wife and children, also cited danger in his country of origin as his key reason for leaving home. Jorge described the beginning of his story as marked by his decision to take his family out of Peru because of the danger he experienced in his activist work:

> Jorge: You know in my country it's very, very frustrating, the activist, economic, political situation, there is no safety. Especially when I went to work in my country, several times I suffered in dangerous situations. It's terrible to live in that. It is one thing—that is my safety.

In the same breath, Jorge described the options he felt he and his family would gain from migrating to Canada:

> Jorge: I'd like to give a good plan for my future for my kids, for my family. It's not easy. …Lifestyle, good environment, highest education, a lot of things for myself. Because my achievement, my goal was to learn English, to dominate this language. This is my professional language. I think this is one "plus" for my knowledge. If I learn to speak English that's better for me, for my profession.

Evidently, Jorge was motivated by fear and danger to leave his country, but chose Canada in particular because of the opportunities he saw for himself. Throughout his narrative, Jorge spoke of the options Canada offered in terms of doing "things for himself." However, these things also benefited his family, suggesting that Jorge had in mind others who were not benefiting from this move. In addition to improving his family's life, Jorge described being motivated to move in order to be able to provide aid and services to the impoverished regions in his country of origin. While it seems counterintuitive to leave a community that one wants to help, Jorge drew a connection between leaving Peru to improve his credentials and knowledge and helping the rural communities in Peru where he used to work:

> Jorge: If I go [to Peru] I would like to bring more medicine, different kinds of medicine. And treatment or something like that....Of course I want to work there for free. If I get my Canadian citizenship I want to work in [Canada]. For my vacation, maybe for one month I just spend my time teaching, check people, different kinds of procedures. For free.

In this excerpt, Jorge seemed to be balancing the fact that he left Peru with the possible future of going back to offer his newly gained knowledge and his help. Although taking care of his family may not ordinarily be defined as selfish, to Jorge this was a decision contrary to his desire to help his community. It may not be the case that Jorge left Peru with the goal of helping his home community, but nevertheless in this telling Jorge now made this an important part of the plan. In the above passage in particular, Jorge asserted that he would work in Peru "for free."

Jorge represented himself throughout his story as a provider, to his family and to his community. He made little mention of any help he may have received during his immigration, or of collaborators in the helping he planned to do, casting himself as the sole character in his narrative.

Jorge's motives for migrating as he described them had some similarities to those of Praveen, who cited family reunification as his primary motive for immigration, but described being torn about making the decision to leave his homeland:

> Praveen: So main reason of coming to Winnipeg is my wife's family has been there, and they live in Vancouver, for thirteen years or so. And I was accepted by the [Winnipeg University]. I met my advisor at a couple of conferences so he sort of encouraged me to apply here and I applied and I got accepted. We were in a dilemma because I had a good job there [in Gujarat] and I was working full-time on an international project.

Above, Praveen described multiple motives. He noted that he and his wife moved to reunite with his wife's family, a very common immigration motive. However, Praveen

also described professional opportunities he would have in Canada and ones that he had left behind. But Praveen's decision-making process was even more complicated than this dilemma. In addition to this conflict, Praveen described the cultural heritage to which he belonged as affecting his decision:

> Praveen: So I came in February 2002, and I came with my wife and daughter. We belong to the Gujarat community. As you may be aware we have a caste system [....] And we belong to upper caste [....] so we were supposed to be teachers and preachers [....] I come from a city called Ahmedabad. This is the state of Gujarat. It's the west coast of India next to Pakistan. It's a very sensitive area, and I come from that state. Gujarat has been known for its entrepreneurial spirit. You can find Gujaratis all over the world, pursuing degrees.

Here Praveen seemed to be addressing the fact that he was reluctant to leave his work in India to come to Canada to study. He suggested that his province is known for entrepreneurship, and described his heritage as part of a group that are teachers and preachers, who now travel all over the world for higher learning. In this description of his cultural affiliation, Praveen provides an explanation for another of his immigration motives. Like, Jorge, Praveen had been doing work connected to the social issues surrounding the members of the poorer communities in his homeland. Although he had been working in that area at home, Praveen described being able to do work in this area in Winnipeg. Both Praveen and Jorge described having gained connections and opportunities that they felt would benefit the work they were doing in their home communities.

One point of interest in Praveen's description is that although he described his province with a great deal of love, he later discussed in great detail his dislike for the social stratification of the caste system. Praveen made reference to his province being a

sensitive area with regard to this stratification and perhaps in terms of political unrest and its closeness to Pakistan. While he did not directly cite this as one of his motives for migrating, its presence in the discussion suggests that Praveen considered it to be an element of the decision-making process. While Jorge migrated because his own life was in danger, it appears that one of the factors that influenced Praveen's move was the social unrest between India and Pakistan and the social problems that were endemic in the caste system, despite the fact that he was relatively immune to these given his caste membership.

Sharada, a thirty-one year old woman from Guyana, said that her motivations to immigrate were partly the result of hearing other people, such as her parents, who had immigrated nine years earlier talk about Canada. In part, Sharada migrated to reunite with them, but she was also motivated by the financial opportunities that she connected to living in Canada. She felt that Guyana held few opportunities for her, and wanted a better life for herself and her daughter:

> Amelia: So what was the motivation for leaving in the first place?
>
> Sharada: Because in my country, we don't have option, we don't have this freedom to get better, the richer get richer, the poorer get poorer, and whose middle, they stay just like that, either they go down, but they cannot come up. Either they stay the same level or they go down. There is no chances for kids, like you know, opportunities for you, you finish school, there's no job for you.

The beginning of Sharada's story is marked by a sense of starting over, or a new beginning in which she can be a new person and do things that were simply impossible in Guyana. Sharada noted that in retrospect she felt that she should have immigrated a long time ago, and although she may have been originally motivated to immigrate because of

the lack of opportunities in Guyana, she was certainly determined to stay and succeed now that she had discovered what Canada has to offer her:

> Sharada: That's why I say it's good, Canada is good. But if you don't have a Canadian paper when you came here to get a good job, it screw you up, and you have to struggle, you have to fight your way [....] And I want to go back to school. And I want to do nursing, I want to do that, because you make a lot of money, and I want to do that, I want to make money now. I didn't come here to sit down. I came here to make money now. I waste lots of time in Guyana, and I did not know that until I reach here, that I was wasting time. Honestly, if you didn't come out from Guyana, then you don't know. Because you don't see it. You feel that's your normal life, relax, waste your time. But when you come here and see how people and see how you have a chance to move on, then you know: I was wasting time [....] I'm sorry I didn't come ten years ago.

Sharada describes her motivations somewhat retroactively, saying that she, like people still in her country, did not understand that she was wasting time until she immigrated. While she came because of what she had heard about Canada from her parents and others, she could not compare Canada with Guyana until after having experienced both. In this telling of her motivations to migrate, Sharada has filled out her reasons with the information she had acquired during her first year here, information she herself says she could not have known while still in Guyana.

The above excerpts describe diverse immigration motives. Some of the participants were motivated by avoidance of danger and poverty, while others migrated out of a desire to improve their living situations for their families, or to reunite with family-members. A few participants reported being motivated to help their home communities with the opportunities immigration to Canada had provided them. But for another set of participants, immigration was more about travel for the sake of the experience than a stoic decision to relocate for safety, family or professional reasons. For

many of these excitement-driven immigrants, future plans were flexible, but did not originally include permanent resettlement. Isabel, an educated woman from Brazil, migrated here with the intention of staying only six months for a work exchange program:

> Isabel: Um, I never thought of Canada. I always thought that I wanted to experience an opportunity to work abroad, not only to work but to live abroad, I thought I would grow a lot with that….And then I guess also made me want to start my life for myself, like deciding what I wanted. But not that my life wasn't good there, it's just that I wanted to have a fresh start again. And that's probably what made me come. And I thought that if I got married and things if I would wait then I would settle, you know get married and have children and then I wouldn't have the chance to adventure. So I thought it was the time. So it was a little bit of everything, was a little bit of professional desire, but the motivation was also personal, and I don't know, something told me that's the time, if I don't do now, I won't have the chance.

Isabel conceptualised her decision to work in Canada as personal, but as beyond her own conscious choice, clear in her statement that some mystified source told her it was time. Whether or not she made this decision all by herself, she described it as something that was always going to happen, motivated by an unknown force. Isabel referred to her travel as only a matter of time, but also something she felt she had to do before other things in life, like marriage and children, happened to her. That the country she visited and then settled in was Canada seemed unimportant to the equation, and Isabel's focus was strongly on the desire to experience something different, no matter where that experience was going to happen.

Although Isabel had planned on returning to Brazil after six months, when the time came to go home, her employer offered her a one year extension, which she accepted. Like her initial decision to travel to Canada, her decision to stay was the result of listening to some internal message, but it was also influenced by the fact that she had

begun a relationship with a Canadian man, another thing in life that had happened to her, but that she did not describe herself as actively seeking out.

Aaron, a thirty-one year old man from Costa Rica, had a similar experience to that of Isabel when a couple of brief trips to Canada with his new Canadian girlfriend turned into permanent settlement in Winnipeg:

> Aaron: I met Karen before when she was working on my organic farm in Costa Rica. I was the volunteer coordinator there, so we have a volunteer system, which is like volunteers from other countries came and work in the organic farm and in the meantime they study Spanish, so Karen went there and we met there, and we started a relationship in Costa Rica, and then I quit the farm and we travelled a little in Central America, for four weeks I guess, and after we come back and Karen went back [to Canada]. And then she came back again to Costa Rica, and she was working here, and then when she come back, we come back together to Canada, and I was thinking to come back [to Canada], because I was working on the farm. I was thinking I would come and visit and then go back home. And then I came to learn about Canadian culture, and learn more English. I studied English in Costa Rica but not much. So that actually was my original idea, that I would learn more English and learn more about Canadian life, and then I changed my mind, and I guess I stayed and applied for my visa again, so I stayed more time, and then I applied three times for an extension on my student visa, because it's only six months. The second time I renewed my visa was when we decided to get married, and start the process of immigration.

From the beginning, Aaron shared his narrative with Karen, his new Canadian partner, and the culmination of the story occurs when they together decided to get married and begin his immigration process. Karen was as active in the course of events as Aaron, which expresses his view of the motivations as shared. Because Aaron never chose Canada as a destination, but simply travelled to the country his partner was from, his motives for leaving were the same for coming to Canada. Aaron had little reason to leave were it not for his partner. This was the opposite for Isabel, who only came to Canada because it was a chance to get away from home.

For Aaron and Isabel, the beginnings of their stories were retrospective. The events surrounding their initial moves to Canada, for them, were not a beginning but a suspension of their lives in their countries of origin. Only after they decided to stay permanently could they mark their travel as the beginning of their narratives. But for them it was this event, and not a later decision to stay, that they described at the beginning of their stories. This suggests that the physical move has a greater significance in the storytelling than the mental decision-making process.

Evidently, motivations for migrating are complex. While all of the participants cited one key reason for immigrating, many of them also named other reasons for migrating that broadened, supported or complemented their key motivation. While some of these other reasons were part of why they originally came, some of the participants seemed to have developed secondary motivations in hindsight, once arrived in Winnipeg. While two of the participants left their homelands out of self-preservation, both highlighted gaining financial and educational opportunities in Canada, though they might not have considered these the reasons for leaving prior to arrival. In another case, a participant came for temporary work, but was later motivated to stay because of a romantic relationship. Yet another of the participants immigrated to join her family, but cited an important reason for staying as the opportunities to which she now had access.

Finding Supports and Helping Others

The reliance on and use of formal and informal supports were important for the beginning for many of the participants, several of whom described their settlement as starting from scratch. When immigrants first arrive, they generally need to have their immediate needs met, such as housing, information and sometimes financial aid. Whether

or not the participants used formal or informal supports or services depended on circumstances such as the premeditation of the move, fluency in English and previous experience in North America.

The settlement process was described as easier by some than it was by others, several of whom nevertheless demonstrated their understanding of the difficulties of others by becoming supports for other immigrants. Isabel, who migrated because of a temporary job offer, arrived with a furnished home and financial security waiting for her. She was nevertheless very sensitive to other, less secure and comfortable experiences of settlement:

> Amelia: So when you first arrived, you had a job waiting for you already which made it easier?
>
> Isabel: Much easier.
>
> Amelia: Where did you live and how did you find a place?
>
> Isabel: The different things from the experiences of an immigrant, is there is a program—international student organization which I came through them—they were at the airport waiting for me. They had offered options to me either living with a family or living on my own and they would look for a place for me to live. They wouldn't pay for it but they would look for it. So I wouldn't have to go through this process of looking for a place so when I came I had a place to stay. And as well furniture. I didn't really have, but the program, like, helps you to or either they ask for donations, or people at work, once they get to know you and they know you are moving into a new place and so they help you out. So I had a lot of help in that sense. I didn't really need to struggle with that.

At the beginning of this statement, Isabel noted that her settlement included "different things from the experiences of an immigrant." This suggests that she viewed her story as deviating from a more traditional settlement experience, in which an immigrant is reliant on others, whether it be family or social services for immigrants. However, Isabel was nevertheless quite reliant on the help of others. Despite the

conveniences and comforts which were provided for Isabel, she nevertheless characterised her experience as being alone and starting from scratch:

> Isabel: The only thing that I find, is the challenges that I had once I arrived. Even though having a job which takes the pressure away from not being paid, or not having to know what to do. I didn't have that pressure, but I had the pressure of starting from scratch. Because, it is awkward, because I spoke the language and had a job, okay. But coming to work and not knowing who anyone was, and it's really surreal, when you're coming to work and like: oh my God, I'm really here.

While moving to a new country where you do not know anyone is no doubt scary and daunting, because Isabel was aware of other even scarier versions of her experience she seemed to have the need to compare and possibly lessen her own experiences against those of an immigrant with even less security. She connected her experience in immigration to her decision to teach ESL to other immigrants, whom she characterised as worse off than herself. Sophie, a twenty-six year old woman from Colombia, also began volunteering for an immigrant organization, after being confronted with the difficulties others experienced:

> Sophie: Well, I know that now they have a lot of new programs, but before let's say two years ago when I first started here, I remember a time that we went to welcome place with Carlo, we had to go there, some paper had to be signed[...]and we met a Colombian family that just arrived. And they were a family with two kids, no English, not a word. And they were just there standing and waiting for someone to help them. So a person from the welcome place told Carlo, "Can you help this family to go upstairs to their apartment and show them everything, how it works, because we can't at this time". So we said "Sure!" So we went with them and we showed them everything in the apartment and we went out and showed them the closest uh, I think it was a Giant Tiger, the closest store, I don't know or an Extra Foods. We went with them, they were hungry, so we went with them and bought food.

This narrative describes Sophie and her husband as accidental helpers to a Colombian family. She described this event as the root of her awareness of the needs of her co-ethnic group:

> Sophie: Because it's not just helping people who is already here and needs information in Spanish sometimes because they don't really speak the language so they don't know where to find things. So it's good to get connected with people that already went through that, and that had already experience specific things. I don't know, getting the driver's license, things that helps others to get settled here. But we don't have that formally, so we don't have an association where Colombians can go to ask what to do here or how to do this. But, informally we pass the voice around, so we know someone who came here who needs help so we help them.

In her description of the help that she later provided in her community, she refers to it as a joint effort, using "we" rather than "I," suggesting that she views herself as part of a group. Sophie highlights the connection between formal and informal supports in her narrative of helping a family that was seeking formal support.

While Sophie and Isabel helped people whom they did not know, helping family members and friends was also common among the participants. Uberto described how he did not need much help because he had the support of the university environment. He compared his experience to that of his cousin, who needed more help:

> Uberto: If you just arrived to Winnipeg or to Canada and you don't have anything, it's more difficult. We knew what we were expecting, we had an apartment, we had everything set up, we knew what to do, we know where to buy things, we know where to go, we know how to handle everything. University is a good place to adjust yourself to the culture. My cousin came here. I sponsored him, he came to my house. Right now he lives in an apartment but he came first to our house. We explained him everything. He had us, but people coming without family support at all, it's a big difference. Where you start is critical. If you start low, it's going to be really difficult to have a good standard of living over the long term. You have to climb a lot.

What is interesting is that Uberto described his cousin as being without resources, and needing Uberto's aid. Yet, he did not describe himself as lacking resources and needing the aid of the international student's centre at the university, from which he and his partner, Linda, had received aid at the beginning of his settlement in Winnipeg. It is possible that his cousin thought of himself as having the resources he needed in the form of the family support he got from Uberto. Nevertheless, Uberto perceived his cousin's situation as starting "low," while he conceptualised himself as being in a collective network with his fellow international students, in which he had everything he needed. Uberto did not mention the aid and information that he received from the university, nor the fact that Linda had come three months before him and found them an apartment. Instead, he focussed solely on the community of students of which he was a part when considering his own resources and needs. It appears that Uberto minimised his own need and instead offered an example that by comparison was a needier individual. Uberto's assessment of his own experience in the context of his cousin's situation suggests that being better off than others may be a psychological support in and of itself.

Informal connections come about in a variety of ways. In some instances, people are a part of social networks in the cities to which they are moving before they even decide to migrate, while in other cases, new immigrants have to find connections once they begin the immigration process. Tushar did not actually know anyone in Winnipeg but made a connection by recognizing a member of his co-ethnic group through school:

> Amelia: So when you first arrived did you have any friends or acquaintances who lived in Winnipeg already?
>
> Tushar: I had one friend, who was in Winnipeg, and I didn't know him from India, but I could tell from the first and last name that he was from the same part of India as I was. So basically we were doing the same

course, he is in [my professional field] also, an online course. So chatting, submitting, so I could see his name. So I came in contact with him and when I came here the first time I came from Toronto to see if I liked the campus and I really liked the course, and the research labs and everything. So I just contacted him and said I'm coming over here. And he happens to work [at my workplace], that's where my school is, and we met there and then he gave me a short tour of the town.

Amelia: Did you get any help in terms of finding an apartment?

Tushar: He found [the apartment], so basically when I came here, we had everything settled.

Tushar became acquainted with this fellow-expatriate by contacting a man whom he did not know but whose name he recognised as from his own co-ethnic group. While he was reliant on this new friend for help, Tushar nevertheless cast himself as the main character in this story. By his description, he was not helped so much as he acquired help for himself by making a friend. While Tushar was receiving support from this friend, he described himself as active in the support-getting process. Additionally, it is clear from this passage that he sought out this particular person for no other reason than because they shared an ethnicity. While there were numerous people from his class whom Tushar could have contacted, he chose the person from his co-ethnic group. This poses questions about whether Tushar would have settled for making friends with someone not from his co-ethnic group, or whether he would have sought out someone from elsewhere. That this stranger would help Tushar and that he would expect help suggests that co-ethnic bonds are expected to be strong and reliable.

Linda's primary support was her partner, Uberto. However, she was by herself for three months before he joined her, during which time she survived alone:

Amelia: Do you think that having a partner makes a big difference?

> Linda: Oh total. It's hard but also I realised when I was alone that you have your own tools to do things. You, maybe you're open to people or...I made more friends when I was alone, and you have your own resources, and when you are with a couple you have a better life because you are together.

Although Linda described herself as having her own resources, she stated that life is better when one is part of a couple, either in the context of settlement, but perhaps in life in general. This suggests that a successful life in a new country resulted from more than simply resources, but also personal relationships. When Mundia migrated, she was counting on her brother to help her. She expected to be taken care of and had difficulty in finding her own resources when that support failed:

> Amelia: When you first arrived did you live with your brother?
>
> Mundia: It's funny that you say that. My brother actually picked me up. What actually happened is I remember coming in and I got into Toronto and my parents hadn't paid for my ticket from Toronto to Winnipeg, so it more like they had given me the money and figure it out. We travelled quite a bit with my family, so I was sort of okay, but I was like okay I've got some money here and let me try and save it and do something else with it. So I actually took the bus all the way down to Winnipeg. I didn't know how long it was, like a few hours is what I thought, every time I'd call my brother and say: I'm here. He would say: you've got a long way to go. I'm here: you've got a long way to go. So I finally get in and my brother's like: oh, you're not going to stay with me, you're going to stay with some family friends, one of my mother's family friends. And I'm thinking: okay, my brother is ditching me and sending me off to someone else's house!

The culmination of Mundia's narrative is that her brother, from whom she was expecting help, "ditched" her, no less after a long, albeit self-imposed, unnecessary journey. In Mundia's description of her journey, she conceptualises herself initially as a competent young woman taking advantage of an opportunity to save money. But as the trip continued, Mundia described herself as increasingly helpless, having made a decision

to take the bus with inadequate information, and now having her brother tell her over and over that home is a long way away, only to have home denied her yet again upon her arrival. In her telling of this story, Mundia withheld the key information in the interview, as her brother had from her, until the very end of the story. Mundia went on to describe a series of failures to find appropriate housing for herself, as well as a deficit in basic information about how to accomplish basic tasks like taking the city bus:

> Mundia: But I remember what was hard too was when I was living with the other family was opening the bank account, and my brother wouldn't even take me to do that so I had to figure things out for myself. I remember my dad telling me okay, my bank is here, so I went and it was pretty close to where I was living at the time, so I sort of took a walk sort of lost: okay where do I go. And another thing I remember was having to take the bus. I remember back home the bus is just a minivan. And you just pay cash and you don't pull for a stop you just have to yell when you want to get off. And I remember getting on the bus and my mom's friend had given me tickets. And so I'm following all these people and I remember seeing everyone flashing something right? So I figured whatever I have, I flash. But I had tickets and at the time I didn't know there was such a thing as a bus pass. So I get on and I flash my ticket and I go. So I was lost because it was my first day of school and my brother hadn't even taken the time to say: this is your school, just in case, shown me around. So I didn't even know. I finally walked and said to the bus driver: oh am I there? And he said no, he's explaining to me what bus stop I need to get off. And in front of everyone he says: next time make sure you pay your fare. And I'm like: here. He said yes but you are supposed to put it in here. I just zoomed out! Even my mum's friend hadn't you know little things that she hadn't even taken the time to say: this is a ticket and you rip it up and put it in. So that was one of the things that I've never gotten over.

Above, Mundia described herself as helpless and embarrassed by her own ignorance. While another immigrant might consider the learning curve to be simply part of the settlement process, Mundia appeared to blame every experience of helplessness and ignorance on the failure of other people, namely her brother, to provide her with information and help.

The above narratives are an indicator of how important supports are to early settlement, particularly for lone immigrants. The participants had several different levels of independence and need, but what stood out was the amount of power and resources that they characterised themselves as having, and what this meant to their expectations of outside help. What is particularly interesting is the lack of importance that many people cast on formal aid, such as governmental and non-governmental immigrant services. Much more attention was devoted to discussing how informal aid was acquired and used or needed but absent. Only Isabel described having significant help from a formal aid agency, though it is possible that some may have glossed over the effect it had on their early settlement.

Making Social Connections and Friendships

In addition to the initial supports of family members, spouses or partners and formal organizations, were the supports that co-ethnic groups and social circles provided. These sometimes took effort, time, and strategies to develop. As described in the previous section, Tushar sought out a member of his co-ethnic group to help him out even though he did not know him. Tushar continued to build friendships with his co-ethnic group after settling in Winnipeg:

> Amelia: And how did you make friends?
>
> Tushar: Well, first of all, after we came here, we just knew that person, and he has a very big family here, and we came into contact with that family, and we started going to picnics that are held for our community and we started going to other cultural festivals that are celebrated here. That's how we came into contact with friends. And in this process we came in contact with Mr. Praveen too. So we all became friends and we also have certain talks that are religious forum, and everything. So we started going to that and we made lots of friends there too.

In this excerpt, Tushar explains how he came to make all of his friends. His use of "we" rather than "I" indicates that he was referring to himself and his wife, suggesting that the friend-making process was a joint effort. Tushar's narrative also indicates that the friend-making process was something to be achieved in his own co-ethnic community, rather than in other parts of his life, such as school. In contrast to Tushar, Isabel found her friends in many areas of her life:

> Amelia: How did you make friends when you first arrived?
>
> Isabel: Mostly through work, and the international organization I came [with]. I think that's how I started because since they were welcoming me they were taking me to parties [....] so that's how I started my network.
>
> Amelia: Where did they come from?
>
> Isabel: Everywhere in the world, Vietnam, Colombia, Venezuela [...] everywhere, Russia, Ukraine, especially because this organization brought people from other countries to experience the same thing that I did. So I had experience with four different trainees, pretty much coming here right after me or being here already. One from Colombia came, stayed, married someone, I mean first got a landed immigrant, then—same story as mine—applied for landed immigrant, stayed on her own, and then met someone and then got married and stayed. One from Ukraine, actually she is my current roommate, she's also from Ukraine and she stayed.

Isabel described her friends as coming from diverse parts of the world, though she met them mostly through her work. She did not seem concerned with meeting people from her country of origin, possibly because she initially did not plan to stay in Canada for more than six months. Isabel's social life continued to be dominated by friends from all over the world as she prolonged her stay in Winnipeg, and she was engaged to a Canadian man at the time of the interview. She mentioned that her fiancé said that she did not have too many friends so they could have a small wedding, but she joked that he would be sorely mistaken because she had so many friends in Winnipeg.

Isabel reported that what she had in common with her friends was that they went through the same experiences as she had; they had all migrated through the same program and many ended up staying and marrying Canadians. Linda and Uberto described the same bond between the friends that they made in the context of university:

> Linda: Our friends were from university.
>
> Uberto: The university is a big social—everything is around the university.
>
> Linda: There's so many international students that it's so easy to connect, right? Because you are in the same situation.
>
> Uberto: You take the bus. Like, all international students have to take the bus to go to the movies. Cinema City was where they would be.
>
> Linda: It's the same lifestyle. You are alone, no family, make friends!
>
> Uberto: No money! [laughs]

Uberto and Linda described making friends with others who were out of their element, regardless of the fact that they were from vastly different parts of the world. That this is a common practice suggests that the statuses of immigrant, migrant worker, or international student each elicit affiliations of their own. Isabel, in addition to Linda and Uberto all described this shared experience as fostering connections and social networks that offer the understanding and common experience that other participants described sharing with their co-ethnic groups.

Social connections served a variety of purposes among the participants. Mundia viewed friendliness to be a strategy for building connections with any social group, as well as a way to access information:

> Amelia: Do you think that social flexibility is extra important when you're trying to adapt to a new country?

> Mundia: For sure. If you are sitting back in your apartment and you're not socializing how are you going to move how are you going to know anything? I have a study group for one of my classes, so we got together and we hang out a lot now. Last week we went out and watched one of them in a play. But through sitting and talking with these girls I met another girl, whose Mom was back home [in Zambia]. So I'm like: Oh great! I got the Mom's number and called her up and, fine, now I have stuff coming from home for me. Little things like that count, and if I wasn't an outgoing person I wouldn't have found this girl. I now have a new friend whose Mom goes every year to Zambia who I can send stuff with.

While Tushar was motivated to make friends with his co-ethnic group just for the pleasure of doing so, Mundia described her behaviour as multi-purposed. Evidently she wanted to make friends too, but she was also interested in making connections to tap into opportunities such as this one to send things home to her family. She attributed her friend-making abilities to being outgoing rather than to circumstance, and having things sent home to her family was, according to her, the result of her own friendliness, rather than the generosity of others.

Mundia also described being comfortable with people who are different from her, suggesting that other immigrants may not find it as easy to make friends in a foreign country:

> Amelia: Do you hang out with a lot of people from Zambia in Winnipeg?
>
> Mundia: I used to, but not anymore. Even when I first arrived I hung out with people mostly from the Collegiate. Which was funny. I guess because even when I was home in boarding school, I had a lot of white friends. So for me the adjustment wasn't a big deal. But I find that other friends that come have few if any white friends because I guess they can't make that adjustment is what it is.

While she attributed the ease with which she made friends to her own abilities, Mundia indicated that the experience of being at boarding school was what prepared her

for making friends with "white" people. This was also her main reason for not having very many Zambian friends, perhaps because her friend-making abilities allowed her to make friends among multiple groups. Min-Soo reported not wanting to make friends with people from her co-ethnic group, mainly because of a fear of negative gossip or competition:

> Min-Soo: I don't like to chat with another Korean, because many Koreans here, they have to open their business here, like us. When we talk to somebody, it may transmit differently to another person. So, I can...
>
> Amelia: You're scared of competition? Other people who are doing what you're doing?
>
> Min-Soo: Yeah, a little bit of competition about business, but I don't like to chat. But not my best friend. When I was in Korea I talked to my best friend, but I usually don't like to chat. Here, I want to avoid talking to Koreans, because the Korean community is very small. Sometimes I think there are lots of different people in Korean community. So when I talk to Korean people, they can transmit to totally different...you know?
>
> Amelia: Like gossip?
>
> Min-Soo: Yes, like gossip. So I don't like that. So I don't like to chat about another person gossip. I really don't like that.

In much of the theory that focuses on co-ethnic groups, they are upheld as key informal support networks for new immigrants, an assumption that Min-Soo's attitude seemed to contradict. Min-Soo's aversion to Koreans may also be an indication of how much she wanted to make Canadian friends, either because she wanted to be immersed in speaking English or in Canadian culture. Throughout her narrative, Min-Soo discussed how much she loved Winnipeg and did not want to go back to Korea, and avoiding other Koreans may have been an expression of these feelings. This was not, however, something she overtly stated, and there are multiple other possible reasons why she

described being resistant to other Koreans, including fears about her business not succeeding, as well as competition between herself and other Korean business owners.

Mundia also talked about competition between members of her co-ethnic group, and then went on to discuss her general apprehension over the way her co-ethnic group sometimes behaved:

> Mundia: You have immigrants trying to make it sound so complicated, because either they think you are already wealthy being an international student and they don't want you to have a better life. And I honestly believe that. There are people out there who are immigrants who may have not had an easy life back home, have come here, they may not have such a great life, but they think most of us international students have so much money because we are here, so they are like: why should we tell them? Oh, it's really hard! It's really hard. Just because they don't want you to see. Oh if she already has enough money why should we make her progress even further.
>
> Amelia: Right, so there's competition.
>
> Mundia: Oh! Lots of competition. Lots. It's interesting I guess, I don't know how much, I always try not to use the word "white" but [laughs]...I always say, when you go to parties with just white people and I am the only black person, and I look at how they communicate with each other and everything else, and you find people just chit-chatting, you know "what's up?" "well last weekend, blah-blah." Then I look at parties that I've gone to with just black people, "So-and-so is with so-and-so!" "Oh!" People spend so much time gossiping about each other than trying to progress or talk about something that's going to be worthwhile. And that will affect you! I've had things said about me circulating in the African community that will bug me. Especially stuff that's not true. And even if it is true, why is it your business what I'm doing? And I look at white people, and white people just don't give a shit! Like it's your life, do what you got to do.

In this comparison between white and black people, Mundia described her own ethnic group as somewhat preoccupied with things that she found to be petty. However, Mundia was enmeshed in her co-ethnic group, otherwise she would not have had rumours circulating about her. Min-Soo in contrast had prevented this from happening by not

forming ties. While Min-Soo and Mundia both had concerns about their co-ethnic groups, Mundia had made many more connections with other social networks than had Min-Soo, who reported spending most of her time with her family. This difference echoes Mundia's statement that all immigrants do not have the same experience with people different from them, which can prevent them from making non-co-ethnic friends.

Evidently immigrants viewed their different ethnic groups in multiple lights. While some saw a co-ethnic group as a support network essential to initial survival and preferable for social interaction, others were ambivalent about how much interaction they wanted to have with people of their own ethnic background. Still others preferred Canadian social circles simply to take advantage of the opportunity to learn and practice English.

Conclusion

The initial stages of immigration are integral to the way in which people experience their settlement. The first stage of this process happens before the move, and it involves the decision-making behind the plan to migrate. Reasons for immigration are often discussed in the literature in terms of economic motivations. The personal reasons for immigration, and the obvious question of why all people who *could* migrate to escape poverty or other problems do not do so, are all but ignored in immigration research (Fischer *et al.* 1997: 49, 88). In reality, there are countless non-economic reasons for immigration, and even where financial stability is one motive, this is often accompanied by other non-economic reasons (Fischer *et al.* 1997: 88). The individual variation that is under-stated in most immigration literature is evident among the participants' narratives, in which multiple personal motives are described.

The factors that motivate people to move determine the circumstances of the immigration, and it appears that some of the participants had reasons for leaving home that were distinct from their reasons for coming to Canada. Apart from education and employment opportunities, which are arguably also economically oriented, the participants moved to Canada for adventure, for romantic partners, to reunite with family and to escape danger. Isabel wanted adventure, and chose Canada simply because the opportunity arose. Aaron had no plans to migrate, but he fell in love and followed his new partner, who lived in Canada. Mundia described in her narrative that she migrated because she was getting into trouble in Zambia, and needed to grow up. She chose Canada specifically because her brother was here. It is easy to see that there are sometimes two components of the migration decision: the decision to leave home, and the decision of where to go.

While Fischer and others (1997: 50) suggest that there are two categories of immigration, voluntary and involuntary, I suggest that in fact there are multiple components to each immigration decision, some of which involve a substantial degree of choice and some involve little or none. Some of the participants left their homelands involuntarily to escape danger, but they came to Canada because of opportunities such as education and financial security, a decision over which they had some control. Robel felt he had no choice but to leave his country of origin, and described self-preservation as his dominant motive for moving. Jorge seemed to give less weight to this issue, suggesting that while he felt he was in danger in Peru, the opportunities available elsewhere were just as important for his move. Jorge seemed to view his move as a choice, despite the

fact that was fleeing from danger. Evidently, the assignment of cause to the immigration motivations is different from person to person.

The roles in which the participants cast themselves in their narratives indicated their interpretations of what caused the change in their lives, and where the control lay. When their immigrations were not premeditated, the participants tended to describe their power over their situations as limited. However, that many of the participants firmly portrayed themselves as in charge of their fates, either from the beginning, or in response to initial lack of control, reinforces Brettell's suggestion that "migrants are free actors shaping their own destinies, as opposed to pawns merely responding to constraints imposed upon them by their society" (Fielding quoted in Brettell 2003: 27). This does not mean, however, that constraints and obstacles that do impede new immigrants, sometimes intensely so, should be ignored, and these are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

While some people conceptualised others as important actors in their early settlement, other participants treated relationships and people as tools required for settling. In the context of finding help in various forms, I found that many of the participants sought out informal aid from co-ethnic groups and other contacts, rather than from formal aid agencies. Only Isabel described formal aid agencies as playing a significant role in her settlement experience. While the need for formal aid is often tied to socio-economic status, in this case the participant who had relied heavily on formal support was financially stable, but lacked social connections in Winnipeg. As all of the other participants found other means of support through family, friends or co-ethnic groups, an informal social network can evidently replace many non-economic supports that formal networks may offer, and it seemed to be the first choice for those who had the

option among the participants. The exception in this work is Min-Soo, who chose to avoid her co-ethnic group but nevertheless was supported by her husband. It should be noted that the participants in this research were comparatively well-off and educated, and because of this, many of them did not need many services that immigrants with fewer resources would require in order to settle. Nevertheless it was interesting that one of the most well-off participants described having the most support formal agencies.

This initial period of settlement seems to be the starting point for many of the participants' (re)constructions of social networks. Once arrived, many of the participants described realizing for the first time how alone they were. As Papastergiadis states, "displacement has become the paradoxical starting point for understanding the parameters of belonging" (Papastergiadis 2000: 180). This was a reality described by several people with whom I spoke. Mundia described a transformation from confidence to helplessness, which prompted her later to develop many social networks. The same happened for Isabel, who developed her social world in Canada after settling comfortably. Evidently, the degree to which people seek out help from informal networks plays a major role in their subsequent interaction with social groups.

It should be noted that there is possibly a difference in description of aid acquisition by women and men. Both Jorge and Tushar described themselves as being the sole actors in their settlement narratives, despite the fact that they migrated with their wives and both sought out help from others. The significance they gave to this help was minimal; as mentioned earlier, Tushar described the help he received from a co-ethnic contact as something he acquired, rather than something that was done for him; Jorge seldom touched on others helping him in any situation, although his English was minimal

when he arrived, so he likely relied on the help of others at some point in his settlement process. Aaron couched much of the support he needed in his relationship with his wife, which was much more than any of the other male informants had done. He also described seeking information from the government, with little success by his description. In contrast to the narratives of the male participants, many of the women with whom I spoke discussed the help they received from others as significant, and seemed to give credit to other actors where it was due.

Bjerén discusses the misconceptions regarding women in the immigration context, suggesting that in the past they have been wrongly viewed as "passive joiners" (Bjerén 1997: 225). However, the roles women view *themselves* playing in their settlements seems to differ from men's self depictions also. As mentioned earlier, Linde suggests that women and men are also different story-tellers, in that men are very individual-oriented, casting them as the sole actors and describing things in isolation, while women story-tell relationally, with a focus on relationships between people and things (Linde 1993: 80).

This initial process of decision-making, moving and acquiring connections and aid formed the foundations for the subsequent experiences as described by the participants. The settlement narratives displayed a connection between this process and later experiences in each participant's process of settlement and adaptation.

Chapter 5

English, Employment and Other Obstacles

All of the participants reported encountering obstacles as they settled in Winnipeg. While many of the difficulties that people experience have to do with social and cultural adaptation, I discuss those issues in a later chapter. Arguably more immediate than these social and cultural concerns are the barriers and obstacles that people encounter when they first arrive and settle in their adopted countries. The obstacles that many of the participants focussed on from the beginning of their narratives included learning English, getting skill-appropriate employment, and becoming financially stable. The intensity of these obstacles varied, as different people with whom I spoke arrived in Canada with differing levels of education, experience, language-proficiency and money. In other words, the participants had varying amounts and kinds of resources which directly affected how easy it was for them to settle.

Among many of the participants, there was an apparent relationship between these obstacles. A lack of English proficiency can impose limitations on one's employability, which in turn limits one's income. Many of the participants reported feeling a need to learn English quickly, and at the same time many experienced pressure to either become certified in their professional areas, or to acquire gainful employment. These pressures seemed to be connected to the initial motives that precipitated the participants' migrations in the first place. Many of the participants cited financial, professional or educational opportunities as one of their reasons for migrating. While it is necessary to secure

employment and become financially stable in order to fill basic needs, it may also be important to succeed in these areas so that the migration can be viewed as successful. Failing to accomplish these tasks may result in a feeling that migrating was a mistake, which may be why so many of the participants were so determined to do well in these areas.

Learning English as an Alternate Language

Fluency in Canada's dominant official language has a huge impact on the settlement experience. The participants who had to improve their English or learn the basics of the language described it as a frustrating road-block, while those lucky enough to be proficient in English were fully aware of their advantages over their non-fluent counterparts. Being a new learner of English can affect every aspect of an immigrant's life, from daily communication required for completing basic tasks, to gaining access to social circles, to navigating the government bureaucracy that can accompany the settlement process. Additionally, certain levels of English must be obtained to become certified in certain professional fields, and in order to take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), which is required for acceptance at many universities. While the participants described a range of difficulty in learning English, many also highlighted different reasons why they felt learning English was important to them.

Some of the participants had some English proficiency before immigrating (See Table B). Others had partners and social circles which made English a less pressing concern. Linda, along with her husband Uberto, socialised with a Latin American co-ethnic group within which she communicated in Spanish. As a result, Linda seemed to feel very little pressure to improve her English when she first migrated, and described her

experiences in learning English as being relatively unstressful. She did seek to improve her English with classes, but did not persist in her studies because, as she described it, she had gained the confidence she needed:

> Linda: I remember I was feeling not very confident. I took a course in conversation. I wanted to speak fluent, like a Canadian. And I took a course and realised that I was way better than most of the people there. And I'm like, okay, I didn't learn much but it made me feel very confident after that. Like okay, I'm not that bad.

Above, Linda expressed that, to her, English proficiency is important relative to the abilities of other immigrants, rather than being important in its own right. Initially she sought help to improve her language skills, but ultimately she overcame her language obstacle partly by re-evaluating her skills as better than previously thought rather than actually improving them. Although she actively sought a solution to her language barrier, her increased confidence decreased the pressure she felt to learn. Linda's description of her experience suggests that, for successful settlement, confidence in one's skills may be an important factor in itself.

Linda felt that her need for fluency in English was limited to one element of her life in Canada. For her, speaking English well was important not for school or work, but for social communication:

> Linda: I think it's easier to perform in university, communication-wise, than socially. Socially you have to—I mean I met people who speak Spanish, a lot of Latin people, but to be able to communicate with internationals or Canadians, you need good English. You need it.

Above, Linda reported that different areas of her life required different levels of English proficiency. Linda described wanting to speak like a Canadian, which could be

interpreted as an understanding of social nuances in English, a familiarity with idiomatic expressions and slang, or the adoption of a regional accent. Linda assessed university as not requiring this sort of proficiency, while suggesting that social interaction was contingent on this knowledge. Linda did make clear that she primarily interacted with Spanish-speaking friends, which indicates that, for her, having a social life did not hinge on speaking Canadian English, but if she wanted Canadian or international friends this would be a necessity. To this end, Linda and her roommate, also a Spanish speaker, decided to try to practice together:

> Linda: Before Uberto came here, I had a roommate. She was from Mexico. And it's funny because we're speaking Spanish; she likes talking so we would speak all the time. We decided one day, we are going to speak in English. Yes! We have to improve our English. So since that day, we stopped talking [laughs]. We stopped talking, you know we were saying basic stuff you know: hello, how are you, how was your day. You know? And then, you know we used to talk about everything, you know, especially, you know feelings, because we were in the same situation. But then we said: no, no. We cannot do that.

Linda's story about practicing with her roommate, for her, is anecdotal evidence supporting her earlier statement that English is necessary when you have to communicate with Canadians but not serious when you can communicate regularly with Spanish-speakers. The fact that Linda told the story as a joke, suggesting that the day she and her roommate started speaking only English was the day that they stopped talking, suggests that learning English was not a dire obstacle for her, but merely a tool that would be useful were she interested in making Canadian friends. At the beginning of this anecdote, Linda noted that this effort to learn English happened before her partner, Uberto, joined her in Winnipeg. This suggests that she was more interested in learning skills that would allow her to interact socially with Canadians before her partner came than after he arrived

in Canada. It is possible that there is a difference in self-evaluated need for English skills between single immigrants and immigrants who migrate with partners. This may be particularly true among immigrants whose partners are fluent in English.

Vidor taught himself English from a book he bought in Hungary. Vidor spoke several languages and described learning English rapidly, seeing it as no more than a minor obstacle:

> Amelia: Did your partner speak English?
>
> Vidor: She did speak English; she did study English in Hungary before. And she did study a little bit here too, and she did live here for two years before I came, so it was easier for her, because when I came over I didn't speak any English like now. I studied English for maybe two months before I came over. And in order go to advanced schools in Canada, you need TOEFL. Which I did pass TOEFL like two and a half years ago or something.
>
> Amelia: Did you learn any English in Hungary?
>
> Vidor: Nope. Yeah, for two and a half months before that. The summer before I came, yeah.
>
> Amelia: So did you take English lessons at Brandon University?
>
> Vidor: No.
>
> Amelia: Where?
>
> Vidor: Nowhere.
>
> Amelia: Just yourself?
>
> Vidor: Yup.
>
> Amelia: Just by communicating with people?
>
> Vidor: I have books.
>
> Amelia: Books. Literature, or exercise books?
>
> Vidor: I bought books in Hungary, and I found this really excellent book with no Hungarian whatsoever. It explains everything. It's grammar, it's

only in English and it has nice pictures in it and real life situations.

Both Vidor and Linda lived in Winnipeg with partners with advanced English skills who also had previously lived in North America. This may have contributed to the fact that for Vidor and Linda, English was only an obstacle in some situations. Vidor's attitude towards learning English was that it was not a problem, and this is reflected in his description of his learning process, that he required nothing more than a book and a couple of months to become fluent enough for his own standards. Linda demonstrated a bit more self-consciousness than Vidor, particularly in her description of comparing herself to her classmates. While Linda assessed her English skills in relation to those of others, Vidor assessed himself only in terms of his own communication needs.

Having a partner with advanced English seems to be a way to avoid or significantly reduce the need for immediate, intensive English learning. For those who need English in many areas of their lives, learning English rapidly may be more important than it was for Vidor and Linda. Jorge, who needed to learn English well enough to write his physician's certification exam, devoted nearly all of his time outside of work to learning English:

> Amelia: So how would you say you concentrate most of your time right now?
>
> Jorge: Studying.
>
> Amelia: English.
>
> Jorge: Yes.
>
> Amelia: This is the number one priority for you.
>
> Jorge: Yeah, my priority? English and reviewing all my background and my profession in English. Because I think I will take my exam next fall?

> Full-time—I don't have enough time for work full-time, because I need to spend it going to school and for my English and then I go to work. This is my schedule at the moment: study in the morning, every morning, and in the evening time, the night shift, I go to work.

Unlike Linda, who was not concerned about English for her work or school, Jorge's need to learn English was firmly tied to being able to practice medicine. While Linda's need for English was compartmentalised in a relatively minor area of her life, for Jorge, learning English was connected to employment, financial security and having his credentials recognised. Jorge was matter-of-fact about what it will take to prepare himself for English certification: constant study. There was no humour or self-consciousness in Jorge's perception of his skills, only resolve.

Ha-Neul also described work as his motivation for learning English. For him, fluency in English represented access to the North American business community, which was at the root of his immigration motivations:

> Amelia: So what were your biggest problems coming to Canada and in Winnipeg?
>
> Ha-Neul: English is a big problem. Our family situation and another immigrant's situation are different. Other immigrants want jobs, so for many people the most important thing is getting a job. But we want to first study English.
>
> Amelia: So what is ESL class like? Do you take it everyday?
>
> Ha-Neul: Yes. From 8:50 to 3:10.
>
> Amelia: And now that you're in Winnipeg, what if anything do you do for a living?
>
> Ha-Neul: Languages.
>
> Amelia: And how about in the future?
>
> Ha-Neul: First important thing is English. So after five or six years later, I want to half North Korea and Asia, yeah. When I came here, one of my

> dreams was international consultant, fifty percent here and fifty percent in South Asian countries. If I can speak English only fluently, if I can speak English, fluent in writing, fluent in speaking, fluent in listening, I can work in any other countries.

Ha-Neul set himself apart from other immigrants, suggesting that while most immigrants want jobs right away, he was there to learn English well *first*, and then start his business. Elsewhere he alluded to the fact that the major difference between himself and other immigrants was that he was financially secure, and he did not enjoy being treated like an immigrant with no money. As he described it, the results of Ha-Neul's English learning would not be just a job, but the fulfilling of a dream.

Ha-Neul and Jorge both considered English to be the largest obstacle in their settlement process and learning English was the number one priority in both of their lives. However, each of them conceptualised their motivations behind their studies differently. While Jorge described working towards a firm deadline, the October writing of his certification exam to become a doctor, Ha-Neul was more abstract in his professional plans. He knew that he needed English proficiency to work in business, but as an independent professional it was he who assessed his own abilities, not an examination. Jorge's success would be unambiguous and he could assess his progress in English medical vocabulary and procedures, while Ha-Neul could only guess how much English he would need in his future profession. This difference was manifested in their respective attitudes. Jorge did not question his lessons or his studying process, while Ha-Neul constantly wondered if there was a better way to prepare himself, and frequently looked for literature about Canadian business culture and language. He often questioned the abilities of his ESL teachers as well as the curricula they used. Jorge seemed confident that the studying he was doing would prepare him for his profession.

In contrast to the participants discussed above, some people I interviewed were already fluent in English prior to immigration. Some of the participants who were proficient in English nevertheless understood the difficulties that others had in learning English. Although Sophie had become fluent in English when she had lived in the U.S, she saw that other immigrants were struggling with their language skills, and began helping them:

> Sophie: And I started to volunteer for the [immigrant service centre], as an ESL tutor. And it ended up that it was a Colombian family, so I helped them, the mother, and now we're friends because of that. And, uh she had a, she has a handicapped daughter, so I helped her a lot with phone calls and doctor's appointments because she didn't speak English [...] And right now I'm helping a Mexican woman that came here as a refugee as well, and she has three children and she's pregnant with twins. And she was alone and her husband just came last Saturday and she didn't speak any English at all. So I helped her with the doctor's appointments for her to know that everything's fine with her babies, and to know exactly what to do, because she will be ready anytime now to go to the hospital [laughs]. So those sort of things I know that there is a lot of people that need help.

In the above narrative, Sophie highlighted some obstacles that result from limited English skills, particularly talking on the phone and accessing medical information. Here, Sophie described being an interpreter, an information provider, but not a teacher. She helped women to navigate the medical system but did not equip them with English skills *per se*. Isabel taught a new immigrant family English at the same centre as Sophie. In contrast to Sophie, Isabel equipped her student with new skills, and claimed that this experience changed her identity:

> Isabel: I started to volunteer for the international centre, teaching a family from Afghanistan, teaching English, which is a rewarding feeling, because I'm not even a native, like I'm not Canadian. So anyway, this just made me feel even more part of here, that they would allow me to teach someone, to

help someone out. I thought that was awesome.

While Sophie inscribed her helping as more of a favour that she was doing for a fellow immigrant, Isabel seemed to view teaching as an honour that this Canadian organization would allow her. Sophie described her experience in teaching as a peer relationship, in which she was helping someone like her, or who could have *been* her. In contrast, Isabel allied herself with Canadians, feeling like she was accepted as a Canadian in this experience of teaching. Her description of her experience casts her as offering to others something to improve their lives, and may not view her students as peers in the context of their living circumstances and their problems.

In her analysis below, Isabel pointed out the problems that can arise when parents with limited English confront their children's needs in a new cultural and linguistic environment:

> Isabel: And another thing, teaching which I also thought a lot of how interesting it is, that let's say I was teaching this woman. Actually I was teaching her because she could not read letters or memos from the school that are sent to parents so that it's the invitation for kids to go to a field trip or anything. And I just thought to myself, how lucky I was not to have to go through this, first because I know English, and second because I didn't yet have kids. So I didn't have this parental thing. Which I probably would, not to the English extent but to the, you know, uncertainties of not knowing, okay, how the bus system works, the school bus, or I don't know, what should I give to my kids for lunch at school so that they don't feel so different from other kids. It's a lot of the struggles that I think a family goes through. And I sense that and I thought wow, this lady, she is kind of losing a little bit of respect from the children. Because they kind of bug her about, because her English is not as good as theirs. And a lot of time the kids would cry because they would miss events from school, 'cause she wouldn't understand what the things were. So that made me a lot more aware of what it is to be an immigrant and how much I would in the future like to help.

Isabel expressed a great deal of sympathy, although not affinity, for the woman she taught. Isabel evaluated her position in life as superior to that of her student, among other factors, due to the fact that she herself was not a parent. Isabel described the life circumstances of her student as the result of chance and luck rather than the result of action or agency. She indicated that because she was lucky enough to be born middle class and to be childless and equipped with language skills, she was accordingly helping those who were not so lucky.

Evidently, learning and speaking English has a distinct place and varying importance across the participants' lives. This linguistic obstacle can affect many elements of an immigrant's settlement process, but is particularly connected to employability and, consequently, income.

Socio-economic Status

The socio-economic status that an immigrant possesses upon settlement will play a major role in several aspects of their lives. While any person's life is affected by how much money he or she has, the immigration and settlement process brings about circumstances that make financial security even more important. Sharada, a single mother from Guyana, described the financial problems that were involved in her immigration experience:

> Sharada: I have to use my savings that I bring. Remember, I don't bring my land, the only money I can bring, and our money is so low when I change it, I cannot bring a big set of money. I have to bring a small set because our exchange is very low, Canadian money is very high. So, you know, if you have a million dollars you have to bring it to Winnipeg and it's nothing. So when you sell your things over there [in Guyana] you cannot sell it—you lose. So you have to leave it and come here.

In the above narrative excerpt, Sharada conceptualised her money problems as being the result of the Canadian economy rather than a feature of her own economic status. Her response, however, was not to go on blaming this external factor, but to take matters into her own hands. Her solution to her financial insecurity was to buy a house:

> Sharada: I know Canada is good. It's beautiful. It's the way to go. I want to go to school, honestly, I want to go back to school and get a better job, because the one where I'm in, I don't like it. But I'm a single mom. I have my daughter, I just bought a house. I don't want to stay in an apartment, and with the savings that I have, I said: before I spend it out, I'll put it into a house. So I have to pay my mortgage first, then I go to school. Because if I go to work and go school...I have to give some time to my daughter. So that's why I cannot do all three at the same time. So I just live like that. But I think we have a chance to be better in Winnipeg.

In the above narrative, Sharada reported not wanting to get stuck with no money and nothing to show for it, and her response was to buy a house with her money rather than to "spend it out" on an apartment. She saw herself as having two options, go to school and work, or buy a house and go to work. Until she achieved financial stability in the form of home ownership, Sharada was planning to continue doing the job she was doing at the time, and would put off going to school to become a nurse. Sharada indicated that she was not going to fall for the trick that is paying rent, and that Canada is "the way to go," but that one should be careful because there are still problems, such as spending one's savings.

Another element to Sharada's discussion of money strategies was her family. In addition to herself she was considering both her parents and her seven year old daughter, with all of whom she shared her home. While getting an education would likely benefit her financially in the long run, housing her family was an immediate benefit for

everyone. In housing her parents, Sharada was also continuing a Guyanese cultural tradition of caring for elderly parents and generally taking care of family financially.

Ha-Neul, a marketing instructor and business owner, was a successful businessman in Korea. In order to break into the North American business world, he first had to learn English, which he did full-time. At the time of our interview, Ha-Neul was not working at all, and he and his wife and two children were surviving on their savings. Although they were living comfortably on their savings, Ha-Neul was uncomfortable with his family's uncertain financial future:

> Ha-Neul: When somebody's business is going well, somebody's business is even, somebody's business is downsizing. So usually my friend's business is going well, so I am very nervous. If I were living there [in South Korea] I could make lots of money or lots of reputations. So I moved here, so I now always spend money. So sometimes I am very nervous. Last week my wife and I were saying that we have lots of difficult situations. My wife's friends, their business is also going well, so my wife is thinking about Korea. So I'm a little bit nervous.

Ha-Neul indicated his troubles were two-fold. He was spending all of his money, which was a problem. But he suggested that he was also missing out on earning opportunities, from which his peers in the Korean business community were benefiting. Ha-Neul thus expressed that it is important to succeed, but even more important to succeed relative to others. Perhaps to defend his actions against the potential judgements of his peers, Ha-Neul described this loss as part of a larger plan, one that in the long-run would hopefully result in a greater gain:

> Ha-Neul: Because when I lived in Korea, English was always my block. For example, Korea has lots of international companies, General Motors, or Samsung [....] But for example [...] Samsung, several times they wanted my help, my know-how, but my workplace would not be Korea, but Malaysia, Mexico and USA, some European countries. If I go there

> two or three months to teach employees in these countries, but if I go there I would have to teach using English. Also, English is always my block. For example if I teach in Korean, in one hour I can make three or four-hundred dollars. But if I use English, in one hour I can make six to eight hundred dollars. It is always a big problem. So sometimes I was a bit angry. Why I couldn't speak English! So I came here. It is one of my reasons. So also if I continuously worked in Korea, my turning point would be at age 50. But, if I came here, study, then maybe I could extend my business life. So I came here. I think I would like to think more positively here.

Above, Ha-Neul suggested that on the surface it may appear that he is doing badly compared to his Korean counterparts, but that in reality it was he who has made the most strategic business decision: to learn English.

Ha-Neul connected learning English to his ability to make money in the above discussion, which in turn is directly connected to his employability in Canada. He also made it clear that he immigrated to Canada primarily to make money and, in his present situation, he was losing money. The fact that Ha-Neul's biggest motivation was profit and business development may have made it all the more difficult for him to spend so much of his savings on immigrating, only to continue to do so while he learned English. Sharada, while experiencing what is arguably less financial insecurity and much less wealth, also made the connection between acquiring skills, financial improvement, and employability. However, for Sharada, school was a path to financial security that was financially unattainable at the time of the interview. Ha-Neul did not have any obstacles preventing him from getting training and skills, and could buy whatever education he needed, but because he was spending money rather than time, he described being very anxious and uncertain about his decision. Sharada expressed some distress about having waited so many years to come to Canada and start a new life, but she did not approach

her money situation with nearly as much anxiety or stress as Ha-Neul, despite it being less secure than his.

Contrasting these two differing experiences of financial instability in settlement clarifies the fact that the level of economic stability one has does not necessarily predict feelings of safety or security. It is clear that security is subjective, and is contextualised against past experience as well as future plans.

Employment and Credential Recognition

Getting credentials and skills was described as a priority by many of the participants. However, several of them were also importing a variety of education and training, some without being secure in the knowledge that their credentials would mean here what they did back home. Many immigrants migrate without familiarity with the Canadian job market, and may be unaware of the credential recognition policies in Canada. Many people I spoke to indicated that there is not enough information about credential recognition, or about finding suitable jobs in Canada. Sharada stated that she was unable to find a job that fit with her skill-set:

> Sharada: You don't have nothing, then you don't have a job, a perfect job. You get any kind of job because you don't know, you don't have a Canadian paper that says: I went through grade twelve or grade six or whatever. So right now you go to these business places, they give you any kind of job, the job is hard, the pay is so small, you know, and my field is seamstress, I'm working in the garment factory, but the garment factory, what I'm doing is leather, glue—it's not clothing. It's a different field from what I am, but I had to take it because I had no choice because I'm land here, and the pressure is on me because my savings that I come up with I have to use it because it takes you two months, three months to get a job. I don't know why they should, like—they know immigrants is coming, so much people come for this year. They should have jobs like already there so as soon as you come, you can go and get one. When you come here you have to go and search or if you don't know someone in somewhere to help

you to get it then you get frustrated.

Sharada distributed causes of her employment problems across multiple agents, with the exception of herself. As Sharada described, she experienced a great deal of difficulty in finding gainful employment. She indicated that getting a good job should be easy for immigrants, because "they" are expecting them. In this statement, "they" could refer to the government or organizations serving immigrants, but Sharada does not clarify who "they" are. She also suggested that her problems in getting a good job, or any job at all in her first three months of arrival, were the result of lacking the proper connections with the right people. Additionally, she appraised her job at the time of the interview as outside of the seamstress field, even though both are a part of the garment industry. Sharada's evaluation of her job situation may have been an expression of general disapproval of her current work and anger that her skill set was not being recognised or valued by her employer.

Sharada also spoke to the reality of many who immigrated from countries that do not have standardised education systems, or that have very low attendance rates at public primary and secondary schools. Sharada later noted that she was worried she would not be able to go to nursing school because she had no records of the secondary school that she had attended in Guyana. Ironically, while she would likely have been able to go to university as a mature student without high school records, her current employer would not promote her without proof of her high school graduation.

Jorge's employment problems were tied to his need for Canadian certification so that he could be a practicing physician. He was a licensed medical doctor in Peru, but in order to see if his skills were up to Canadian standards, he had to take a test, in English:

> Amelia: And are you able to practice here?
>
> Jorge: Hopefully one day. Now I am going to school to improve my English, and I'm learning about the health system in Canada. And this takes time. It was supposed to be one year to prepare for myself for ready to work because I have all the experience about that, but it's not really. We need to learn English properly for work, to understand, to study, for everything. And we need to learn English for professional purpose, you need to have a high English for listening, reading, writing, speaking.

Although Sharada viewed her employment problems as a result of external forces, Jorge connected them firmly to his need to acquire English skills, the responsibility for which was his own. This is in part because Sharada had no future job prospects, while Jorge was working towards certification in his field. Jorge said that his preparation time should have been one year, but he did not lay blame when it ended up taking longer. Rather, the tone of his description is one of acceptance. Jorge went on to discuss his uncertainty about how long it was going to take him to prepare to take the exam. He reasoned that if becoming a doctor by Canadian standards did not become a reality, he could instead become a nurse or a midwife:

> Jorge: Yeah, um. I understand my condition, my situation. Before to come here, I think about that, you know? But now not really. I don't like to go back. I believe this takes time. It's not easy. I don't know how long. Actually, I have another shorter goal? Maybe nursing? Nursing is maybe the second, shorter goal. Another choice is as midwife. Midwife in Canada, is a new profession. It's an old profession but in Canada it's developing right now.

Jorge's back-up plan represented security but also shows that he is expecting an uncertain future. Although he was likely going to become certified within the year, Jorge's strategy was to consider multiple options just in case, and exhibited both determination and flexibility. In contrast, Sharada was experiencing her work problems in

terms of how others were responding to her skills, rather than developing strategies to "sell" her skills. Unlike some others, Jorge had researched the amount of time it would take for him to get certified.

Vidor was unemployed for a time after being a student at a Winnipeg university. He found that once he did get a job in his field, doors opened for him in other areas of his settlement process:

> Vidor: That was amazing because I did my formal audition, and the next day I got my working visa.
>
> Amelia: Oh, great, that was good timing.
>
> Vidor: No, I mean it wasn't timing. They got it for me. They got the forms, the next thing I know I have a work visa. So they wanted you, the personnel manager went, phoned, organised, no maybe not the next day, but it seemed like the next day I had my work visa.
>
> Amelia: How long would it have taken you?
>
> Vidor: Forever. To get my, yeah, because you have to go through all the human resources, all these things like that. For work I still don't have to go to these human resources. If [they] want you, they do that. Now that I'm doing my landed immigrant status, now I have to go do everything by myself.

In the above excerpt, Vidor demonstrated his perspective on the immigration system in Canada as he had experienced it. While he now had to complete his landed immigrant documentation by himself, he had been witness to an organizational body effortlessly overcoming bureaucracy when it so desired. Vidor's evaluation that the experience was "amazing" is meant to be somewhat sarcastic, meaning it was no great feat that the immigration system can be made easier when one has the right connections. The fact that those connections have not endured for Vidor is perhaps what caused him to

have a cynical attitude about the system, whereas if he were still benefiting from it, it is possible that he would be less critical.

What is evident from Vidor's evaluation of his work situation is that he did not feel like he was in charge of his situation, but that he was benefiting from the way his company worked. Rather than experiencing privileges such as getting a working visa quickly because he was skilled and therefore worthy, he attributed this to the somewhat questionable practices of the immigration system.

Finding employment appropriate for one's credentials was an important factor for nearly all of the participants. But, as mentioned earlier, skills and labour are linked to English proficiency, as well as to financial security in many people's experiences of settlement. Praveen described the difficult circumstances that the combined obstacles of learning English, earning an income and getting credentials can create. Praveen's wife had significant trouble in this area, which impacted them both:

> Praveen: Settlement was a different issue. After we came here we had some initial problems in terms of the language, finding places for my daughter's education, how the system worked. My wife had some problems, because she left [India]. She was working as an accountant and she had problems finding job. Unlike here, we have a three-year degree program in India for commerce. Here they have four years, so they say that "you are really short of one year". And I don't think they have any mechanism here to upgrade that one year loss and get recognized as commerce. But we came here and I had my own priorities. And we were still settling and understanding the systems here, so initially at settlement, we had a tough time [....] We had one year when my money was running out, and we weren't sure what to do next, and living on my fellowship, so my wife took a work. And, yeah, we had a hard time, she had to brush up her language, 'cause at home we only speak our own language which is Gujarati.

Praveen went on to describe how his wife could not even take the only job offered to her, as a grocery store clerk, because she had no transportation. Praveen indicated that

he and his wife originally immigrated to Winnipeg because Praveen had professional opportunities, but suggested that his wife's professional options may not have been taken into consideration. He described her as having simultaneously experienced all three obstacles described above. Her credentials did not meet Canadian standards, and her English skills were basic, which culminated in employment problems for her and income concerns for them both. Although Praveen was doing well enough for himself, the obstacles his wife suffered impacted their shared experience, largely because their migration was based on one set of priorities.

Evidently, some of the participants had a harder time than others in overcoming the above described obstacles. Their narratives suggest that predictors of success in dealing with these difficulties might be financial resources and credentials as well as fluency in English or a partner or co-ethnic group with which to communicate. However, even for those who are financially secure, or who have credentials, problems in this stage of settlement can still be significant.

The way in which the participants viewed their own roles and responsibilities in the context of their experiences affected their strategies and attitudes. While some asserted control of their lives and adapted as best they could, others assigned responsibility for successes and failures to different factors, and subsequently were somewhat less strategic in acquiring employment, learning English and becoming financially stable.

Conclusion

A powerful element of the immigration and settlement experience is encountering obstacles that are not normally faced in such intensity in regular life. The experience of

obstacles as I have defined them is subjective, and personal circumstances prescribe whether the same experience feels like a success or a failure. The participants diversely reported three different obstacles that they found impacted their settlement experiences: learning and using English, being and becoming financially stable and secure, and succeeding in finding employment that suited their credentials. While not every individual encountered all of these issues as obstacles, at least one of these was a barrier in one or more areas of everyone's lives.

Table C. *Narratives of Settlement* Research Participants' Perceptions of Variables as Obstacles, Winnipeg 2006.

Name	Learning English as a Second Language	Gaining Skill-Appropriate Employment	Acquiring Credentials or having Credentials Recognized	Gaining Financial Stability
Aaron	Yes	Somewhat	Yes	Yes
Mundia	N/A	No	No	Yes
Min-Soo	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Ha-Neul	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sophie	No	Somewhat	Somewhat	Yes
Linda	Somewhat	No	No	No
Uberto	No	No	No	No
Vidor	Somewhat	Somewhat	Somewhat	Yes
Sharada	Somewhat	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jorge	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Isabel	Yes	No	No	No
Tushar	No	Yes	Yes	Somewhat
Namita	Yes	Yes	Yes	Somewhat
Robel	Yes	Somewhat	Yes	Yes
Praveen	No	No	Somewhat	Yes

In their discussion of immigrants learning a new language, Hou and Beiser (2006) suggest that "from the perspective of a new settler, learning the dominant culture's language is a prerequisite for economic, political, social and cultural integration" (Hou and Beiser 2006: 155). Although the participants showed this to be true in describing their experiences in learning English, I found that they experienced English as an obstacle in distinct ways, and some people were more concerned with learning English for some areas of their lives than in others.

The needs that had to be addressed by learning English varied between experiences of settlement. As well, the degree of stress and immediacy of need to learn English varied across cases. Haour-Knipe discussed this issue in the context of her research on immigrants to Geneva, in which learning French was sometimes a social stress, and at others a professional stress for the participants in her study (Haour-Knipe 2001: 51-52).

For some of the participants, learning English was a passport to employability and credential acquisition. Jorge described his experience as a conflict in which he could not work as a doctor until he learned English, but had difficulty finding enough time and energy to learn English because he was working multiple low wage jobs. He described being very anxious and emotionally exhausted at the prospect of having to learn English well enough to take his medical certification exam. Linda and Uberto viewed English as impacting their education as well, but found that while it was important to understand English lectures, it did not require the same level of attention and comprehension as did socializing in English, which they considered to be more difficult.

For other participants, learning English was of little concern. Circumstances such as access to informal resources like spouses and co-ethnic social groups can reduce the effects of not being proficient in English. Vidor and Linda felt little pressure to learn English because their respective significant others were fluent in English, which provided them indirect access to the English speaking community.

Some found English to be a massive obstacle that affected all parts of their lives, and English has long been viewed as the key means of adapting in English-speaking Western countries, without which immigrants cannot access the social world or understand the rules and norms that govern their new environments (Carnevale 2000: 417-419). Some of the participants seemed painfully aware of this fact. Ha-Neul viewed English as a route to understanding Canadian culture, but seemed confused about how to go about connecting learning English to accessing other venues for information. Instead, he described being frustrated that he was not being taught about Canadian culture in his ESL class.

Language skills are connected to employment, financial security and education in a number of ways. Hou and Beiser (2006) note that language acquisition and formal education attained prior to settlement play a large role in subsequent English abilities among new immigrants (Hou and Beiser 2006: 140). This relationship reflects the connection between wealth and English acquisition, as the wealthiest people in immigrant sending countries tend to have greater access to education than the rest of the population. Education, employment and income go hand in hand, and accordingly poorer immigrants are less likely to succeed in learning English than financially secure or wealthy immigrants. This perpetuates poverty for poor immigrants in adoptive countries, as

English learning is more likely to be accessible for people who have either had previous training in English or previous formal education.

While most of the research participants were educated and knew enough English to participate in English interviews for this research, Sophie and Isabel, who both had high English proficiency, were particularly sympathetic to the experiences of other immigrants' encounters with Canadian society without having much needed language skills. Isabel described a woman she helped to learn English as not being able to parent her child fully in the context of the English based public school system, while Sophie reported that the woman she was helping could not communicate with the health care system about her pregnancy. That the participants were sensitive to the obstacles that English posed in other people's lives indicates that, in the participants' lives, confidence in communicating does not necessarily come with fluency, and that there are many degrees of proficiency. It also suggests that communication cross-culturally is perhaps a feature of all settlement narratives, whether or not one is fluent in the grammatical elements of a language. In their discussions of their own English skills and those of others, the participants found linguistic ability tied to making money and being successful in settlement, and there was a good deal of empathy for those who were not learning English, as though it was considered a failure in settlement if one was unable to adapt to speaking the dominant language, and therefore communicating with the rest of society.

Current studies on success of immigrants in the labour market done in the U.S. suggest that individuals moving from countries in which English is spoken do better in the labour market than those who do not (Ozden: 2006: 241). While the participant sample here is too small to test such a theory, the participants showed the relationship

between English and employability to be more complex than this correlation indicates. To be sure, financial resources and education were also strong indicators of success in the labour market. Sharada, who came from Guyana, spoke English as her first language, and while this made Sharada employable, her language skills were not a credential that opened any doors beyond unskilled labour because she lacked education and credentials. While Guyana's official language is English, Sharada herself drew a distinction between Canadian English and Guyanese English, calling the latter *Creolese* and describing herself as not "speaking proper." She reported feeling much the way ESL learners described feeling: embarrassed about her accent and her skills. This suggests that self-assessments of language skills may differ from an outside assessment. While Sharada would likely be considered fluent by her immigrant peers, she was measuring her abilities against those of Canadian speakers, whom she more than once referred to as "very smart." Sharada seemed to be incorporating her lack of education into her assessment of her English abilities.

Sharada was not the only one who seemed to under-value her own linguistic skills. Vidor, who had learned English primarily from a language book, spoke articulately and expressively, yet he remarked that he lacked confidence in his skills. He was at the time working as a musician, arguably an occupation that transcends language as much as one possibly could. In contrast, Linda and her partner Uberto, who had skills that were very good but not better than Vidor's, were quite confident in their skills, perhaps because they were working professionally in English, and viewed this as evidence that they were fluent. It should also not be overlooked that Uberto and Linda were highly educated and worked in well-paid secure employment, which may have provided the

status and confidence that compensated for imperfect English and Latin American accents. Although Sharada worked in English also, she worked unskilled labour with other immigrants as well as Canadian English-speakers. She described an alliance with her immigrant peers rather than with the others, and reported identifying with the linguistic barriers they encountered at work rather than allying herself with other first-language English speakers.

In addition to the barrier of language, an individual's initial financial circumstances are a powerful predictor of how they will fare during settlement. While immigration most often involves a movement from poorer to richer countries (Skeldon 1997: 6), it should be noted that people who undertake to immigrate frequently have greater financial and social resources than do their peers who stay home. Thus, it is important to make the distinction between immigrants who are migrating because of poverty and underemployment and immigrants who are doing so to market their skills, invest, or attain Western credentials (Kapur and McHale 2005: 6). That being said, the level of financial stability did not always result in an equal level of security. One example from my research is Ha-Neul's anxiety over investing money into his full-time ESL training, during which time he was earning far less money than he was used to. Ha-Neul was still living an upper middle-class lifestyle by Canadian standards, and he continued to have investments in Japan and South Korea. Nevertheless, Ha-Neul was nervous that he was wasting his money on an endeavour that might not have benefits worth the risks. Jorge seemed much less worried about his situation, which was comparable to Ha-Neul's in terms of practice, though less financially secure. The major difference between these two people was their differing experiences of their financial circumstances; Ha-Neul

came from affluence by Canadian standards, while Jorge did not. Thus Jorge viewed his situation as good by comparison to his circumstances back home, while Ha-Neul was not convinced that he had made a decision that would result in improvements.

The participants' perceptions of financial security were subjective and depended as much on past experiences and expectations for the future as they did on their actual financial security. As illustrated above, individuals with multiple financial resources and credentials, such as Ha-Neul can be more fearful of financial collapse than individuals earning minimum wage and supporting their entire families. It has been suggested that the poorer one is, the more one stands to gain in immigration, and thus less risk is involved (Kapur and McHale 2005: 6). However, poverty also poses greater challenges and obstacles in the process of migration and settlement. Thus, financial stability and success in immigration is highly subjective; for some of the participants, access to minimum wage employment meant overcoming the obstacle of poverty, while the expectations of others were much higher and would not consider this to be a success.

The participants' accounts of learning English, marketing their skills and managing their finances depended greatly on how much importance and weight they placed on each of these things, as well as what responsibilities they placed on themselves for the outcomes of their experiences and those of their families. Although some of them migrated alone, all of the participants managed these aspects of their lives in the context of the cultures from which they came and the families and networks in which their lives were entwined. As Bjerén (1997) suggests, new immigrants assess the obstacles, needs, successes and failures in their lives according to criteria put forth by their past cultural contexts (Bjerén 1997: 227-230) as well as their current experience of *being an*

immigrant. What was clear in interviewing the participants is that their own confidence in their financial security, language skills and abilities appeared to play as strong a role in their lives as did the reality of their circumstances relative to their peers.

Chapter 6

Adaptation, Stress and Change

One of the most important, and perhaps one of the most mystified processes in migration and settlement is that of adaptation. Adaptation involves the way people respond and adjust to a change in their socio-cultural and geographical environment. The participants reported a variety of experiences in adjusting to their new home. The way the participants adapted depended somewhat on the resources that were available to them, such as income, linguistic ability, presence of a social group or family, experience in foreign countries, and education. Nevertheless, in hearing the participants discuss their experiences of adaptation, it is apparent that the presence or absence of these resources alone does not necessarily determine an individual's ability to adapt. Adaptation is also contingent on internal resources such as the strategies and attitudes that the participants brought to their encounters with their new surroundings.

The diverse experiences reported by the participants suggest that adaptation is subjective and personal. The participants brought multiple meanings to this somewhat elusive aspect of settlement, and their descriptions of strategies and attitudes were influenced by their personalities. Some described change as something they could decide to do, and defined adaptation as a relatively simple process to do with learning. Others considered adaptation to have to do with internal and personal changes, which sometimes culminated in crises or emotionally stressful experiences in which they begin to view their identities as altered.

By examining the ways that people described change, it became evident that there are no clear divisions between personal and cultural change. Rather, every individual expressed their relationships to their cultures with distinct attitudes and descriptions, as well as with differing levels of importance. Many of the participants personalized their references to their cultures, discussing what the attitudes, languages and practices of their countries of origin meant to their particular lives, back home and in their new country.

Adaptation

Everyone with whom I spoke had different definitions for adaptation, with some focussing on cultural differences, linguistic differences, or simply climate. Some saw adaptation as a knowledge set that had to be learned, while others described it as an ambient process of growing comfortable in a new place. Namita and her husband Tushar described adapting to Canada as something they had prepared for in advance, and that could be accomplished through learning:

> Amelia: When you were first in Toronto, you hadn't had experience with North America before?
>
> Namita: No, no.
>
> Amelia: So what was that experience like?
>
> Namita: Actually we were prepared with this kind of stuff so…
>
> Tushar: Of course we didn't spend any time in Western countries before we came to Canada. But just from watching movies, reading about the country, you have that mental frame anyways. So when we came, it didn't look odd to us. It was just quite easy.
>
> Namita: Enjoyed also. It was a good experience, first winter, also.

Namita stated simply that they were prepared for differences in Canada, while Tushar elaborated on what they did to prepare. After having experienced the real Canada, both seemed unmoved by differences between movies and reality. They had seen movies and read books about Canada, and voiced no distinction between these representations and lived experience. Perhaps because Namita and Tushar socialised mainly with other Indian expatriates, they continued to observe Canada from an external vantage point, watching but not necessarily integrating themselves into *Canadian* social groups beyond attending school.

Namita was unequivocally pleased with Canada and brushed off all suggestions that it was difficult to live in a new country. Tushar was less enthused about Canada and cited the weather as a problem for him:

> Tushar: And secondly, the weather, I would say for me. Where I grew up it was almost like forty-three, forty-four and the minimum was plus ten [...] I really don't like cold at all [....] Now I might feel that this is too hot. I'm trying to run away from cold weather, but I don't know if I will adapt myself to really hot weather. So I mean that's another thing too. Nothing is fixed yet. I'm sixty percent going to India, and forty percent living here. That swings back and forth.

Above, Tushar indicated that he was undecided about whether to stay or to return to India. Tushar incorporated his possible plans to return home into most parts of his narrative, including his perceptions about his adaptation to Canada. Tushar was hesitant to get used to Winnipeg's winters and subsequently to become uncomfortable in India in the future. Tushar expressed a deep desire to return to India to live, and perhaps beginning to tolerate or even enjoy Winnipeg weather, or Winnipeg itself, felt to Tushar like a threat to his plans for his homeland. In contrast, Aaron seemed happy to have

already adapted to the cold, and to the city, that he once disliked, perhaps because he was making a home and a family in Winnipeg:

> Aaron: And we came back in December and my wife and I kept a house for some friends [...] and it was winter, and I think it was two, three winters ago, it was forty below, fifty below, it was so hard, so...I know that this was for one or two days, but I said: forget it!
>
> Amelia: That was really a big shock?
>
> Aaron: Yes! It was very bad. It was so cold. Actually now it's very nice.

Aaron's comfort with Winnipeg's weather may have been a reflection of his happiness in Winnipeg with his new life. It may also be the case that the cold may have become an unavoidable fact of life for him because he was now settled in Winnipeg with a wife and was expecting a child.

Many of the participants with whom I spoke who came from a hot country described being very affected by the weather in Winnipeg, and a few reported being closest to giving up and going home when they experienced storms or other extreme weather. On the morning of the season's first snowfall, Mundia described calling her mother in Zambia to tell her she was coming home after ordering her plane ticket. Her mother convinced her to stay, but Mundia described this experience as making her feel very homesick and helpless. The association of strong feelings with the climate was only absent among Namita and Min-Soo, both of whom described with the strongest words their love for Winnipeg. For people who are struggling to settle, like Aaron and Tushar, expressing feelings of unhappiness through talking about the weather negatively may be an effective way of channelling feelings of being out of one's element, as this is a tangible, external problem beyond everyone's control.

Many of the participants viewed their new environment as something they could not control, but to which they simply had to adjust. Robel viewed adaptation as something that is complicated by personal characteristics and circumstances like age, which was also beyond his control:

> Robel: And the big problem is the young people can find a job fast. But above thirty it's harder. They have a lot of communication skills, because the young people, they can adapt fast.
>
> Amelia: Are things becoming very Canadian or are they still traditional Eritrean?
>
> Robel: Very traditionally Eritrean. Yeah, because the only time you come and become Canadian if you are younger, like eighteen years or something, you can understand other cultures. But when you become over twenty-five or so, you already passed the point.

Robel did not overtly discuss his own personal ability to adapt, but it is possible to infer it from the above narrative excerpt. Robel, already twenty-eight at the time of this interview, viewed adaptation as something that is easier for people younger than him. He seemed to be marking twenty-five as a standard age that above which, change is not possible. Despite the fact that twenty-eight is below the average age of the immigrants I interviewed, Robel may have felt that he had trouble adapting, and wanted to attribute it to something beyond his control, like his age. Robel described socializing mostly with fellow Eritrean expatriates, and the association of adaptation with age may have been an explanation for this also.

While it may be assumed that people will have to adapt to a new external environment, some elements that demand adaptation are less obvious. Linda and Uberto suggested that the relative safety that Canada has to offer was something that they had to adapt to:

> Uberto: We came from a huge city. Lima has like eight million people, there's crime everywhere there, you cannot wear your watch, you cannot wear anything outside with you, because it's dangerous [....] Like here is peaceful. You can do whatever you want at any time of the day [....] We wanted to go out to a dangerous area in Winnipeg, so we went to the inner city. For me that's nothing, like. Like the living standards...Main Street is nothing.
>
> Linda: Yeah it's funny because in Peru, you would walk with your purse like this, holding it. And then here I was walking down Pembina holding my purse like this and I'm like: what am I doing!

Linda and Uberto had both engaged in protective practices in Lima, including not stopping their cars at red lights at night, holding onto personal items tightly and generally being wary. In their adaptation to Canada they were faced with modifying the degree of caution necessary for everyday living in their new environment. At the same time, Uberto suggested that Winnipeggers falsely consider some areas as dangerous, which are "nothing" compared to Lima. Uberto seemed to imply that it was not he who needed to adjust his behaviour, but Winnipeggers who should adjust their safety practices in conjunction with how safe they really are.

While some aspects of settlement and adaptation affect nearly all immigrants, one's particular motivations and circumstances impact the degree of adaptation that is demanded by the new environment. Later in our discussion, Uberto made a few observations about the differences between international students and new immigrants:

> Uberto: One of the big things, in university, you have a try-out period. You adjust to the culture with no risk. You are still in university and you are not immigrating, you are studying. Because we both did that, after that because we decided to stay, it's like a controlled risk, because you already know what to expect. If you just arrived to Winnipeg or to Canada and you don't have anything, it's more difficult. We knew what we were expecting, we had an apartment we had everything set up, we knew what to do, we know where to buy things, we know where to go we know how to handle everything. University is a good place to adjust yourself to the

culture.

For Uberto, the safety of the university environment allowed him to get his feet wet without plunging into any commitments. He describes an adaptation process in which there are no strings attached, and once he decided to stay in Winnipeg, he was already settled. His description is interesting because in it he viewed himself as having avoided something that regular immigrants must endure, although in reality he had to adapt to everything that any immigrant would, but without the mindset that he was bound to his new environment.

While some people I spoke with experienced an improvement in living standards, Isabel had an experience of reduction in convenience and privilege:

> Isabel: Countries like Brazil and other places like Colombia and South America mostly, we still have people working at your house. Not that you need to be rich for, to have someone like a house assistant or housekeeper. Just because the poverty and the social gap is so high, that you can unfortunately it's a way for you to help someone else, and for you to have a little bit of comfort, to have somebody cooking for you or either doing your laundry or ironing. But you don't really have to be rich at all. But then that makes a huge difference too, because besides having everything fresh, you really don't have to make anything. Right? You wakeup in the morning, and they say: "oh what do you want to have today?" "Oh, just a fresh orange juice." And the person goes and squeeze the orange for you. And you just eat on your way out or, you know, have already it set up for you. So that's a convenience.

Isabel evaluated having a housekeeper as an act of helping someone out rather than enjoying a luxury, and repeated twice that she is "not rich," and even seemed embarrassed that she would be mistaken for a rich person. She nevertheless experienced a convenience that is not a stereotypical experience of many immigrants. However, many of the immigrants now coming to Canada are part of the middle class, and may share

Isabel's experience, one that involved a reduction in her standard of living. Having lost this luxury did not symbolise a loss in status for Isabel, however, because she made it clear that she did not see this convenience as associated with wealth. Isabel's description of her social status also suggests that she was already using a Canadian frame of reference for social status. While she may have been very wealthy compared to her housekeeper, for example, she was comparing her life in Brazil to the lives of Canadians, rather than to the lives of other Brazilians. This suggests that, at least to a degree, she already viewed herself as a Canadian.

For Isabel, this loss of a luxury may have meant more than the actual demand on her to take care of her own housekeeping and cooking. This change also stood for the challenge of relocating in general, and not having another person taking care of her needs may have brought to the surface an emotional reaction that was separate from, but affected by the loss of this convenience.

Isabel viewed adaptation in the context of conveniences of daily living, and reacted to the differences between what was demanded of her in her old and new lives. For Ha-Neul, adaptation was connected to deciphering the socio-cultural environment in which he was trying to embed himself. He described his efforts at learning about Canadian culture as something he wanted to accomplish through learning. He described his disappointment that he could not learn about Canadian culture in his ESL class:

> Ha-Neul: From my point of view, customs are very important. Why, many foreigners from Japan and Korea and China, they study English from middle school to university, but nonetheless they can talk, they can write, but they're not familiar with English. The main clue comes from culture and customs. They know just about English language!

In this discussion, Ha-Neul insinuated that he thought he would be getting an upper hand by learning English in an English-speaking country rather than in Korea because he would have access to cultural lessons, not just language. He was understandably frustrated when he arrived here and found no resources for learning about Canadian culture and practices:

> Ha-Neul: Canadian culture has common sense, common rules. But if you go to a bookstore, I can't find them! So, if we go to ESL school, Canadian culture, Canadian customs [should be taught] [....] Nobody teaches you about Manitoba and Winnipeg [....] For example, Winnipeg and Manitoba have lots of things. For example, Manitoba's main industry, Manitoba's main associations [....] These are things that are not taught.

As a scholar and writer, Ha-Neul's desire was to deal with adaptation as he had dealt with everything else in his life: through reading and studying, and located his adaptation in the classroom. He and his wife, Min-Soo, described their lives as including little socializing and few Canadian acquaintances, since this did not seem like a resource for cultural information to Ha-Neul.

The way the participants assessed what did and did not require adaptation depended on their particular circumstances and intentions. Ha-Neul, who was much less fluent in English than Isabel, did not view adaptation in the context of convenience, but in terms of his need to interpret everything in Canadian culture, from the traffic system, to social interaction. In his interview, he asked whether it was culturally acceptable for men and women who are married to share the same drink, a question he could have answered through observation and social immersion. However, because he was learning English in the classroom, he seemed to view cultural knowledge as a similar skill, and accordingly wanted to learn these two skills in the same fashion.

The participants' different adaptive experiences were contingent on multiple circumstances and variables. In describing their processes of adaptation, the participants' personal characteristics and resources were seen responding to the demands of the external socio-cultural environment. The way they defined what actions were needed to accomplish a comfortable adjustment influenced how they adapted and what degree of action they took in this process.

The participants viewed their adaptive processes in terms of their present concerns but also in terms of their future plans. For those who were intending to stay in Canada for a long time, adapting was a major concern, while for others, plans to return home made adaptation less important, or even unwanted. Whether an individual viewed adapting as something that he or she had to do, or that ambiently occurred, indicated how actively he or she embraced the things they had to adapt to.

Cultural Identity and Change

For many of the participants, the process of settlement and adaptation challenged them to re-evaluate who they were, reconsider what their connections to their homelands meant for their personal lives. Often this demanded that they develop strategies to cope with the way that their cultural affiliations and identities changed as a result of settling in a new country. For some, personal changes were something they could control and decide for themselves, while for others it was a personal learning experience that they did not direct. Several of the participants considered identity to be something internal, while others attributed it to where they were, who they were with and what they did.

Hybridization of cultural identity was brought up in different ways by the participants, and their opinions of it depended largely on how hybridised they themselves

were. When asked whether he was going to remain culturally Peruvian, Jorge had this to say:

> Jorge: No, I adopted a new lifestyle. It's different, completely. If I live here I need to practice, I need to live, I need to adopt all the things. It's not easy if you live here and you think about there. Your body is here, your soul is there. That's no good. You need to concentrate. Several people, they make a mistake. Living here, but thinking there. Make money here, but all the money go there. (That) is a problem. If you live in some place, if you work in some place, if you have everything in some place, you need to develop other things properly. Two things at the same time, no it doesn't work. Because, what are you? This is a big trouble. You are only one person, and you need to concentrate yourself. If you don't it's a mistake.

Jorge's described his identity as being manifest in outward behaviour or lifestyle. In the above narrative excerpt, he stated that his life has completely changed. This suggests that he did not think Peruvian culture can be practiced in Canada, and that at the same time it is a mistake to live in both countries at once. Jorge's conception that his body would be here but his soul there suggests that it is not possible to blend both cultures together. Interestingly, Jorge had active personal and professional connections to his home community in Peru. He seemed the most emotionally wrapped up in his homeland, and spoke at length about all things he wanted to do to help his community. Of all the participants, Jorge seemed to have left the most of his self in his homeland. Perhaps Jorge was speaking directly to his own fears, or was projecting in his explanation that he wished he could adapt smoothly and become Canadian, but that in reality it was not that easy or simple.

Nevertheless, Jorge described cultural identity as a choice, rather than something that is beyond his control. On the other hand, after having come to terms with its inevitability, Linda expressed a stubborn contentment about having a double life:

> Linda: Sometimes, you know that there are so many things going on, and you miss that part of course. But that's when I talk to a lot by phone, not only my parents, but my brother. Yesterday, I spent so much time, but I don't care. I spend my time talking to people. I find my way to still be connected to my country. I'll do that. I have a double life and I am ready to have that double life for how many years. We are talking about that, if at this point I go back home I would never be complete again. You know if I go home I'll be missing my life here. I have my life and friends and supports, so life will never be one country again. Even if I go home or if I stay here it will be that way.

Above, Linda described having given in to living in two countries. Although she physically spent most of her time in Canada, visiting Peru only once a year, Linda defined her identity as something that could exist across borders and be maintained through contact with family and friends over the phone. Unlike Jorge, Linda did not divide herself between the two by separating her body from her soul. Rather, she spread her identity between both countries. In saying she did not care about spending so much time talking to people in Peru, Linda seemed to be asserting her comfort with her identity being both Canadian and Peruvian. Isabel was also comfortable with her identity change, but she described it as an internal process rather than the result of communicating across borders:

> Isabel: But after coming here, there are a few things in Winnipeg that I really like. I like the people as an example, so...no I didn't go back because I didn't want to be in Brazil, but because there are things that I gained that became part of my life. And it just all mixed with me, or mingled, I don't know [....] It's part of me, or I'm part of it. I don't know I can't say where it starts but...the people in Winnipeg are extremely friendly and concerned and just like, they care about you and it was a huge surprise to me.

Isabel described being changed in a way that she could not isolate and name, yet she tied it to the acceptance she felt after settling in Winnipeg. Perhaps if she had not felt this welcome, she would not have allowed her new surroundings to "mix and mingle"

with herself, and her identity would have remained more closely tied to Brazil. Like Isabel, Vidor described feeling welcomed and accepted in Winnipeg:

> Vidor: The thing is this is a culture that Hungarians very much admire. We very much admire Canadian culture because they are patient, they are nice, they are polite. Reserved, but polite, very friendly, very calming. We like them much more than Americans [....] I'm always welcome to meeting other people, if that never happened that would be okay. They are very, very nice bunch of people and they are super nice. But I'm always, you know, I'd kind of like to think because, it's a Hungarian way of socializing, so...plus I'm trying to take good advice from the Canadians and be welcoming, so I like letting everyone into my life, for friendship or anything.

Above, Vidor indicated that he felt warmth from Canadian people, and that he was following their lead in his socializing. He indicated above that Canadians actually socialized similarly to Hungarians, implying that he felt welcome because of cultural similarities. However, Vidor described changes to his cultural identity as having more to do with feeling disconnected from his Hungarian culture. When asked whether living in Canada was going to change him culturally, Vidor had this to say:

> Amelia: But do you think that's going to...
>
> Vidor: That's going to de-Hungarianise me? Probably. Umm, there is not a very strong culture in Hungary anymore. The departure where it's going yet, I'd rather have a Canadian culture for my kids than the Hungarian culture. Right now the Hungarian culture society of youngsters, it's not going in a good direction.

Evidently, Vidor had a particular idea of what Hungarian culture was, and believed that it was not strong in Hungary. His conception of culture seemed to be limited to language and tradition, rather than a concept that included current life ways in Hungary. Consequently, Vidor presented a take-it-or-leave-it attitude about hanging on to

Hungarian culture in Canada and immersing his (not yet conceived) children in a Hungarian lifestyle.

In considering how cultural practices and beliefs will be manifested in an adopted country, the way the second generation's lifestyle will differ from that of the first generation is often a key issue. Min-Soo was primarily concerned with cultural change in the lives of her children, and though she was not opposed to this change, she was torn about how to raise her children in her adopted country. Min-Soo viewed this change as a matter of choice. As a parent, Min-Soo was not sure how to manage the cultural adaptation of her two children, aged eight and twelve.

> Min-Soo: But we were confused because we are Korean, so we have lots of knowledge about Korean history and Korean culture. But also we wanted my children to grow up like Canadians. So, we have two aspects of education. So which one is better? We don't know. But when we tried two aspects of education to my children, they have a hard time. So we pressured them so my children: "Mom and Dad! Here is Canada! But why do you want I do like Korea?" So, here: "even though here is Canada, you are Korean". But sometimes, the opposite...my husband: "Here is Canada. You never do that". But my son said: "I know I am Korean, I am a Korean even though I live in Canada, I have to do like Korean".

Min-Soo's dilemma lay in her indecision over how to apply cultural change to her life and that of her children. Min-Soo described culture as something she could pick and choose. Rather than being an uncontrollable force for change, she conceptualised Canadian culture as something tangible that could be taught to her children. Praveen discussed his understanding of cultural adaptation of children as a potentially negative phenomenon that needed to be understood:

> Praveen: We were very worried, especially about our daughter. Because I've met people from my community, the second generation, and the second generation was not typically Gujarati, they were CBCD Canadian-

> born confused Desis. Desis is a term used in India to describe people from India, like the Diaspora, Desis is a generation. So they called them the CBCD. They were born in Canada, but their parents are pushing them to maintain their Indian traditions, which was sort of sometimes opposite to what you do in Canada, or North America. So, they're contradictory information from their parents, from their friends, their teachers. And they are confused with what to do in some of these situations.

Min-Soo and Praveen both saw cultural adaptation as a confusing process, one that did not necessarily pose a problem for them, but was problematic from their perspective for their children. Neither seemed to have found a solution to this problem, however Praveen spoke about it as a collective concern of his co-ethnic group, reporting that his fellow expatriates even had a shared name for the problem. In allying himself with his cultural group with regard to this issue, Praveen seemed to view it as a shared problem while Min-Soo described her experience between herself and her husband alone, defining it as very personal. While Min-Soo honestly did not know which culture was better, Praveen was clearly motivated to instil traditional practices and life-ways into the children of his co-ethnic group.

The process of cultural adaptation and change was manifest in the participants' lives according to their interpretations of what could and should happen. Whether they described change as something that they caused, or something that happened to them is a determiner of the attitude that they took towards it. Moreover, the definitions that people imposed on culture and identity decreed the arenas for addressing what changes were happening and who and what was responsible for them. As discussed above, these changes can be public or private, inevitable or involving choice.

Stress and Emotions

Being faced with change in the context of daily life can pose emotional challenges and personal stress on individuals during settlement. A few of the participants experienced intense emotional experiences that constituted stress and sometimes a personal crisis. Some of the participants conceptualised these experiences in terms of feelings of loss and a re-evaluation of fundamental parts of their lives and selves.

When Sharada first arrived, she felt overwhelmed by difference, a feeling often called culture shock. She reacted to her surroundings and the demands they made on her with intense emotional stress. Sharada connected being upset to feeling like an outsider:

> Sharada: Because when I land here, I don't know, I started to cry. Because it's so strange I don't know nobody in Canada, people here don't talk to you because you look strange, but it's all different. But I stay one year—it's a beautiful country, but when I land the first two month? Honestly I want[ed] to go back [...] That's why I want[ed] to go back.

In response to this feeling of being an outsider, Sharada actively modified her behaviour to overcome this difference, and in doing so engaged in a strategic behaviour:

> Sharada: I'm shy too. But if you asked me in the first five months, maybe I wouldn't talk to you. I would be scared. I would say, why she want to interview me, why she want to talk to me! Like I would have think those kind of things. But now, I say no, people are people and I can talk, what they ask me, I can talk [....] I have lots of friend here. Bunch of friends [...] I have lots of friends and I don't know I don't know because if I speak English, because I talk all the time in the bus, the whole bus—everybody knows me.

Sharada reported a change in her behaviour and her attitude. She described how she was comfortable in a situation that previously would have intimidated her. Sharada's narrative indicated a personal transformation from being fearful, depressed and aimless,

to becoming determined, confident and strategic. Sharada described this change as from different places, most notably from her own needs to reach out to others and to talk, which she described as definitive of her character. She thus overcame her own depression by being herself, but in the end this process seemed to have changed her into an even more assertive and confident person.

Min-Soo was of two minds about having migrated. She stated more than once that she loved Winnipeg, but she nevertheless felt depressed and unsure of her choice for the entirety of her settlement:

> Amelia: Do you think you're more happy now after being here for one year, or do you think that you were happier when you first arrived?
>
> Min-Soo: I think I'll have a more difficult life here, because almost I haven't lived for one year, I was very, very sick. And I always thought "Why am I here?" So I have a very hard time to finding my identity. So "Why am I here? I want to go back to Korea!" [...] So I explained about my difficult situation to my ESL teacher: "Yeah I know. Many people who comes from different countries. When they lived for one year or two years in Winnipeg, Canada, they was like you. So I hope you overcome very well". So I don't know why I am here.

Min-Soo and her husband had migrated one year previous to the interview, and stated that they did not interact much with any social communities other than their ESL classes. For their entire time in Canada, Min-Soo had felt varying degrees of anxiety and depression. In discussing her problems with her instructor, Min-Soo learned that many immigrants experienced these feelings. However, this led Min-Soo to view adaptation as something that simply happens after living for a duration of time in Winnipeg. Although Min-Soo described cultural change as something to be chosen, she viewed adaptation in general as something that she simply had to wait for. Min-Soo's passive approach was the opposite of Sharada's strategy of actively modifying her behaviour to ensure more

rapid resolution to at least some of the problems that were contributing to her emotional state.

Isabel, in contrast to Min-Soo, viewed emotional crises as experiences that one had to grapple with and work through. She conceptualised her experience specifically in terms of loss and eventual gains:

> Isabel: It's starting all over again, you know making another family when you already have one. So it seems like you're always giving up and that's what it is, you are giving up there, right? You are giving up your house, you're giving up a little bit of your family, of your material possessions, coming here is a huge thing. It's like, what do you bring? What do I want to have there that would fit into suitcases, you know? So that's another loss that you have right there. Coming as an immigrant, I think you start as a big loss. That's how I would say. It's a huge loss and then you start gains as you progress towards adaptation.

While similar to Sharada's resolve to deal with what was causing her harm, Isabel did not focus on making concrete changes in her life as Sharada did. Rather, Isabel was concerned with solving her problems internally. She described her material loss as culminating into a crisis in which she had to confront feelings from her past:

> Isabel: And it's funny [...] but coming here, all my emotions became so much stronger, and things that I had thought didn't make any difference in my life, that were not so important anymore, they came all back [...] I would have strong dreams and thoughts and feelings about my mom, about past boyfriends, and relationships, and my father. It seems like you are so, what can I say, so vulnerable to anything that really hit you in the past, so it all comes back I think [....] And you are here by yourself so you really have to heal all the feelings that you thought: oh no, I have dealt with [....] Ten years had passed and when I came here, this all came back. Things that I would live my life without thinking so much about it 'cause to me it was settled, the issue was settled. And then I came, it hit me like crazy.

Isabel associated her feelings of loss and sadness with being away from home. She suggested that, ironically, when the emotional supports are absent, one is faced with confronting the issues that were suppressed in the comfort zone of home. Above, Isabel noted that during the settlement process one can be highly vulnerable. Yet within this vulnerability, Isabel found resilience in her underlying motivations for migrating in the first place:

> Isabel: And I think it's facing that reality that yes, I am here, like now, really emotionally now I am upset and then someone comes and says: "Then why are you here? Why don't you go back? You have the option to go back. It's not like your life was miserable there?" So, and then you start to think: but do I really want it? [...] I think coming here makes you think a lot about yourself, who you are and what you want to do. And that really triggers emotionally I think.

Clearly, personal experiences of change can result in intense emotions. Some of the participants had difficulty in knowing how to deal with their underlying problems, and hoped that time would solve them. For others, actively addressing these issues was necessary, and this was done using differing strategies, including modifying behaviour and attitudes, and doing work internally.

Conclusion

Adaptation, change and stress recurred throughout the research participants' narratives. Each individual defined adaptation and change differently, and each had their own opinions about how adaptation should occur for themselves and sometimes offered prescriptive strategies for new immigrants in general. The participants discussed cultural, social and personal elements of adaptation and change sometimes as a single issue, and at other times as changes distinct from each other. As suggested by Fielding, the outcome of

immigration "usually involves mixed emotions" (quoted in Brettell 2003: 23). Some of the participants experienced powerful emotions which they associated with different aspects of adaptation and change.

It should be noted that none of the participants described feeling pressure to change from any single direction. Everyone asked said that they could be who they wanted to be, and felt accepted by Canadian society, and indicated that in the course of social interaction they had felt warmth and interest about their cultural backgrounds. Much has been written on the attitude of Canadians towards immigrants and multiculturalism. It has been suggested that Canadians' relative ease in accepting cultural difference is connected to Canada's arguable lack of unified cultural identity (Harles 712: 1997). Another reason for this lack of localised pressure might have to do with the fact that none of the participants were forcibly relocated to Canada. All willingly chose to come here, whatever the motives (Ward *et al.* 2001: 193). Because they were the architects of their current situations, it may be that they were more willing to take on most of the responsibility for making their settlement and adaptation unfold successfully.

What was cited as important in adaptation by the people I spoke with was not always confined to socio-cultural differences. Perhaps because none of the participants claimed to experience pressure to change in any one area, they had a diverse set of concerns with regard to adaptation. Elements such as social communication, the Canadian business system, and the weather were all lumped together as one grand environment to which it was necessary to adapt. In his efforts to understand his new environment, Ha-Neul made no distinction between all different sorts of rules, and wanted the answers to all of his questions, from social rules about gender, to parking

laws, to English slang, to be accessible through formal learning. Ha-Neul described his attempts to adapt as frustrating, as he recounted trying and failing to get the information about Canada in books and in school.

In discussing the psychological aspects of settlement, Ward and others (2001) note what seems to be an obvious point, that "immigrant acculturation is a product of interactions between settlers and members of the receiving culture" (Ward *et al.* 2001: 195). While Ha-Neul seemed oblivious to this connection, Sharada described overcoming fears and strategically talking to people wherever she went in order to immerse herself in new social worlds. Both Ha-Neul and Sharada were motivated by a desire to interact with their new social environments, yet Sharada did so in relation to people, and Ha-Neul did so, or attempted to, by trying to understand ideas.

Some of the participants viewed continuing traditional cultural practices to be the most important element of adapting to Canadian living, and took steps to preserve their traditional cultures in their households. Praveen took such an approach in his family, saying that he feared the cultural loss that he witnessed around him, and made sure that aspects of his traditional culture were present in his daughter's life. Chambers suggests that "what we have inherited—as a culture, as history, as language, as tradition, as a sense of identity—is not destroyed but taken apart, opened up to questioning, rewriting and rerouting" (Chambers 1994: 24). Praveen described children from his co-ethnic group being disrespectful to others, and behaving in ways he felt were culturally inappropriate. He cited this as a major motive for actively avoiding Western cultural practices in his life and that of his family. Evidently *he* felt that his group's cultural

identity was being negatively *re-written*, and viewed the way culture was changing in other people's lives as destructive.

Hall states that cultural identity is hybrid, and that our identities are always incomplete (Hall cited in Papastergiadis 2000: 189-190). Praveen, and others whom I interviewed, did not feel this way, and were very concerned with preserving their cultural identities within the home, by eating traditional foods, speaking native languages and trying to live as they had in India. They also tended to socialise predominantly with a co-ethnic community. Tushar, who shared a co-ethnic group with Praveen, described similar strategies of cultural preservation, including living with or near his parents, enmeshing himself in co-ethnic groups and participating in religious and cultural events.

Bjerén suggests that similar practices among co-ethnics, like Tushar and Praveen, is to be expected, and that different cultural groups value the maintenance of cultural identity differently and that distinct strategies of preservation develop among each group (Bjerén 1997: 232). While these individuals did not know each other until they met at a religious event, they had both been protecting their households and lives against cultural loss in ways that were informed by their mutual cultural group. Their descriptions of their interest in cultural preservation were similar, but differed in small ways. It was apparent that Tushar was very tied to the religious elements of his co-ethnic group, while Praveen highlighted playing traditional music as very important to him.

Not everyone had as firm an opinion regarding traditional culture in their lives or within their homes, and the importance and form that culture had in the participants' lives was very personalized. In contrast to Tushar and Praveen's affirmative approaches, Min-Soo and her husband Ha-Neul described being confused about how to incorporate

Canadian culture into their household and their parenting without abandoning their traditional Korean practices. In her discussion on migration and reproduction, Bjerén states that "producing babies is not the same as reproducing cultures", indicating that culture is passed between generations in complex ways (Bjerén 1997: 231). Although their children lived under their parenting and rules, Ha-Neul and Min-Soo could not control the cultural contributions that their children brought in from the outside world, particularly since they were fluent in English and interacted in the public school system daily. Nevertheless Ha-Neul and Min-Soo defined the culture in their households as something they governed, a notion that Bjerén (1997) contradicts. Bjerén suggests that the cultural permeability of the household is inevitable as parents are seldom able to supply all the cultural immersion necessary to reproduce a cultural identity that would have developed back home, in which children may be raised in the context of an extended family and perhaps a whole community (Bjerén 1997: 232). This results in cultural change as household members bring the public into the private sphere. Interestingly, while Bjerén (1997) describes this process as largely out of the control of immigrants, the participants I spoke with who were interested in this issue seemed to view it as a decision making process over which they had control. However, that this was present in some people's narratives may have reflected a *desire* for control more than a reality, in which adaptation and cultural continuity are more mystified than people would like to believe.

Both Praveen and Tushar indicated that returning to India was a possibility, and for Tushar this was an especially exciting idea. That return migrants often have more success in cultural preservation during their stays than do permanently resettled immigrants is no surprise, and Tushar alluded to fears that upon his return to India he

would be uncomfortable, having gotten too used to Canada. Aaron had migrated to Canada with intentions of staying permanently. He noted that when visiting home, he felt changed and less socially and culturally at ease than he had been before immigration. Aaron felt that he had simply grown more mature during their absences and that this was not contingent on culture. Linda described feeling pretty much the same as before her migration, which she ascribed to returning home so often that she felt like she had continued to carry on a life there.

Linda seemed comfortable with possessing what might be called a *hybrid* identity, and she recognised "gaps and contradictions" in herself (Papastergiadis 2000: 169-170). However, she did not view them as signs of failed identity but rather as a naturally occuring "negotiation of difference" that was the result of her carrying on two lives (Papastergiadis 2000: 169-170). Linda described this as a welcome realization, and reported feeling content about her process of personal change.

In contrast, Jorge was adamantly against cultural blending in his own life, suggesting that one's physical and emotional selves must be in the same place. Evidently he felt that there is no gradual transformation in the process of identity change, but rather a decision to adapt wholly to a new cultural environment without looking back. While Praveen seemed to feel that the "essential distinctiveness" (Papastergiadis 2000: 180) of his culture could be retained with effort, Jorge seemed to feel that if this could not be done, better to abandon his previous identity altogether. What is confusing about his feelings on this is that, at the same time Jorge is very concerned about doing activist work in rural communities in Peru. How he was able to claim to be leaving his Peruvian identity behind while still being involved in the community may have had to do with his

definition of cultural identity. Perhaps he separated his professional identity as a doctor and an activist, from his identity associated with his cultural environment. It may also be that he was protecting himself from grief associated with the loss of familiarity, by unambivalently embracing the change he saw as inevitable.

Sometimes the pressure to adapt and the personal changes accompanying settlement had a powerful impact on the participants, and they discussed having intense emotional experiences, a common psychological reaction to adaptation (Ward *et al.* 2001: 70-97). In the experiences of adaptation, many of the participants described coping methods to deal with stress. Ward and others (2001) suggest that, in the experience of settling in a new cultural environment, stress often results from the reality of settlement being far different from the immigrant's expectations (Ward *et al.* 2001: 76). A few of the participants described such an experience. Sharada noted that she expected to get a job very easily, while Min-Soo said she did not expect it to be so empty, while her husband Ha-Neul expected to start a business soon after he arrived. None of these individuals' expectations were met, and all described feeling depressed or at a loss as a result.

In their settlement narratives, many of the people with whom I spoke often made reference to how they had overcome crises, "documenting their successes and their failures and *drawing conclusions*" from their adaptive processes (Brettell 24: 2003, emphasis added). While they endured stress, they most often described learning something, growing or changing. Isabel voiced many such feelings. She described being under a duress that caused her to reassess who she was, which ultimately led her to overcome her emotional issues and come away from the experience a stronger person.

Described in Haour-Knipe (2001) by an interview subject as a loss or "a little death" necessitating a restructuring of identity (Haour-Knipe 2001: 66), Isabel framed her own experience as a process breaking down and building herself back up, now stronger and more aware of who she was. She noted feeling like all of the small things she had to adapt to, the weather, speaking English, bad tasting food, as well as more personal issues such as loneliness and loss of a familiar setting, put an immense amount of pressure on her. Isabel said this pressure caused her to realise that underneath the protective shield of one's home, there is vulnerability but also an undressed self, with no cultural norms and routines to eclipse feelings she was having about her experiences.

Adaptive stress is suggested to occur "at a point at which new friends ha[ve] not yet been made, and old friends [are] far away" (Haour-Knipe 2001: 69). In the process of starting a new job, making friends and getting to know her surroundings, Isabel felt that she was overcoming her stress and crisis. Min-Soo indicated that she was having trouble adapting but did not know how to overcome her sense of loneliness, loss and depression. Because she and her husband seldom or never interacted with others, she was not necessarily going through a process that would be overcome with time, as was the case with Isabel, who had multiple social networks at her disposal. While the process of intense identity change is assumed to be temporary, it is perhaps presumptuous to assume that this natural stage of adaptation is generally accompanied by integration into social networks of one kind or another, which, for Min-Soo, was not the case. Olwig (1998) draws a connection between personal change and connecting with others, suggesting that "the project of getting to know oneself may involve a deeply personal process of reflection and self-awareness; but this process also necessarily engages migrants of

identity in a dialogue with significant others" (Olwig 1998: 231). That Min-Soo did not view a connection between her own negative feelings and her isolation from others points to the fact that adaptive processes are not natural events, but are distinct and highly personalised.

Chapter 7

Cultural Connections at Home and Abroad

In each of their narratives, the participants reported multiple strategies of settlement, processes of adaptation and personal changes. Each of these was contingent on the participants' circumstances, needs and desires regarding their respective migrations. However, there remained the issue of how their connections to their countries of origin, and these countries' cultures, would exist and evolve within the context of their different lives and new homeland. For many of the participants, this process of altering, reorganizing and strengthening of connections to their old homes in their new homes and communities seemed like a final aspect of settlement, a need that was addressed throughout settlement, but may continue as an evolving process indefinitely. Many of the participants indicated a continuation of membership in their ethnic or cultural communities through co-ethnic group affiliation, remittance and idea exchange, and visits and return to their countries of origin. Overall, the participants' narratives on this subject suggest that a reorganization of the cultural group at home and abroad is experienced differently depending on cultural affiliation as well as on individual needs and desires regarding cultural connection.

As explored above, some immigrants whom I interviewed engaged socially primarily with their co-ethnic communities, while others integrated themselves into a non-culturally based social circle. Still others continued to feel that they lived across borders and consider themselves members of social groups in other countries. Finally,

some of the participants expressed ongoing desires to return to their countries of origin permanently. Continued connections with one's culture, through co-ethnic groups and connections to home, were a key feature of the settlement experience for many of the participants. Establishing how this connection would look in their lives was an important part of settlement for many of the participants, and likely for most immigrants.

Co-Ethnic Communities

Participating in a co-ethnic community in their adopted country seemed to be a major way for many of the participants to continue their cultural identities and practices. Everyone I spoke to had different accounts of their co-ethnic groups, and each participant defined it differently in terms of who belonged and who did not. Some of the participants made divisions within their communities according to lifestyle, age or other differences. Some described a powerful sense of belonging and reliance on their co-ethnic groups more than others, and some described connections to their cultural groups changing in relation to their needs.

Vidor described his co-ethnic group as broad, consisting of factions which differed in their make-up and in what they had to offer him:

> Amelia: What's the Hungarian community like in Winnipeg?
>
> Vidor: It's not Hungarian. There are those Hungarians who moved out from Hungary in '56, so they don't like Hungary government, they have these bad experiences about the whole thing. They're kind of bitter. I'm not bitter about Hungary really, so there's always this bitterness that I don't like about them. But they are very nice people, very welcoming, very healthy people. They have their own life, very busy life, they are very hardworking people. And the young people, they just...it's not broken down into Hungarian society, it's more broken down to what kind of group you belong to. Let's say there is this folk dancing group, that there are many Hungarians in but there are some Polish too, they all equal, there is

no culture, no national level.

Vidor illustrated above that there are actually two groups: the "bitter" group, comprised of political exiles who were older and migrated after 1956, and the younger group whom he defined as nice, welcoming and healthy. In the above description, Vidor allied himself with the latter group, noting that he was not bitter and did not like the attitude of the older group. This quality of bitterness seems connected to the political circumstances under which this group left Hungary, and Vidor seemed ambivalent about this group holding onto this historical connection and set of feelings. In the same breath Vidor stated that the younger co-ethnic group was "not Hungarian" but more culturally diverse. However, the older group was more ethnically exclusive. What Vidor seemed to be expressing was that he did not belong to this older cultural group; rather, he belonged to the younger, culturally broader group of Eastern European immigrants. When asked whether this second group got along, Vidor had this to say:

> Vidor: Yeah. Although I did hear about it, I don't know much about it. There is two dance groups in the city, and I don't think they are on the best terms with each other. And there is also two kind of Hungarian groups that are not on the best terms with each other, but it's just normal because that's just us being Hungarian. But that's what I heard, and I never investigated because I really don't care about it because I like the people. So I don't want to get into these little politics.

In the above explanation, Vidor stated that there were actually conflicts between people in this quasi-Hungarian group, but dismissed it as a normal, Hungarian trait. That this explanation is valid for the group he allied himself with but not for the older, "bitter" group is likely connected to who Vidor allied himself with. Vidor seemed to suggest that some conflict is narrow-minded, and therefore bitter, while other forms of conflict are

cultural, and therefore reasonable and acceptable. However, Vidor extracted himself from the conflict on all sides, saying that he just liked the people, and viewed the politics as petty and unimportant. When asked about the sources of conflict within this cultural community, Vidor suggested that it was the stress of starting anew:

> Vidor: It's a new country, new start, it might be. But again, I have a Romanian colleague, we're supposed to be enemies, I love her. She's great! You know the first thing that I come to Canada, there is no national or social or whatever differences, no financial differences. It doesn't matter what kind of clothes I have on. If I don't look that good, like the business man across the table, he won't stand up and leave or anything. So businessmen and people who don't make that much money, there is no difference at that level, there is no difference in the religious level, not in the Hungarian community anyway. No Jewish and Catholic difference, you know these differences are very pointed in Europe, not here. So there is something that Europe should learn from Canada.

Above, Vidor further broadened the group he was discussing to include all of Europe, in the context of it being preoccupied with social differences that were, according to Vidor, unimportant, unacknowledged or glossed over in Canada. That the younger, welcoming and nice group of his co-ethnics were behaving less like Europeans and more like Canadians than were the older, "bitter" group suggests that there is a perception among immigrants that age is an important factor in the settlement process. It appears that in the above statement, Vidor was attempting to present himself as possessing the traits that he considered Canadian, while shunning the traits that he considered European. This may be a personal characteristic of Vidor's, as he seemed to be conveying, but it may also indicate an adaptive strategy that he had found helpful in his settlement process.

Unlike Vidor, Tushar, who described himself as culturally traditional, described a strong sense of belonging and shared values with his co-ethnic community:

> Tushar: I really feel that it can't be better than this. The [...] community that we have here. There is a provincial community, and outside that provincial community, we have our own group, we meet each weekend for a religious group. And [...] in summer we go to picnic. And the purity of values that we share in terms of our provincial values, I don't think that it could be better than this, this is probably the best that we could find. So we are really happy about this.

In this excerpt, Tushar described a group within a group, the larger being his co-ethnics from the province of Gujarat, and the smaller being a religious group that he regularly engaged with socially. This group hierarchy suggests that Tushar considered religion to be very important, as this was the basis for his choice of his intimate friend group. In contrast, Vidor felt the most affiliation with co-ethnics who were less traditional and more *Canadian* in their attitude and lifestyle.

Tushar viewed his relationship as including himself and his wife, whom he often spoke for, using "we" in several descriptions of their daily activities. The group he described was very family-oriented in terms of gathering regularly for picnics and religious events. If he did not have a family, or did not have the strong religious beliefs that he did, it is possible that he would not have felt such a sense of belonging. This suggests that different people will use different criteria to assess the value of their co-ethnic groups, and what may draw one person to a group may repel someone else.

Tushar seemed to be comparing the way his current co-ethnic group met his needs to the way others had in the past. Earlier he had noted that the Indian community in Toronto was not as open and friendly as the one in Winnipeg. However, he was ultimately comparing his cultural connections in Winnipeg to his original community in India:

> Tushar: Well of course in India, you could find better definitely. But in terms of living in any Western countries and finding this group of friends and sharing the same values, probably that's something you cannot find.

Tushar's evaluation of his co-ethnic group in Winnipeg resembles a quantitative assessment, in which he felt that a set list of needs had been met, and while he could find better in India, he was for the moment satisfied that he had discovered an acceptable community. Tushar's description, however, seemed to allude to the possibility that he would switch communities if a better one appeared, as if it was not the individual people in this group who were important, but a certain manifestation of his culture and religious values that he was looking for.

What is clear from the participants' evaluations is that co-ethnic groups are, to a degree, interpersonal constructions. Who they include, where the divisions lie within groups, and what they divide, depends on where in the group individuals see themselves belonging, and although Canada as a nation generally offers freedom to belong, co-ethnic groups may be more rigid, importing the social divisions from their countries of origin. Nevertheless, reorganizations of co-ethnic communities abroad create new forms of both inclusion and exclusion. Ultimately all co-ethnic groups manifest a certain amount of cultural change in response to immigration. This is a change which occurs the same way that individuals adapt: slowly through time and in multiple ways.

Co-ethnic Communities and Conflict

While many of the participants discussed group divisions, groups were nevertheless more or less successful at maintaining unity, and only a few of the participants described incidents of overt conflict. However, when immigrants come from countries where there are social or political divisions, conflict can sometimes make the

congregation of a co-ethnic group abroad strained or impossible. Some of the participants described how their group avoided importing the conflicts that existed in their countries of origin, while others described being unable to do so, with differing reasons why not. Sophie, whose Colombian co-ethnic group included about five-hundred expatriates, attempted to explain why no formal Colombian association had been formed in Winnipeg:

> Amelia: Is it a big community?
>
> Sophie: We don't really know how much people we are because we don't have an association. So, it's hard to know. I know that it's supposed to be growing and, the last three years it grow a lot. So I'm not really sure how many people we are. But umm, I would say, 500 maybe or maybe more.
>
> Amelia: So there's a general lack of association? Because it's part of [the] Latin America[n] [association]?
>
> Sophie: Uh, it can be part of Latin America, uh but usually...there is an Argentinean association, there is a Salvadoran association, there's a Chilean association. So usually what happens is every country, people from every country associate themselves. But we haven't been able to, I'll say [....] It's hard [....] I think there is a lot of people from different backgrounds in Colombia, and I think the regions are different, and they came because of different reason of the conflict as well.
>
> Amelia: Like not getting along?
>
> Sophie: Yes [laughs]. I don't know. I don't know if really because of political backgrounds? Or political ideologies? But it's hard, it's hard. It's too recent I think, since they came. So probably it's just a matter of time [....] And actually we are kind of working right now, it's a program they're trying to analyse the Colombian society [....] And I am working with them [...] to identify needs of the Colombian community with the purpose of identifying what's going on, why we cannot get together or connect people, connect information to people that really need information and they don't have access to, or just to identify what kind of needs there are in the community.

At first Sophie was hesitant to define the reasons why the Colombian population in Winnipeg did not congregate. She first provided references to vague differences between regions, and then backgrounds, and then suggests that people were divided because of differing reasons why they left Colombia, even though all were connected in the conflict. When probed further, Sophie admitted that the conflict in her group was rooted in political differences.

Sophie viewed her co-ethnic group as consisting of all Colombian expatriates living in Winnipeg. This opposed Vidor's attitude, who viewed his cultural community as consisting of multiple groups. Perhaps the difference lies in the fact Vidor did not desire a cohesive single group, and in fact considered conflict to be a cultural attribute to a point, while Sophie seemed to want a group that could get beyond its internal strife.

More than once when discussing her co-ethnic group, Sophie referred to time as a factor in the conflict, as if people were still very close to their experiences in Colombia, and putting time, as well as distance, between those experiences and resettlement as a group in a new country was necessary for a sort of collective adaptation. This suggests that Sophie viewed people's attitudes and alliances changing in response to immigration, over time, rather than immediately.

Sophie extracted herself from the group in her discussion, and did not take sides, instead choosing to describe the conflict as one in which she was not partaking. She reported being dismayed that the conflict had followed her community to Canada. At the same time, she was confident that time would heal this wound, and inserted herself into the equation personally when it came to listing solutions, such as analysing Colombian society, a task which she saw herself sharing with others. Sophie also suggested that

solving this problem required studying the Colombian community back home as well as the one in Winnipeg.

When discussing social organization in Guyana, Sharada described a society in which regions were divided according to class, and social mobility depended on ethnic origin:

> Sharada: In my country in Guyana [...]we have ten regions. We are living in region two [...]and the city's region five. That's very far away to home. You're not getting the options like other regions closer to the city, we are last, get the last. Like, we say we are Cinderella country, that's the name for it because we are the last. We get all remaining there.

Sharada described experiencing discrimination when she lived in Guyana because she lived in one of the poorest regions. But when asked whether these differences persisted in Canada, she had this to say:

> Sharada: No. When you're here? Oh, you're happy when you see. You don't care where they come from anymore. But in my country, then you have this kind because there is the city, they don't want to talk. But here? Oh, they hug you and kiss you, they treat you—they welcome you because you're happy, you see somebody from your country, you get to talk and you know, you get to release something and you want to hear what is going on in your country, you want to hear what they are doing [....] The election is this year. They would always start to fight again so you want to hear what's going on. Yeah, when it's election time, they have big corruption. But after that it's okay.

Above, Sharada described sharing a feeling of community with people who would not have talked to her in Guyana. Sharada felt that the warmth that her fellow expatriated show toward her is evidence that they are not holding onto divisions present in Guyana. Being on the receiving end of a newly friendly and welcoming attitude from people who might have discriminated against her back home, Sharada presented herself as grateful

and happy, rather than holding onto feelings from before. She had elsewhere referred to Canada being welcoming of immigrants and treating everyone equally, which was similar to Vidor's assessment of Canadians being unconcerned with social status. That she presented herself as happy to get along with everyone suggests that she too was influenced by this sentiment of equality, and that it has made her feel like she has the right to this equality.

Interestingly, Sharada noted that one of the things that drew members of her co-ethnic community together in Canada was the desire to hear about news from Guyana, especially during election time, when she said the fighting and corruption are most rampant. Because Sharada was now in Canada, she seemed to have reoriented herself outside of the conflict, while in Guyana she may have chosen sides. This attitude is similar to that of Sophie, who described being more interested in the solution to conflict than choosing sides within it.

Sharada and Sophie both described themselves as existing outside of the groups that were involved in their respective conflicts, and both chose instead to belong to a new group, however informal, in which people were choosing to go beyond the conflict, either by studying its roots, or simply choosing to get along in their new environment.

Financial Remittance

Remittance was a frequently reported way in which the participants maintained connections with their communities back home. The participants described more than one form of remittance. The most common is the practice of sending money to one's family and friends who have remained behind. Some participants described this as a form of gift

giving, while others suggested that it is expected. Mundia sent things home that were unavailable or too expensive in Zambia:

> Mundia: I usually send stuff like, my sister's son is there and sometimes I'll just buy clothes [....] So sometimes it's little things that my mom wants, like perfume, maybe I was stocking up on her favourite perfume because it was on sale so I'll keep on buying stuff. Or my dad would ask me to buy ink cartridges because they're so expensive there. So just sending stuff, and I want stuff from back home like hair extensions, they're so expensive here.

In return for sending goods home, Mundia received things in return. This two-way gift exchange reflected Mundia's self-description as always being able to use situations to her advantage. In this case she was exchanging things she had for things she needed, while in other instances Mundia was strategically meeting people to make connections from which she could benefit. Also, Mundia was exchanging goods with her parents, rather than friends or others who had fewer resources than she. Thus she did not view remittance as provisioning for others, but rather as a convenience practice that benefited her. Additionally, Mundia came from a financially stable family, and did not have to leave her country of origin because of lack of resources. For this and other reasons, Mundia's explanation of her remittance practices was quite different from how others described it. Sharada, who left poverty-stricken Guyana for a higher standard of living and opportunities, described sending money to many of her friends in addition to her family, whom she supported often:

> Sharada: Yes, it's worth it, if you come here and work and send back.
>
> Amelia: So you do that regularly for your sister?
>
> Sharada: Yeah, because right now she's doing home care? I tell her, she can go and do that because you know, she knows how to do that, most

people do that. So I do that, I send sometimes for, you know if she really need it, because you got to pay for the program.

Amelia: Were they sad when you left?

Sharada: Oh yeah, they cry. Sometimes I talk on the phone, they say when are you coming back? If there's a party, there's a wedding, sadness, I'm still there. You know, I like to be there. I'll always be there. One o'clock, Two o'clock, I go. Somebody need you, you go. So they miss me in my village. And a lot of people are very poverty so if I send money to my sister, if I send this friend now, I wouldn't send for that friend again, I send to another friend, like, a boy, he doesn't-he's slow, he doesn't know how to read and write at all [....] he was like a brother, so I sent twenty dollars to him for Christmas, and he was so happy! Oh my God, because when you change it you get $5,000 [in Guyanese dollars].

In her discussion of remittance, Sharada referred to remittance as the same as still being back home in her village. Sharada and other participants connected remittance practices to missing home or being missed. The reaction to being absent for many people was to send things home. Unlike Mundia, Sharada cast herself as continuing to provide a service to her community from abroad. In Guyana, Sharada described being there at any hour when she was needed, which she has now replaced with financial remittance.

For Sharada, remittance was not just money, but the sending of a message that she cared for her friends and family, that she understood their lives and knew that they needed this money. This was evident when Sharada followed the list of people she had sent money to with an imagining of the things she knew they would use the money for, such as school fees, or special items that they would otherwise never have.

While Sharada described her remittance practices as something that she willingly took on, Robel, whose disposable income was comparable to Sharada's, described it as something that his family expected of him. Robel viewed this as a major pressure rather than a continuation of a connection:

Amelia: Do you ever send money back home to your family?

Robel: Yes.

Amelia: Do you do that regularly?

Robel: Not often, when I can. There is a lot of them and they need a lot, and I don't have a lot.

Amelia: Do you feel pressure to give something back to them?

Robel: Yeah, yeah. No idea what is the life here, and what they think. It's a different world.

Amelia: Do you feel like you can express this to your family, do they understand you?

Robel: Yeah. But sometimes they don't know because they think Canada, America is something where you'll get money like that. It's a big problem.

Amelia: So you feel pressure for that?

Robel: Yeah, everybody! Yeah, please send money! Why? Everybody. Also myself, I used to think like that.

Robel was a full-time student, and his funds were limited. He described remittance as something that was demanded by his family, a demand that was present because his family just did not understand the reality of his life. Earlier, Robel described his preconception of Canada as a place where one could make money easily. He made reference to this notion again above, noting that he also felt this way before he came, so he could empathise with his family's pressure. Likely his belief that Canada was a place where money was accessible led him to assume that he would be sending money home to his family regularly, and it is likely that his family was also counting on this possibility.

While Sharada had left Guyana only a year previous, Robel had been away from Eritrea for five years already, which may indicate cause for Sharada's stronger connection to home through remittance. Sharada was also more family oriented, living

with her child and parents, while Robel lived alone. It was clear that to Robel, sending money was not a way to continue a connection with his family. In fact, Robel was unsure if he would ever see his family again, and said at one point in our interview that, to them, he was "already dead." This attitude may reflect the detachment Robel felt from the family that he hadn't seen in five years, and the country that he could not legally go back to. By not sending money regularly, Robel may have been divesting himself from his community, while it seemed that Sharada was fostering her connection to her Guyanese community through remittance.

Financial remittance, and the way that the participants conceptualised the practice, reflects the way that the participants felt about their communities back home, and what sort of connection they wanted to foster. Sending money or goods can be a simple exchange, but its form and frequency of practice among the participants also reflected their attitudes about home, as well as their positions in their countries of origin.

Remittance practices are not always financially oriented. Levitt discusses the concept of social remittance as being the transmission of knowledge and culture between countries through communication, visits and return (Levitt 1998). I found the participants to be enacting a similar form of remittance, which I call intellectual remittance. This particular practice involves gaining Western knowledge with the purpose of transmitting it to professional communities back home, or to help communities in some way with Western knowledge. Several of the participants spoke about their plans to return temporarily to their countries of origin with knowledge, technology and skills in order to improve their community's standard of living back home, or to benefit the intellectual

climate that they originally worked in. Jorge wanted to return temporarily to Peru to set up community health programs for indigenous Peruvians:

> Amelia: How do you think you might do that?
>
> Jorge: Maybe one day I plan to build a clinic. I think in the future I'll open up a clinic or something like that. Not for making money, there's no business in health in my country. I don't think it's a business, health. It's cooperation with other people, organization, and take this opportunity to be better. Clinics, something like that, for poor people. I would be happy.

Above, Jorge described his desire to help people with few resources in Peru, again casting himself as a helper and a provider. He seemed to be interested in describing his motives for his remittance plans, stating that it was not about money, but about making things better, which in turn would make him happy. The opportunity Jorge referred to above is the fact that he had migrated to Canada and now had access to resources, including money, ideas and technology. The reason why this was different from financial remittance lies in the fact that Jorge wanted to return to Peru and build this clinic himself, rather than to simply invest money and supplies in the project. Jorge also described himself cooperating with others, this time describing a situation in which he would be working with others in his community. Jorge may have also felt uncomfortable living in relative privilege with the knowledge that some Peruvian communities are lacking in so many resources. While feelings of guilt may have been part of the reason for remitting aid, Jorge appeared to be acting out of more than guilt. Jorge was evidently deeply connected to the rural communities of Peru and his remittance practices involved a desire to continue a personal connection as much as to offer the community resources.

Unlike financial remittance, intellectual remittance appears to involve a commitment to return to one's country of origin, at least temporarily, and also a desire to

work towards a non-monetary goal. Intellectual remittance practices were discussed by many of the participants in the form of future plans, and this discussion was sometimes tied to the possibility of returning permanently.

The Plan to Return

Imagining or planning a permanent return to one's country of origin can cause a lot of internal conflict for immigrants. The desire to return is sometimes very strong, and depending on the changing circumstances in the country of origin, and the original motivations for immigration, some immigrants seriously consider returning home.

Some of the participants changed their minds about settling in Winnipeg once they had the opportunity to view their lives and options from a new perspective, and a few were moved to re-evaluate their decisions to leave their homes. Initially, Tushar and his wife Namita had planned to stay indefinitely after completing their educations in Winnipeg. While Namita remained firm in this plan, Tushar described being torn between staying in Winnipeg and returning to his province in India:

> Amelia: Did you have any reasons why you didn't want to live in India?
>
> Namita: He loves India [laughs].
>
> Tushar: If you ask me, I would like to go back to India. It's just that she doesn't want to.
>
> Amelia: Oh, have you both sort of talked about going back?
>
> Namita: I don't want to go back.
>
> Tushar: Well, these things that keep changing every few months. It's just a kind of like, I want to live here right now, I don't want to live here, so we will just live here for a few years, we will do what we came here for, like study and then after finishing everything I think we will be in a better position to decide whether we want to go back or whether we want to stay.

For some, living in Canada for a few years can change one's perspective about one's country of origin, and assessments of opportunities back home can also change. Namita found her circumstances in Canada to be preferable than her life in India, which Tushar interpreted as being unaware of what to expect in Canada:

> Tushar: I pretty much knew what I want to do and what to expect, and probably she found her life and her job much more exiting than what she had anticipated. And the thing I think here is she did not like the job she was doing in India, and I loved my job in India. So probably that's the difference.
>
> Namita: Yeah, my job was very bad in India.

Tushar and Namita had differing circumstances to which they were comparing their experiences in Canada. Namita experienced an improvement in her position, because she hated her job in India but loved school here, while Tushar stood to enjoy greater prestige in his field back home than he would in Canada, where a Western education was not such a valuable and rare resource:

> Amelia: You mentioned that [your profession] is in its infancy in India?
>
> Tushar: Well again, I have been out of India for four and a half years, with what I hear from my friends back home, it's really doing much better than what it used to. But definitely it will take a few years for the profession to catch up to Western standards.
>
> Amelia: So do you think that getting a Western education will give you the upper hand to practice in India?
>
> Tushar: Well yeah. Actually when I came here that was one of the main things, that if I get this education I can really get a dream job if I go back to India. So, yeah that's one of the reasons. When I think about it I might go back to India I know that I'll get a very nice job [....] And that I think very few people might have that kind of skills.

Tushar noted that one of his main ideas was to export his Western credentials back to India for personal and professional gain. It appeared that for Tushar, the value of his training made moving back to India very appealing. It is possible, however, that regardless of whether his credentials were valuable in India, he would have still planned to return, and that this was a secondary reason developed in hindsight to support his desire to return to the country that Namita described him as loving.

It is important to note here that there may have been a gendered subtext in the interaction between Namita and Tushar. Namita may have experienced greater prestige in her position as a student in Canada than she previously had as a designer in India because her identity was inscribed with continued inequalities between women and men that exist within many professions, both in North America and in India. Also, Namita and Tushar's personal relationship may have been evolving in their new environment, and while Namita said that she would return to India with her husband, her dislike for India and her growing love for her life in Winnipeg may have affected the compromises she would be willing to make for Tushar in the future. While Namita was vocal about not wanting to return to India, it may be the case that she would have provided additional reasons if she were interviewed alone, rather than with Tushar.

What is unique about Namita and Tushar's situation is that while having differing desires with regard to their homeland, as well as differing experiences in Canada, they had, at the moment, committed to a position in which they would have to make a joint decision. If they decided to stay in Canada or to return to India together, Namita and Tushar would likely both provide reasons for why the choice they settled on was right for

each of them. While perhaps maintaining the partnership is reason enough, other reasons may create a coherent foundation for their future living plans.

Imagining returning to one's country of origin is an experience which can change in response to the way people assess their lives in Canada in relation to their previous circumstances in their homelands. While some of the participants were moved to want to return, others had a growing desire to stay. Both choices were described in conjunction with coherent reasons that supported their changes in plans, even if these reasons may not have been at the root of their plan changes.

Conclusion

The way that immigrants incorporate their countries and cultures of origin into their present lives and their new homes is complex and variable. Levitt (2000) suggests that one common misconception held by Westerners is that "migrants will gradually shift their allegiance from the countries they leave behind to those that receive them" (Levitt 2000: 459). She goes on to suggest, however, that immigrants continuously connect with their homelands in several ways (Levitt 2000: 459). This transnational participation in culture and country of origin was present in many of the participants' lives, and manifested itself in their lives in several different ways. Basch and others state that:

> "We often define transnationalism as the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasise that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders" (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc-Szanton 1994: 6 quoted in Portes 1997: 812-813).

As alluded to above by Basch and others, transnational living involves connections to multiple communities across borders, in multiple countries, rather than

being isolated in one's new home by virtue of continuing connections with home. Accordingly, the participants described belonging to more than one community, and analysed what this meant for their lives and futures. In their descriptions of these affiliations, the participants often indicated that they were choosing where to belong, and that this was a new experience brought about by migration and the opportunity for change. Whether or not they were maintaining strong cultural connections or creating new non-culturally based communities for themselves, the participants seemed to view themselves as free to belong wherever they chose. This sentiment is noted by Ong (2003), who describes the right to be different as a commonly held attitude among certain immigrant activist groups in the U.S (Ong 2003: 5).

Many of the participants had strong connections with co-ethnic groups in their new homes, which they sometimes tailored to suit their cultural and social needs. Some were more successful than others at incorporating themselves into an ethnically-based community. These communities are often formed based on shared interests such as family-oriented living and religious beliefs, which was an allure for Tushar, who described wanting a close reconstruction of his community back home.

That a co-ethnic community should be defined as such only if it forms the backbone of its participants social lives and interacts happily and regularly is not assumed here, and Levitt (2000) notes that all members of a co-ethnic community should not necessarily feel "a sense of affinity or solidarity with one another" (Levitt 2000: 461). The choice to communicate and affiliate or not depends on culture, the legacy of the past, the circumstances of immigration and the individual desires and needs.

Some participants noted that they did not have co-ethnic communities in which people met and interacted because of various forms of internal conflict. These conflicts were sometimes a by-product of political problems in the sending country, which many of the participants seemed to want to overcome, but could not because there were too powerful differences in beliefs and attitudes. Papastergiadis, in his discussion of building co-ethnic groups abroad, suggests that communities cannot be built without trust (Papastergiadis 2000: 197). This may be behind Sophie's description of a fracture in her community, in which opposing sides of an on-going Colombian conflict prevented Winnipeg expatriates from convening together.

There were also non-political reasons for disconnection and fracture among co-ethnics. Ha-Neul and Min-Soo chose not to interact with their South Korean expatriate peers because of fears about gossip surrounding their business success. Mundia also noted that she distanced herself from her co-ethnic group because they gossiped, which she cited as a feature of older members of the group, while younger ones tended to interact with non-ethnically based groups. Vidor did not want to connect with some members of his co-ethnic group, citing a generational and an attitudinal difference as the source of his distance.

What was clear in these individuals' discussions was that they were not simply unhappy in their co-ethnic groups, they were asserting their independence from them. It is suggested that the contemporary world values independence more than interdependence, causing community to constantly be renegotiated (Papastergiadis 2000: 197). This attitude is likely a manifestation of capitalist-rooted individualism, in which

making it on one's own may be viewed as more of a success than succeeding with the help of others.

The desire to detach one's self from one's co-ethnic community may be connected to capitalist-influenced individualism, but it may also be the result of a desire to connect to non-co-ethnics. Most co-ethnic communities likely have some degree of internal conflict, but when these communities constitute one's entire life, one may be willing to live with it, whereas when faced with options, one may chose something new, such as a non-culturally based group. As Vidor, Mundia and others were evidently not dependent on their co-ethnic groups, they were critical of them by virtue of being able to step back and analyse their problems.

What should be considered in analysing why people do or do not have strong connections with their co-ethnic groups is greater than an examination of conflict. The participants were interacting with their co-ethnic groups according to their personal needs and the circumstances of their lives. Vidor described appreciating Canadians and may have been explaining his desire to not live within the confines of a cultural group by criticizing his group's attitude rather than considering his own desire to simply become more Canadian. As suggested by Papastergiadis, "communities constructed today in a context where attachments are multiple and partial....and people may participate in communities in different parts of their lives" (Papastergiadis 2000: 196). Many of the participants had the opportunity to seek out membership in various groups, and while some found that they wanted multiple memberships, others felt that a single group was equipped to meet their needs.

Planning to resettle permanently in the country of origin was a part of a few of the participants' experiences of immigration and settlement. Some considered their options with an awareness that the skills and education they acquired here would be valuable back home. Bjerén suggests that training opportunities give immigrants qualifications with value as well as the resources to return in the first place (Bjerén 1997: 239). Tushar's experience was a prime example of Bjerén's discussion, as he noted that he could get a dream job back in India once he had completed his PhD in Canada.

Brettell makes a distinction between individuals who, like Tushar, plan to return home permanently, and accordingly maintain ties with their home communities, and those who connect with home through visits and communication but do not plan to return permanently. She calls the former return migrants and the latter transmigrants (Brettell 54: 2003).

While Tushar was a prime example of a potential return migrant, Linda was perhaps the best example of a transmigrant, as she was quite active in two distinct communities, one in Winnipeg and one in Peru. She communicated daily with friends and family and had returned for visits six times in the three years since she had lived in Winnipeg, describing herself as leading a "dual life," a term also used by Portes (1997) to describe transnational people (Portes 1997: 812). Linda relayed that the reasons why she was in such close contact was not only to maintain relationships with individual people, but so she could remain up to date on the daily activities back home, also mentioning that she and her partner read news about Peru often. This suggests that these transnational ties are not merely about family and friends, but cultural communities as a whole, which are evidently greater than the sum of their parts.

Connections with sending countries were commonly displayed in the form of remittance practices through sending goods and money home. Each of the participants differed in their definitions of financial remittance with respect to what they saw their money doing and standing for among its recipients, as well as what sort of demands they felt were being imposed on them to practice remittance. While Sharada was willingly sending money home, and Mundia was happy to send goods home as long as she was sent goods in return. Robel was reluctant to do so, stating that he felt pressure to send money that he did not really have. For each of these individuals, remittance meant something different, and this difference was rooted in the differing financial resources to which each participant, and their families back home, had access. For Mundia, remittance was about convenience, for Sharada it was about support, and for Robel it was about familial pressure.

Financial remittances, although sometimes viewed as enmeshing home communities in a cycle of need, have been shown to contribute greatly to communities in dynamic ways. Adams (2006) notes that remittance-receiving households spend fifty-eight percent more on education than do non-remittance receiving households, which suggests that financial remittance manifests itself in the home community in non-material ways (Adams 2006: 53). That financial remittances can have non-financial effects was evident in the narratives of many of the participants. Sharada saw the money she sent home as a continuation of her active relationship with the community, and would later be given credit for the home care certificate that her sister would get with the help of her financial remittances. Rather than simply sending money home for the sake of supporting them, Sharada knew exactly what the money was being spent on.

While it is necessary to maintain connections with one's homeland to foster the duality that seems to inscribe several of the participants' identities, growing that connection with one's country of origin was a feature of a few of these individual's transnational connections. Some of the participants returned home or planned to in the future to work, or contribute knowledge, technology and aid to communities back home that lacked resources. This largely altruistic activity, which I have called intellectual remittance, after Levitt's *social remittance* (Levitt 1998: 926), was not something they could have done if they had stayed home, and therefore constituted a new way in which they were able to contribute to their communities.

Jorge described being able to contribute knowledge and innovation that he had not had access to prior to coming to Canada, and in this way was creating a new way to connect to his old home. Linda and Sophie also cited having in the past done work, and having plans for the future that were connected to their home communities, that they had only had the opportunity to engage in after having formed new connections from across borders.

This dynamic change in connections to transnational communities is reflected in Brettell's (2003) suggestion that the transmigrant "become(s) involved in the economic, social, religious, and political spheres of their sending communities as well as the host society" (Brettell 2003: 54). That individuals viewed themselves as capable of making change back home is not unfounded, as Kapur and McHale suggest that "highly skilled returnees to poorer countries can play an important role in development" (Kapur and McHale 2005: 176). The participants described their behaviour as not out of the ordinary, and several of the participants described their changing connections with home as being

about giving something back in exchange for their good fortune to be living in Canada, and that being able to share the wealth coming out of an opportunity was yet another way to continue a relationship with their home communities.

Feelings of success and happiness in Canada likely colours the idea of one's homeland, and assessments of opportunities at home and abroad are important determiners of how strong people want their connections to their countries of origin to be. The attachment to co-ethnic communities at home and abroad is a matter of choice but also a matter of need, and as needs change over time, so too are all communities renegotiated and social connections altered.

Chapter 8

Findings and Conclusions

Research Summary

The outcome of this research has been the documentation and analysis of the narratives of fifteen recent immigrants to Winnipeg, Manitoba, in Canada. The analysis of these narratives involved the examination of multiple aspects of how the research participants described and interpreted their experiences of migration and settlement. Compared to more quantitative approaches found in immigration research, the use of narrative in this research provided the freedom for an analysis and interpretation concerned with individual experience, which offered an opportunity to observe the way the participants personalized their settlement processes. Winchie and Carment (1989) suggest that "to explain personal choices of moving or staying and selection of destination it is necessary to obtain information from individual migrants" (Winchie and Carment 1989: 96). This research reflects the opinion that studying immigration and settlement using an immigrant's own words as data rather than, say, answers to a questionnaire or quantitative demographics, should be at the root of research concerned with the personal experience of immigration.

This research sought to answer a few key questions. Using the participants' settlement narratives as my primary research data, I wanted to discover how individual immigrants differ in their reasons for migrating, as well as in their perspectives and

descriptions of different aspects of settlement including experiences such as learning a new language, cultural change, and adaptation to a new environment with multiple obstacles. I also examined the different ways that the participants described the relationship between their cultural pasts and their cultural presents, with particular attention to co-ethnic group affiliation, identity change and connections with their former homelands.

The research produced a collection of narratives, all of which focus on many of the same issues with respect to immigration and settlement, while possessing uniqueness in circumstance, perspective and evaluation of these issues. I have argued that the experience of immigration and settlement is both intersubjective *and* personal, and is contingent on several variables. These include income, education, gender, age, linguistic ability, migration motives, and presence of and connection with co-ethnic and non-co-ethnic communities. All of these are elements that many of the participants pointed to when discussing the immigrant experience abstractly. However, I showed how each participant had distinct definitions and personal interpretations of these factors that came out of their individual experiences and respective identities. I found that personal differences, such as attitudes, desires, and needs as well as strategies and decision-making processes also strongly shaped the participants' descriptions of their settlement experiences.

While the first set of variables can be and have been studied extensively in quantitative research, the personal elements of individual settlement experiences have not and possibly cannot be studied in this way. This study, however, was able to explore the

connection between both sets of variables closely through qualitative research with a small number of participants.

This final chapter summarises the relationship between my research and the theory and literature that informed its undertaking, and elaborates on the significance of my findings in the context of the research area. Below are the key findings that have emerged from this study.

Individual Difference and Self-Representation

> "It is impossible to propose a category like the migrant, when all its members do not share the same characteristics or belong to the same class" (Papastergiadis 2000: 199).

As the above quotation suggests, the particular economic, socio-cultural and personal circumstances in an individual's life play an integral role in her experience as an immigrant. Abu-Lughod (1991) argues that there is no single grand cultural experience, but rather, multiple individual experiences of culture. She suggests, therefore that culture should be examined at the individual level (Abu-Lughod 1991: 153). By this token, I claim that there is also no definitive experience of migration and settlement, and I have followed her suggestion to study the personalization of cultural change in the context of my participants' respective settlements. It became evident early on in my analysis that some events in the participants' lives had many similarities, as well as shared meanings and definitions of several aspects of settlement. However, the participants' individual assessments and explanations of events and experiences were often different in clear rhetorical and attitudinal ways, in part informed by the "cultural rules and norms" from

their countries of origin (Bjerén 1997: 227-228), but also by their personal circumstances and the attitudes that these circumstances informed.

In the participants' settlement narratives, there was a vast difference of self-representation, and the way the participants perceived and presented themselves in their narratives was an important element to understanding the individual experience of settlement. I discovered that some of the participants described events as happening to them, and in so doing described themselves as having little agency in their experiences or responsibility for their unfolding. Others described themselves as the primary actors in many of their life events, in which they actively met their own needs and developed their own strategies. The participants who described strategies and plans of action were also often the ones who portrayed themselves in the forefront of their narratives. Mundia described every social encounter as a potential to make connections to be used later. Tushar sought out co-ethnics to help him arrange housing and attributed the help he received from others to be something he had organised and for which he was therefore responsible. Mundia and Tushar, among others, used the resources that they had at their disposal, but relied on social strategies to achieve their goals. Both of these participants, in their distinct ways, presented themselves as the primary actors in their narratives, seldom deviating from their own perspectives and actions in their narrative tellings.

Other participants, such as Sharada, expressed a transition from one pole to the other, first being shy, hesitant and passive, but slowly growing and changing into strong social actors, responsible for achieving change in themselves and their lives. Sharada initially felt the government or some other agency should have arranged her employment, and she only sought out help after she found that her needs would not be met by anyone

else. In her narrative, Sharada went from being a passive observer of her life to the primary actor, who was seen to accomplish her goals once it became necessary. Ha-Neul was also waiting for others to respond to his needs, and while he wanted information about certain aspects of Winnipeg, he never sought it out, and continuously expected it to be taught to him by others, namely his ESL teacher. Unlike Sharada, Ha-Neul remained quite passive throughout his narrative, and did not present himself as undertaking any strategies to acquire the knowledge or connections he described needing.

Each participant's descriptions of strategies and representations of self were indicative of his or her personal interpretation of how settlement should unfold. Evidently the participants' narratives did not indicate there to be a shared meaning of what it is to settle in a new country, as some conceptualized it as a process in which they would have to do a lot of work and adapt in immediate and numerous ways, while others thought that their adopted country would bear the responsibility for this process. This difference in definition underlay the vast difference in overall experiences of settlement for the participants.

Differences: Gender and Socio-Economics

The settlement narratives were the sites for locating the participants' diverse personal and socio-cultural characteristics, which affected how they viewed themselves. Differences in socio-economic status and gender were factors that powerfully influenced how each participant viewed and defined their experiences and practices.

Sharada migrated because of poverty and Mundia came from a financially stable household. Accordingly, each had markedly different definitions of remittance, because of multiple factors. Sharada's age and sense of responsibility toward her family back

home, paired with her family's poverty, influenced her to view remittance as a necessary financial support. Mundia, being in her early twenties and coming from a financially secure family, treated remittance as an opportunity to exchange goods she could get in Canada for goods from her homeland. Sharada also described a culturally rooted sense of family as at the heart of her remittance practices. She noted that in her country families took care of each other and she wanted to continue with this practice. While Mundia indicated she understood that some people relied financially on remittance, this was not part of her definition of remittance for her life. In considering this example, it is evident that culture and socio-economic status both informed many of the participants' definitions of key elements of settlement, of which remittance is but one example.

Gender differences affected how people defined and experienced settlement. I found that the stereotypes surrounding women, men and immigration occasionally emerged in some of the participants' representations of themselves, their loved ones or other people who they knew. Praveen described how his wife's credentials had not been considered in their migration plan because it was his goals for which they were migrating. Namita expressed her intention to follow her husband back to India if he chose to leave Winnipeg, despite the fact that she wanted to remain here. Mundia, a seemingly confident, assertive young woman, described herself as the most adventurous of the "girl-children" in her family, though she described herself as more outgoing than her older brother. Linda alluded to gender differences when giving reasons why she missed her family and friends more than her partner, Uberto. Though many of the female participants migrated alone, some of them indicated that they had a heightened sense of gender awareness during their migrations, as this is a practice that many of the

participants viewed as uncommon for women to undertake alone. Tushar illustrated this enduring belief, to the point that he described how he left his wife behind and later sent for her when he had everything in their new home settled, in order to save her the difficulties that early settlement involved.

While these examples evidently suggest that gender divisions and stereotypes simply existed in many of the participants' lives, they also indicate that many of the participants' perspectives were informed by some of the same gender assumptions that have been brought under scrutiny in the context of immigration research. The presupposition that women are passive bystanders and family-oriented homemakers without their own professional or economic goals has been an issue that has received a great deal of scrutiny, and is all but discounted in most recent immigration work (Brettell 2000: 109; Ip and Lever-Tracy 1999: 59). However, it appears to be part of the collective knowledge that informed many of the participants' understandings of how immigration unfolds with respect to gender differences.

A New Understanding of Migration Motivations

Behind all of the participants migrations lay differing wants, needs and goals. The factors that motivate movement are more complex than we have been led to believe by most immigration theory. Immigration motivations are usually boiled down to economic gains or political reasons (see Kapur and McHale 2005: 120), while some theorists have begun to pay respect to the fact that individuals usually have multiple non-economic immigration motivations (Winchie and Carment 1989: 96). In discussing motives with the participants, it became clear that immigrations are often driven by emotions and personal motives. The participants migrated for many reasons including adventure,

school, opportunity or to avoid danger. Nevertheless, many also claimed that they were meeting personal needs with the act of immigration, despite their other motives being diverse.

Some of the participants were at the mercy of external forces, and migrated primarily out of necessity. Robel, Jorge and Sophie migrated because their lives or those of their partners were in danger at home. Sharada migrated because she was experiencing extreme poverty with no opportunity for upward mobility in her homeland. All of these individuals lacked power in the circumstances of their lives prior to migration, and migrated to achieve greater power and control over their lives. Those who had power and/or financial means were arguably migrating with much less at stake. These individuals tended to have more philosophical reasons for migrating, and described personal and pleasure-related reasons as being at the root of their decisions.

In their study of internal East Asian immigrants, Ruback and others (2004) described many of the people they interviewed as attributing their immigration to fate along with other personal motivations (Ruback *et al.* 2004: 815). Some of the participants described equally ethereal reasons for migrating. Isabel described being motivated by something inside her telling her it was time, while Mundia indicated that she wanted to migrate because she felt a deep-seated desire to move. While these participants had multiple reasons that contributed to their decisions to move, these decisions were made with much greater freedom and control than in the lives of those who were forced to migrate. While the division between those who chose and those who lacked choice is not solely based on finances, it is based on power and control, and often those who had the most control also had financial security.

Praveen described his motives for migrating as somewhat different from those of any of the other participants. He described being influenced by a mixture of seeking further credentials and a desire to continue his cultural group's practice of traveling for education, and being teachers and preachers. Other examples of this persistence of cultural-historical patterns of migration have been documented and studied, such as the practice of Indians continuing to migrate to Britain as a result of the cultural links forged under colonialism (Papastergiadis 2000: 31). While new generations of Indian migrants likely view Britain as an alluring destination because of the large existing Indian community, the fact that they continue to settle there indicates that they are neither economically motivated to move to the nearest site of lucrative employment, nor are they beyond the cultural influences of earlier incarnations of migration. In his narrative, Praveen suggested that continuing on with the migration patterns of his community's past was influential in his decision to migrate.

Papastergiadis (2000) notes that in the classical phase of migration, the push/pull theory dominated much of the discussion of migration motivations in sociological literature (Papastergiadis 2000: 30). In light of my examination of why people migrate, the reduction of migration motives to a theory that people are " 'pushed' out of stagnant rural peasant economies and 'pulled' towards industrial urban centres" is an outdated oversimplification (Papastergiadis 2000: 30). Even later incarnations of this theory, which consider "personal and enabling factors" (Papastergiadis 2000: 31), such as population growth and political forces, fail to adequately address individual motivations, such as those explored above.

In varying proportions, shared definitions of migration, external influences such as cultural origins and practices and socio-political forces as well as internal personal needs can be seen in this research as dynamically interconnected in the migration motivations of the participants. While the participants described in detail their own personal motivations to migrate, they often compared their personal reasons to the reasons of others, as well as to their beliefs about why people migrate in general. For example, Ha-Neul described his motives of migrating to learn Western business practices as distinct from what he viewed as a primary conventional migration motive: to find a job. Repeatedly, the participants indicated that there was a collective understanding of why migration takes place, and often this was a belief that people migrated for economic gains. I found that this understanding was similar across most experiences. The analysis of how the participants interpreted their motivations provided a new understanding of how individuals view the causes of their own migrations.

Identity, Culture and Belonging

The narrative of settlement is often a narrative of change, and it highlights the relationship between the personal and the cultural. At one time or another in their narratives, the participants described how the process of settlement caused them to change internally. In comparing her initial fears: "I'm different, and maybe I'm not fit here," to her attitude one year later: "I can go all over the place and I don't care now," Sharada illustrated how many people gain confidence and become more comfortable as settlement unfolds. But identity change is more complex than merely growing familiarity and confidence, and, as several theorists have stated, it involves a move from being relatively unaware of the boundaries of the self into a state of sharp awareness of one's

identity (Brettell 2000: 114). Papastergiadis (2000) suggests that the discovery of identity is accompanied by the realization that one's identity is now fractured, incomplete and in need of addressing (Papastergiadis 2000: 168).

Also accompanying cultural change is the notion of loss, that the hybridizing of cultures is a threat to cultural identity and that "gaps and contradictions [in one's identity] are a sign of failure" (Papastergiadis 2000: 170). But this assumes that identity is at first a complete, closed phenomenon, rather than an ongoing process. The participants described their personal cultural changes and hybridizing in vastly different ways; some were scared of "losing" their cultures (Bjerén 1997: 232), which prompted them to develop strategies. Aaron planned to teach his children Spanish, while Tushar sought out a tight-knit co-ethnic community. In contrast, Vidor saw no need to preserve his culture, stating that he felt it was gone anyway. Jorge described hybridity as an unhealthy state, firmly stating that: "it's not easy if you live here and you think about there. Your body is here, your soul is there. That's no good." Linda seemed to accept her increasingly mixed identity, saying: "I have a double life and I am ready to have that double life for how many years [....] I have my life and friends and supports, so life will never be one country again."

Evidently, the participants displayed a relationship between identity and geography, though Papastergiadis suggests that migration threatens this connection (Papastergiadis 2000: 52). Some of the participants felt bound to this connection and tried to maintain it through a close relationship with a co-ethnic group, which for them constituted a home away from home. For others, it was acceptable to have their identities

disconnected from their homes, or reconstituted in relation to different groups, both co-ethnic and otherwise.

As I discovered in interviewing the participants, there are multiple ways in which the personal changes that often accompany settlement transform into cultural changes. While co-ethnic groups can provide a community for expatriates, some of the participants no longer wanted traditional or exclusively co-ethnic social lives, preferring to form relationships with people and groups that they would not have encountered back home, or enacting strategies that take them outside of the realm of their cultural community. Papastergiadis suggests that displacement has become the "paradoxical starting point for understanding the parameters of belonging" (Papastergiadis 2000: 168). This suggestion, that migration can cause one to understand who one is and where one wants to belong, was echoed by a few of the participants. While some of the participants described their settlement experiences as challenging their old attitudes and practices, adaptation and pressure may also have contributed to a few of the participants becoming even more culturally conscious than before. Such was the case for Tushar, who described realising how much he missed India after migrating, and became enmeshed in a strong co-ethnic group.

Individuals like Tushar lived as though they still belonged only among their home community, while participants like Ha-Neul and Min-Soo did not associate with their co-ethnic group, their cited reasons being a fear of competition and distaste for gossip. The reluctance to build connections and associate with fellow expatriates has been connected to the value of independence (Papastergiadis 2000: 197), to which Ha-Neul and his wife Min-Soo alluded in their shared desire to avoid the Korean community in business and

social settings. The act of "self-making," in terms of economic independence and a separation from an identity-forming community, according to Ong (2003), is a common practice among some immigrants, partly under the influence of capitalist entrepreneurial values (Ong 2003: 7, 9, 12). Ha-Neul's account of his desired independence as a business-owner and as a social person captured this value.

For many, belonging was viewed as independent of geography, and many indicated that they *chose* to belong, sometimes to several groups at a time, sometimes to none at all. Ong (2003) notes that some immigrant activists define "cultural citizenship" as the right to be different (Ong 2003: 5). This is not dissimilar to the right to choose *where* to belong, which in the context of Canada's increasingly multi-ethnic society is becoming a part of the Canadian ideology.

It should not be forgotten, however, that exclusion is another common experience among immigrants. Sassen (2004) suggests that the excluded, namely disadvantaged unskilled immigrants, "whose sense of membership is not necessarily adequately captured in terms of the national…often evince cross-border solidarities" (Sassen 2004: 653). That many of the participants couched their identities and affiliations in terms of choice may not reflect the reality for all immigrants. Those with the resources such as high incomes, education, linguistic skills and social strategies, had choice in deciding where to belong, while those who lacked such resources would find belonging only where they would be invited and included. Although one may have the "right to be different" that right may only be exercisable in some contexts, such as in co-ethnic groups and transnational cultural communities. The absence of clear references to exclusion among the participants' narratives may be due to multiple factors. Perhaps

some never felt excluded, or had no desire for belonging anywhere they were not already included. It may also be possible that exclusion was not something that people wanted to discuss or admit.

Clearly, the relationship between identity, culture and belonging is still a work in progress. In their narratives, the participants presented multiple definitions of identity, culture, group and place. The way that this affected who they felt they were, who they would be, and how this would change, was distinct for each participant.

Transnationalism

Transnationalism was a feature, in one way or another, in every one of the participants' lives. Portes (1997) describes transnational communities as "dense networks....through which...people are able to lead dual lives" (Portes 1997: 812). These networks are delineated by their members in the countries of origin and the adopted countries, and while they are the root of grand cultural diffusion through rapid communication and exchange, they are experienced in many small ways on a daily basis in the lives of many immigrants. The participants experienced transnationalism in many forms, such as remittance, travel, and continued social and professional connections.

It was made evident by the participants' narratives that people need not travel between countries to live transnationally. Many of the transnational experiences that the participants described were personal and psychological, but nevertheless connected them to global networks. One such experience was the voicing of affection and desire to return home. Tushar was most vocal about wanting to return to India, and described his experiences of missing home versus enjoying Winnipeg as a pendulum swinging back and forth. While his reasons for moving back to India were about personal preference,

Tushar would also be making transnational connections between Canada and his province of Gujarat. Jorge's imagining of his return was less about living in Peru, or even being there in person, but rather focused on ways in which he could affect change in his community through non-profit projects in rural areas.

Sassen (2004), in her extensive discussion of the local level transnationalism that takes place among individuals and resource-poor organizations, suggests that the individual plays a more powerful role in global networks than is often recognised (Sassen 2004: 650). While Sassen refers largely to the role of grassroots activist organizations, there is a connection between such network nodes and personal motivations to be a part of them. While Jorge voiced his professional desire to work along transnational networks to benefit rural Peruvian communities, this desire was driven by his personal connections to the culture and the place. It was this that fuelled his motivation to migrate in the first place and this that was an element of his drive to acquire Canadian credentials and connections. The relationship between the personal and the global is thus as observable as the global-local dichotomy, and getting at this relationship was made possible by listening to personal accounts of this connection.

Conclusion

As put forth at the beginning of Chapter 1, the ethnographic study of individual experience involves the examination of the environment in which the personal meets the group. What is unique about this research in the context of the existing immigration research is the focus on the individual's interpretation of settlement in the context of her world of meaning. In this work, I have addressed many issues with respect to migration and settlement, including motives for migrating, experiences of change, connections with

culture and community and perceptions of difference. This exploration has resulted in an expanded understanding of how the individual perceives and describes their personal experience, and what this means in the greater context of collective experienced, shared meaning and immigration theory. It is the words of the participants that have allowed this research to exist, and it is their words which will close this examination.

> I'm sure it would be different if you tell somebody that just got here, because, I will tell you the story of how I felt and how I feel now. You always say: oh it was bad, but it was not that bad, right? Because I'm out of that situation. But I'm sure that if you interviewed me in my first year I would tell you: this is hard.
>
> Linda

> And then when you think you start from zero, you realize that you don't. And that's when you discover your strengths and you see what it is that you have to make it. Everything different, from that understanding that everything is zero.
>
> *Isabel*

> Either I get citizenship or not, I'll be Canadian. When I came here, in the airport, that day I became a Canadian. That's it. Nobody can forcing me to go out.
>
> Robel

> I have dreamed...my dream since I learned English my dream has grow up in my mind "Okay if I grow up I want to move to another country." So I am very happy because dream comes true.
>
> *Min-Soo*

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about yourself? (Cultural/ethnic affiliation/background, Age, marital status, children, languages spoken, education)

2. When did you immigrate to Canada and arrive in Winnipeg?

3. Who in your family came to Canada/Winnipeg with you and who did not?

4. What do you do for a living in Winnipeg?

5. What did you do for a living back home?

6. Can you describe the services, if any, that you access from immigrant organizations?

7. What sort of things do you do in your daily life (work, childcare, activities with family/friends, university, ESL classes)?

8. When and why did you decide to leave your home and immigrate to Canada?

9. Can you tell me about getting ready to come to Canada?

10. Why did you choose Canada as your new home?

11. Can you tell me about settling down in Winnipeg?

12. Tell me about how you found a place to live and found a job/enrolled in school when you arrived in Winnipeg.

13. Can you describe your neighbourhood and your neighbours?

14. Did you have help from anyone when you first arrived in Winnipeg?

15. Who are the people that you see most in your daily life?

16. What role does your family play in your life here?

17. Do you consider yourself to be different from Canadians who were born in Canada? How?

18. Do you think you have changed as a person since you've been living in Canada?

19. How has your way of life changed since you've been living here? (Language, social activities, relationships)

20. When you think about your friends and family who've also immigrated, do you think that they have changed? How?

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Research Project Title: Immigrants' Narratives of Settlement

Researcher: Amelia LaTouche

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

1. The purpose of this research is to learn about experiences of immigrating to Canada and settling in Winnipeg. In this project, I want to listen to what immigrants have to say about their lives in Winnipeg, and what they think about different aspects of immigrating and settling down to live here.

2. Each person who agrees to be a part of this research will participate in one or two interviews of 1-2 hours in length. In this interview I will ask each participant about 20 questions regarding their experiences of immigration.

3. I will be recording the interviews with a tape recorder, and I will also be taking notes during the interview.

4. The identities of people who will participate will be kept confidential. Only I (Amelia LaTouche, Principal Investigator) and Ellen R. Judd (Thesis advisor) will know the identities of the participants, and statements made by participants will not be linked in any way to them in the written thesis. All of the audiotapes and notes that I take during the interviews will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home.

5. All participants are welcome to request a copy of the written thesis document after the project's completion.

6. Participation in this study is on a volunteer basis. Nobody will be paid in any way for taking part in this research.

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

aware a disclosure of information pertaining to child abuse cannot be kept confidential, and under such circumstances anonymity will be breached. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Amelia LaTouche (Principal Investigator)(204)

or

Ellen R. Judd (Thesis Advisor) (204)474-7674

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _________________ Date ____________

Researcher's Signature _________________ Date ____________

I would like to receive a copy of the thesis document upon its completion:

Yes___ No___

If yes, please provide email address and/or street address below:

Street________________________ number _____ apt._______

City_______________________ Province_______

Postal code____________ email _______________________