

Continuing To Be a Parent; Newcomers from Southern Sudan
To Winnipeg, Canada

by

Carmen Lazarus

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

MASTER IN SOCIAL WORK

Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

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Continuing to be a parent; Newcomers from Southern Sudan to Winnipeg, Canada

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Masters Degree in Social Work (MSW)

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Abstract

This research explores how parents who originated from communities in Southern Sudan make meaning of their transition to being newcomer parents upon relocation to Winnipeg, Canada. Already established parents in one setting they are now continuing to be parents in a new setting. This study asks parents what aspects of their concept of life and social customs which guided their previous parenting behaviours and expectations are reinforced or challenged as they continue parenting in their new location.

Eight Southern Sudanese parents, four fathers and four mothers from unrelated families were interviewed for their perspectives on their parenting journey since coming to Canada. Three themes emerged: **Listen** – maintaining the primacy of newcomer parents' voices, **School/911** – managing the influence of outside Canadian institutions on the stability of newcomer family life, and **Good/Bad** – parental provision of moral anchors amidst diversity in Canada.

Implications and suggestions for collaboration with Sudanese parents at the Community, Group and Individual levels are discussed in several areas of social work practice, from community organizing and program evaluation to advocacy and approaches in case management.

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1 Chapter One: Introducing the Study

1.1 Introduction

This research explores how parents who originated from communities in Southern Sudan make meaning of their transition to being newcomer parents upon relocation to Winnipeg, Canada. Already established parents in one setting they are now continuing to be parents in a new setting. This study asks parents what aspects of their concept of life and social customs which guided their previous parenting behaviours and expectations are reinforced or challenged as they continue parenting in their new location. Eight Southern Sudanese parents, four fathers and four mothers from unrelated families were interviewed for their perspectives on their parenting journey since coming to Canada. Their perspectives inform a discussion on the parenting journey across cultural borders.

The majority of the Southern Sudanese parents in this study left their familiar environment of their home country due to the coercion of civil war. Southern Sudan was under British rule from 1898- 1956. The period since British colonization has been marked by violent, fatal clashes between the Arabic/Moslem North and the African/Christian South as the native inhabitants have challenged the artificial nation lines drawn during colonial rule. The length and severity of the civil war created wide spread displacement of people internally and across Sudanese borders, a situation which generated 'refugees'.

Under the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is someone who:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her]

nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him [or her]self of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his[or her] former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (UNHCR, 2005; 5)

The 1969 Protocol relating particularly to the African region provides for civil disturbances:

“the term “refugee” shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his [or her] country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his [or her] place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his [or her] country of origin or nationality. (UNHCR, 2005; 6)

The Democratic Republic of Sudan is a ‘source country’ for refugees to Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (a) 2006). Sudanese refugees began to arrive in Canada during the 1990’s (Winnipeg Free Press, 2006d). Winnipeg, Manitoba was a designated site for Canada’s 2003 Refugee Group Settlement program. Group resettlement was ‘so that they (refugees) can maintain ties with friends and family members. Allowing them to remain with the groups that have developed over a period of years in the refugee camps will hopefully create the positive environment necessary to allow them to successfully integrate into various regions across the country’ (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (b) 2006).

Immigration policy for 2007 in Manitoba was to welcome a total 10,000 newcomers (refugees and immigrants) from around the world to the province as a means of increasing its productive capacity. This target increased to 20, 000 per year in 2008 (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2009). Sudan was listed as 8th in the top ten source countries for newcomers to Manitoba in 2004 with 225 arrivals (Manitoba Labour and Immigration, 2004; 15). The majority of newcomers (79.32%) remain in Winnipeg, the capital city of Manitoba.

1.2 Research Problem

The primary expectation of a Sudanese parent coming to Canada is to live in Peace. Considering the provincial government's motive of increasing the productivity of Manitoba, Sudanese parents' expectations would include opportunities to participate in the economy of the province along with access to education and health care for themselves and their children that make such economic participation possible.

It is therefore worrying that a study of 220 newcomer Sudanese within 7 Canadian cities suggested that a majority (75%) felt their expectations for life in Canada were not met. Eighty-five percent felt disappointment in the employment situation and experienced economic hardship relative to their host population. This disappointment had negative effects on their mental health. 'Mental distress was described in personal, sometimes somatic terms, but ascribed to social factors in Canada: social isolation, ruptured family relations, unfilled obligations and work-related disappointments' (Simich, Hayley & Baya, 2006; 437).

Literature on African immigrants suggests unease about the Canadian settlement experience. An African parent is recorded as saying 'Canada is good. But the problem is you lose your kids' (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2001; 137). The losing was the losing to a culture, experienced as 'bitter divisions within some families and a sense that familiar values no longer held' (ibid); it was also the losing of one's children to gangs and, sometimes to death.

In Winnipeg, the local newspapers reported signs which generated grave parental concern. A November 2005 article in Winnipeg's local newspaper referred to refugee youth joining gangs, with a settlement agency representative commenting that gangs 'offer recent

immigrants the social coherence, support and possibility of earning money that they often lack when they move to Canada' (Winnipeg Free Press, 2005). Only six weeks later a family tragedy held another local front page when a Sudanese young man stabbed his Sudanese friend to death and then was fatally shot by Winnipeg police (Winnipeg Sun, 2006). A picture of the grieving parents of the stabbed man appeared under the heading 'United in Death'. Both families united in a joint funeral for their sons.

Surely Sudanese parents did not travel half way across the world to Canada with their sons expecting to lose them to gangs or stand over their dead bodies in Winnipeg! Yet both these stories attracted negative attention to the issue of immigrant African families' adjustment to life in Canada. How are Sudanese parents feeling about their move to find peace? How do they feel about their children joining youth gangs to fit in? What strengths are parents using to cope and respond? Are these stories representative of the experience of Sudanese parents who arrive in Canada with their children and settle in Winnipeg, Manitoba?

Southern Sudanese parents are expected to share the universal emotion of concern for their children. Each culture, however, distinguishes itself in the way in which it trains its young for participation in adult society. What is the experience of parents who were raised in a particular society and began in turn to train their own children in that familiar setting and are then re-located to a new society? Why do the current literature and the media suggest that in some cases the results may be tragic?

This research explores the lived experience of parenting among Southern Sudanese parents in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in particular the parents' perspectives on the migration experience as it relates to their identity as parents.

1.3 Research Questions

The primary research question is:

How do parents who originated from communities in Southern Sudan make meaning of their identity as parents upon relocation to Winnipeg, Manitoba?

Within this broad question are other questions, some of which have been noted above. This research focuses on the parents' perspectives with an emphasis on the changes they sense in parenting between the two locales of Southern Sudan and Winnipeg.

- What were the Southern Sudanese parents' expectations of parenting in Canada when they decided to relocate?
- What type of strengths do they depend on as they address their parenting role in their new Canadian environment?
- How do the parents express their current expectations of parenting in Canada?
- In what ways do Southern Sudanese parents convey that they may appreciate Canadian social work support in their parenting journey?

1.4 Significance of the study for Social Work in the Sudanese Community

This research is relevant to social work for several reasons. Social Workers must continually inform themselves of the populations in their immediate communities as well as issues affecting these communities which may occur beyond their immediate locale. Prior to the 2003 Group Settlement of families from Sudan most social workers, teachers and other societal leaders in Winnipeg were unfamiliar with the family life or cultural norms of Sudan or the issues that determined a Sudanese parent's decision to re-locate with their children.

Social Workers are encouraged to be pro-active in seeking information about and perspectives of their client populations (International Federation of Social Workers, 2006; Mullaly 2007; Potocky-Tripodi 2002). Refugee parents, particularly those from areas new to the host population and noticeable due to language, skin colour and dress tend to attract societal curiosity. This curiosity can be channelled into a positive perception of refugees or a negative one. The negative implications and outcomes of the afore-mentioned research and newspaper reports can fuel a negative perception of the family life of immigrant Sudanese, and societal distancing from what is portrayed to be dangerous. This research aims to get a view from the parents themselves as to their perspective on what is happening in Winnipeg and to present it in a written report.

In Canada the government is the largest employer of the social work labour force and entrust considerable power in social service systems to assess and impact family situations (Hick, 2002, 61; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2001; 136, Awasis, 1997, xvii).’ Social workers are in a position to intervene when social issues arise, such as the previously noted negative experiences of Sudanese newcomers, by researching and disseminating accurate, comprehensive information. Efforts are currently being made in Winnipeg and Canada-wide to address the existing unfamiliarity with Sudanese culture and its application in a Canadian setting. This research is one such effort to generate accurate information about this client base.

There is a dilemma in the social services, what Structural Social Work educator Bob Mullaly describes as a ‘basic contradiction’ (Mullaly 2007; 320). He raises awareness about the fact that Social Workers ‘provide social care and social control at the same time’ (ibid). The

power and authority of a host country's laws lead to social control which may not be culturally sensitive to immigrants. There is potential, therefore, for an incompatibility of interests between the social service user and the social worker (ibid; 300). This is where social workers as the human face of the government have both an opportunity and a dilemma to identify, address and balance the contradiction between social care and social control. Manitoba's stated intent in newcomer settlement is to increase the province's productive capacity. Social agents therefore need to assure the returns on this provincial investment in newcomers by creating a supportive state of affairs where immigrant parents' efforts produce a positive family environment. How this is to be achieved is at issue.

Outside of government, Canadian social workers in various human service and advocacy agencies have an opportunity to build on the strengths of immigrant clientele so that the client can articulate their concerns and offer recommendations and alternatives to the governing bodies. Through knowledge dissemination social workers have the opportunity to forge 'the connection between private troubles and the structural source of these troubles' (Mullaly 2007; 296). In a new society, immigrants are very likely unaware of how certain policies were formed, what the historical-political context was at the time and who are currently most and least affected by certain policies. Again social workers at the community and group levels have an opportunity here.

In addition to their responsibility to their employers, social workers have mandated roles of human service, resource development and social justice (International Federation of Social Workers, 2006; Mullaly 2007; Potocky-Tripodi 2002). On an individual client level social

workers can validate and normalize the concerns of specific immigrant parents. Through a strengths-based assessment and the development of strategies for parent-action within the home space, at their children's schools and other arena of concern, social workers can encourage immigrant parents to address their parental concerns in a well-considered way.

This study therefore aims at social workers as uniquely placed to directly impact immigrant family outcomes both through governmental and non-governmental agencies at various levels of intervention and support. By considering the person-in-the-environment the social worker has a broad as well as an intimate perspective in supporting their clients.

1.5 Organization of the Study

This introductory chapter presents the research problem, the research purpose and questions, the significance of the study for social work with Sudanese parents, and the organization of the study. Chapter Two reviews two aspects of the literature. The first focus is on immigration literature – immigration theory and immigrant parents' experiences. The second focus is on Sudanese family life in Sudan and in Canada. The literature provides some background to aspects of the research question. Elements of the research question not addressed in the literature are also noted. Chapter Three outlines the methodology used in the research including the research orientation, researcher reflection, cultural advisory committee participation and the processing of data collection and analysis.

The research findings are presented in Chapter Four in the form of themes. In Chapter Five, each of these themes is discussed focusing on the parents' own voices; followed by a discussion by the researcher summarizing how each theme plays out in the lifeworlds of the Sudanese parents. Chapter Six discusses emergent themes from the research in terms of the

Canadian socio-historical context which shapes current thought and practice in Canadian social services. Chapter Seven looks at the implications of the research findings for social work practice in Winnipeg. These implications are organized at three levels: community social work, group work, and individual therapeutic interventions. Chapter Seven concludes with suggestions for future social work research amongst immigrant parents in Winnipeg, and particularly amongst immigrant parents from war torn countries in the African continent.

2 Chapter Two -Reviewing the Literature

This chapter reviews literature relevant to this study in two main sets. The first set of literature relates to migration and settlement in North America. The migration literature itself is of two types: theoretical frameworks and accounts of immigrant experiences. The second set of literature relevant to this study is research specifically about the Sudanese people, in particular, family life amongst Southern Sudanese during the current civil unrest and personal accounts of Sudanese refugees who settle in North America.

2.1 Migration Theories

People have been moving from place to place since the beginning of history. Some hypothesize that mankind originated in Africa and, through forces such as climate change and through adaptations that allowed population survival and economic advantage, migration has extended throughout the world (Curtin, 1994). Some migration theories focus on economics and push/ pull factors determined by economic disparities in two separate places. Neo-classical economic theories emphasize rational decision making; people move mainly to improve their economic advantage. They 'emphasize the individual decision to migrate, based on a rational comparison of the relative costs and benefits of remaining in the area of origin or moving to various alternative destinations' (Castles & Miller, 2003; 22) Citing immigration economist George Borjas, Castles and Miller explain that in neoclassical theory migrants maximize utility, exchanging information about various receiving countries and comparing options. Migrants then move based on the location where they may have an economic advantage. These theories do not factor in forced migration due to war.

In cases of war, countries in the midst of unrest depend on organizations such as the United Nations to declare a country a 'Source Country' for refugees, thereby making all nationals from that country qualified to be welcomed in safe havens, for humanitarian reasons. However refugee applicants have little power over where they are accepted, presenting an exception to the neo-classical economic theory of maximized economic utility.

The systems approach to migration theory is to consider conditions in both the sending and the receiving countries. The systems approach looks at layers in the society – the macro and micro levels. Macro level factors include government policies, national economies, social institutions and technologies. Micro level factors include cultural capital to find work and adapt, community relations, economic status and personal psychological resources. This approach to migration theory can be applied to Sudan and to Canada.

The macro system of Sudan is currently one of conflict in which the Southern sections of the country are advocating for political independence from the North. The Sudanese Liberation Peoples Movement (SPLM) via the internet and international ambassadors is appealing to Southern Sudanese nationals who are dispersed throughout the world to return and help build the infrastructure of the New Sudan. The SPLM's 'Key Elements of Peace through Development Strategy' states:

The SPLM shall work towards persuading Sudanese exiles with specialized skills, such as doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, agriculturalists, mechanics etc. to return home and use their skills for the development of the New Sudan, while those not ready [to return

permanently] can contribute during their leaves. (Sudan People's Liberation Movement, 2006)

The New Sudan would be distinctly Southern, distinguishing it from Northern Sudan.

The macro system of Canada is one of multiculturalism. Canada is dependent on immigration for its future growth. During the 1990's seventy percent of the growth in Canada's labor force was provided by immigrants (Li, 2007). Despite this dependence, Canada is selective in its screening of refugees. Canadian Immigration Canada (CIC) explains in the statements below:

Persons selected for resettlement undergo medical, security and criminality screening.

They must also show that they will eventually be able to re-establish themselves in Canada. (CIC, 2006c)

Canadian immigrants and refugees are free to preserve their unique cultural heritage on the condition that cultural groups also make the effort to participate in Canadian national life. Within this openness to cultural diversity certain core institutions (education, health, justice and defence) may operate with a standard that is set by the dominant established Canadian society (Berry, 2006).

While the macro level in Sudan suggests that the SPLM sees the civil conflict as a manageable deterrent it remains a deterrent nevertheless. While the Canadian macro system suggests all are welcome, in fact only the desirable are selected. On a micro level even the selected Sudanese find that they do not have the 'cultural capital to find work and adapt, community relationships, economic status and personal psychological resources' to fit in easily,

as recorded earlier in the study of 220 Sudanese newcomers in 7 Canadian cities (Simich, Hayley & Baya, 2006; 437). The systems approach provides a framework for a comprehensive look at a situation – both the societal factors as well as the personal.

Two additional frameworks are presented based on their usefulness in understanding how a Sudanese parent may experience the re-location and settlement process.

2.2 Berry's Acculturation Theory

John Berry presents a systems theory of 'acculturation'. Acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological change that results from continuing contact between people of different cultural backgrounds (Berry, 2006; 27). He posits that there are currently very few unicultural societies and that each country has a context into which newcomers settle and which is affected by the presence of these newcomers. All the interacting cultures are affected. Certain factors may determine how the effects unfold and are felt.

At the micro level of the individual or cultural group there can be easy adaptations or stressful ones with Berry suggesting a number of factors favouring either outcome. Some cultural dimensions are: how diverse both the sending and receiving societies are, whether conformity was/is an expectation, access to desired resources, and the nature of interpersonal encounters. Berry suggests that acculturation outcomes are not static and a group or person may move from feeling settled to becoming unsettled depending on the level of stress– feelings of cultural loss or uncertainty about fitting in - in a given context.

The receiving countries respond in a more formal way through policies that facilitate or restrict immigrants' participation in the economic and civil activities of the host society. Canada

as mentioned earlier has selected a multicultural response. Newcomers, both immigrants and refugees participate in the economy along with Canadian born citizens. Legally settled newcomers benefit from basic education and health care. After a relatively short period of residence in Canada a newcomer may become a Canadian citizen. Cultural groups are encouraged to form and can then apply for and receive financial support from the Canadian government for their organizational development.

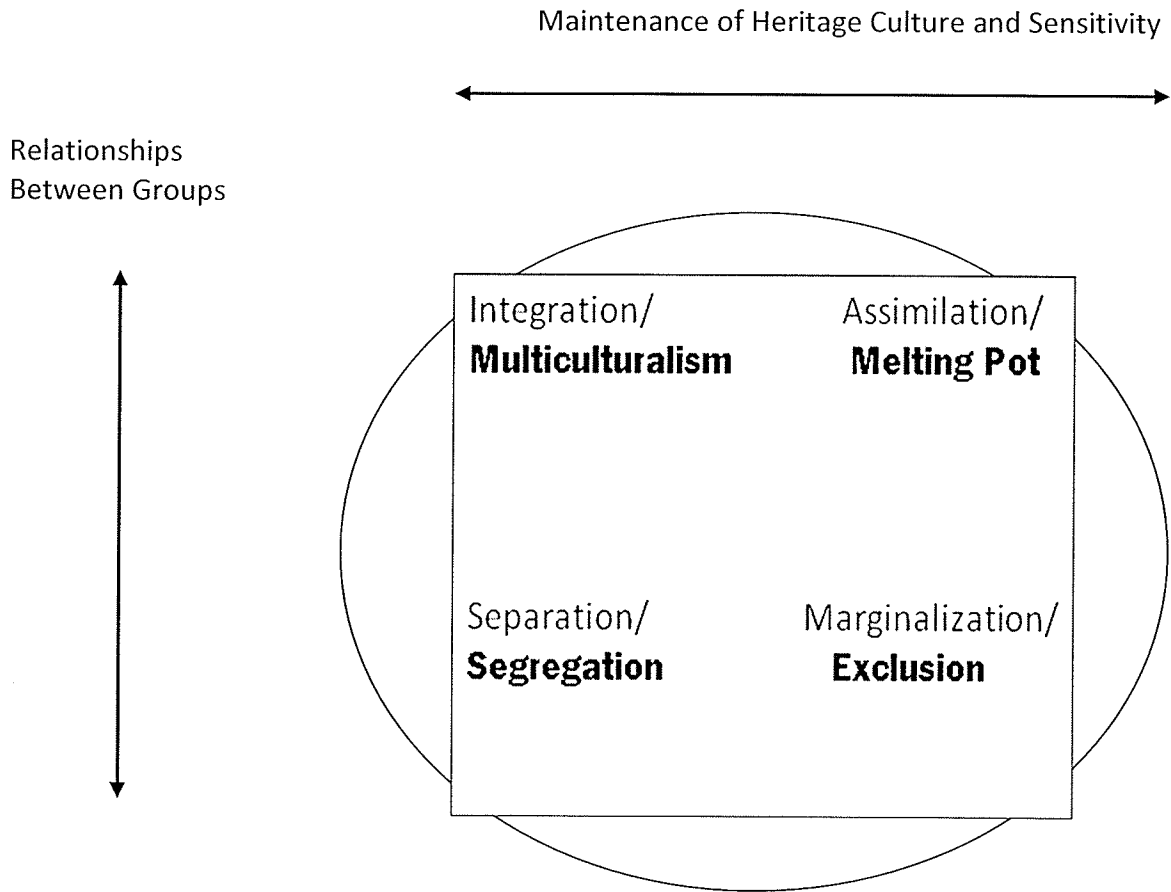
Berry describes four strategies which individual immigrants can select from: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization. The strategies distinguish between allowances/preferences for homeland cultural continuity and intensity of contact between the receiving society and the newcomers. When newcomers prefer to relinquish their cultural identity and assume that of the receiving society 'Assimilation' is the desired strategy. Some countries in turn make this cultural conversion the condition of citizenship e.g. the USA melting pot philosophy. The 'Integration Strategy' involves daily interactions with multiple cultural groups along with the possibility and interest in maintaining one's original culture. It also involves a willingness by the receiving society to adapt national institutions to accommodate the needs of newcomer groups. The 'Separation Strategy' occurs when people place a value on holding on to their own culture and also wish to avoid interaction with other cultural groups. Finally Marginalization involves relinquishing homeland cultures and also avoiding other cultures.

Berry's recommended strategy for acculturation is 'integration' – where the dominant society is open to diversity and the individual is interested in both maintaining aspects of the

culture of origin and in having daily interactions with groups from the dominant society. He however also notes that for some groups and some countries strategies of assimilation, or separation may serve positive functions. Berry describes a fourth strategy of acculturation: Marginalization, with the receiving society's course of action being Exclusion. He does not recommend this strategy as it does not foster healthy interactions between the host population and immigrants.

A diagram of Berry's acculturation strategies for both individual and country levels is presented on the next page.

BERRY'S ACCULTURATION THEORY



In Berry's model an individual may choose to move from a personal strategy of separation to one of integration if the host society has an accommodating policy such as multiculturalism. While individuals in a multicultural society (and in a 'melting pot' society to a large measure) have choices, a person in a society with exclusion as its policy is not afforded this option.

2.3 Sluzki's U-Curve Adaptation Model (1979)

Another method of conceptualizing immigration is a sequential approach. Sluzki (1979) suggested the migration process follows a predictable U-curve pattern with discrete stages (See

diagram on page 25). A person or family begins the migration process with the first concrete efforts to leave (Preparatory Stage) when a concerted effort is made to depart and prepare a new destination for settlement. This can be a hurried departure with little fanfare or a celebration with much planning. Departure is followed by the Actual Move; a stage predominated with the logistics of settlement – finding shelter, food, schools, and jobs. During this time there is some disorientation and a family may perform less well than they had at home where things were familiar. However, the energy of the actual move leads to a Moratorium Stage during which the migrant family improve their performance as they adapt to their new location.

This improvement in performance is due to over compensation, a type of frantic energy to make things work. The energy eventually is expended and some dissonance between expectations and the reality of the new environment things becomes unavoidable. Family relationships get stormy (Crisis Stage) as values, norms and mores from the culture of origin undergo testing and change with children often being the first to bring the tension between cultures into the home. A final stage is the Trans-generational stage where children who either arrived in the host society at a young age or were born in the host society perform well in the host society, despite a dual culture at home. At this point, the children's high performance pulls the whole family's societal performance up.

Based on these predictable stages Sluzki proposes an assessment of which stage in the migration process a group or individual is at. Intervention to assist a family in the migration process can then be tailored and targeted to specific points in time in the migration process.

Sudanese family life both in Sudan and in the interim countries which represent part of the refugee journey to Canada.

2.4 Sudanese Family Life in Sudan and enroute to Canada

Movement by present day Southern Sudanese refugees is due to a need for survival.

Entire communities are forced to re-locate under the coercion of civil war and threat of death, drought, and destruction of their farms and communities.

Sudan is the largest country on the African continent. In 1999, Sudan was one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse countries in the world. It had nearly 600 ethnic groups speaking over 400 languages and dialects (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Sudan). Ethnic identity is highly fluid in Sudan and depends upon the criteria by which individual groups of Sudanese distinguish themselves from other groups. The largest commonly recognized ethnic groups are Arabs, Nubians, Beja, and Fur (all Northerners and Muslims), and the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, and Nuba, all Nilotic peoples of the South. The Arabs and Dinka are the largest groups within their respective regions. All these ethnic groups are subdivided into tribal or other units. In rough percentages, Sudan's population is composed of 50 percent black Africans, 40 percent Arabs, 6 percent Beja, and 3–4 percent other (Library of Congress Country Studies, 1991).

Citizenship and Immigration Canada's country profile describes Sudanese family life as 'traditional' with men making the major decisions, and women making decisions relating to domestic matters and child care (<http://www.cp-pc.ca>). Family structure and identity are based on the extended family under the leadership of a respected male elder. Within gender groups social differentiation is based on age. (Kenyon, 1994) Marriages, particularly in rural areas are arranged by the extended family. The purpose of these arranged marriages is to 'form

important ties with other families' (<http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/sudan>). Women's sexuality is controlled with a focus on fidelity and family honour. Throughout the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia) genital mutilation, including clitoridectomy and infibulations, is wide spread as a means of controlling female sexuality, creating 'good women' and ensuring family honour (Kenyon, 1994, Matsouka & Sorenson 2001).

In a study on the value of children in several African countries it was found that 'children secure conjugal ties, offer social security in illness and old age, assist with labor, confer social status, secure property rights and inheritance, provide continuity through re-incarnation and maintaining the family lineage as well as satisfying parent's emotional needs' (Dyer, 2007, Nsamenang, 2000). These societal values determine the desire to have children. They focus on a child's practical utility and the social significance placed on generational continuity. Emotional attachment is therefore only one aspect of the parent-child relationship. An African couple therefore enters marriage with a social expectation that they will have children and will raise their children according to these social values.

Studies specific to the Sudan confirm that children are valued as resources for the family and as a result family sizes tend to be desirably large (Chuol, 2006, Abusharaf 2002, Fadlalla 2007). Sudanese girls remain contributors within their family until married when they move to the husband's family. This move provides her family of origin with a dowry. Dowry is also practiced in the neighboring countries of the Horn of Africa. Sudanese boys stay within the family and are responsible for earning the family's resources including marrying wives who

provided children. Boys are also responsible for the care of the elderly and the family honor (Chuol, 2006).

Due to the 30 year civil war in Sudan the traditional Southern Sudanese society has been forced to change. Sudanese researcher Rogaia Abusharaf (2002) noted that until 1955 out-migration from Southern Sudan was very uncommon. Francis Deng (1972 cited in Abusharaf) adds that for the Dinka (a large Sudanese tribe) 'until recently going to foreign lands was not only a rarity, but a shame'.

Gender roles, household composition and community organization within Sudan have all been affected by the civil war (Abusharaf, 2002, 2006, Deng, 1995, Kenyon 1994, Smich, Hamilton & Baya 2006). Most people displaced by the civil war are Southern Sudanese internally displaced within Sudan, moving to urban centers. Many flee out of Sudan to neighboring countries – Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, Chad, and Kenya.

Saudi Arabia was a preferred country for Sudanese labor migration (Castles & Miller, 2003) especially for men, who found lucrative jobs there. However, due to political conflict, settlement in the Middle East became risky for Sudanese families with some choosing immigration to the relative safety of Canada. Sudanese fathers often remain in Saudi Arabia in order to continue financial support to their Canadian-based families (Abusharaf, 2002). Both the internal migration within Sudan and the out migration from Sudan have changed the traditional family composition. Women are becoming more independent by force of circumstance and extended family ties become broken.

A feature of Southern Sudan's tragic reality has been the separation of families. Of particular note are the 'Lost Boys of Sudan', more than 27,000 boys who fled when their villages were attacked by the Janjaweed militia and formed themselves into walking groups seeking asylum. Some were abducted and pressed into warfare by both sides of the warring factions (Arieff, 2006). These Sudanese children to a large extent have parented themselves in peer groups that have changed during the course of their movement to seek safe havens (Bok, 2003, Bul Dau, 2007, Eggers, 2006). Through the Unaccompanied Minor Refugee Program 3,500 boys and girls were brought to the United States and 600 to Canada; 200 of whom were placed in Winnipeg, (CBC Manitoba, 2005).

Canada became a destination for Southern Sudanese refugees when Sudan was assigned as a 'source country' for refugees (Citizenship and Immigration Canada (b) 2006). Sudanese Source Country refugees apply through the Canadian High Commission based in Cairo, Egypt or from refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda. The application process requires parents' personal determination as families undergo incredible stress regardless of whether they are located in a refugee camp or in Egyptian safe houses. Amnesty International reports that Sudanese who take the initiative to go to the Canadian High Commission in Cairo experience long delays and repressive treatment by Egyptian police (Amnesty International, 2006).

During the refugee assessment process Sudanese families are in limbo for many years. They are dependent on the largesse of the United Nations and their host country. Refugee

parents in the camps no longer live in their extended kinship groups, do not have control over providing food and money for their children and experience erratic school /work routines.

Although many people are fleeing the country the government of Southern Sudan, the Sudanese People's Liberation Party (SPLM), reaches out to bring people back. The SPLM maintains a website www.splmtoday.com which posts news about Sudan from the government's viewpoint. In its 15 point Programme the SPLM makes its appeal to the Sudanese Diaspora:

The SPLM shall work towards persuading Sudanese exiles with specialized skills, such as doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, agriculturists, mechanics, etc., to return home and use their skills for development of the New Sudan, while those not ready can contribute during their leaves. (SPLM, 2007; 11)

The ongoing fighting is a deterrent for Sudanese families to return, however the SPLM's appeal is an open welcome in the event that return to Sudan should become attractive to the Sudanese Diaspora.

This literature review on Sudanese lifestyles in Sudan and in interim places of asylum illustrates a situation for families of tremendous uncertainty and uncontrollable change. Until recently, 30 years ago, Sudanese lifestyles were based on predictable tribal traditions. The Sudanese civil war tore families apart within Sudan, internally displacing millions of people and changing family arrangements. Many children became orphaned and joined youth bands seeking safe shelter. Various family formations survived. Some Sudanese family groups decided to re-locate internally, others chose to flee Sudan. The refugee application process itself

required further family adjustment as refugees anxiously waited years for re-location to a safe haven. Despite the fighting the newly formed government aims at re-building and encourages the Sudanese Diaspora to return and help in this effort.

In the next chapter I discuss the research at hand and the method employed to engage Sudanese parents in Winnipeg in a research process about their parenting experiences.

3 Chapter Three– Method

3.1 Research Orientation

For this research I chose an anti-oppressive (Potts & Brown, 2005) and indigenous (Smith, 2004) research approach in the research tradition of phenomenology (Van Manen, 1990). I aim to draw on these three ways of organizing thought and data to present an authentic perspective of the Southern Sudanese parent's everyday, intimate family experiences and as they continue parenting in Canadian Winnipeg.

Anti-oppressive research encourages the equity of power between the researcher and the researched (Potts & Brown; 268). As a research student with university approval, but no powerful community mandate, I approached the Sudanese participants with great regard for their freedom not to participate. Potts and Brown (2005; 259) argue that 'those people who have experienced an issue are perhaps the best people to research that issue'. My strength lay in my own immigrant history, my status as an immigrant parent and my association with a few members of the Sudanese immigrant community in Winnipeg.

I migrated to Winnipeg five years before the interviews were conducted for this study, which is a similar time frame to that of the participants I planned to engage. My own relationship with my children experienced modification as a result of migration as we continued our previously familiar interactions in a new setting. I saw some positives and some negatives in our new Canadian based parent-child relationship. As I approached the Sudanese parents I felt their perspective would be genuinely as valid as mine. My job as a researcher was to establish a rapport that would enable a candid conversation guided by interview questions that would

clarify to the readers of the study how the Sudanese parents experienced their parent-child relationships. This clarified view could then form the basis of discussion, understanding and action planning between immigrant parents and human service providers. The anti-oppressive framework offered the research grounding, keeping it accountable, practical and user-focussed.

Indigenous research adds to the anti-oppressive concept by requiring that the people being researched have a say in what gets researched (Smith, 2004; 177). The decision as to what is useful and worthy of research should be influenced, if not determined, by the people under consideration. Indigenous research therefore maintains that research should be used by and useful to local communities and specific groups. My challenge then was to include the Southern Sudanese parent community in developing the research questions and determining how the resultant information may be used. This inclusion and accountability was done through collective consideration with a Sudanese Cultural advisory group (Smith 2004; 187, Potts & Brown 2005; 268). In both recruitment and analysis, the advisory group shaped the creation of knowledge in the research process.

A phenomenological approach was used to explore the Southern Sudanese parents' life world, the intimate ways that a Sudanese parent experiences the rhythms of everyday family life and societal interactions in Sudan and in Winnipeg. A person's life world is simply the intimate world in which they operate and of which they are intuitively aware. Van Manen encourages the phenomenological researcher's commitment to the investigative process as a way to present a case for action:

To become more thoughtfully or attentively aware of aspects of human life which hitherto were merely glossed over or taken-for-granted will more likely bring us to the edge of speaking up, speaking out or decisively acting in social situations that ask for such action. (Van Manen 1990; 154)

Some moments of parenting are particularly poignant, such as the first sign or knowledge that a pregnancy has occurred, or the birth of a child. Some aspects of the parenting experience are more routine – daily feeding, clothing, hygiene, ordering of the day. Both the poignant and the routine make up the intimate rhythms of the life world of the parent

For the parent who shares their story much of their life world is not experienced in a conscious way, they simply get on with it. Phenomenological interviewing seeks to get that pre-reflective, original expression (Van Manen, 1990; 7) from the parent, which is more likely to be the essence of how they experience daily life, rather than a more considered approach such as when answering survey questions. . To reduce the distraction of my lack of awareness of Sudanese 'common sense' I prepared myself by reading autobiographies of Sudanese refugees in North America (Bok, 200; Bul Dau, 2007; Eggers,2006), writings of Sudanese in Canada (Choul, 2006), and becoming familiar with the rituals around Sudanese hospitality, meals and some recipes (Sandler, 1993). I also noted the assumptions I may make [correctly or incorrectly] as a black non-African (Gordon, 1998). Having chosen a phenomenological approach which focuses on the participants' intuitive comments about their life my goal was to reduce the jarring difference between our cultures.

Parents all over the world are aware of, but may not articulate 'the force of incredible transformation' (Van Manen; 42) that one's children have on one's life. Each parent's life world will be 'concretely unique' and 'universally essential' (Van Manen; 23). From phenomenological research I aim to present the essentials of the experience of continuing to be a Southern Sudanese parent in the new environment of Canadian Winnipeg, based on the uniquely personal transformations that are expressed by the Sudanese parents in this study. My efforts will be one plausible interpretation of the Sudanese parents' expression at the moment in time of the interview. The phenomenological aspect of this research aims to successfully present that unique vantage point so that the parents' experiences may 'bring us to the edge' of social action.

In keeping with the research orientation above, the research began with an aim to be anti-oppressive, indigenous and phenomenological. Issues of power equity, usefulness to the participant community and genuineness shaped the method.

3.2 The Sudanese Cultural Advisory Committee

To address power equity and usefulness to the participant community I asked a Sudanese leader known to me to discuss my research idea. Incorporating his input I developed the research proposal for submission to the academic committee of the Social Work Faculty of the University of Manitoba. Through this first Sudanese contact I approached three additional Sudanese community leaders and presented the draft research proposal. The Sudanese group discussed the research idea and then offered advice on the design of the recruitment brochures. After university ethics approval was received for the research three of the Sudanese leaders remained available to advise the research and signed a confidentiality agreement

officially becoming the Cultural Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC further assisted in recruitment by personally mentioning the research to potential participants.

During the interview phase I kept the Sudanese Cultural Advisory Committee up to date on the number of completed interviews and when the sample target had been achieved. At the point of review of the draft report contact information for two members of the CAC had changed. Easy contact was made with the initial Sudanese leader. A summary of the emergent themes was discussed with him. However, time considerations made it difficult for him to attend a presentation of the initial report in its entirety at a conference held at the University of Manitoba.

3.3 Sample Recruitment

Brochures, flyers and cover letters describing the research and inviting participation were distributed to settlement and employment agencies and to churches which had large numbers of Sudanese members in their congregations. Brochures were also distributed by the researcher when she attended public gatherings such as a public advocacy march raising awareness regarding the dismal situation in the Darfur region of Sudan. I was invited to Sudanese events by members of the Cultural Advisory Committee and the research brochures were distributed at these events as appropriate. At one Sudanese function - a baby's christening - the pastor gave me a few minutes to inform the gathering about the research.

All the people who eventually participated in the research reported that they made their final decision due to a direct invitation. Each respondent named either a member of the CAC, a mutual friend of the researcher or me as their source for hearing about the research. None of the agencies were named as sources of reference. The brochure was recognized when

shown but had not been read. The importance of personal contact has been noted in other research with immigrant communities (Reinhartz 1992; 28, Bernhard, Landholt & Godring, 2005). Establishing some rapport with the targeted population was essential for sample recruitment in this study and can be largely credited to the members of the Sudanese Cultural Advisory Committee.

Participation was voluntary and confidential. Interested participants had to let me know directly that they were interested. Language became a selection criterion as some Sudanese were less comfortable with English than would be required for an interview. One participant offered to translate for his wife but due to the breach in confidentiality this may have created, his offer was declined. A CAC member noted that many Sudanese mothers may have held back from participation because they could not speak English due to less opportunity for girls in English language education in Sudan. Recruitment remained open until 8 persons had been interviewed and a saturation level had been reached (Rubin & Barrie, 2000).

3.4 Research Procedures

There were 6 parts to this research:

1. Eight individual in-person interviews which were digitally audio-recorded.
2. Transcription of the audio-recordings by the researcher.
3. An initial follow up meeting with individual participants (about 1 hour long) to confirm that their interview audio-recording was correctly transcribed. Audio CD copies of each interview and a written transcript were given to each participant for reference.
4. Coding of the transcripts by interview question.
5. Re-coding by emergent themes. (Boyatzis, 1998)

6. A second follow up meeting with the participants (estimated at 1/2 hour long) to check for their reaction to the emergent themes. A written summary of the themes was provided.

3.5 The Interviews

Initially the venue for the interviews was the Winnipeg Millennium Library in downtown Winnipeg and three father-interviews were conducted there. However, the other interviews were held at locations which were more convenient to the participants (homes and churches).

The interviews were audio-recorded conversations with four mothers and four fathers guided by 11 open-ended questions which explored issues derived from the literature review. The actual interview guide appears in the Appendix. Each participant was given their own copy of the interview questions to read before and during the interview and to take with them for future reference.

In summary, the issues raised in the interview questions were:

- Why participants chose to participate
- Parenting at different times
 - Prior to arrival in Canada
 - Immediate arrival
 - Current
- Gendered experiences
- Guidance to other Sudanese newcomers
- Thoughts of returning to Sudan
- Feelings of loss/ achievement in Canada

- Personal recommendations to improve the parenting experience in Winnipeg

3.6 Follow Up Meetings – Post-Interview

Research participants were contacted to discuss the audio CD's and the transcripts of their interview four months after the interviews had taken place. Two such meetings took place with father participants. I was very familiar with the transcripts since I did the transcriptions myself. The fathers however, recalled the interviews less clearly and found the written form of an oral interview awkward reading. They nevertheless were active in the review of the transcripts and clarified areas where I was uncertain of the wording.

Of the other six participants, one father had left Winnipeg for work in another province while the other father and the 4 mothers experienced difficulties in scheduling a meeting with me in the limited time I was available [I had re-located to Toronto]. I mailed out the interview audio CD's and transcripts to the five participants with whom I could not meet. Written reminders of my contact information were provided so that participants could contribute feedback by telephone, email or letter. One of the participants who attended a follow up meeting called me to clarify an aspect of his transcript that he felt he had presented in a confusing way.

3.7 Follow Up Meetings – Emergent Themes

I attempted telephone contact with all members of the Cultural Advisory Committee (CAC) and the 7 remaining interview participants when a Draft of the Final Report was ready (18 months post interview). In-person meetings were scheduled with 1 CAC member and 3 participants but one participant cancelled due to competing activities. The two participant

meetings were with one of the fathers who attended the first set of follow up meetings and with one mother. As had been agreed in the interview consent form, I presented the emergent themes for participant reaction. Both parents and the CAC member endorsed the emergent themes and elaborated on their continued relevance with Sudanese parents. The third participant, a mother who could not attend in-person engaged with me in a telephone meeting. She also endorsed the themes with encouragement to get the report completed and in circulation. A written copy of the summarized themes was sent to her as well as to the addresses of the three other participants with whom telephone contact had not been successful.

3.8 Interview Analysis Plan

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher. Initial coding of the transcripts was by interview question. Using the selective or highlighting technique (Van Manen, 1990; 93) the researcher highlighted statements or phrases in the coded transcripts that 'seem particularly essential or revealing'. The highlighting technique suggested three dominant themes across the conversations with the eight Sudanese parents.

The transcripts were then re-coded for these themes. The coded themes were analyzed to extract common essences of each theme, and nuances distinguished between one participant and another. This analysis appears in Chapter Four. The analysis led the researcher to a literature review to supplement her initial readings undertaken prior to the research. This additional review of the literature was in direct response to the themes which the parent interviews indicated were disorienting to the Sudanese parents' experience in Winnipeg.

3.9 Limitations in the research method

Language was an important consideration throughout the research. Although the participants all spoke English, some were more comfortable and fluent than others. Although all the participants accepted the condition of English as a communication medium since English is not their first language they may have had nuances which they decided not to share, due to the difficulty of conveying this to me. The CAC advised that had I been able to speak Dinka or another Southern Sudanese language sample recruitment for the research would have been faster and the research data more informed.

My desire to keep the participants involved in the research process was met with polite curiosity on the part of the interviewees. One father made it clear that I should provide direction and he would leave the research process up to me. In the process of scheduling the follow-up meetings it seemed that the participants and CAC members were busy with other things and felt that follow-up for their feedback on accuracy was low priority for them. These research experiences highlighted the importance of creating concise, pragmatic feedback and being available to allow for the participants' busy schedules. While the issues remained relevant and the participants deemed the emergent themes as accurate they awaited the further step of action addressing the themes.

4 Chapter Four - Findings

This section of the report presents information which came from the Southern Sudanese parents' interviews. Demographic information was not collected separately. However, as the parents shared about themselves during their interviews, they described aspects of themselves that they felt were useful to the topic of parenting. This descriptive information has been tabled and assists the reader in visualizing the participants. A brief summary of the collective parent responses to the 11 interview questions then follows. As described in the Methods chapter, a technique was used to highlight phrases or concepts that were common to all the interview responses. The highlighting process is referred to as the interview responses are presented. The emergent themes are then discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

4.1 The Participants

The respondents in this research were 8 unrelated parents from Southern Sudan, four mothers and four fathers, all over 30 years of age. The research sample required that participants had already had children prior to arrival in Canada. Seven of the eight parents had their first children born in Sudan. All respondents experienced asylum in one of three interim countries – Kenya, Egypt, or Lebanon. Time periods in the country of asylum were between 5 and 7 years. One parent had her first three children born in one such interim country. Six parents brought children to the interim country and also had additional children born in the interim country. One parent brought a child to the interim country but had no further births there or in Canada.

Over the 5 to 7 year interim period, the Sudanese parents raised their children in a foreign country, although some described Egypt and Kenya as 'Africa', with little difference in the general style of discipline and parent /child relations from that in Sudan. Four parents also had children born in Canada. The average residence period in Canada at the time of interview was 6 years, with a range from 3 to 10 years. Despite the similarity in times as residents in both Canada and an interim country, the parents indicated permanence in the Canadian residency which they did not for the other locations.

See Table 1 on the following page for a summary of the birth locations and number of children. Note that 'children' as described by the participants included non-nuclear family members.

4.1.1 Table 1: Children of the Participants

	Total # of children	Sudan born	Born Elsewhere	Canada Born
Father 1	7	6	1 (Egypt)	0
Father 2	6 including step brother & sister in law	5	1 (Kenya)	0
Father 3	5	2	1 (Kenya)	2
Father 4	1	1	0	0
Average # Fathers	4.75	3.5	0.75	0.5
Mother 1	7	6	1 (Egypt)	0
Mother 2	4	3	1 (Kenya)	0
Mother 3	5 including nephew	4 including nephew	0	1
Mother 4	4	0	3 (Lebanon)	1
Average # Mothers	5	3.25	1.25	0.5
Overall Avg.	4.8	3.3	1	0.5

4.2 The Fathers

In terms of educational status, three of the four fathers had tertiary education from universities or colleges in their region. One father had also earned a Masters Degree from a European country, and another was a lawyer. However, none of the educated fathers obtained Canadian employment of a status that was as high as the one they held or would hold in Sudan. At the time of interview two fathers were unemployed; one of these was a full-time university student.

In terms of marital status one father was a widower, the other three were married. They had an average of 4.75 children per family, with a range from 7 children to 1 child. At the time of the study one father had two children born in Canada. He was the only father with Canadian-born children.

4.3 The Mothers

Regarding educational status, three mothers had tertiary education prior to arrival in Winnipeg. One mother had been a teacher for over 10 years in Sudan. Another had worked for the Sudanese government as a field officer and a third had completed university in an interim country then had been a home maker. In Canada all four mothers were employed outside of their home. However, none of the educated mothers were working in Canada at the same occupational level as they had previously in Sudan or would have expected based on education. The fourth mother's lack of education prior to arrival in Canada was not an occupational disadvantage as she was employed at the same entry level as the other mothers. Prior education in this sample of women proved not to be an advantage. Despite the lack of advantage from international education, all four mothers placed a high value on Canadian education for their children. In terms of marital status two mothers were married, one was married on arrival in Canada but became separated and one arrived as a single mother. The mothers had a total average of 5 children with a range from 4 to 7 children. Two of the mothers each had one Canadian-born child.

Table 2 below summarizes the parents' occupational status and residency in asylum countries and in Canada.

4.3.1 Table 2: Parents' Changes in Residency and Occupational Status

	Sudanese Occupation	Period in Asylum	Years in Canada	Canadian Employment Status
Father 1	Teacher	Egypt 5 yrs	4	Settlement Counselor
Father 2	Teacher	Kenya 6-7 years	3	Teaching Assistant
Father 3	Farmer	Kenya (? Yrs.)	3.5	Unemployed
Father 4	Lawyer	Egypt 6 yrs	8	Full-time Student
			Avg.: 4.6 yrs.	
Mother 1	Teacher	Egypt (? yrs)	10	Health Care Aide & Self-Employed
Mother 2	Housewife (?)	Kenya (6-7 yrs)	9	Health Care Aide
Mother 3	Gov't Field Officer	Egypt (? Yrs)	6	Residential Support Worker
Mother 4	Univ. Grad/ Housewife	Lebanon (5+ yrs)	6	Health Care Aide
			Avg.: 7.7 yrs	
		Rough Estimate: Avg. 5.9 years	Overall Avg. 6.2 yrs.	

4.4 Responses to the Interview Questions

The first question asked the participants how they heard about the research study and why they decided to share their stories. All the participants referred to a person with whom they were familiar as the source of their motivation – members of the Sudanese Cultural Advisory Committee, a colleague, or the researcher herself. This confirmed the researcher's impression that interpersonal contact was a key aspect in sample recruitment.

The Sudanese parents' purpose of sharing their stories was to inform. The parents wanted to inform the wider Winnipeg community about the Sudanese approach to parenting, their view on appropriate parent-child relationships and the challenges they encounter when parenting in Canada. One father hoped this information would lead to more culturally inclusive social policies in relation to family dynamics. A mother hoped it would lead to strategies for better Sudanese teenage adjustment in Canada, a matter that concerned her throughout her interview.

The second question asked for comparisons between the parenting experience in Sudan and Winnipeg. Experiences in the countries of asylum were added as this information came up during the interviews. Parents spoke of their concern for safety and opportunity for both themselves and their children in Sudan. They also expressed a sense of disorientation as the parenting strategies they were accustomed to using prior to immigration led to different consequences in Canada. Physical punishment was a noted practice that met a different response in Canada. In answering this question, the theme of 'Listen', which is explored in Section 5, began to emerge. Parents noted that their children no longer attended to them as they had in Sudan and during asylum.

Question 3 explored the difference between the parents' early migration experiences and current experiences. There was a range of reactions to this. Several parents, both mothers and fathers, were less worried now as they found that their parental influence had been maintained. They had acquired resources, especially cars, which helped get the family around when the Winnipeg climate became cold. Adjustment to the Canadian climate was a feature for

all the Sudanese parents. Several of the parents noted the increase in their choices of neighbourhood once they had cars. Two mothers worked night shifts and their cars facilitated this employment. These two mothers also had recent newcomers from Sudan living with their families.

The challenges mentioned since arrival were around disappointment in employment opportunities. In Table 2 above, it can be seen that neither mothers nor fathers achieved the level of employment they had held prior to coming to Canada and the fathers were particularly affected. Of the four mothers in the sample, two were married and neither of their husbands was currently employed, despite having internationally-acquired professional qualifications.

Fear of the influence of negative peers became an increasing matter of concern to the Sudanese parents after a period of relocation. Initially parents were able to maintain control over their home space but the impact of external societal influences gradually became more noticeable. Teenaged children appeared to be the first affected. However, even young children appeared to form values which differed from their parents and to develop an awareness of how to bypass parental resources and access external supports. The theme 'School' and '911' emerged during responses to this question.

'Who do you lean on?' was question number 4. The answers suggested a small circle of support – spouses (2 fathers and two married mothers), friends (2 unmarried mothers), the church through its outreach programs (one father and all 4 mothers), government (one father) and the Sudanese community (one father). Two fathers said 'no one,' although one expanded to include assistance in accessing his children's school through the church. The parents'

interpretation of the question emphasized 'leaning on' someone who could provide practical assistance.

Winter climate was noted as a factor that restricted social relations. One father stated that Sudanese people's inclination to visit each other was overridden by their discomfort at getting around in the cold. At a separate point a mother noted that she did not go out of her house at all her first winter in Winnipeg. In fact she had wanted to return to Sudan despite the troubles there, rather than endure the effects of winter. Both she and another mother claimed they could now conduct household errands, participate fully in work, visit their children's school and attend their church despite the winter because they now had cars and were more comfortable getting around personally and with their children.

Although all the parents spent many years in a country of asylum, none of them expressed satisfaction with that period of their parenting experience [Question 5]. In fact, this is the only reference made to racial prejudice. One mother was physically hurt during her time in asylum, and related this directly to racial tensions. One father expressed great agitation at the real possibility that not only his children but other members of the family could have been attacked.

The theme 'Good/Bad' came up amidst answers to question 6. Given the scenario of preparing a family still in Africa and about to come to Canada, the parents in the study highlighted the importance of holding on to moral values. The Canadian-based parents wanted to prepare the prospective newcomers for a change in parenting patterns, and a change in socially acceptable behaviours in the host country. Interestingly, one father suggested people in

Sudan no longer favoured moving to Canada as there was hope for peace in Sudan and awareness of the difficulties in Canada for settling and maintaining a Sudanese polygamous lifestyle. In his interview he highlighted that in Canada a man could only afford one wife whereas in Sudan a man was more likely to be able to afford more than one wife. [He did not comment on the fact that in Canada a man is only allowed one wife at a time].

A mother said prospective newcomers heard that in Canada they take children from their parents and were turned off by this. Another mother said she would dissuade a family from coming, especially if they had young or teenage children as the Canadian environment did not support sound moral values.

Answers to the potential for relocation [Question 7] suggested that Canadian-based Sudanese parents had actively considered returning to Sudan but were aware of the challenges of safety, the need for resources in order to return, and the likelihood that they would not be able to effect the desired changes they wanted to see in Sudan. Only one parent (a mother) stated a clear desire to relocate to the Sudan in the short term. Two mothers wanted to go to help their country folk and to show their children their homeland. The fourth mother wanted to return to visit elderly relatives if she could afford to go. Three of the mothers were aware that despite their own interest in going back to visit, their children had stated a lack of interest in relocating to Sudan.

The fathers also had varied thoughts of going back to Sudan, and were just as cautious as the mothers. One father had already been back to visit and was committed to having his children complete their education in Canada before any further thoughts of return. One father

recalled an extremely traumatic situation which led to his fleeing his homeland and he is not considering a return. Another father wanted to go to Sudan to test the social climate himself and see if the promised peace was solid before he would move his family back. The fourth father would send his son back for relatives in Sudan to help in correcting some negative behaviour which the father attributed to too much 'good' life in Winnipeg. However, the father himself did not wish to return to Sudan and wanted his son to come back to Winnipeg once his behaviours had been corrected. Despite nostalgia for the clarity of gender roles and moral values which the fathers recalled from their life in Sudan, they were also pragmatic about the lack of resources and disruption in their homeland.

The gender question [Number 8] elicited a range of responses. Whilst all the parents noted the change in gender roles during their settlement in Canada both mothers and fathers were divided on what to make of it. They all reported disruptions in Sudanese family cohesion as a result of women feeling support in Canadian society for women's independence.

Money played a role in the change in gender relations. Mothers were given government cheques to assist with the children's welfare during early settlement. For some, this was their first bank account in their own name. One mother related the story about her husband trying to cash her cheque and being told that since it was written in his wife's name she had to come in person. Her husband tried several banks with the same result until he reluctantly informed his wife about the cheque and instructed her to come to the bank. Once there, the teller educated the wife about opening a bank account in her own name.

This same mother felt there was a pressure in Canada on women to go out to work. She based this on the urging by settlement workers that she should find work and their direction to job training courses and language courses to improve her English. Once she began earning there was a resultant ongoing focus on money as her social assistance was cut back. Her previous focus on home life and her new work schedule led to a tension in her family between the two arenas of responsibility. The tensions between home life and work outside of home were raised by three mothers. One of the four mothers highlighted her children's appreciation for the money she earned.

While discussing the issues of gender negotiations in Canada both mothers and fathers used the word 'Listen' which became an emergent theme. Both sets of parents noted that women in Canada tended to no longer 'listen' to Sudanese male authority. Two fathers had adjusted by seeing the advantages in not holding with tradition. They were able to pursue roles they could not have done in Sudan. The single father felt he had more authority in his home being both mother and father without the social pressure to find a new wife that he would have been under in Sudan. Another father felt grateful that he could be a full time student while his wife went out to work although he felt awkward in his childcare role.

Despite the high male unemployment reported by the participants neither mothers nor fathers referred to a loss in confidence in fathers due to unemployment. The point they all made was the difference in the Canadian societal attitude to women which impacted the Sudanese concept of male authority.

Question 9 was developed from the migration literature in which African immigrant parents reported losing their place in Canada (Matsuoka & Sorenson; 2001). While half of the participants agreed that Sudanese parents did lose primacy in their families in Canada, half of the participants disagreed, feeling they had been able to maintain primacy in their own children's life. In order to maintain this primacy those parents noted various strategies they had taken – restricting their child's exposure to unsupervised social activities, arranging work schedules to ensure children were monitored at home and selecting schools and moving to neighbourhoods which the parent felt were most favourable to Sudanese values.

Stories about school and the police featured during this question about parental primacy. Although only one parent had experienced the loss of her nephew to the legal system all the parents were aware of other Sudanese parents whose homes had been visited by the police due to children calling 911 or whose children had threatened their parents with such a call. One father had tried to assist during a parent – child conflict and had been reprimanded by the youth in the family. This experience had significance for this man as he recalled the logic in the youth's argument which rejected the Sudanese principle of eldership and endorsed the Canadian principle of individual freedom of choice. References to Eldership as a Sudanese principle for social order had been brought up by parents in earlier questions and resurfaced here with several references to school as a place where parents' rights were questioned.

Question 10 asked what the most meaningful moments were for the parents in any location they had lived. Parents' responses ranged from pride in being able to guide their children to academic success, pride in being able to provide material resources and safety, to

worry that, based on Canadian standards, they had not created a positive impression on their children. Fear that their children may grow up with negative moral values preoccupied two parents in the study (one mother and one father). This fear was based on observations of other families in the case of the apprehensive mother, and based on actual experiences with his son in the case of the frustrated father.

The final question invited parents' sense of agency. What would they recommend that would make Winnipeg the best place to parent? Two main issues were 1) safety of their children from gang recruitment and 2) access to on-going support from agencies as the settlement experience continues. Regarding safety the parents suggested culturally sensitive communication with schools and the police to address the concerns of the parent about teen gangs – gang recruitment, easy drug availability and street safety. They also had become aware that some Winnipeg neighbourhoods were less safe than others and felt that immigrant families should be directed to the safer neighbourhoods.

Regarding support in settlement the mothers in particular felt the settlement time frame was too short and only skimmed the surface of settlement issues. One mother said her questions arose over time as her children grew and she noticed a change in the parent-child dynamic. By then the two year settlement period was over and she did not know where to go to ask her questions. Two mothers strongly recommended on-going, hands-on, community-based workshops for immigrant mothers. It was also suggested that there should be a special focus on immigrant parents, as parents had unique, long-term responsibilities compared to non-parents or compared to children. Other recommendations were the formation of networks for

rapport with the parents of their children's peers and conducting research into immigrant parents' stories (such as this research). The parents' recommendations are further discussed in Chapter 7: Implications for Social Work Practice.

As can be seen in this chapter the responses coded by question provided a wealth of information on the lifeworld of the Sudanese parents in Winnipeg. In preparing to analyse the transcripts I decided to select words that recurred throughout each interview and across all 8 interviews regardless of interview question as this seemed to represent the collective voices of the parents to a greater degree than the questions did.

In the next chapter the three emergent themes are presented separately with extensive reference to the parents' own voices. Each theme is discussed at the micro-level of the parent in their lifeworld. In Chapter 6 the themes are discussed within a macro-systemic framework.

5 Chapter Five - The Emergent Themes

The responses to the interview questions presented in Chapter 4 provided a wealth of information about the Sudanese parenting experiences in Sudan, in interim countries and in Canada. Within the answers were a small group of words which came up repeatedly and which conveyed concepts which I will present in this chapter as emergent themes. The words were **Listen** - as in 'I want my children to listen to me'; **School** - relating to a place of learning outside of the home where unfamiliar adults taught and conducted activities which affected family life; **911** - a phrase used to convey the involvement of the Canadian police in domestic spheres; and words that conveyed binaries in morals: **Good/Bad** and **Right/Wrong**.

In this Chapter direct quotations from the parent transcripts are used to illustrate the emergent themes. Within each theme there are nuances where a particular parent may express a variation on the theme or where mothers may express variations not expressed by fathers. Following the illustration of the theme I discuss the way the theme appears to convey an aspect of the parents' collective life worlds, their intimate experiencing of life as a Sudanese parent in Winnipeg.

5.1 Theme 1: 'School' and '911'

The word 'School' and phrase '911' occurred together in several instances and are presented as a joint theme. The words convey the parents' dilemma between their Sudanese value of respect for authority including teachers and the police, and the unanticipated negative impact these authorities had on the parents' perceived rights as parents and on their relationships with their children within their homes.

5.1.1 School for Children

All the parents valued education for their children as a worthwhile way to advance in society - have respect, demonstrate character, get a good job, earn adequate money, position the family in a good societal position. They generally saw their children's academic success as a meaningful marker in their parenting journey.

Phrases reflecting this value are:

- *My duty is to make sure that they [my children] get the EDUCATION (IM1; 7.8);*
- *Oh, Winnipeg is good. Yah. Yah. I have chance to work. My children go to SCHOOL. (IM2; 11.7);*
- *I like when my children grow up and follow EDUCATION here in Canada. I don't have another problem. I will be happy. (IM3; 11.2);*
- *I have lots [of meaningful moments in Canada]. But the best one was last year when my son won a scholarship to go to UNIVERSITY. I was just thriilled! (IW1; 11.4);*
- *My kids are going to SCHOOL. I don't have to you know, stop them going to SCHOOL because they have to go and stand [in the food line], maybe wait for like a week and push on line to get through. (IW2; 5)*
- *So, for me the meaningful time for me in Winnipeg, or for me in Canada ... to start ... getting myself [settled]... This is your house. And this is where you gonna stay and you're responsible for your children to go to SCHOOL and here [is] the money in your account and you go do shopping and be responsible as a parent! You know. (IW2; 18.6)*
- *Canada is good ... I bring my children here because in my back home is fighting and no peace that's why I came here. I need my children LEARN more. That's why [we went to] Egypt. Egypt, and then came here – Canada. (IW3; 11.5)*
- *Let [my children] grow up first and then we will see. When they finish high SCHOOL – yah. When they in UNIVERSITY ... let them just [pass] that ... you know teenage stage. If they pass then [if] they're good kids they gonna become good forever but if not ... you know [audible sigh] ... I don't know. (IW4; 12.3)*

While the parents highly valued getting an education for their children all but two parents conveyed an accompanying anxiety about the content of the Canadian curriculum. Something about what happened at school generated a wary attitude within their children towards parents. The parents conveyed a perceived alliance: School taught children about children's rights [not filial duty] and 911 (the Canadian police). School called 911 [not the parent] if they had a concern about a child. Children called 911 [not their parent] when they had a concern about how things went at home. 911 responded to the child's call [without reference to the parent]. School and children and 911 were therefore experienced as a combined force challenging a Sudanese parent's relationship with their children.

A father conveyed the perceived alliance. He also had a suggestion of how school social workers could intervene in a way which complemented Sudanese parents' efforts.

- *I know in schools SOCIAL WORKERS they have the obligation to report anything to POLICE. Instead of going straight to POLICE it still would be good if even if SOCIAL WORKER sees something, like bruises on the child, instead of calling POLICE then it would be good to talk to the parents: Did you beat up this child? [Parent reply:] Yes. [Then social worker could ask:] Why? (IM1; 14.6)*

His suggestion is to talk to the parent when a case of abuse is noticed with the view of helping the parent. The first step in helping would be finding out what has been going on in the relationship that led to the abuse. From this father's perspective the social worker would then work with the parent to identify the underlying issues and address these issues rather than calling the police and initiating an investigation at that level. His suggestion conveys a perceived difference in the level of intervention with the social worker being less intimidating and more problem-solving than the police.

To Sudanese parents the Canadian school system was a necessary risk and not 'safe'. A parent had to be vigilant to correct the implications taught in school regarding parents as suspect rather than being able to feel endorsed by the school philosophy. One mother felt the school paralyzed the parent and a father said schools tell children that parents 'beat you up'. It is likely with this wariness, on the side of the parent in this study and possibly also on the side of the school, that well-intended efforts by both parties may be misunderstood.

5.1.2 911

'911' was used as a phrase and conveyed the unwelcome intrusion of the police into the sanctity of the Sudanese parents' space with their children. This 'space' is sometimes a physical location such as the home and also the school. Space also included psychological spaces. One such psychological space was the child's perception of their relationship with their parent. Another psychological space was the parent's lack of confidence in relation to the authorities. Only 2 Sudanese parents in this study spoke of any direct contact with the Canadian police regarding their family situation. But 4 additional parents referred to stories which they held as credible about Sudanese children being 'taken away' from their families for reasons which they considered invalid. Of particular concern is the reversal of power within the home with children threatening their parents with '911' for incidents which the parents felt were inappropriate. The parents' general feeling was that the Canadian system of surveillance of Sudanese family life was unfair yet beyond redress.

- *Kids, they are told [by their parent] not to do something bad, something wrong, and [when the parents] show them what they're doing, and what the parent sees - they call*

911. *The POLICE comes in. So the POLICE takes the rights from the parents not the child. (IW1; 14.6)*

- *As soon you say: Why did you do this? [Your child says] Well, you saying this to me? I'm calling 911. (IW2; 16.2)*
- *[The mother said] I have to ask you! You're just eleven years old. This not the time not to be home. Since you left SCHOOL at what time – three thirty? Now it's like eight o'clock. [The daughter said] Well if you say anything I gonna call the POLICE ... call 911. ... And [the mom] go to her [daughter] and say: Ok. Come here. She pinch [the daughter] and [the daughter] call 911 and 911 say: Well, you don' have to [pinch her]. That young girl says that her mom is always beating her. You know. And that was lie. Lie. She just lying, saying lies because she just want to get her mom in trouble. So the kids were taken. (IW2; 16.3)*
- *She said he's six years old and he [said that he] will call the POLICE ... Because [her son said that] they tell us in SCHOOL if the mom pinch you or something or dad or something like that you have to call 911. And he called! He is six years old and he ...he called! Yeah! The POLICEmen come ...(IW4; 11.2)*
- *Cause I told [my friend's family] now my kids they don' know. They just know 911 is for emergencies – if somebody sick at home! Yah. It's not for POLICE for something like that [reporting on parents' behaviour]. Because the kids they supposed not to know that. Parents have to guide [their children] you know! (IW4; 11.5)*

The term the 'government' was used as reference to a source for possible change in support for parents. The changes which they suggest range from adaptations of the current way of doing things to new ways of doing things. A mother suggested that the 'government' form a Sudanese committee to discuss cases of concern with 'Family Services'. One father suggests the 'government' should help him send his son to Sudan to the son's uncle where behavioral correction would be effective.

One mother related the residual impact of a current procedure. She told a story of a social work intervention which resulted in children being returned to the home after removal

by the police. Even though the children were returned she referred to the distress of the intervention itself:

- *So, after I think three days, the interview and the involvement of SOCIAL WORKER the kids were brought [home] but they were you know under like SOCIAL SERVICE supervision. Which is something you know as a parent you don't think that [would happen]. You know. It's your child. (IW2; 16.3)*

5.1.3 'School' for Parents

Adult job training and language training were features of life for several of the Sudanese parents in this study. Although five of the parents referred to having tertiary education themselves prior to arrival in Winnipeg [IM1, 2 & 4; IW1&4] they still had to go back to school for some form of qualification to participate in the Canadian workplace. Of these educated parents three spoke of re-training in Winnipeg specifically to get jobs [IM4; IW1 & 4] and two previously educated fathers spoke of going to classes for English-language [IM2, & 4]. However, none of these jobs were at a similar social position as the ones they held or could hold in Sudan (See Chapter 4; Table 2). One wonders about the impact on the confidence of re-located Sudanese parents when they find that despite their years of education they have to go back to school in Canada only to emerge with menial level jobs.

Being able to speak English was highlighted by five parents as an important aspect to coping with social interactions with the authorities in the settlement agencies, schools and the police [IM2, 3 & 4; IW1 & 3]. Two fathers spoke of learning English after they arrived in Winnipeg. One mother referred to her own limitations in the use of English. One father noted

that knowledge of English was a privilege of formal education in Southern Sudan. Sudanese parents from Northern Sudan were more likely to speak Arabic and this was the recent expectation for Southern Sudanese also.

5.2 Discussion of Theme– School and 911.

All the parents placed a high value on education and five of the eight parents had invested in their own education up to a tertiary level prior to arrival in Canada. The parents' participation in this research also indicated a belief that academic research was worthy of their time. There may however be a cultural difference between school - the social institution, and education - the process or method of instruction. Three of the parents were trained and experienced teachers who may be aware of the difference between the philosophies in curriculum in schools.

The parents appear to express a dilemma. It is their deep seated belief that education is the way to enhance their family through discipline, socially recognized qualifications, and relevant skills. They made an assumption that Canadian society would be pleased with this and that their support for education would elicit a positive reaction to them as parents. They assumed an inherent relationship with the teacher that would acknowledge their commitment to this ideal of education.

Their dilemma expressed in various ways and to varying degrees is that the school curriculum includes an ethic - individualistic, rights-focused, youth-centered, expression without boundaries. The effect of this ethic for the parent is that it displaces the parent's authority, encourages the child to think, speak and decide for him/herself in a way that challenges the power balance between parent and child. The socialization that comes through

the school is therefore significantly different from what the parents expected. It may only be at this point in the migration journey that a parent recognizes the difference between 'Canadian school' and the parent's perception of 'Education'.

Several parents noted that on arrival in Winnipeg they were in charge. After the children had gone to school for a while things changed; in a negative way from the parents' perspective. Coping with this dilemma is expressed in both a problem-focused way and an emotion-focused way. Problem solving attempts included two mothers going into the school and talking with the teachers. One mother and one father chose a school that they felt would support their perspective of education (Catholic and Church schools). Several parents implemented monitoring systems - neighborhood patrols or child minders, alternating work shifts to have one parent available to monitor, or self-sacrifice (give up sleep, and personal goals in favour of monitoring child) A father enrolled his children in after-school activities to tire them out. Two mothers noted the influence of their residential neighborhood in adding or removing unwelcome distractions.

The parents referred to emotion-focused coping mechanisms which can be summarized as:

Distancing: 'My children are Canadian now. What can I do?'; 'I won't express satisfaction until my children pass the teenage years.'

Rationalization: 'My children had to change to fit in.' 'Parents have to change to avoid children leaving home; becoming bitter; being unable to understand their parents'

Distractions: 'After my children are educated I'll be able to return to Sudan.' 'If I had money I would return to Sudan,' 'Orphans in Sudan need me. I would be valued there.'

Anger: 'The teacher ignored my wisdom, my primacy as my child's mother'. 'The state reduces parents to child minders under their scrutiny'. 'My training and experience as a teacher are disregarded, even as it relates to guiding my own children.'

Jealousy: 'In the school are many influential voices besides mine, the voices are anti-parent.' 'My culture and position are undermined.'

Hope: 'If you are lucky things will work out. If you are lucky.' 'Canada is a great country with great people. I hope my children will become great people too.'

Pride: 'One of my children has achieved a goal that I value! - a scholarship; completion of first year university'

Certain censored coping methods were referred to - essentially around physical punishment. The dilemma around these was clear. Parents had themselves grown into adults with values because of, or at least despite, physical punishment. They observed their children and other children guided by the Canadian non-physical ethos with disgust - lack of respect for elders, self-centered, threatening their parents, abusing substances, joining gangs. A father said this caused 'hopelessness'. The threat of 911 was confirmed as real through stories known to all the parents.

The Sudanese parents had two dilemmas in connection with Canadian school and the 911 system. Send your child to school to enhance their life chances and risk the influence of anti-parent philosophies present in school, or stick to your concept of discipline as you believe is cultural and effective, and risk having your own child report you to the authorities at school or 911 and risk being condemned to jail or being labeled by Canadian society as a child abuser. The parents in this study chose to send their children to school and their resentment at the attendant risks to their relationships with their children was evident in their voices.

5.3 Theme 2: Listen

A second theme which emerged from the 8 interviews was a comparison made by the Sudanese parents between children listening in Sudan and children listening in Canada. Having been raised in Sudan it is the Sudanese tradition of listening to those who are senior, especially one's parents, which informed the parenting expectations of the study participants.

Listening did not refer simply to a behavior, as in the somatic definition of concentrating on hearing something (Collins Concise Dictionary 1998) but more particularly, it referred to the attitude of taking heed, of giving value to the person who is speaking.

One reason why a Sudanese parent expected their child to listen was a concern that they keep their children safe. Their experiences had taught them that they needed to protect their children. They did this by figuring out a family safety strategy to which they expected their child's compliance. One father relates his concern in Egypt, the country where his family sought asylum as they waited to come to Canada.

*The most important moment that I had [in Egypt]....I had the feeling that, you know, when I tell my kids, 'Please do not go out.'" And they **listen** to me, they stay indoors, then*

*I say Okay.Because getting your kids on the street, interacting with other kids is dangerous. It is a recipe for potential problems. Your kids get into a fight with the Egyptians and the Egyptians when they are coming they may bring weapons. They may hurt your child, and not only your child but even you! When I tell my kids and they **listen** to me, I become very proud. (IM1; 13.7) if kids **listen** to you ...and you keep your children out of trouble, that is ... the key. (IM1; 13.9)*

For this father having his children listen created a sense of pride that gave his role as father a purpose. These were the most meaningful moments in parenting for him. It was also the main value he wanted his children to keep from their Sudanese heritage. He notes that this respect is not generally maintained by Sudanese youth in Winnipeg. When a child does not listen the Sudanese parent could be 'in the space of hopelessness'. Having a child 'listen' meant appreciation for the parent's revered role, in the above example, the role of protector.

5.3.1 Age as a factor in Listening

The teen years were found to be most challenging based on the difference between the parent's expectation as experienced in Sudan and the child's attitude based on the Canadian context. Age proved to be a cultural concept. Three of the parents made note of the fact that in Sudan until a child sets up their own home with the blessing of their parents, the child, even at thirty years of age, continues to be expected to 'listen' to his parents. At this mature age 'listening' appears much like a Sudanese social observance. The parents all contrast this to the age of eighteen in Canada, where a person is legally an 'adult'. The Canadian concept of 'child' and of 'adult' is not the same as in Sudan. The law in Canada imposes an influence over the tradition of Sudan. The quotations below illustrate the point as expressed by several of the participants:

*Like back home [in Sudan] even if you're thirty you have to stay home. If you didn't get married, you have to stay home and **hear** your dad. You have to respect them. You have*

to. If you are going anywhere you have to tell them you are going and then I will come this hour, exact hour I will come, or maybe after two hours or three hours. But here – they just ... you know, 'I have rights. I am eighteen years old. Maybe I will move out of the house. I will do whatever I have to do'what, what, what – oh! Just crazy! (IW4; 8.7)

So, the kids when they... [come to Winnipeg] they turn against the parent even. They don't want to **hear** what you are saying! But back home [in Sudan]! Doesn't matter even up to you're thirty, if you not married, you still have to respect your parents. But not in Canada. It's really difficult to raise kids in Canada. (IW2; 8.2)

....Here, whenyour children get to maximum eighteen years, seventeen, they cannot understand you again. They just want to do what they know.they say because they know English better than you and they know everything in the street and they have a lot of knowledge. Better than mom and father. So, that is difficult for us now. (IM3; 1.8)

It's good in a way because [my grandchildren] are still young, you know. ..You can still say 'No don't do this 'or 'Don't do that'. They will **listen**. But the crazy age is around sixteen. (IW1; 3.4)

When I came here my children is little, is not grow up. Everything is good because they **listen** me and they don't know street ... Younger they are okay. But now when they reach age eighteen, seventeen now [it is] difficult to follow what I tell them. (IM3; 4.5)

I say No. I am not a Canadian parent at all. I'm an African parent and you know what? I'm not changing my words. You want to come [in my house] you have to respect me and you have to **listen** to what I'm saying. Because I know you are eighteen but you still calls me Mom. And you're my daughter and you have to **listen** to me. (IW2; 8.1)

Where I come from any child must respect an elderly person. Must **listen**. When an elderly person calls and says "Come. Please why do you do this?" the child has the right to **listen**. Respect for elders is something they have to keep. (IM1; 5.9)

As I said you are getting into a different parenting style [in Winnipeg]. It is quite alien to you as a newcomer. If the kids don't **listen** to you and there is not any other way of making them **listen** to you then of course you know, you are in the space of hopelessness. You feel you have lost your place as a parent. (IM1; 11.5)

5.3.2 Other influential factors to Listening

Age of the child however, did not appear to be the only factor in listening. In the earlier section on School/ 911 a six year old reportedly called 911 to complain about a parent after

learning about this resource from his Canadian teacher. This was not the age at which the Sudanese parents expected a child to be influenced into not listening exclusively to his parent. It was the strength of the influencing party, in this case a school teacher's advice, which appeared the significant factor. As more Sudanese parents have Canadian-born children the impact of external agencies may become more influential than age of the child as to whether the parent can keep their child's attention.

Influencing factors also included options for reliance on one's parents for practical help, cultural capital and financial support. Friends and parents of friends from non-Sudanese ethnic backgrounds may not share the same Sudanese concept of deference to parents and may be willing to provide shelter, food and other resources to Sudanese children who reject their parents' authority. Government financial and housing supports to eighteen year olds as well as private sector part-time and entry-level jobs for teenagers provide independent financial resources and social connections. Amongst the parents in the research one mother had a daughter who moved out at eighteen to live with friends; one mother's nephew moved out to live alone and ended up in jail. One father had a son who dropped out of school, hung out with friends and came home at erratic times with police reports being made to the parents regarding their son's undesirable behaviour.

The excerpt below is from a Sudanese father who tried talking to a wayward Sudanese youth:

*If I talk to [a Sudanese child in Winnipeg] some of the children will tell you 'You know what? You didn't take [me] into Canada!You are not taking care of me. I'm taking care of myself. ...I didn't **listen** to my Dad. How do you expect me to **listen** to you?' ...If*

*the child decides to take care of him or herself or if the child decides ...not to **listen** to parents. This is the question. What do you do? (IM1; 12:3)*

The excerpt below is from a mother noting her perspective on children's self-direction in Winnipeg:

*[If they stayed in Sudan] I think those kids would be good kids. And you know they have to **listen** to the Mom and Dad. They don't ...like I told you [here in Winnipeg] if you are eighteen you have to do whatever you have to do. Even if you are ten if your parents say 'Don't do that' you can say "Yes. I will do it." because they teach you [in Winnipeg] that we have to do whatever we like to do. (IW4; 10.5)*

The following excerpt is from a mother noting a change in sequence of events in parent-child interaction between Sudan and Winnipeg:

*In Sudan, and in Africa, if the children make a mistake then [parents] talk ...if [the child does] not **listen** ... then punishment. But here aaaah no ... it's to talk and then [the child] call 911. ..Sometimes I think [about] here and then back home. It is difficult. It is different. Yah, it is different. Yeah, different because the children is not **listening** the parents!.... Is not **listen** and then to do somethings [which are] not good. (IW3; 2.5)*

5.3.3 Ambiguity – Is the Sudanese requirement that children listen so crucial?

While seven parents reinforced the importance of Sudanese style listening one father appeared open to an alternative strategy and one mother was uncertain if insisting on this expectation was wise. For the father who did not express 'listening' as his major expectation his alternative was to understand the secret to what made Canada 'a great country'. He appeared open to change as he wanted his children to be 'a great people too'. This father said he had to be 'awake' to the other influences on his children. His strategy was to block out the negative voices rather than force his children to listen specifically to him.

Children are easy to be influenced either in positive way or negative way. So you have to be aware to see your children are being influenced in a positive way. Because both ways go together - like in the city you may have heard that there are some young people who

are involved in gang activities and that those people - those young ones they keep recruiting the teenagers and my kids are teenagers so... if I am not awake [my kids] will be recruited by the gangs. And so, if I am awake they will continue on the right track. For this reason I need to be awake (IM2; 4.5)

I know they are active people – the kids are very active So what I did, I had to look for the places that would keep them engaged so that their activities would not be something negative. So ...there is a program available by my living place like sport activities and other kids programs so I let them go inside the activities so that they can learn positive things and they are spending their time so when they come home they came and are already exhausted and hungry! (IM2; 5.5)

For one mother who was guardian to her Sudanese nephew in Winnipeg it appeared better not to press a young person who was not listening. If the young person reacted negatively to parental/ adult pressure the results may be worse than the disrespect to the adult. She holds this opinion 'because is different here'.

*Maybe community needs to sit down and to talk. If maybe my son or my daughter is to make a mistake, maybe sit down and talk slowly. If [the child] **listen** – good. If not **listen** – then leave like that, because is different here. Maybe children move out of their home in [to] a house and then feel alone and make somethings not good. That is the problem. (IW3; 2.5)*

With safety as the major focus of 'listening' some Sudanese parents appear to have modified their opinions the wisdom of making 'listening' a demand.

5.3.4 Listening among adults

The word listen was also used with reference to spouses. Two of the four mothers were married at the time of interview. Both felt uneasy with the gender reversal in Canada as it affected 'listening' between a Sudanese husband and wife. One married mother identified that a major difference in Winnipeg was that the Sudanese wives no longer 'listened' to their husbands. In fact, Sudanese husbands now 'listened' to their wives. The word was used to

convey who is 'the boss'. The person who has to listen is not the boss. She notes that a husband 'listening' is not the way gender relations were in Sudan. In this woman's family she is currently the sole income earner as her husband had been laid off for some time.

*Yah is different [in Winnipeg compared to Sudan]. Men and women is different because the mothers they have something, ...plan for what I don't know. The fathers sometimes is different ...is not together. The mother is talking different and then sometimes the fathers is not listen. That's why sometimes people is in the middle. ..You know, is not the same like in back home. ...Back home the mothers **listen** the fathers. You know that? But here is different. And then she, mother, is everything. Everything. And maybe the father is **listen** the mother. ...But [back] home – No. Man is boss. Here the mother is boss. Yah! (IW3; 10.4)*

The second married mother felt this gender role reversal led to marital separation with negative effects on the children. She also was the sole income earner in her family as her husband has been studying in the hopes of regaining his professional status through a better job.

Some womens they took [the Canadian settlement] orientation in different way. Like broke the family - the dad is stay away from the kids and she with the kids. Or sometimes the dad with the kids and mom ... that's ... [sigh] I don't know ... like womens have rights. Like back home you know you woman just a women. You don't have rights like ... the husband is everything - have to tell you what to do, what not to do. ...But here ... all woman ... especially immigrant, all immigrant not [only] Sudanese, they just separate and ...one of them is gonna be maybe with the kids. And sometimes you are working and the kids will be by themselves home and they will do whatever they want to do and that's why the kids are all in the ...street and nobody will guide them. (IW4; 10.1)

One married father expressed a similar opinion with the married mothers; that Sudanese immigrant families break up as a result of wives not listening.

*Sometimes some of [the mothers] say 'If I come to Canada I can't give up my way of life. In Sudan when my husband tells me it is this I have to **listen**.' But some moms they say*

'You know what? This is an outdated theory. We are in the world and everybody has a right.' [Sudanese] families which takes this kind of action they don't go far ...they break up easily. (IM1; 9.1)

The three participants who were separated, widowed or divorced parents had a wider variety of opinions as to gender equality of 'voices'. Two mothers were not married at the time of interview. One was divorced and the other separated. The divorced mother became divorced in Winnipeg and attributes her marital break up to different rates of acculturation between herself and her husband particularly over the topic of control of money. In her family this mother was also the sole income earner.

Since we came here we don't have a good ...like family talk ... We just start thinking. See? So, all the time he's talking about Oh! You know what? I need money and now ... you just putting this money in the [children's] education plan and ... you wanna show off. (IW1; 8.8)

The single mother on the other hand sees a definite advantage to being heard in Canada. Her single status was a negative in Kenya where she sojourned. She felt she risked losing her daughter there due to the culture of early marriage amongst girls.

When you are like a single mom you are like a dog without a tail. You don' gain a lot of respect. ... So ... for you as a single Mom and because of the culture you have also to respect men, so you won't say anything. And even not too long enough you would see your daughter may be pregnant so you rather, you know, let her go, get married (IM2; 10.8)

Amongst the fathers the opinion on listening was expressed in varied ways. They focused less on their experience with Sudanese mothers and more on the change in cultural expectations for fathers in Canada. The widowed father and two married fathers said that for Sudanese men listening or attending to children's voices was new. In their opinions some fathers adjusted, some did not.

As I said people are different, traditionally, according to our culture the role of man in ... the parental role of man in our [Sudanese] society is not that big form compared to the role of women because [Sudanese] women are more responsible for the children when they are still young. So [fathers] may just go and play the role of ... [breadwinner] ...and that is the big role about [fathering] - how to succeed in that part. But when they come to Canada it is like the role of father ...you have to be aware from day to day basis how your child is gonna live today. So that is become a very big problem for other fathers. (IM2; 9.4)

[Sudanese fathers] are the people that provide ... living for family. While [Sudanese] wives should stay at home. That's how we were raised. Yeah [chuckles] so it's different. So if I'm in Sudan I ...I could not stay at home to take care of ...five years old kids! But now in Winnipeg everyone is inclined to do that job. Not just five years old kids, even ...less than five year old kids. We take turns in taking care of our kids. So that's the benefit. (IM4; 7.8)

Even the man also they have different idea how to stay with the children and somebody can not like to stay a lot with the children. Different husband [are different]. And the different husband can stay with the children all the time because they like children to make something like fun. Something like that to be happy! Because when you stay with children you be happy sometimes even when you angry. You angry and sometimes when you look [at] your children – they do funny, you be happy ...but another husband, they don' like that. He cannot stay with the children and they can angry with the children's behaviour. (IM3; 8.8)

[I would say to a Sudanese newcomer] ... if you have a five years old [child] instead of jumping from here and there to make ... to accomplish all these big dreams [of life in Canada which] will take you nowhere ...you won't accomplish anything overnight. But be content with what you got now and focus on your child to make sure that ...you are with him. So that he will get used to you and listen to you. Yah. That's what I would say. (IM4; 6.4)

These Sudanese fathers appear to be grappling with the incongruence between their own traditional expectations that their children listen to parents and their increased non-traditional involvement with their children in Canada which allows them to be more aware that this listening is not taking place. Their deliberation is apparently unique to the changed cultural context.

5.4 Discussion of theme: Listen

In this theme 'Listen' the parents express their disappointment and frustration when they are not able to control, attract or sustain their child's attention so that the child takes heed of the parent. They stated an expectation that their voice would have some primacy with their children, that their opinion would be accepted as trustworthy and be the first source of reference. They saw their insistence that their child listen as a protective parental responsibility.

Apparently the societal culture in Sudan would redirect a wayward or distracted child's attention back towards the parent. In Sudan the socially reinforced respect for elders and the desire for social approval were factors which directed a child to 'listen' to their parent right up to the age of thirty or whenever marriage occurs. Also the lack of alternate resources may have directed the child to depend on being seen as dutiful to their parent. Being dutiful may provide a required social influence in Sudan in order to marry well and to access other roles associated with status in Sudanese society.

Sudanese parents are then faced with a potential loss of an aspect of their original vision that led them to bring their families out of Africa and into the Western world. It took many years of application and waiting in a country of asylum to get to Canada during which time parents were able to hold their children close. After a short period in Winnipeg the participants in this sample all speak of the potential or actual loss of their child's attention.

The participants note there is also a change amongst adults. In Winnipeg both men and women have choices as to who they attend to, to whom they 'listen'. The traditional Sudanese male hierarchy is not holding in Winnipeg. Much is said about women not listening to men as

was the Sudanese tradition. Some Sudanese fathers note that they now listen more to their children in the Canadian context. Increased Sudanese father-domestic involvement and increased Sudanese mother-workplace involvement are changing the gender dynamics within Sudanese homes as expressed in this theme 'Listen'.

As the Sudanese parents change it is likely that their children note these variations on Sudanese tradition at home in addition to the new Canadian culture outside of home. The parents did not suggest, however, that their children stopped 'listening' to parents because they saw women stop 'listening' to men or men start to 'listen' to women. The concern expressed by the parents related to marital breakup which could lead to gaps in parent-child supervision. The parents may not therefore anticipate that changes in power in marital gender relations will extend to parent-child relations. It is likely that the Sudanese tradition of hierarchy by seniority would be expected to still apply - children listen to their older, presumably wiser parents regardless of marital disharmony. The expectation of 'listening' is still very basic for the Sudanese parents in this study yet in the context of Winnipeg some changes in this expectation appear inevitable, though not anticipated nor welcomed.

5.5 Theme 3: Good/Bad; Right/Wrong

The third theme which emerged from the collective interviews of the Sudanese parents in this study related to a Sudanese parent's moral responsibility to direct their child in any cultural situation in which the family found itself. This was apparent in the parents' use of the words 'good' and 'bad'; 'right' and 'wrong'. They wanted to encourage their child in what was 'good' and 'right' and steer them away from what was 'bad' and 'wrong'. The parents felt it was their 'duty', 'role', 'job' to secure aspects of their Sudanese cultural ethic in their children as an

anchor in the turbulent Canadian multicultural waters. Although the words present binaries from parent to parent there were variations which produced a range, of values albeit a fairly restricted one. Within this range parents wrestled with the extent to which they retained their Sudanese cultural ethics in Winnipeg. The theme Good/Bad; Right/Wrong presents a rich and often agonizing debate on moral philosophy amongst the Sudanese parents as a community as well as within individual homes.

5.5.1 Lowering an Anchor – Respect for Parents

Although a range of family values seemed to be evolving during the settlement process, all eight Sudanese parents expressed conviction with one traditional value - respect for the parent role. For most of the parents this traditional value was absolute, above reasoning and not up for discussion. Regardless of social approval or personal benefit this type of respect was a definite.

For two fathers and three mothers, 'respect' was reflected as deference to the parent's status as Parent. One father expressed his distress at a situation where a son rejected his parents' advice stating that he had his own opinion and choice of action. For the father this disrespect was beyond his capacity to overlook. His observation was 'Now you are in conflict'. For this father, conflict was undesirable but inevitable when a child chose not to show respect.

The issue of physical punishment came up in relation to moral training. The father above was open to the social norm in Canada of alternatives to physical punishment as a way to enforce values in a child. He noted that physical punishment was the social norm in Sudan and other African countries and was socially approved in those places. He, therefore, located the context of Canada and the approaches which are socially approved here. He referred to several

Canadian approaches which he held in high enough esteem to share with other Sudanese parents:

I am telling them [Sudanese newcomers] do not raise your hand. Do not use physical punishment. Solve your problem verbally. Talk to your child. Deal with it that way. Lead your child with example. Always if any child does anything WRONG do not yell on that child because otherwise it will be construed to mean verbal abuse and so forth. So talk kindly. ... And if anything should go WRONG try to correct them the RIGHT thing by, you know, taking to the example. (IM1: 5.2)

However, faced with a lack of respect from a child after employing the Canadian alternatives the same father felt a line had been crossed in accommodation.

Maybe this is something that has been taking place over a period of time and the parents; they have run out of patience. So the only option is to use force, you know. They know that it is against the law but ...what can they do? (IM1: 14.9)

Despite Canadian imposed consequences, for this Sudanese father it was beyond tolerable for a parent to accept lack of respect - which is a Sudanese parent's basic expectation. This cultural value was worth going to Canadian jail for, although jail itself suggested a negative social assessment.

As one mother put it, her maternal devotion was grounded in her belief that her role was to ensure that her children were morally anchored. That context explained the physical action she chose.

I want [my children] to be a better people! I want them to be a better Canadian citizen! So I have to tell them what's RIGHT! I have to you know, discipline them or pinch them. You know when I pinch them it doesn't mean I'm gonna kill them! I'm not gonna shock that child. I want to say very strong: Don't do this again! You know. (IW2; 16.7)

I would tell [newcomers] ... some advice –like you have to really hang on as a parent – telling your kids what’s RIGHT and what’s WRONG. And don’t stop ... talking. And that’s what I told my kids. Until the day that you see the ground is open and they put me down there – that’s the day I will stop talking! (IW2; 11.7)

Although reference was made to the social norm in Sudan of children remaining in the household until marriage, it appears that respect for the parent’s status extends beyond departure from the parent’s household. The above mother spent a lot of time explaining the connection between what she was taught to be right and its connection to intrinsic life values:

When you start to breast feed your child that’s how you know ... It’s the feeling of being parent – taking responsibility to be a parent. ...When you carry a baby you always wishes the best for your child or your kids if you have two or three or four of them. You always wishes the best for them. So when I had my child and started to breast feed the child. I realized that I am a parent. I now become a parent! And whatever my parents used to tell me – do things, whatever the advice they were telling me it start to record in my brain. It start to come back. Saying ok this is what I’m gonna tell my child when she grow up. And I have to tell her and I have to teach her so she will be a nice child like what I used to be. And what my parent used to tell me I have to tell them too. So ... that moment when I had my baby ... that was the meaningful time to me of being a parent. (IW2; 17.7)

When this basic value is ignored by her own children she expresses deep distress.

I feel bad. You know, I, ... sometimes you know ... I cry. And I keep saying this up to now. I say you know, this is not how I was raised. And I myself I cannot even look in my Mom’s eyes. Even if today she would be alive I wouldn’t do that. That not RIGHT. (IW2; 4.9)

In the section above, the absolute value of respect for parents was presented particularly in the voices of two parents. In many of the interviews, respect for parents was combined with respect for elders in general. However there was less certainty about absolute respect for elders in a multi-cultural setting as we see below.

5.5.2 Respect for an Alliance of Elders

Several of the Sudanese parents made reference to an intrinsic principle of 'Eldership'. Elders were senior persons who through life experience were able to offer sound advice and to whom deference ought to be paid. Elders worked together for the protection of children and the teaching of moral values. Sudanese parents in the study noted with disappointment that in Winnipeg not all senior people were 'good'. Some misled children into gangs, drug use or towards an anti-parent philosophy.

There are grown up people outside there who are in the community who are using those kids to their benefit and getting those kids involved in all their BAD practices (IM1: 14.1)

Say with my kids, if they meet an elderly person and an elderly person tells them the RIGHT thing they should take it. But if that turns out to be contrary then, that is unfortunate. You have to turn it down. If I see a child doing what is WRONG I have the moral obligation to say to that child 'You know what? What you are doing is not RIGHT'. Because by being an elderly person, and I expect an elderly person to do the same. (IM1: 6.3)

Awareness had developed amongst the Sudanese parents that assigning 'Eldership' in terms of positive ethical mentor was not to be indiscriminately awarded in their new setting. Nevertheless, the reaction seemed to be that the 'bad' elder should not triumph over the basic intrinsic Sudanese value that elders be respected. A solution to this problem of harmful elders is suggested by three fathers - keep them away from our children.

The respect for elders embraced community members beyond the Sudanese ethnic group. One Sudanese mother related how she instructed her daughter to get up and give her seat to an older woman on the bus. The daughter objected saying other young people did not do this and she would be

ridiculed by them. The mother insisted, the daughter stood to give the older woman the seat and the older woman said thank you. The mother interpreted this 'thank you' to her daughter as a 'blessing'.

5.5.3 Elders - Contextual Considerations

The parents noted that Winnipeg and Sudan were different contexts however they aimed at resolving the difference in context by specifying the points of exception to the Sudanese tradition of Eldership. The Sudanese context offered a more narrow range of options and homogeneity not found in Winnipeg. Parents could more easily anticipate consequences to their own and their children's actions. At least two parents contemplated a cultural 'time out' during which the challenging child was returned to the Sudanese context for a period of cultural re-orientation and then returned to Winnipeg once a sound moral anchor had been restored.

Some mothers related the salience that respect for eldership had in Sudan. Respect for elders benefited both the child and the parents. The child was monitored and kept safe, the mothers were kept aware and honoured in the Alliance of Elders.

Raising kids in Sudan ...for me it was easier ...because the environment there and the culture and restriction of the society itself, it helped, you know. It made it easier for me or other parents to raise their kids because in Sudan, my neighbor would be like my blood sister. ... Would take care my kids, would even if I'm sick she would be able to come in the house and cook and do everything for my family. And even she would take time to come visit me or stay with me in hospital. ...So you know, that also makes it easier for parents, even if you're single mom you can be able to raise kids. Another thing is also, kids in Sudan – Nobody would say this is X's child. It's everybody in the community responsible for the child. When you see my child doing something out there, you will call.

[In Sudan] somebody even doesn't know me but she knows that child did something wrong could call: Come, come, come here. Come! Oh, I know you! Come here! The child would come. [The adult would] say: Why did you do this? Huh? Why did you do this?

That not **RIGHT**. You not allowed to do this. If you do this I am gonna tell your Mom.
(IW2; 1.3)

In Sudan it's much easier because you always with your kids in the house and then there is the freedom for the children to go outside and play. And you don't need even to go and to look for them. Because the whole community is looking after the kids. Not only you raising the kids. They know who is this child and who play with this. Any body in the street is not going to touch your child. But here it's very tough for us. (IW1; 1.5)

The omniscience of 'they know who is this child and who the child is playing with' provided a comfort that the Sudanese parents missed in their new context. The Sudanese parents also noted a change when their children referred to moving out or actually did move out from their parents' home. The concept of 'moving out' was apparently not anticipated and was interpreted as a rejection of the parent's protection and a breakdown of the family ethos.

There's something start to go WRONG in this place [Winnipeg]. My daughter, when she start she just say: You know what? It seem like you are just out of control. You know. I don' wanna stay in this house. I say: Where are you gonna go? [She] said: I don' wanna stay here. Because you want me to be at home at this time and you want me to do all of these things and you want me to be here. I'm not in jail. You know. See other kids are out there. [I] say: Ok. That's what you want? You are seventeen years old. If that's what you want ok, I don't have a problem. You go. ... You go. But in my culture a child all in Sudan no a child have to get out of the house, or a daughter or your son until they get married. (IW2; 6.8)

Because it is different here [in Winnipeg] ...maybe children is to move out of the home, of the house and then live alone and then make something [that] is not GOOD. That is the problem. (IW3; 2.8)

Although a father referred to earlier in this theme suggested a Sudanese parent may have to face the negative Canadian assessment of jail if he used physical punishment to insist on respect, two parents suggested another method. They suggested that the child be returned

to the Sudanese context in which this absolute moral value is not up for question and physical punishment is socially approved.

[If] I have money ... I'm not gonna stay here [in Winnipeg] but I will come back [from Sudan] when my kids you know ... they know what is wrong; what is right. (IW4; 9.5)

The [Canadian] government [should] collect [the Sudanese children who are misbehaving and] to take them back to Sudan, because when they go to street they can do something BAD to government and that BAD can come for your [family] name. So it should be difficult. [We] supposed to can talk to the government. Is not GOOD children can go to fight, to kill to do something WRONG which is the Canadian don' like it. The Canadian brought you here to come to feed your children, to [educate] children, to be a GOOD future in your life. But children they don' like that. What can you do? You supposed to take them back to your country. IM3; 10.7

The Sudanese parents in the study had a heightened awareness of the new Canadian context.

Their deliberations focused on how to interpret the context and develop a strategy that they believed would work for their families.

5.5.4 New Canadian Context – Weigh in the moral anchor and drop it ...where?

From the Sudanese parents' deliberations about strategies that can work in Canada one father expressed the view that in this new Canadian context Sudanese parents should change:

So I would ask [Sudanese newcomers] to accept the change in their way of parenting and adjust to the more Canadian way of parenting. For if they stick on their own way of raising kids [i.e. the Sudanese way] that might cause bitterness on their kids. (IM2; 7.3)

This father has been a single parent in Winnipeg for three years and has gathered experience in those years through raising five children by himself. Two of his children are now teenagers. He also participates in Sudanese/Canadian community organizations. He arrived in Winnipeg at a time when many Sudanese families were placed in the city. He recommends a tolerant, relativistic approach. Rather than see cultural issues in binaries of good or bad he

emphasizes that Sudanese parents should note the change in context and adjust to the new Canadian cultural norms.

This father also notes that the newcomer Sudanese parent may not have the cultural capital to interpret and apply these Canadian norms. This challenges the intuitive perspective of parenting which is possible in a familiar society. In his choice of words (below) he seems to note the consequences of cultural disadvantage, language in this case, in eroding the Sudanese moral anchor. His perspective suggests active reflection – Sudanese mothers want their children to grow in a ‘right’ way, but mothers don’t have the Canadian language to be sufficiently informed about what their children are doing, mothers are therefore not providing the guidance they otherwise may provide.

*Most of the mothers don't speak English. Yah so ... And children are very, very smart so they cheat their mothers. They cheat, they deceive ... They deceive their mothers. The [children] say we are going there and we are doing this and mothers don't understand – these kids are spoiling. So... mothers also ... they are looking forward as usual to see their kids are growing ... in a **RIGHT** way but through their ignorance they fail also to give a **GOOD** parental role. (IM2; 9.6)*

What is ‘A good parental role’? Is it dependant on cultural capital? The mothers described above do not understand the Canadian context in which their children are operating. Would they parent differently if they did understand the context?

A contrary view is put forward by a mother who has lived in Winnipeg for ten years. Her opinion is grounded in her personal experience in Kenya and Canada where she raised four children through their teen years, as well as from her observations while giving assistance to newcomer families. She strongly recommends a Sudanese-based, intuitive sense of right and

wrong. For her, the Canadian context enforced her position of holding to the absolutes based on her cultural intuition.

I don't have to copy what some parents are doing out there [in Winnipeg]. Parents is doing this. I have to do this to you guys [her children]. No. I won't do this. Because I have to know what's GOOD for my family. And I do what I know they would benefit from it and is helpful for them, then I would do it. Not because somebody's doing it I have to do it. No. Won't do that. (IW2; 12.5)

This mother, as well as the father cited previously, presents the active deliberations amongst Sudanese parents regarding the prudence of change. Despite a change in cultural context it is not automatic that there should also be a change in moral values. The Sudanese parents who relocated to Winnipeg in 2002 are pioneers, there are few Sudanese to observe and from whom to learn. Because they did not come with their own parents they instantly become the Sudanese elders in Winnipeg. Their deliberations will greatly affect the debate over absolute respect for Eldership and other moral issues which Sudanese parents in Canada encounter.

5.6 Discussion of Theme Good/Bad; Right/Wrong

In their use of the words Good/Bad and Right/Wrong, the Sudanese parents in this study appear to be wrestling within and amongst themselves regarding how to respond to the impact on their moral philosophies brought about by re-location to Canada. Clarifying this philosophy appears crucial as it is the parent's own moral anchor as well as the anchor they throw out to their children. One Sudanese philosophy is that there is absolute good and absolute bad. An absolute good is respect for parents. This respect is not up for discussion, nor is it to be justified - it is absolute.

More open to discussion amongst the Sudanese parents is whether the tradition of respect for elders is a culturally transferable absolute value. Are there qualifiers for this respect? Must elders see themselves as such to warrant respect? Do elders need to be in alliance with each other and uphold similar values? Is it therefore not simply seniority or status (e.g. being a biological parent) which is the qualifying factor? If not what is? Most importantly what do Sudanese parents teach their Canadian-based children on this matter?

One Sudanese father notes 'bitterness' may develop in children when Sudanese parents 'stick on their own way'. Being morally anchored in Sudanese tradition could then be also seen as being 'stuck'. Which Sudanese moral values are anchored in cultural context and in a new harbor need to be lifted and new anchors lowered in the Canadian location? If a parent feels a Sudanese value is absolute and must be anchored within their child is the only option to return the child [or whole family] to the original context of Sudan, or another hospitable harbor, temporarily until the child [or family's] moral anchor is more firmly formed? This active philosophical debate is expressed by all the parents with much angst.

6 Chapter 6- Contextual Discussion of Themes

In this chapter the three emergent themes from the eight interviews with the Sudanese parents are reviewed in the context of the theories on immigrant family life presented in Chapter 2 and the context of social history. Change is a feature which affects the context of life both in Sudan as well as in Canada although possibly at different rates and in different aspects. The Sudanese parents entering Winnipeg in 2002 jumped from a whirlwind on the African continent into a whirlwind on the North American continent. If they searched for peace it was peace from war and armed conflict, but the legal, psychosocial and cultural changes in a city rapidly expanding by means of new immigrant families do not create calm. Instead Winnipeg is at an unsettled place as it tries to manage the integration of its new demographics.

There is a phrase every newcomer to Canada hears as they settle. 'This is Canada' refers to the way things are done, the underlying principles of communal Canadian life. It may be more accurate to say 'This is this location in Canada since event X, Y OR Z at 1, 2, or 3 period in time.' Canadian practices regarding family life have been undergoing change as we will explore in this chapter. Placing the Sudanese parents' observations within a socio-historical context offers the possibility that change in Winnipeg can be directed to address their domestic concerns and also facilitate the enhanced productivity that is the goal of Canadian immigration policy. In this regard the personal is political and the political is personal. This concept of interrelatedness between what happens at home and what happens in the wider society provides a helpful perspective for the following discussion.

6.1 Relevance of Immigration Theories on Settlement

Of the two immigration theories briefly introduced in Chapter 2, Sluzki offers predictable stages at which challenges to immigrant family life may occur and when external support can be helpful. The reflections from the participants in this study suggest a predictable stage by stage concept is inadequate. Their own experiences do agree with the initial performance levels in Sluzki's curve. They performed well in their preparation to leave the crisis of war and social upheaval in Sudan and successfully completed the application process and long wait-times for refugee entry into Canada. Upon arrival they were dependant for a while on Canadian based settlement organizations, but during that time their performance levels as parents seemed to remain intact. Several of the parents said their children continued to 'listen' to them in the first few months after arrival in Canada. As predicted by Sluzki the family's performance levels fell when the children went to school and the parents experienced disorientation due to the employment situation in Winnipeg. However, many of them were still dealing with under- and unemployment when they were interviewed for this study after an average of six years in Canada.

Despite this personal disappointment they maintained a significant level of performance as parents. They set up homes in yet another foreign situation, accessed the necessary food and clothing, and got their children into school. They have participated in Canadian community life to such an extent that based on the referral of significant community members they volunteered to participate in this study. All eight parents said helping others was their reason for participation in this study – to inform about Sudanese family life and to change Canadian policy towards immigrant families. The fact that they responded to personal encouragement

rather than referrals by agencies likely suggests a preferred medium of communication and not a deliberate rejection of the formal written brochure/ poster medium of invitation. Had they been in a peaceful situation in Sudan their level of parental performance would most likely have been much higher. However, their current family performance in Canada suggests that they are actively engaged and aiming for improvement.

Their reflections demonstrate a high cognitive appraisal of their situation and they present solutions and recommendations as well as a pragmatic view of their social position in Winnipeg. Doubtless each parent has experienced some form of crisis stage as they settle, however only two mothers and one father singled out crisis points [nephew's incarceration, daughter's abrupt departure from home and son's involvement in 'the street'.] These three parents appear to have come to some place of resolve and did not present as being in active crisis. They do however appear to be hypertensive to a potential negative impact from their Canadian social surroundings. This could cause them to move either into crisis or if their resolve is functional move up to a heightened level of family performance.

It is in the crisis stage of Sluzki's performance curve that its usefulness diminishes. Does the family's performance necessarily follow a linear direction up or down? If the family goes into crisis should the social work response reflect pathology?

Berry's Acculturation Strategies (2006) seem to be very relevant at this point in the discussion of the Sudanese parents' perspectives as it provides a framework which anticipates movement during settlement from one level of sensitivity to social participation to another level and possibly back again. Berry points out that both the immigrant and the receiving

society have choices. The majority of the Sudanese parents in the study appear to choose to fit into the 'Integration Strategy' which makes them a good fit for the current Canadian multicultural policy. Berry's model of personal strategy of Integration and the corresponding government strategy of Multiculturalism theoretically allow that a Sudanese parent can hold on to their homeland cultural heritage whilst also embracing and interacting with other cultural groups in Canada.

Berry's model also allows another choice - that is, some Sudanese immigrants in Canada may prefer to hold on to their homeland culture and avoid/ reduce interaction with other groups (Separation strategy). The mother in the study who said she would return to Sudan right away if she had the money, wished to separate from Canadian culture until her children knew 'good and bad'. Once they had attained an acceptable cultural morality she would bring them back to Canada (Integration strategy). Likewise, the father who wished to send his son to Sudan for a period and then bring him back to Canada once his behavior had improved, appeared to want to implement the Separation strategy for one member of his family for a specified period and then change to the Integration strategy afterwards. Berry's strategies allow that at various stages in the family's development the acculturation strategy may also change. It is this aspect of choice that makes Berry's strategies useful.

If it is assumed from the eight interviews that the strategy preference of the Sudanese parents is integration with an intense concern from two parents regarding moral values which leads them to consider temporary separation, then the following discussion looks at ways to facilitate Sudanese parents' integration into Winnipeg with attention to participation in

developing moral sensibilities. Integration would include mutual accommodation by both the Winnipeg society at large and the parents in particular.

During the interview/conversations the participants revealed a high level of personal development (education and/or reflection), and distinct values and expectations for themselves and for their children. The parents expressed great interest in their parenting role in Canada. As parents they felt a need to be 'awake'; it was their duty, their job; it was their worry. Their concerns focused on cultural adaptation as it affected the relationships within their homes between themselves and their children and between marital couples. They highly valued their children's regard and expressed pride in their children's academic achievements. Their experiences as immigrant parents included years in a country of asylum outside of Sudan and an average of 6 years within Canada. They expressed appreciation of the improved quality of life for their families in terms of material goods and access to education in Canada.

6.2 Macro-Systemic Issues

Despite their appreciation for the material improvements to their life and access to services such as education, the Southern Sudanese parents in the sample experienced disorientation. They had a number of assumptions which did not seem to fit with the Canadian situation. They assumed Eldership - an alliance amongst adults, which was distinguished from any alliance which may form between adults and children. In effect they assumed a hierarchical social structure in relation to seniority. Within that hierarchy they also assumed a primacy of family in their relationship with their children which was distinguished from any relationship other non-family adults may have with their child. Thirdly they assumed clarity on values amongst parents and other potential adult role models for children which distinguished

between positive attitudes and behaviours and negative ones and in turn endorsed the hierarchy of eldership and primacy of family.

The Sudanese parents noted factors outside their families within the wider Winnipeg society that negatively impacted their households – the Winnipeg youth gangs, an apprehensive attitude from social institutions to parents, a reduced social standing for immigrants, changes in gender role, their children’s heightened awareness of children’s rights, children’s access to resources external to the home and a lack of social appreciation for the parents’ cultural values.

Some of these social factors will now be discussed with a socio-historical lens as it is my belief that this knowledge provides context, validates the Sudanese parents’ perceptions, illustrates how change has occurred and describes how further change may therefore be approached. Admittedly, social change enlightened by knowledge of history is not initially likely for a new immigrant; however, after a few years in their host country when immigrants have garnered some cultural capital with which to interpret such knowledge and a host country policy that invites new citizens to participate in policy formation, change is increasingly possible.

6.3 The Canadian Socio-Historical context

6.3.1 Governmental and Legal Context

The laws governing Canadian families have changed over the past century but some of the ideology remains the same. Prior to 1867 Canadian families in **poverty** were seen as ‘moral and economic threats and their children were to be ‘bound out’ to proper self-supporting families who would not taint the children with their **parental failure**’ (Hick 2002; 96). There was

a link made between poverty and parental failure. [Some may say that this perspective endures in 2009.] Legal amendments in 1874 allowed that 'courts would decide whether a child's best interest would be better served with his or her family, one parent or an employer.' (ibid 95). The 1893 Children's Protection Act gave the Ontario Children's Aid Society 'the right to remove neglected or abused children from their homes and become legal guardians for such children' (Bala, 2004; 3). To ensure the welfare of children in Canada, child welfare societies have developed in all ten provinces and have an official legal mandate. In Manitoba this organization is called Child and Family Services.

Child welfare agencies walk a fine line between supporters who believe they should step in and remove children in a pro-active effort to avoid abuse, and critics who feel these agencies weaken familial relationships rather than facilitate families to build on their strengths. Child welfare is increasingly legalized with 'the courts continually struggling to balance concerns about the protection of the constitutional rights of parents and children within the family, with the desire to promote the welfare of children' (Bala; 6). In 2004 Chief Justice MacLachlin wrote

'Children need to be protected from abusive treatment ... yet this is not the only need of children. Children also depend on parents ...for guidance and discipline to protect them from harm and to promote their healthy development within society. A stable and secure family ...is essential to this growth process.' (Bala; 6)

It is this legalization of child welfare that brings in the police, brings in formal family risk assessments and in the face of liability, brings in professional accountability for social workers and schools. There have been cases where children have been abused in families which were known by agencies to have difficulties. This has resulted in reduced personal discretion and greater cautiousness on the part of professionals who interact with the families identified as

needing support. It is this type of historical series of events that makes the social support balance lean towards social control rather than toward social care.

The historical link associating poverty with parental failure places a poor yet committed parent in a defensive position. Refugee parents, who arrive without resources and aim at working to pay off their transportation loans to the Canadian government, will likely be poor for a while. In order to work and or go to school for English language skills or employment readiness immigrant parents will need to place their children in school or day care. As one mother in the study explained, she was expected to look for work shortly after her employment readiness was completed. She had five children. The work schedules of the mothers in this study made setting up the interviews very challenging. All four mothers worked in either hospitals or other residential institutions and had night shift work. For the married mothers it was in a way fortunate that their husbands were unemployed and could help with child supervision during the night. The separated mothers had older children and used strategies such as the telephone to maintain some supervision of their children whilst away at work.

6.3.2 Non-family involvement and the Work/ Home Balance

The work/home balance is a continent-wide problem for families. North American scholars in the United States of America as well as in Canada have written on the issue (Hewlett & West, 1998). Canadian researcher Anne-Marie Ambert (2007; 14) highlights the North American situation where children spend extended periods with peers and what she calls 'serial' caretakers in daycare, in school, in aftercare and then babysitters in the home. Ambert then makes a cultural comparison with child care in the African traditional society of kinship and family linkages which model more consistent relationships and offer the child a sense of

belonging. Describing contemporary American family life styles Elkind (2002; 35) refers to 'the permeable family' due to all the services required from non-family resources who influence family life. He also likens the North American home with a bus station. Parents and children are so programmed by activities outside the home, including school activities, that home is only a place to rest before heading to another destination. In a situation such as this he bemoans the fact that schools now teach what parents should – character development and sex education.

The Sudanese parents arriving in Winnipeg in 2000 find themselves plunged into this socio-historical context and have intuitively understood the North American dilemma. The mothers who work nights so they can be awake when the children are at home have made an intuitive adjustment. The fathers who are learning to listen to their children are also becoming aware of the influence of other voices on their children. However, having become aware the next step is less clear. The Sudanese fathers who are unemployed, such as two of the four fathers in this sample and both the husbands of the married mothers in the sample are available to engage in active fathering. However, North American child raising [children's group projects, talking to teachers, volunteering in schools] is a whole new world for them where Sudanese intuition may not help. Additionally, one father said that though he was home he was so worried at his lack of employment that he was nonfunctional with his son.

6.4 Contextual Discussion of Theme 'School/ 911'

This section of the discussion now moves from the broad socio-historical context to look specifically at one of the three themes raised by the Sudanese parents. The alliance which parents sensed intuitively between school and 911 is real. Winnipeg School Division [40 schools] has 5 school resource police officers stationed in 7 high schools and also serving their

feeder schools. The purpose is 'to promote better relations and understanding between the kids and police' (Martin, 2008). The Winnipeg Police Service, School Education Section, is also reaching out through its website and the Take Action Schools program <http://www.winnipeg.ca/police/> [300 Winnipeg City schools]. That purpose is broader and aims at parent groups as well as students, giving presentations on bullying, drug awareness, gang awareness, internet safety and so on.

The case of police officers based in schools can create a tremendous range of reactions from immigrant parents. The need for this presence confirms that school is not safe while at the same time offering reassurance that action is being taken. In a situation where children have such direct access to the police and active programs are aimed at building rapport between children and the police, the threat in the '911' stories [where the police come in the home and take the side of the child over the parent] to which the participants in this research referred, may appear valid.

One district of the Winnipeg School Division, the Louis Riel School Division states in its Newcomer Family Reception brochure that it has the highest number of refugee students in Manitoba (Louis Riel School division, 2008). The newcomer programs offered refer to services for the children but not for their parents once registration has been completed. The school division web site does provide documents parents can read on the curriculum and safety in schools. The availability of online resources does not necessarily mean they are accessible to Sudanese parents or that this medium is the best means of communicating with them. [Recall in the Methods section that the researcher's brochure for this study was largely unread even

when in hand. The method that worked for this research was direct interpersonal referrals from people known to the parents].

There are also other non-academic professionals in Winnipeg schools providing services to newcomer students. In the Inner City School District, dedicated professionals including the school's English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher, the Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) and a settlement organization identified children originating from war affected countries who needed extra attention (Arruda, 2008). In an article briefly describing the project and best practices the CGC newsletter highlights that the fastest growing age group among newcomers is children, and schools are a major vehicle of socialization. As the Winnipeg schools do their best job to socialize newcomer children, the parents of these children also need to process what their children are experiencing away from home and how that impacts home and parent-child relations. This processing will be experienced differently for each child, as each child may react differently to the school's efforts. The average number of children of the parents in this study was about 5. Sudanese parents therefore have to process what the school is trying to achieve, how it is done and how each of their 5 children respond to this intervention. At the same time, the parents themselves are also going to school to learn/improve English language skills, working shift work in entry level jobs, acculturating themselves and maintaining the home space.

Some EAL classes are located in regular schools. The Immigrant and Refugee Committee of Manitoba (IRCOM, 2009) runs its literacy classes in nearby elementary and junior high schools and provides on-site child minders some of whom are from the newcomer community

itself. This is very convenient for newcomer parents and maximizes the use of resources such as teaching space and equipment. It also means that parents are students in the same school as their children, a situation which creates an opportunity for the parents to become familiar with the school and their children's teachers. However, parents' student role may convey to both parents and children that there is a leveling off in status.

The challenge for the Sudanese parent is firstly to take this all in and then to decide how to respond in an unfamiliar culture. Children spend long hours in school under the influence of the adults there. The Sudanese parents' comments about school/ 911 reflect Elkind's description of the 'permeable' family (Elkind, 2002; 35).

6.5 Contextual Discussion of Theme 'Good/Bad; Right/Wrong'

Multiculturalism in Canada means those Sudanese families, as well as all immigrants from fairly homogenous cultures, are immersed in a context of diverse views on just about everything. The angst with which the Sudanese parents described the theme 'Good/Bad; Right/Wrong' can be considered to be a feature of a multicultural society. Southern Sudanese parents arriving in Winnipeg in 2000 [5 years before these interviews] entered a highly dynamic societal structure. Their very arrival was part of this dynamism. Prior to the 1990's there had been few Sudanese in Winnipeg's population. Prior to the 2003 Refugee Group Settlement policy, the focus had been on individual refugees who, after a period of their own settlement and understanding of the Winnipeg culture, may then have sent for their children and spouses. Those pioneer family members may have been able to 'interpret' the culture for the rest of the family. Entire families arriving all at the same time requires a new range of settlement services geared to individual family members. Settlement tends to focus on school, language,

employment and shelter. Facilitating the resolution of cultural disorientation requires a unique application of settlement services.

It is difficult to pin down absolutes in an environment where so many diverse points of view are allowed expression. The human rights that allow a Sudanese parent to expect that their cultural norms will be respected are the same human rights that allow another cultural group to endorse another set of norms. Cultural norms influence the very decision to have a child and also the number of children deemed optimal. In the literature on the value of children in Africa (Dyer 2007; Nsamenang 2000) value was placed on the child's potential to offer social security in illness, and old age, assist with labor, confer social status (by proving fertility) (Dyer, 2007, Nsamenang, 2000). Another study on Nso children [West African tribe] lists in priority the characteristics of a 'good' child – obedient and respectful, filial service, hardworking, helpful, honest and intelligent (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; 139). In the present study the Sudanese parents stressed respect for parents and for elders. This would fit well into an African environment.

In North America adults no longer have a halo due to seniority. Much concern has been raised at abuses to children by adults. This used to be hidden in the confines of the home space, or private areas where adults had access to children. Through active consciousness-raising by child safety advocates the issues firstly of physical abuse and then sexual abuse have been highlighted and have resulted in the formation and development of child protection agencies as described in the discussion on schools. The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (Statistics Canada, 2001; 8) presents data collected by child welfare workers which

is damning of relatives, with mother and father being the most alleged and substantiated to perpetrate abuse or to neglect their children. Non-relatives were also investigated in the study [although this is more thoroughly covered under police investigations] and include family friends, children's friends and babysitters.

The Sudanese expectation of eldership therefore will not be accepted without reservation by mainstream Canada. The concern is not about value transfer which appears to be the concern of the Sudanese parents in the study, but of potential exposure to physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional maltreatment and neglect. The North American child is therefore asked questions regarding safety, including emotional safety. Elkind depicts this when he notes that children used to be asked after attending a party 'Were you good?' Now the question is 'Did you have fun?' (Elkind 2002; 39). The focus is on the child being able to express satisfaction rather than the child's social competence or contribution to the event.

Even professionals working with families in North America debate matters pertaining to what is right and what is wrong. In the text '*Current controversies on family violence*' (Loseke, Gelles and Cavanaugh, 2005) scholars debate opposite sides of several family issues – the pros and cons of child discipline, the value or lack of value in family preservation vs. child protection, whether child abuse is over reported or underreported, the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of child sexual abuse education. These scholars support their opinions with academic literature, empirical research and many personal hours authoring volumes reflecting their point of view. The editors note that 'the high quality of the presentations here repeatedly

demonstrate how equally intelligent and dedicated people can come to quite different conclusions.’ (Loseke, Gelles and Cavanaugh, 2005; xix).

Diversity of values impacts the immigrant family when they may least be able to process its impact and to respond. A Sudanese parent who wants to become integrated in Winnipeg society can be overwhelmed by this societal debate in Canada. That is if they had the language skills as well as the time to debate. While societal debates on morals rage, parents live in real time and are occupied with home making, child-raising, liaison with school, budgeting, basic personal care – sleep, hygiene; in addition to work and/or school. To keep their children safe they must instill guidelines. The Canada Safety Council (www.safety-council.org/info/child/alone) advises – ‘Set firm rules, with clear do’s and don’ts.’; Can the child follow rules responsibly? On a micro-level there are so many responsibilities that demand parents’ immediate and sometimes exclusive attention that joining the societal debates may seem irrelevant.

Ambert (2001a) describes child effect - the effect a child has on his/her parent. The focus on children’s well-being can over shadow the fact that children, simply by their existence, greatly affect the adult who becomes ‘parent’. In a national poll of both parents and nonparents the United States of America’s National Parenting Association found ‘lots of agreement’ amongst parents and almost opposite priorities from nonparents (Rankin, 2002; 252). American parents across races, genders and political persuasion had many concerns in common simply because of the effect of their children on their budget, on their view of the neighborhoods they lived in, plans for the future and on their use of time. Children have as

much an effect on parents as parents have on children (Lerner, Noh & Wilson, 1998). The child's reaction to their parent's efforts has a positive or negative effect on the parent and all this plays out in a societal context.

The North American societal context is so diverse in its view on morals that Ambert posits 'many parents become indecisive, unsure of themselves and unable to say no' (Ambert 2001b; 201). It is likely that busy Sudanese parents will say 'No' as they move in the confidence of their familiar parental role until the Canadian culture enters their private home space through their children's attitudes and behaviors. At this juncture the indecisiveness and lack of confidence which Ambert refers to may occur due to fears of Canadian societal sanctions described in the emergent theme 'School/ 911'.

Although an adult may be aware of the diverse views in the society, it is child effect that really brings this home. It is when one's own children reject you, or venture into harm's way that the attitudes and policies of the outside world become personal. This is when a policy to place police in schools to establish rapport becomes a personal consideration. This is when child abuse policies penned by academics and policy makers enter the home in a real way. At this point, through child effect, parents experience what is described in feminist ideology as the political is personal (Hanish, 1969). The political world of policy outside affects their domestic world inside.

The Sudanese parents' angst is due to a juxtaposition of perceived Canadian values and the Sudanese ideal. The Sudanese ideal has been nursed through the 5 years waiting in refugee sites and around Canadian Embassies. It must be noted that Africa is no stranger to child abuse.

South African authors Richter and Dawes (2008; abstract) explore societal aspects of child abuse and note that 'the socialized obedience, dependency and silence of women and children, create conditions in which abuse can occur, often with few consequences. South Africa has extremely high rates of both physical and sexual abuse of children'. For the purposes of this study and this discussion the issue is not the reality of abuse in Africa or Sudan in particular, but the desire amongst the Sudanese parents in this study for an alliance amongst adults that protects their children. They want their children to be safe and they want to be familiar with the people interacting with their children.

As two parents in the study noted, they also have the option to return to Sudan, temporarily or permanently to that traditional environment where there is clarity as to 'right' and 'wrong'. However, change occurs everywhere including in Sudan. In this study one father who went on a visit to Sudan returned committed to keeping his children in Canada until they completed their education. Sudanese scholar Abusharaf (2002; 2006) notes that the effects of war, urbanization of internally displaced rural refugees and increased migration to North America have had a significant effect on Southern Sudanese-based families. Even in Sudan traditional values are being re-considered.

It is highly likely that criteria for the role of a Canadian-based 'Elder' can be developed but it will take time. Like the North American scholars referred to in Loseke, Gelles & Cavanaugh (2005), the Sudanese parents in this study proved they were intelligent, reflective and dedicated. The Sudanese parents are asking amongst themselves: How do we guide our children in this new environment? How do we conduct ourselves as Southern Sudanese

families in Winnipeg, Canada? The angst in their voice is evident. The answers may prove discordant.

6.6 Listen

In the theme 'Listen' the Sudanese parents in the study emphasized wanting their voice to be received by their children as unique and trustworthy. Amidst the cacophony of adult and peer voices the Sudanese parent felt a need to become hyper vigilant to hold their child's attention. Since the Sudanese attitude of 'listening' itself conveyed an element of deference on the part of the listener, the process of parental vigilance only served to highlight the loss of deference. As the parents noticed the effect of the many distracting voices on the parent-child relationship they expressed varied responses.

In response to the interview question 'Do you feel you lose your place as a parent in Winnipeg?' the parents were divided in their response. Some felt they maintained their status while others were more apprehensive. Two parents appeared to question the value of enforcing 'listening' as the negative consequences could be a total cut off in parent-child communication. Directly or indirectly all eight parents raised the issue throughout their interview that, in Canada, Sudanese children were no longer listening to their Sudanese parents, whether the children were their own or whether the comment was an observation about other families.

Some of the factors the parents noted that children gave for not listening were: knowing English better than their parent, generally having a better understanding of the Canadian approach to things, becoming legally independent at age eighteen, influential other parties – particularly peers, and being able to take care of themselves without parental support. Some of

these factors were more relevant to teenagers but younger children also voiced tendencies of reduced regard for their parent's guidance. Wives also appeared inclined in the Canadian setting to disregard Sudanese male guidance, possibly perceived as male dominance.

6.6.1 Theme 'Listen' – The impact of professional voices.

Social service professionals are guided by literature, research, policies, organizational mandates and funding agency stipulations. One guideline regarding families is that members in the family should have a sense of individual identity. The notion of 'individuation' is a psychological term that has influenced many Western countries including Canada. Individuation refers to children gaining a sense of identity separately from their connection to their parents (Ambert, 2001b; 37). Some influential theories about families such as Bowenian theory and Structural Therapy (Nichols, 2004; 374) suggest it is dangerous for individuals to 'lose themselves in relationships'. Individuation suggests a separation by children from parental influence, and an acceptance of a philosophy that as children age into young adulthood parents 'must let their children go and take hold of their own lives' (ibid; 126). Although many texts point out that in different cultures family relationships are expressed and are expected to progress differently (Nichols, 2004; 114) somehow individuation has become embedded in Western philosophy and institutions despite increasingly cosmopolitan populations in Western countries. It will take strategic effort to incorporate other ideologies into the training of the professionals who work with families (Green, 1998).

The expectation of the majority of the Sudanese parents in this study is not individuation, neither for their children nor for themselves. Even as they look to their children completing school they speak of filial obedience to age thirty and hopes that if they return to

Sudan their children will accompany them. The parents in this study appeared to more fit the concept of Familism shared by Asian, South Asian, and Latino cultures.

Familism is 'characterized by strong commitment to family obligation and loyalty, including support, and a preference for geographic closeness' (Ambert, 2001; 73). In the literature on the value of children in Africa (Dyer, 2007, Nsamenang, 2000, Chuol, 2006, Abusharaf, 2002, Fadlalla, 2007) emphasis was placed on the child's contribution to the 'family' in its extended form. Even in marriage the adult child contributed to the family either by dowry payments or by acquiring a wife who could contribute labor and income and provide children who could in turn contribute to the larger 'family'. In old age a parent could continue to expect an adult child to provide support. Adult children who immigrate also continue to send support by way of remittances (Houle & Schellenberg, 2008) or by sponsoring relatives to come to Canada.

Within the professional discourse there is a change underway from individuation to a new philosophy. Psychologist Barry Schwartz (2000) suggests a careful withdrawal from the ethic of individual self-determination to a positive psychology which articulates constraints, commitment and a healthy vision for optimal functioning of human kind. David Eklind (2002) extols the attitude of commitment in what he calls a move toward the 'Vital Family'. As the North American discourse changes Sudanese parents may find that as they process which Sudanese values they wish to keep here in Canada, and those which they may let go, they will increasingly find a receptive environment amongst culturally sensitive professionals in which to

discuss their aspirations of having their children attend to parental guidance and contribute to family cohesion.

6.6.2 Listen – the impact of the media.

Much has been written about the impact of television on North American family life. Not only does TV take the time from interpersonal dialogue in the family schedule, it also infuses a range of thoughts into the consciousness of the viewers. Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Cornel West co-authored in 1998 'The War against Parents', with a chapter on 'A Poisonous Popular Culture'. In it they illustrate through excerpts from daytime talk shows and a historical review of movies, songs and television programs how a philosophy of 'parent bashing' is fed to the public in the guise of entertainment. Four years later in an edited volume they continue to present the challenge facing parents, and Bernice Kanner (2002) contributed a chapter titled: 'From Father knows best to The Simpsons – On TV, Parenting has lost its halo'. In it she discusses the debate whether art (such as TV programming) leads North American life or reflects it. Family life in North America has indeed changed over the past 50 years. Some claim the traditional family no longer exists and is redefined as 'people taking care of each other'. While not suggesting that the 'sanitized' electronic equivalent to 'Home Sweet Home' embroidery is what is needed today, she does encourage advocacy for family programming that does not present parents as 'nincompoops'.

Two Sudanese fathers in this study referred to television as one of the ways to keep children from the dangers of the streets. It is not clear whether they also are aware of the dangers in their living rooms. The family television set, or sets as so many families now have more than one TV set, attack the desired family value of 'Listen' much more than we may

realize. The North American societal environment, what Garbarino (1998) calls the 'socially toxic environment' does not allow parents the leeway to let the negative effects of TV, or other electronic entertainment go unscrutinized. Every incoming 'voice' needs to be attended to. As several of the Sudanese mothers said, staying on top of the many influences on the family in Winnipeg can become overwhelming. In their words: It is very stressful.

6.6.3 Listen – the impact of peers

Sudanese refugee parents start their residence in Canada with debt to the Canadian government for their families' transportation costs. With family sizes averaging 7 people their indebtedness for travel costs from the African countries of asylum to Canada would be sizeable. As they head out to work to pay off this debt, their children go into various settings where they interact with non-family groups. There is also the feeling that the children need to learn English and develop friendships with Canadian children as befits the integration strategy of acculturation. Sudanese children of all ages will therefore be exposed to Canadian peers early in the migration process.

Peer interaction is a familiar concept to Sudanese parents but within a cultural context. Literature on African socialization suggests that peers play a significant role in child socialization (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994, 140). Older children are often expected to supervise and admonish their younger siblings while parents perform domestic tasks or participate in economic activities. Social competence and social intelligence are particularly stressed and children are expected to observe, imitate and rehearse the behaviors of the senior sibling who

had in turn learned the desirable behaviors from other seniors. The Sudanese context of 'Listen' is therefore based on mentoring by seniors, often seniors in the peer /sibling group.

It is very significant when a senior sibling, a teenager or young adult, does not 'listen' to their parents as this has a trickledown effect within the family. An elder child who is a deviant role model jeopardizes the socialization process. Such a child will also jeopardize the family resources for sibling supervision and domestic tasks.

This effect of being outside the African culture which supports filial duty is further compounded by the child's presence in a recreational, consumer-oriented youth culture in Canada (Ambert, 1997; 96). Products are directly marketed to youth (Aird, 2002; 21, Elkind, 2002; 36). For poor youth, such as early immigrant Sudanese, there is a strong inclination to utilize the resources they do have in order to participate in the consumer culture. McDonalds, Burger King, Subway and several other fast food companies have impressive career opportunities for teens willing to work in order to earn. On its career opportunity webpage (www.mcdonalds.ca/en/careers) McDonalds outlines its people principles including 'Employees are respected, valued and empowered'; we listen for and value diverse opinions'; 'Pay is at or above local quick serve restaurant levels.'

The same characteristics that make a senior sibling a good mentor also make a good McDonald employee, plus of course the cash compensation which provides the ability to participate in the consumer youth culture. There is a career path within the organization and even endorsement of moving on to other employment under the 'Personal Growth' section in the career webpage. A Sudanese youth could find herself 'respected, valued, and empowered'

by her participation in the economic community which at the same time might create parental disorientation and reduced caregiver resources for her siblings at home.

Canadian peers' motives may be to be helpful as in the case of a classmate providing a Sudanese youth the information on how to get a job after school. Peers may also be motivated by destructive intentions as in the gang recruitment that the Sudanese parents in this study fear. Societal characteristics that co-exist with negative peers are: neighborhoods – low quality of housing, low quality of schools and day care, high unemployment or low paid employment, inadequate health facilities, single parent households, low parental education, high parent absence (Ambert, 2001a; 43, 2001b; 187). Two Sudanese mothers named communities in Winnipeg that they felt were not conducive to dutiful filial behavior and street safety. Unfortunately this is the area where many newcomers are housed initially. The area is well supplied with public transit, ethnic grocery stores and inexpensive household stores. Newcomer Sudanese parents would need to realize the risks, and be 'hyper vigilant' (Ambert 2001b, 193) to avoid contact with undesirable peers – a tall order for new arrivals with 5 children and a long list of settlement requirements. As the children go to school and begin to know their way around they will meet people unknown to their parents.

In response to this increased vulnerability to unknown persons some Canadian middle class, educated parents are focusing on 'concerted cultivation' of their children's talents in order to optimize their position in education, sports, the arts and ultimately their careers.

In Canada, employed parents with children under 12, increased time (direct care and socializing) with children from 51 minutes (1986) to 76 minutes (1998) per day (increase of 50%) (Zuzanek, 2000). These results are consistent with trends in the US (Bianchi, Sayer, Weathers, & Robinson, 2000) and Australia (Bittman, 1999). Although these results appear to be counter intuitive, they do point to important changes in the way that parents spend time with their children (Daly, 2004).

A suggested explanation for this increase is that Canadian parents with a certain level of awareness due to their educational level, implement more 'goal oriented, structured and activity saturated time' with their children (ibid; 9). The Sudanese single-father in this study explained that he had created a tightly supervised schedule for his 6 children utilizing community facilities in his downtown neighborhood. Whilst it is not clear how much time he was able to spend with the children as a result of his scheduling efforts, it is interesting that like middle class Canadians he intuitively turned to the strategy of 'structured activity saturation'.

The challenge of their children's peers to Sudanese parents' primacy is very steep. Canadian peers can provide access to resources of which the Sudanese parent is not even aware. The very skills that would make a senior teen most helpful at home are also skills that may earn her an income in the economic market. The consumer-driven youth culture and teen-friendly workplace are significant competition in what could be called a positive distraction from parental authority. The negative distraction is the destructive life of gangs and drugs. Neither distraction is well received by a Sudanese parent concerned about their children not 'listening'.

6.6.4 Listen – Parents' Personal Choices

The freedom of individual choice that Sudanese children experience in Canada is also being experienced by the adults, as expressed in some Sudanese mothers choosing not to 'listen' to their husbands. As these marital relationships play out in the more liberal Canadian context, Sudanese children learn that change is in the wind amongst their Sudanese role models as well. As mentioned in the earlier discussion of the theme 'Listen' in Chapter 5, the

Sudanese parents did not relate their own increased freedoms with their children's. A concern was expressed by a Sudanese mother that children are unsupervised when single parents have to be out. In her comments she was not sympathetic to the Sudanese mother who due to not 'listening' had a difficult single parenthood. Her comments suggest that Sudanese communal help may be less available for those mothers who chose to deviate from the Sudanese norms.

The single Sudanese mothers in the study reported having non-Sudanese friends who helped with child rearing and offered emotional support. They did not say who they 'listened' to; however they too noted the change in gender power. Unfortunately, single-parent families, often headed by women are more likely to become poor and remain poor. This would increase the pressure on youth to go out of the home to work, especially those already inclined to do so – whether to help with family finances, to escape the home situation or to earn resources for personal recreation and consumer goods.

The Sudanese fathers were significantly changed by their experiences in the Canadian environment. Their employment status was lower than in Sudan but despite this the single father appeared most satisfied with his new status and his increased involvement with his children. Father involvement is measured by three dominant dimensions (Pleck 1997 cited in Daly, 2004; 12) – engagement, accessibility and responsibility. The 'listen' theme as raised by the Sudanese fathers, referred to engagement in Canadian domestic situations where they were more accessible to their children than in their previous Sudanese setting.

Pleck's study (Daly, 2004) suggests that American fathers now spend more time present (accessible) and involved in direct contact with their children (engaged) in a way that converges with the time spent in these activities by American mothers. If this American trend is similar in

Canada then immigrant Sudanese married fathers will have an environment that supports their increased involvement and offers increased opportunities, if they and their children wish, to develop a new kind of father – child relationship. It may be that both father and child listen to each other rather than the Sudanese traditional unidirectional flow from father to child. This would herald a significant change in Sudanese immigrant family life.

This chapter reviewed the emergent themes from the 8 interviews with the Sudanese mothers and fathers in the context of societal changes within the host country. Berry's model of Acculturation Strategies provided the possibility that Sudanese immigrant parents may choose to be closer or further away from the host country norms depending upon a variety of factors. The historical context illustrated that the Canadian society itself is undergoing change and may be tending towards greater appreciation for parents' struggles between work and home, the positive significance of parental vs. non-family care and the need to monitor the influence of children's peers and the media on youths' aspirations and consequently on family life.

7 Chapter 7 - Implications for Social Work Practice

In this chapter the implications of this research are applied to the practice of social work. I selected the topic of Sudanese parents for this Masters in Social Work thesis study because the perspectives of newcomer Sudanese parents offer Social Work a view of operating within Winnipeg society that is unique to the parents' multinational lens. At this time when Manitoba looks to integrate 20,000 newcomers each year, social workers must prepare for dynamic changes in the environment in which we practice and the clients whom we serve.

The Sudanese parents' perspectives have been presented through a phenomenological method based on in-person interviews that present the Sudanese parents' way of knowing their life world of parenting in a new culture, the world as they intimately experience it. This study aims to extract from the Sudanese parents' experience and present that which is 'concretely unique' and universally essential' (Van Manen, 1990) about immigrant parenting that can inform and shape social work practice.

The chapter addresses the study's implications for social work at three levels of practice: community, group and individual. The discussion of social work practice is set in the context of Manitoba's current approach to families and a critical social work lens that challenges social workers to operate in a manner that is politically aware.

7.1 The political context of social work with families in Manitoba

In Canada the issues of education, health and welfare are provincial rather than federal responsibilities. Family and child issues are therefore provincial matters. Social work with families in the province of Manitoba has been shaped by the presence of a large population of

Aboriginal families who suffered marginalization, forced re-settlement and family separation during colonization and subsequently. In recognition of the terrible injustices to Aboriginal families provincial government responses have come through channels such as the 1991 Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI) (2007). Changes in the provincial child and family services system were made in 2001 and again in 2006 following the death of a 5 year old Aboriginal girl while she was in government care. In its blueprint for change the province acknowledges:

The report from the review of child deaths stresses that the child welfare system cannot [effectively build preventive strategies to strengthen families and enhance child safety] alone – responsibility for the safety of children is shared with families, communities and other service systems (Manitoba Dept. of Family Services and Housing, 2006; 6).

It is truly sad that government statements sharing responsibility for the care of children with families required such a tragic impetus. At this time the Province of Manitoba through Healthy Child Manitoba is committed to supporting families and has introduced parenting programs such as Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) (Healthy Child Manitoba, 2009) and changes in law towards a differential response to support families as soon as they sense a struggle in performance. The differential response emphasizes tailoring services to families which provide early support and crisis prevention to avoid more intrusive and adversarial child protection responses.

The legacy of intrusive and adversarial action on the part of social workers representing the cause of child protection is a barrier to current efforts to be seen as collaborators and facilitators in family strengthening. Social work educator and analyst Robert Mullaly (2007) describes this aspect of social work practice as a basic contradiction in the social services. Social

Workers 'provide social care and social control at the same time' (Mullaly; 320). There is potential, therefore, for an incompatibility of interests between the service user and the worker (ibid; 300). As Social Workers we must be mindful of these incompatibilities in the past and to aim at new compatibilities in the immediate future.

The unique history of social work with families in Manitoba offers an opportunity to avoid tendencies toward social control and to emphasize the social care aspect of social work. The specific data from newcomer Sudanese parents generated in the current research study is now discussed within the political and critical context presented above.

7.2 Implications for Community Social Work

The Canadian Association for Social Work (CASW) (2000) lists in Appendix 1 several methods of social work practice. For this section of the research study focus is placed on two areas of community level social work which seem particularly applicable to the themes raised in the interviews with immigrant Sudanese parents.

- Neighborhood and Community Organizing
- Program Evaluation

7.2.1 Neighborhood and Community Organizing

In order to find the participants for this study I had to find a way to enter the Sudanese community. From my perspective the first step in community organizing is community engagement which is the focus of the following discussion. Indeed I would change the CASW's social method to Community Engagement and Provider Re-organization. Community Engagement happened inadvertently in my case as I arrived in Winnipeg and attended settlement agencies at the same time as large numbers of Sudanese families were also arriving. Our association could have ended there but it did not because I needed hair care services which

Sudanese women provided in their homes at a vastly lower cost than the few Winnipeg salons which cater to African hair. Although my original motive to maintain contact was of a personal nature when my academic course required that I connect with the wider Sudanese community I had to make some 'cold calls' to people who through my limited participation in the community I believed to be community leaders. Some of these efforts to connect worked out, some did not. Some initial contacts referred me to others, and amongst the various contacts I was able to engage three community leaders who committed to my research project.

My motivation in making contact with Sudanese community leaders was grounded in indigenous and anti-oppressive research (Smith, 2004; 187, Potts & Brown, 2005; 268). It also made a lot of practical sense which I appreciated even more as the research process became prolonged due to various factors. The Sudanese community leaders kept me apprised of general happenings when I was away from the community for long periods. I bounced my ideas off them and they re-directed me as they saw fit. When I needed to conduct feedback sessions the Cultural Advisors were aware if people had moved away, as was the case with one father in the study, when there were other more attractive activities going on and when to keep trying to regain contact until I was successful.

Literature on client perspectives of service delivery indicates that clients appreciate when service providers make the client feel needed in their own right and extend themselves to engage the client (Gillam, 2009). Currently the Sudanese community advertises some of the activities which are held in their community centre. The curious social worker can therefore venture in, ask about future events, note some names and faces and express interest in coming

back again. Participation in the ethnic communities now settling in Winnipeg is part of the definition of cultural competence; a shared understanding amongst community members (Davis, 2007).

The nature of 'community' whether a place or an identity may depend on circumstances such as safety. The participants in this study lived throughout the city of Winnipeg. Although in their accounts of their first months in Winnipeg they started off living in the downtown area around Central Park, all except one of the eight families had moved out to other neighborhoods. When refugees first arrive it is likely that their 'community' will be settlement residences, settlement services, employment agencies and locations associated with establishing themselves. In Winnipeg these services are concentrated in the Central Park area which is convenient for newcomers, especially in the winter months.

Two mothers in this study alluded to youth gang recruitment in the settlement neighborhood and recommended that newcomers not be settled there. This concern for safety means aware Sudanese parents may try to keep their children inside and that the geographic community of the settlement area will be transitory with people moving in and out rapidly without investing in the space. However, once safety was no longer considered an issue two mothers noted that in their permanent neighborhoods they made connections with other mothers [non-Sudanese in both cases] on their street to keep an eye out for strangers or to be stop-over locations for their children until the mother could get home from work. Community investment was greatly affected by the mothers' feelings of safety despite the convenience of concentration of settlement services.

In the process of scheduling the interviews three mothers identified community 'hubs' which they selected as interviews sites. In all three instances the selected sites were rooms in a church building and the timing of the interview followed a social function or worship service. Familiarity and supportive resources are likely reasons why these locations were selected. At the churches there were people who watched the children while the mothers spoke with me. The site originally designated for the research was a downtown library and this worked for three fathers who came to meet me there at appointed times. Both options of community 'hubs' and central public spaces were safe, accessible, convenient and familiar locations to the research participants with mothers preferring the safe, familiar and supportive.

When Sudanese relatives arrive under the sponsorship of earlier immigrants they may start off in the homes of their sponsors or friendly supporters and are dispersed throughout the city, so may not have a defined geographic area to which settlement programming can be directed and personal contacts made. In their case 'community' may be harder to create and may only be electronic via telephone/ internet or occasional in-person visits at the 'hubs'.

The suggestion for social work practice is to consider being mobile and locating community services and meetings in 'hubs' which the target community identifies as desirable. A first step could involve mapping 'community' by asking respondents for locations which they frequented and ranking location by order of preference. The social worker could then investigate the feasibility of embedding social service delivery in the various locations. Gillam's (2009) study also suggested going out to collect participants to make attendance easier and more welcoming.

Timing of meetings was also a challenge in the study both for the interviews and for the follow up feedback. The mothers in particular had weekday and weekend night shifts and spent their weekday mornings getting their children out to school and their homes in order. They then slept before the children came home or went out on errands and slept in the afternoon before going back to work. Two mothers [both married] indicated they could not meet me for several days as they were doing double shifts at work.

The employed fathers had day jobs and the full-time student/father had classes during the day. However, it is notable that none of them referred to a supportive social network. Two fathers responded to the question 'Who do you lean on' that they depended on no one and two fathers referred to their wives as their support. Predictable personal schedules which, for example, allowed them to meet me by appointment, did not necessarily lead to social network formation.

Scheduling based on convenience to potential clients, embedding within other organizations and venturing out to cultural events as a means of making connections may be a significant change for some social work services which anticipate that a client will seek help from agencies, commit to an appointment at a set agency location and attend at a particular time each week or attend during weekdays. However, based on the experience from this research and the literature, investments in developing cultural competence by interaction, sharing mutual interests and appreciation of client strengths establish the foundation for effective community services.

7.2.2 Program Evaluation

The participants in this study provided very thoughtful, reflective insight into their world as parents during the 60 to 90 minute interview period. Once engaged, many newcomers will provide constructive feedback as to the effectiveness of programs in which they participate and are capable of suggesting alternate courses of action.

A challenge to engagement is the linguistic ability of service providers. Although I was able to find willing English speaking participants, the Cultural Advisory Committee noted that they had to screen out excellent participants due to my lack of linguistic ability in Arabic or Dinka which most of the Winnipeg-based Sudanese population spoke. Most newcomers to Winnipeg try to learn English but it is not known how many service providers are trying to learn the newcomer languages.

In the absence of linguistic ability amongst service providers linguistic interpretation services in Winnipeg are slowly being developed by organizations such as the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WHRA) (2008; 8) who have had the wisdom and funding to develop the Language Access Services in order to remove 'significant barriers to health promotion/prevention programs and initial access to health services.' Although their 38 interpreters covering 22 languages are in demand by other service providers the WHRA's first priority is health services. The WHRA's goal is to expand interpreter services from the four facilities presently with such services to all their health facilities.

Manitoba's social workers therefore need to develop a linguistic service for social service agencies or encourage the WHRA to extend its linguistic services more generally to social services. These services need to be mobile if face-to-face (simultaneous or summary

interpretation) or available on-call such as via speaker phone (telephone interpretation). Such services are currently available in other provinces such as in Ontario through the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic (www.schliferclinic.com) or the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association (www.thunderbay.org/article/translation-and-interpretation-services-128.asp) whose interpreters are trained to interpret in therapeutic counseling, in group therapy as well in legal settings and other social service areas. These two agencies both train newcomers to become interpreters thereby providing employment and they also provide an essential service which would greatly assist social workers' capabilities to engage and serve newcomers. Services are free to some clientele (e.g. domestic violence victims)

The medium of communication was significant in this study even amongst the participants who were able to communicate in English. As noted in Chapter 3 under Sample Recruitment, the participants possessed the research recruitment brochure but had not read it. Spoken language, even in a familiar language, is perceived differently in many cultures than is written language. Communication through written mediums is not recommended for the Sudanese newcomer and possibly is not appropriate for other newcomer cultures as well. Many program evaluations are written forms requiring client completion which limits client response from populations unfamiliar with English or with low literacy levels. A change in process to language-interpreted verbal evaluations is recommended. The traditional flip chart and marker with votes by raised hands or simple ballot may prove most valuable.

7.3 Implications for Social Work with Groups

The Canadian Association of Social Work lists several methods of social work practice which can be categorized as work with groups. Two group methods which address the emergent themes in this study are discussed below:

- Network Facilitation
- Advocacy

Network Facilitation is a strategic group intervention and relates well to the theme 'School/ 911'. Group Advocacy also is a considered method to respond to parent concerns about their relations with social institutions such as expressed in 'School/ 911' and their sense of social value as expressed in 'Listen'. As parents feel more aware of resources and ways of getting things done due to Network Facilitation they may feel more confident at home which may impact the 'Listen' theme. Advocacy involves seeing the other point of view, even if in order to counter it, and may influence perspectives on values, expressed in the emergent research theme 'Good/Bad'.

7.3.1 Network Facilitation

Children and youth in Canada are formally taught networking in settings such as collaborative and cooperative learning in classrooms (Saskatoon Public Schools, 2008). Adults are assumed to have acquired these networking skills in their youth. Upon arrival in a new culture however, the networking skills that newcomer adults had acquired in their country of origin may not apply. For example, Winnipeg does not have a market culture where people gather and talk as they sell and buy produce. The market in many cultures is more than just a retail space, it is also a social gathering space where networks are formed and developed.

Winnipeg's weather was noted by one of the Sudanese respondents as a factor which kept Sudanese immigrants at home and thereby reduced social visiting. The parents noted several family care solutions to their new economic circumstances such as maternal night work with child supervision by the father and morning/evening supervision by mother to allow father to study and seek work. A single father programmed his children's evenings with activities to avoid his children's street involvement while he was at work. Having five children in different schools, doing unfamiliar school assignments [including group assignments] and keeping the children off the street while she tried to work outside the home all added up to what one mother called 'stressful'. These family care techniques combined with shift work leave little time or energy for parents to meet in groups unless there is a crisis or a highly desirable activity.

Trevellion (1999) offers a solution in the concept of strategic network facilitation through a community broker. The broker, an individual social worker or a social service agency, identifies the issues which clients are concerned about but may be unable to address and do the research and 'strategic linking work' (ibid, 71). In order to determine which links may be strategic, social network maps need to be drawn for relevant members involved. Trevellion cites J. C. Mitchell's (1969) work on personal relationships in Central African towns in which a social network is defined as 'a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons' (Trevellion; 18). A social network is illustrated on the next page:

7.3.2 **Illustration 1: Social Network Trevellion (1999; 19)**

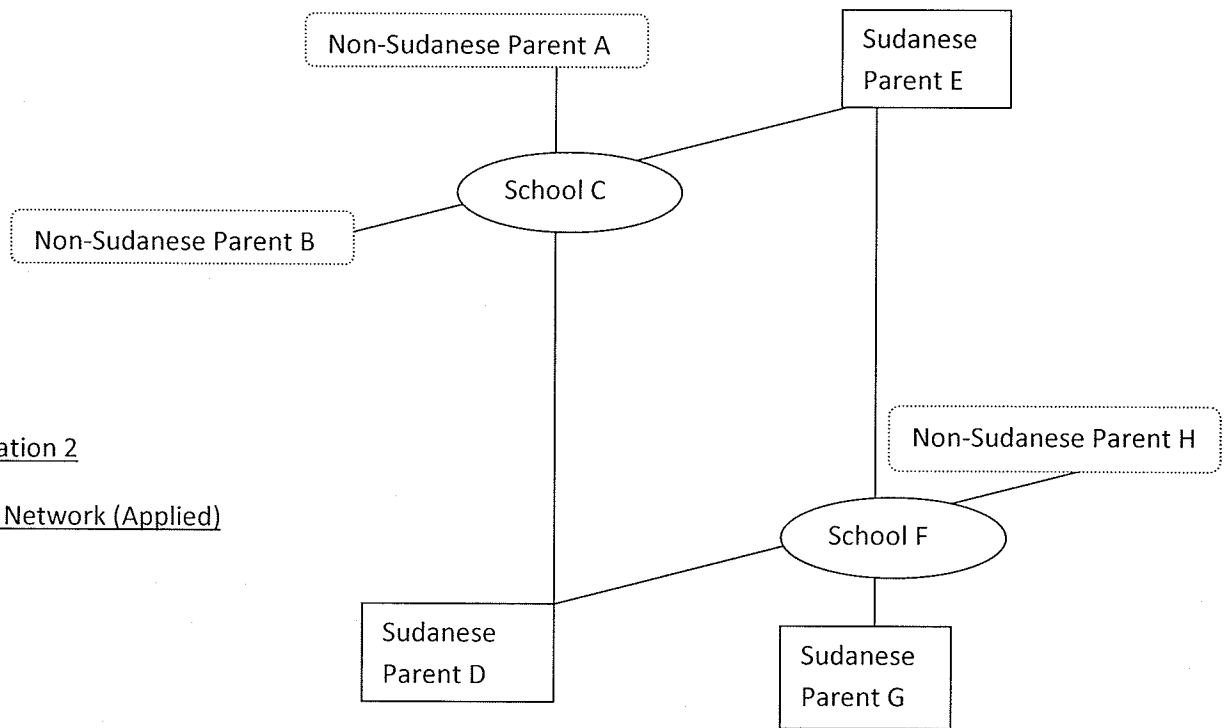
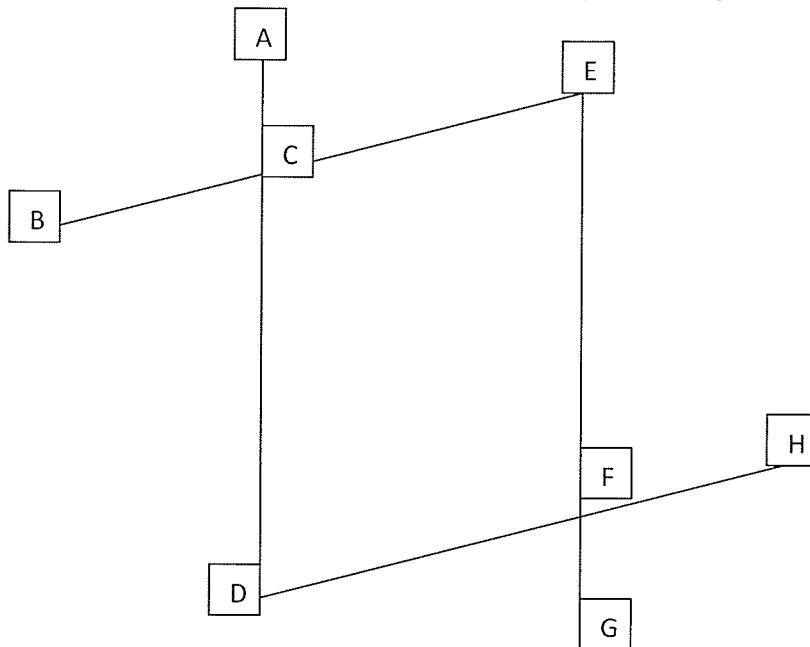


Illustration 2
Social Network (Applied)

In Illustration 1 depicting the social network ‘...it is possible to see that A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H are all interacting in a particular way with one another. C for example is interacting with A, B, D and E but not with F, G and H. Moreover, A and B are interacting only with C and not with each other. F and C have no contact with each other but both have contact with E and D’ (Trevellion; 18)

Adapting Illustration 1 above, I have assigned identities to the social network in Illustration 2. The initial motivation behind networking would be task oriented; that in order to achieve positive outcomes in relation to the emergent theme ‘School/ 911’ - children threatening parents, children not listening to parents, and children staying out late - it is best for Sudanese parents to be connected and to work with other select people. I have included a combination of systems – professional (schools) and domestic (parents) and of cultures (Sudanese and non-Sudanese). Non-Sudanese Parents A and B take their children to School C, as do two Sudanese parents D and E. School C knows these four parents (Sudanese and non-Sudanese) but may not be aware of their connections with other schools or parents. School C is also not aware of Sudanese Parent G’s negative reactions to the presentation of children’s rights in school F. However, the three Sudanese parents D, E and G are aware as they all have children going to School F. Sudanese Parents D and E have the perspective of parents with children in two schools, one school (F) with methods that cause concern, the other school (C) which does not cause concern, but the two methods combine at home. Sudanese Parent G is traumatized by the events in school F. Non-Sudanese Parent H is aware of the children’s rights

presentation in school F but is not concerned. Non-Sudanese Parents A and B are very happy as School C meets their expectations.

Trevellion suggests that social workers can help in this sort of situation by being community brokers to the social network. By talking to various parents (Sudanese and non-Sudanese) it may become apparent that some are happy with their children's schools whilst others are not and some are able to speak about both situations. In this research study all the Sudanese parents had heard that Winnipeg schools inform children about their rights and access to emergency resources. What may be needed is to find parents (Sudanese and non-Sudanese) who find this sort of information helpful to their families and who can share their perspective with the concerned parents (Parents D, E and G).

In addition to a parent-to-parent network, the schools (C and F) could also be approached. Although School C is not currently having an issue it may appreciate the concerns of Sudanese parents D and E, who it serves directly, about School F. School C may also understand the influence that Sudanese Parent G, an anxious member of the community, can have on the wider Sudanese attitude towards Winnipeg schools in general.

The networking process may be able to suggest sharing of resources or strategies for sensitive practice with School F, and strategies for family harmony with parents D, E and G. For School F, a sequencing solution may work where the school has sessions with interested parents prior to delivery of certain information to students so that parents can decide if they wish to discuss the topic with their children before the school does. Some topics are available in parent-friendly formats such as designed for homeschooling parents

(<http://homeschoolreviews.com/reviews/curriculum>) and the school could utilize these in conjunction with the parents. Parents could also be invited to provide feedback to the school if negative situations result after the topic has been taught. This example depicts the strategic linking of a specific group of people to solve a problem via a social network.

7.3.3 Advocacy

Advocacy is defined as something that one person does in support of another. It is about:

- safeguarding people who are in situations where they are vulnerable
- speaking up for, or standing alongside, people who are not being heard - helping them to express their views and make their own decisions and contributions
- enabling people to make informed choices about, and remain in control of, their own social and health care

Collective (or Group) Self-Advocacy:

- Support is offered to allow vulnerable people to come together and gain strength from a collective voice (Glasgow City Council, 2006).

Based on the definitions of Advocacy and Collective Self-Advocacy above, the themes 'School / 911' and 'Listen' could be addressed in partnership with the Sudanese community in general and with specific Winnipeg based advocates. The parents in this study were concerned that their children were being distracted from parents' voices to the many other voices of adults, peers and the various media which are a part of life in Winnipeg. Despite their concerns only two of the eight Sudanese parents preferred to temporarily separate from the influences of the Winnipeg society and return their entire family or particular members of the family to

Sudan to a more familiar set of influences. The other six parents preferred to remain in Winnipeg and carve out a solution locally. The two parents who want to leave only want to do so temporarily and want to return, suggesting that if there is a hope for change they too would put their shoulders to the wheel.

The Sudanese parents appeared vulnerable. They did not have the Canadian cultural capital to anticipate what was coming at them and to prepare themselves and their family for possible consequences. What came at them was a change in climate that restricted their normal movements, a change in language which restricted their ability to communicate and absorb the vast amount of information inherent in settling into a new country, a change in school curriculum which provided information to their children that impacted parent-child relations at home, a change in social status as their qualifications were not recognized and they began work below the status they left in Sudan, a change in work scheduling – many of the jobs open to them were at night or weekends, and a change in gender relations as the liberal, Western values in Canada impacted couple relationships.

In the midst of change the eight parents in this study had weathered much of the storm. Five had intact families. One mother had experienced marital breakdown, one mother had lost her nephew to criminal influences and one father was experiencing anxiety as his son chose the street life rather than school and family. All eight parents in the study still had large families at home with the average number of children at five per household. Their concerns were to keep their children's attention and clarify family values amidst a multicultural setting and a societal climate apprehensive about domestic abuses.

The parents needed cultural diversity to be mainstreamed into the schools, workplaces and social services. Advocacy messages and campaigns could be designed to promote the situations listed below:

- Schools that anticipate large families with parents unfamiliar with the curriculum and which focus on engaging immigrant and refugee parents as essential partners in education.
- Schools which prepare language appropriate briefings on the information about to be shared with immigrant children and develop parent friendly curricula such as designed for home schooling parents.
- Workplaces that design parent friendly work schedules in numbers related to the 20,000 newcomers which the province of Manitoba is targeting each year.
- Employers who recognize the potential of personnel trained in foreign countries and design integration training for rapid participation in the Winnipeg work force.
- Employers who seek out personnel in Winnipeg who speak languages other than English and French and then can advertise that they offer multilingual services.
- Social Services with information in appropriate ethnic languages in audio, written and electronic form who are funded based on the numbers of refugees and immigrants that they serve.
- Interpreters in the languages which the province of Manitoba anticipates, based on its refugee re-settlement agreements, will be needed.
- Slogans in the public media that not only inform about domestic violence, which is a real issue and every home should be a safe place, but which also celebrate parent

contributions just as loudly: Parents can make us solid! Dedicated Parents are the backbone of Winnipeg! Refugee families are survivors! Immigrant Parents add a new perspective! Refugee and immigrant families quickly build Manitoba!

The Sudanese parents need independent advocates who are funded by the province and whose income is based on results in achieving integration within Manitoba. Parent satisfaction should be polled regularly to verify that parents, both new arrivals and foundation residents, feel that they are being supported to be competent parents. Active methods of parent integration need to be funded by the Province and monitored for effectiveness.

7.4 Implications for Social Work with Individuals

From the lists of social work practice methods posted by the Canadian Association for Social Work (CASW, 2006) two are discussed in relation to the parents in this study:

- Assessment
- Case Management

7.4.1 Assessment

Client assessment is the first step in individual work and so is important in establishing the relationship between the prospective client and the social worker. Typically, assessments use set criteria to determine if a client is proficient in specific areas and in which areas support is needed. Assessments are usually documented and establish a direction for further intervention.

Assessment criteria and the methods of measurement require a cultural lens in order to be relevant and valid to the specific client (Gopaul-McNicol & Armour-Thomas 2002; Gopaul-McNicol & Brice-Baker, 1997). Some concepts which are held by the mainstream culture may not be valid to the client. For example in the emergent theme 'Good/Bad' which was debated amongst the Sudanese parents in this study, deference to parents was a non-negotiable family value. They felt that Canadian society overstated individualism, presented it too early to their children, denigrated the valued Sudanese tradition of seniority and thereby undermined the principle of Eldership.

The parents assessed their own success and that of their children on principles of communal commitment rather than on individual self interest. The parents shared points at which support would have been welcome or was still needed. One mother recounted that she cries when she considers how differently her Canadian-based children are growing up in contrast to Sudanese values. Another mother refused to note pleasure in her children until they reached adulthood as she was gripped in fear that they would be negatively influenced by Canadian values. Two fathers explained that the teaching of right and wrong as they understood this from their culture was their paternal duty; it gave value to being a parent. If they did not play this role one of the fathers stated one could become 'hopeless'.

Would these parents be assessed as being in need of support? How would the social worker become aware of the parents' concerns in order to initiate an assessment? A Sudanese parent may not reach out for several reasons – they may be so busy with family and work that their concerns are displaced, they may not be aware of available

supports, and/or they may not feel comfortable sharing their concerns with a social worker. Perceptive community leaders may be a source of referral if the social worker is engaged in the community.

By what criteria would these parents be assessed? Would they be assessed as honorable or deviant? Are they loyal and trustworthy or inflexible and unrealistic? Assessments are the conventional method used to open up access to resources for clients, to confirm placement in programs, or confirm 'normalcy'. The challenge for social work practice with individuals is to develop grounding in cultural awareness that leads to wisdom, to compliment the organizational criteria contained in assessment documentation.

Social workers are therefore encouraged to spend time learning from and talking with community Elders as sources of cultural wisdom which can hone assessment abilities. What are the criteria that these Elders and other members of the ethnic community feel are reliable indicators of parental abilities? Through which medium can such criteria or indicators be taught to social workers – immersion as in participant-observer, by culturally specific experiential literature?

Social workers have power. The ability to assess a family as non-functional or to assess that children need to be removed from their parents for the child's safety is phenomenal power. Through assessment a social worker can also provide a family with resources appropriate to their needs. Assessment of a client is so important to the flow of resources to that client that this aspect of practice needs urgent attention.

This power is mitigated. Regulatory bodies (Government of Manitoba, 2008) and employers have power over the social worker and negative consequences following what is considered irresponsible professional action lead to sanctions and in extreme cases inquiries and de-registration. As outlined in Chapter 6, Governmental and Legal Context, there is organizational concern about client risk management and litigation. The earlier reference in this chapter to the political context of social work in Manitoba, the tragic events leading to the AJI-CWI along with Mullaly's caution of the social control aspect to social work practice, make the mitigation of power a necessary and desirable condition. Therefore, social workers need wisdom when assessing a client; a balance between organizational criteria and cultural competence is required.

7.4.2 Case Management

The National Case Management Network of Canada's (NCMN) definition of case management is:

Case Management is a collaborative client-driven process for the provision of quality health and support services through the effective and efficient use of resources. Case Management supports the clients' achievements of goals within a complex health, social, and fiscal environment (NCMN, 2008, 2).

Case work, the precursor of case management, featured early in social work as a way to confirm that a client was needy and therefore worthy of external support. Through more liberal concepts of social justice, this philosophy has evolved. As seen in the above source and definition, case management is now used in many human service areas and is ideally client-driven and aims at achieving client goals. Social workers primarily work within service

systems such as health care, child protection, corrections, schools and government social welfare agencies (CASW, 2006). These systems have developed case management to coordinate the services they offer and services they access on behalf of clients. Case management as illustrated below can become highly structured and regulated:

In hospitals and health care facilities, it is expected that social workers record psychosocial assessments, interventions, and outcomes in accordance with organizational and professional procedures and standards. When these procedures are not followed or standards are not met, the social workers, patients, their families, and the organization potentially enter the domain of risk (Cumming, Fitzpatrick, McAuliffe, McKain, Martin & Tonge, 2007; 240).

This regulated approach to case management may be less practiced by the social workers who operate in private practice, and they may exercise more flexibility in their services to clients. However, social work records can be subpoenaed in certain circumstances and so conformity to professional practice is prudent.

In an attempt to expand the range of perspectives on case management, a case study by Kenyan psychologist Augustine Nwoye (2007) presents a clinical approach shaped by his culture and distinct from current Western organizational practice. Working with a client who learned that she was HIV positive, Dr. Nwoye assessed the client's needs based on her own perception of what the problem really was, and provided support along with his wife in a way that suggests 'family' more than 'clinician'. Although he had an office he conducted his sessions at home because the client contacted him at home suggesting this was a preferred setting for her. He incorporated his wife as part of the 'witnessing community' and involved

her in spiritual and emotional support to the client. Having provided therapeutic interventions, the client was finally referred to 'positive clubs' which were non-governmental organizations serving HIV clients. The case study presents an alternative approach to individualized care, professional boundaries, and integration of available resources.

While a Canadian-based social worker may be constrained by the organizational modus operandi it is helpful to be aware of possible client expectations based on country of origin. Case management options may be expanded by inclusion of cultural Elders who may offer what the social worker, by virtue of professional boundaries, cannot. Inclusion of cultural guides can also enable the interpretation of client perceptions such as whether referrals are interpreted as accessing better care or as being pushed off to someone else; or whether efforts at increasing self-determination are interpreted as client empowerment or as indifference by the service provider. In situations where different concepts of timeliness or competing community activities may affect client attendance at appointments, a cultural guide may prompt the social worker to mobilize systems of support (for example: reminders, transportation, re-scheduling for optimal timing).

To illustrate case management using the experiences expressed by the Sudanese parents in this study, we can look at the discussion in 'School/ 911'. Parents expressed a perceived alliance between school, children and 911 that excludes the parents. Schools and the Child Guidance Clinic would not agree with this. The website of the Child Guidance Clinic in Winnipeg states: We work together with school teachers, principals and parents to provide specialized help for school children

(<http://www.wsd1.org/childguidance/history.htm>). It also states that their work usually takes place within the school. Parents of children who have a difficulty as assessed by the school, therefore would be made aware of the assessment and the intervention but may still feel that there is an alliance within the school if they did not participate in the assessment and agree on the conclusion. If they did not understand, agree with or observe the intervention themselves they may still feel 'out of the loop'.

In the case of the newcomer parents in this study special efforts are needed to ensure that case management is 'a collaborative client-driven process' (NCMN, 2008, 2). Factors such as language, cultural background, cultural expectations of the parent and the service provider will shape what 'collaboration' looks like.

Some of the confusion may be in defining the 'client'. Is the parent the client? Is the child the client? Is the school the client? To the parents in this study they feel the parent is as much the client as the child since the parent is the adult responsible for the child. However, the school environment is not open to the parent during the intervention process. Therefore, school social workers need to develop a means of building trust with parents, a frequent and consistent two-way communication system on the child's progress which includes the parents' goal achievement for their child. Sessions with the child could be videotaped and discussed with the parent as occurs in some facilities. Interventions such as Theraplay (Jernberg and Booth, 1998) which includes the parent in the assessment and delivery of the intervention is one way to build trust, inclusion and understanding with parents. Locating the intervention in spaces that feel safe, familiar and supportive to the parent can enhance 'collaboration'.

Case management coordinates multiple systems to support the client's goal achievement, and consideration of the cultural system is recommended as a necessary inclusion. Studies suggest that client drop-out (Davey & Watson, 2008) and client non-adherence to health care interventions (Vourlekis & Ell, 2007) can be improved by culturally appropriate case management.

7.5 Directions for Future Social Work Research

During the process of preparing this research report areas for future research were notable. In this section I suggest areas of research with newcomer parents which may have informed this study or which could logically follow from it. With Manitoba's goal of high levels of newcomer arrivals for the purpose of building the economic productivity of the province it is essential that newcomer families settle quickly and well.

Autobiographies of Sudanese newcomers in various Canadian provinces would have presented a point of reference from which to compare the local Winnipeg experience of the parents in this study. Autobiographies of male Sudanese refugees in the United States of America (Bok, 2003; Bul Dau, 2007; Eggers, 2006) provided me with a cultural initiation into issues of note for refugees to North America. Detailed personal accounts from Sudanese refugees in Canada, particularly from a parent's perspective, could guide us towards appropriate means to engage with and better serve Sudanese families. Producing such autobiographies would fit the advocacy role of social workers and the facilitation of client self-advocacy.

Case studies can now be compiled and published based on the numerous interactions which social work professionals in schools, community agencies, health facilities and

corrections have had with Sudanese clientele since the 2003 Refugee Group Settlement program. No doubt case studies are prepared and discussed in-house in the various delivery systems but these must also be shared in the academic media for wider discussion, application and support.

Several Sudanese and other newcomer parents' voices remain unheard: parents who have done so well that no social work organization interacts with them, parents whose children have in fact been incarcerated in the Manitoba Youth Centre, parents for whom the alternative measures program (Stevenson, Tufts, Hendrick & Kowalski, 1998; 15) being utilized by Manitoba Justice has successfully re-directed their children to pro-social lifestyles. Phenomenological studies with these parents would inform the concerns raised by the Sudanese parents in this study.

City-wide surveys amongst all parents in Winnipeg may quantify how unique or commonplace the fear of the Sudanese parents in this study of recruitment into youth gangs is and whether other parents have suggestions on how to successfully deal with this matter. For parents for whom this is a low level of concern, the study could expand on the factors that alleviate fear of gang recruitment. The demographics (for example: age of parents, age of children, household size, parent's educational background, parent's occupational history, mother tongue, length of time in Winnipeg, parent's marital status) of variations in parental concern may suggest groups for further study. The Winnipeg data set could for example look at parent-child attachment practices amongst various ethnic groups, such as has been conducted in several Canadian cities (Mawani, 2002) to pin down specific areas for social work intervention.

Ethnographies of the community 'hubs' which participants in this research identified, most notably the church, could help us design comfortable spaces for newcomers to gather, share experiences, support each other and access social, cultural and possibly economic resources that facilitate their healthy integration into Winnipeg. Ethnic groups can be encouraged to articulate their vision of healthy, helpful community spaces. Discussion forums might investigate whether social services would be appropriate additions to the activities in these 'hubs'. Ethnographies of the settlement areas may also identify the strengths and challenges of their downtown locations and the priorities to be addressed for healthy newcomer-family adjustment to Winnipeg.

Longitudinal studies of Sudanese newcomer parents as they age will inform the changing immigrant perspectives across their life span, help to identify the services that were helpful, how helpful services were facilitated and the barriers to service delivery. How do elderly Sudanese-Canadians view the African value placed on children as social security in illness and old age (Chapter 2) once they are actually in old age in Winnipeg? Do the services for aging meet their needs? What does the experience of aging in Winnipeg feel like for a Sudanese parent? What impact do the concerns identified in this study in the theme 'Listen' have on eldercare both for elderly Sudanese-Canadian couples and for Sudanese-Canadian parents who separated due to the more liberal Canadian value system?

Strategically designed research will prepare us to better serve the many other newcomer parents and families that Winnipeg anticipates in the immediate future. It will indicate to government and other funders where resources need to be channeled to successfully integrate newcomer families as a source for provincial productivity and stability.

Research will better ensure that the tremendous personal investment that newcomer parents make when they travel across the world to a better life in Canada reaps positive returns for their families.

8 Appendix - Interview Questions

1. How did you hear about this research? Why did you decide to share your experience of parenting both here in Canada and in Sudan?
2. Please tell me about your experience of parenting your children in the Sudan compared to parenting them in Winnipeg?
3. How would you compare parenting when you first came to Winnipeg to parenting now?
4. Who would you list as the people you lean on the most? [Social Support Network]
5. If you raised your children anywhere else please tell me about that time.
6. What would you tell a family leaving Sudan now to come to Winnipeg to help them be prepared for the transition?
7. What changes here or in the Sudan may encourage you to return to live in the Sudan?
8. In what ways do you think Sudanese mothers/ fathers have a different experience to Sudanese fathers/ mothers when they come to Winnipeg?
9. How do you feel about the following phrase? 'I feel that I lose my place as a parent here in Winnipeg'
10. What would you describe as the most meaningful moments of being a parent in any of the places where you have lived?
11. What recommendations do you have to make being a parent in Winnipeg the best parenting experience for you?

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